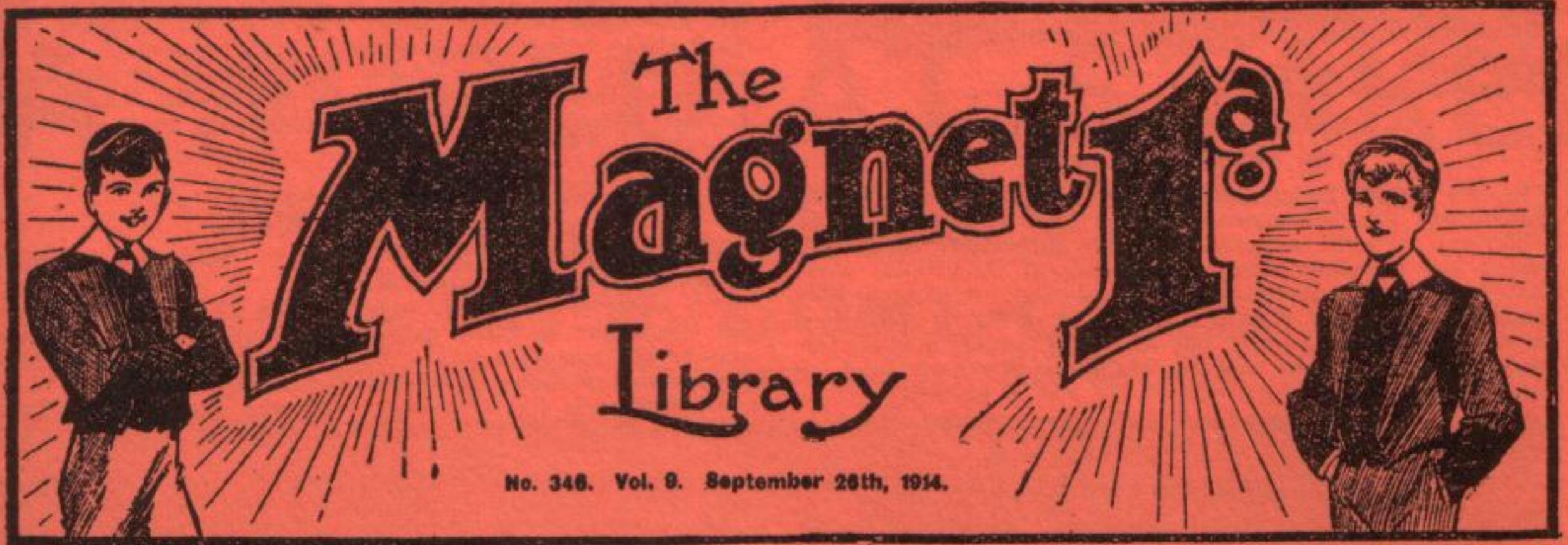


**A WORD IN SEASON!** BY THE EDITOR.



**THE SPOOF VENTRILOQUIST IN TROUBLE!**

(See the complete school story inside.)

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

**FOR NEXT MONDAY:**

**"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"**

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In this grand, long, complete tale of Greyfriars School, Mauleverer, the millionaire schoolboy earl, gets the shock of a lifetime! To the amazement of his chums and the whole school, the erstwhile champion slacker of Greyfriars completely alters his habits. Work no longer makes him shudder—he actually revels in it. A lot of fun is caused by his sudden change of front, but when the episode is over, the schoolboy earl realises that his standing in the school is higher than ever since his way of life was so abruptly

**"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"**

**A WORD IN SEASON.**

In spite of the grave state of affairs in our country at the present time, I feel sure I can confidently look to my vast army of reader chums to stand by "The Magnet" Library loyally.

The time has now arrived when the "Magnet's" staunch supporters can prove their loyalty by coming forward and making strenuous efforts on behalf of their favourite paper. The continued success of the "Magnet"—and of its companion papers—depends wholly and solely upon its readers.

Many of you will be perusing this Chat Page amid the invigorating surroundings of camp life. There you will meet with all sorts and conditions of fellows—Scouts, Cadets, and Territorials—many of whom have never read our papers, and are in ignorance of the entertaining reading matter they contain. Here is a golden opportunity for the loyalist. He can boom the "Magnet" abroad. He can tell of the excellence of its stories to his camp-mates; and, in short, he can be the means of securing a large complement of new readers. If he does this, he can be quite satisfied that his part has been performed in keeping the good old "Magnet" Library from going on the wane. I take this opportunity of

thanking my reader-friends for the co-operation I have already received from them.

In the meantime, there will be no falling-off in the "Magnet" stories to be presented to my readers during the coming weeks. The stories of famous Greyfriars School will lose none of their charm, and fine war features and illustrations will also be provided. No opportunity will be neglected in order to keep the invincible trio of companion papers in their place in the front rank. All I ask is the earnest support of my ever-loyal chums in these troublous times.

**REPLIES IN BRIEF.**

"Four Grammar School Chums" (Hastings).—Vernon-Smith is about fifteen years of age.

"A Deserter's Brother."—As it takes at least three weeks for this paper to go to press, I am very much afraid my answer has come too late. I hope your friend did his duty, irrespective of the consequences to himself.

D. Edmunds (Northampton).—Thanks for verses. They are not quite up to publication standard, however. Try again!

H. P.—In reply to your query, it is very difficult to say who is the finest all-round cricketer, but, in view of this season's performances, Frank Tarrant (Middlesex) may be said to hold premier place.

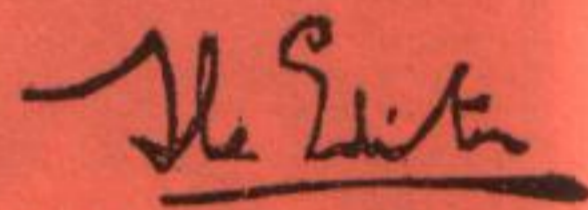
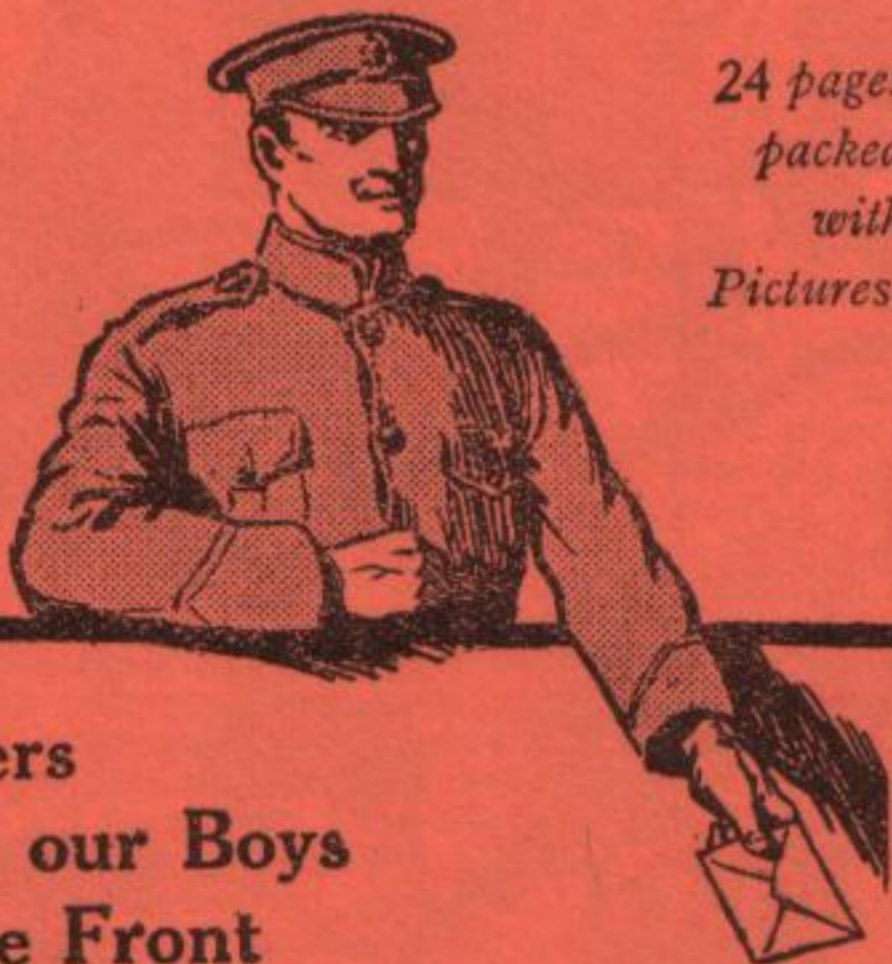
A. Dunn.—I do not think Vernon-Smith would make such a good captain as Harry Wharton, although he can doubtless play as well as Wharton.

L. Winston (Raynes Park).—Many thanks for your suggestion, which I will bear in mind.

"A Constant Reader" (Tottenham).—You will obtain your information by writing to the Cunard or White Star Line Company at Liverpool.

"A Magnetite" (Liverpool).—It would spoil the interest in the stories were I to do as you suggest.

"A Schoolboy Reader" (Southampton).—Marjorie Hazeldene has never shown any especial liking to any particular junior.

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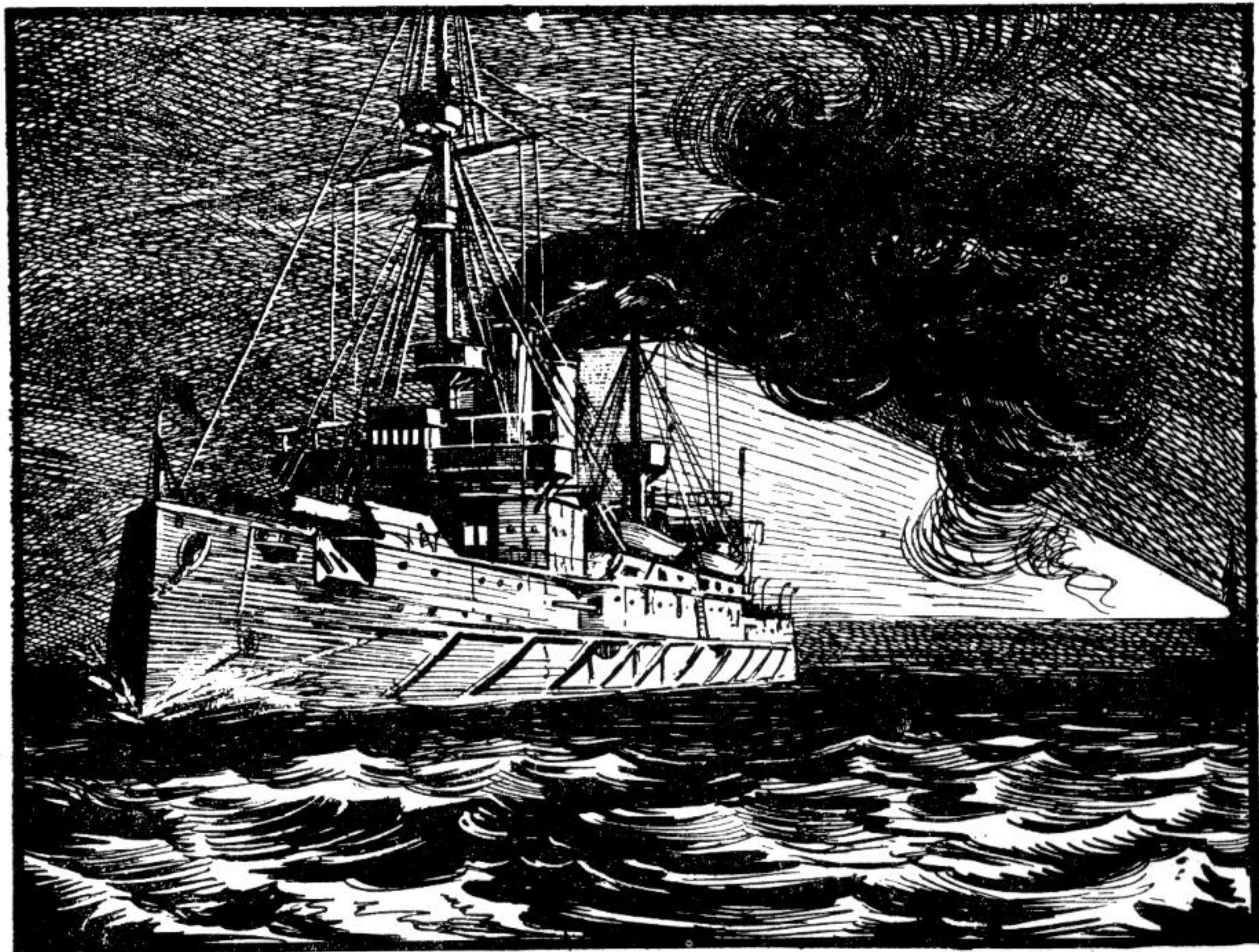
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# A WORLD AT STAKE!

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**By W. B. HOME-GALL.**

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### READ THIS FIRST.

**THORPE THORNHILL**, a practically penniless inventor, who has constructed a wonderful airship, with the aid of his brother,

**DICK THORNHILL**, astonishes

**FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS**, who is in command of the British troops at manoeuvres, and tells that officer, when he alights, that the British Government had refused to buy the invention. With Roberts are the military attaches of Germany and France.

**COLONEL GIRAUD**, who represents France, and

**MAJOR SEIGNER**, the German attache, both attempt to buy the airship for their respective nations. Giraud, when he hears that Thorpe will not sell his invention to anybody save the British Government, retires gracefully. But Major Seigner, offering a million pounds and a principedom of the German Empire, resorts to threats, and is thrown out of the house. It is then that

**CAPTAIN HORSHAM**, an old school friend of the Thornhills, visits them, and warns them to beware of the German. One of the most trusted men in the Thornhill works is a German named Julian Hartz, who has invented a gun

which he refuses to sell to the German Government. He flees to England, and, by the Kaiser's orders, Major Seigner traps the man on board a ship by the simple means of telling Hartz his wife and child are on board. Here Major Seigner puts a pistol to his head, and demands that Hartz should lead them one night to the building-house on Seamew Island, where the wonderful craft are constructed. Hartz is compelled to give way to the German officer, and the latest ship, the Night Hawk, is successfully stolen, but not until nearly the whole of Thornhill's employees are killed. At the time of the attack Thorpe and Horsham were in the Falcon, near London, and Dick warns them by wireless. They arrive too late to stop the Germans from stealing the machine, however; but Dick, who has been taken on board the stolen craft, drops his cuff, with instructions to follow the thieves to Berlin. Dick is told that he is to help in the construction of the ships, and Major Seigner is gloating over the fact that Germany alone possesses a really wonderful flying-machine, when suddenly he sees the Falcon coming straight for them. "That is the Falcon," says Dick calmly. "You see, England can still build these ships."

(Now go on with the story.)

### The Attack on Seamew Island.

Seigner was furious. Hurling Hartz from him, he paced the deck with long, agitated strides.

Presently he halted near the companion-way.

"Adeler!" he shouted; and the next moment a dark-browed, evil-faced lieutenant of marines appeared on deck.

Karl Seigner drew a pistol from his belt, aiming at Hartz.

"Attend to that cub!" he roared, pointing to Dick Thornhill with his other hand.

Following his superior's example, Adeler drew his pistol and pressed its cold muzzle against Dick's head.

"Now, you two traitors, listen to me!" cried Seigner. "If that ship overtakes the Night Hawk, as sure as the sun shines above us you shall die! Your fate is in your own hands! To the engine-room! March!"

For a moment Dick hesitated. Self was entirely eliminated from the thoughts that coursed through his brain, and it was only the consciousness that perchance Fate might yet give him an opportunity of delivering the Night Hawk from her captors—or, if all else failed, to destroy her—that induced him to obey Seigner's orders, and descend to the engine-room.

The next moment the Night Hawk was rushing through the air at redoubled speed, the ease with which she kept her distance from her pursuer showing how accurately the two vessels had been designed.

For a moment Dick and Hartz were left alone in the engine-room.

"Forgive me, Dick!" pleaded the latter. "I had no choice. Seigner, fiend in human shape that he is, would have murdered me without mercy had I refused to obey him."

At first Dick would not see the other's out-stretched hand; but as he marked his pale face, lined deep with the traces of an almost unbearable sorrow, he grasped the wretched man's extended hand, crying earnestly:

"I do forgive you, Hartz, from the bottom of my soul, and will let bygones be bygones if you will help me to undo the evil. Are you with me in this?"

"To the death!" was the emphatic reply. "Let the consequences be what they may, I will act the man."

Ere Dick could reply, an orderly entered the engine-room to summon him on deck.

He found his captor in the chart-room, poring over a map. Evidently he was no navigator; and though far beneath them the dyke-intersected stretch of country over which they flew proclaimed Holland, he seemed to have little idea where they were.

"Do you understand aerial navigation, boy?" demanded Seigner, in tones laden with studied insult.

"I do," replied Dick, ignoring the other's boorish offensiveness.

"Then perhaps you can tell me where we are?"

Dick glanced at the speed and mileage indicators; then made some rapid calculations on a piece of paper ere he replied:

"We are not far from Utrecht. Berlin lies a point or so to the north."

Seigner turned on his heels and paced up and down the deck for several minutes. Now and again he paused, to look apprehensively towards where the Falcon followed like a sleuthhound on his track.

"Come here, you English dog!" he cried presently.

Dick did not look up from the chart over which he was poring.

"Do you hear me, you unlicked cub?"

Still Dick paid no attention.

White with rage, Seigner strode towards him, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, shook him violently.

"The sooner you learn that I am master here—that every word I utter must be attended to and obeyed at once—the better for you! Do you hear me?" he thundered.

Dick looked up, and perhaps for the first time Seigner realised that he had no conscript Teuton to deal with, but an Englishman, reared from his cradle in an atmosphere of liberty and self-reliance.

"I heard you speaking, but did not think it likely that you would dare to address me in such terms," he said calmly.

Stung to fury by the bold reply, Seigner struck the defiant English boy a heavy blow on the cheek.

The next moment a cry of pain and alarm burst from his lips, for he found himself stretched on the deck, and Dick, with flashing eyes and clenched fists, was standing over him.

"You cowardly beast! Let that teach you common humanity to your prisoners!" he cried angrily.

Snarling like a tiger robbed of his prey, Seigner scrambled to his feet.

"Adeler, Hans, Keppel, Gorgon!" he cried, foaming with rage. "Seize that Englishman and hurl him over the side!" he added, as his lieutenant and three Marines approached the chart-house.

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But, ere they could lay hands upon him, Dick burst through their ranks, and, hastening below, gained the door of the ammunition-room.

The door stood open, the key on the outside. Swiftly changing it, he entered the room, and, drawing the door to after him, turned the key in the lock.

Barely had he locked himself in ere Seigner and his satellites hurled themselves against the door.

The next moment a shout of rage escaped the arch-villain, for a tiny grating was opened, and Dick's triumphant face looked down upon him.

"Ah, Herr Seigner, foiled again!" he cried laughingly.

"Not for long, you dog!" roared Seigner furiously. "You cannot stop there for ever. You must have food, you must have drink. Then my turn will come!"

"I'll stop here, my friend, until I die," returned Dick—"and that will not be very long, unless you do as I say. If you take the trouble to look through this grating, you will see that I am opening a box of detonators, one of which, exploded in this room, will set fire to the rest of the ammunition, and the Night Hawk, with all on board, will cease to be a menace to England."

"But you dare not do it. You yourself would perish also!" cried Seigner, aghast at the other's threat.

Dick shrugged his shoulders.

"I not only can do it, but I will, unless you swear to do as I order!" he said, with a calm determination that sent cold shivers running down the backs of his baffled foes.

In vain Seigner fumed and threatened. His wildest promises and most fearful threats were answered only by stinging taunts, which lashed the listeners to fury, until at last, leaving a sentry over the ammunition-room door, he hastened on deck to get away from the many home-truths to which Dick treated him.

Here he found little to comfort him, for the position of the two airships was unchanged. He was not to have it quite so much his own way as he had hoped. He dare not slow down, he dare not descend, for at the rate they were flying the Falcon would soon have covered the intervening distance, and then one well-directed shot from the other vessel's bow-chaser would wipe himself and his companions out of existence.

In vain he sent for Hartz, and ordered him to navigate the airship. Hartz knew nothing whatsoever about navigation. And Seigner realised more entirely each moment that he must come to terms with his prisoner.

He sent Adeler with an invitation for the young Englishman to come on deck; but Dick was not so easily gulled, and sent back a chaffing reply to the effect that he was quite comfortable where he was; and, as he had so short a time to live, he did not think it worth while to change his quarters.

Then Seigner descended; and, after some bit of chaffing, agreed to surrender to the Falcon as soon as he got out of Germany.

"You will swear, on your word of honour as a German officer, to keep your part of the bargain?" demanded Dick.

He did not trust the specious German, but he could be of little use to anyone shut up in the ammunition-room.

"I swear to keep my part of the contract to the letter," replied Seigner eagerly. "Until I hand the Night Hawk over to my Government, and then Heaven help you, my very sharp friend!" was his mental reservation.

"All right. Then I'll come out!" consented Dick.

And the next minute he was on deck.

By this time the Night Hawk had crossed the German frontier, and was flying at about forty miles an hour over Westphalia. It was evident that they would reach Berlin long before nightfall, and would thus be unable to land under the guns of their pursuer; so, pretending to fall in with Dick's demands, Seigner allowed him to turn the Night Hawk's head in a southerly direction.

This was Seigner's great mistake, as he realised when the Falcon steered a course which cut them off from Berlin.

Seigner's great hope had been to elude his inveterate foe during the night, but when darkness descended over the scene the bright, white beams of a searchlight shot from the conning-tower of the Falcon, from which, dodge as she might, the Night Hawk could not escape.

In vain the baffled Germans sought to evade his pursuer. Now to the right, now to the left, he swerved, but every movement from the straight course only served to decrease the distance between himself and the Falcon; so, gnashing his teeth with rage, he was obliged to continue in a southerly direction.

### A Stern Chase.

As a skilful shepherd's dog drives his charge before him, so the Falcon headed off every attempt of the Night Hawk to double on her course. Once, it is true, in the early part

of the flight, as they raced over the snow-capped Swiss mountains, Seigner, taking advantage of a slight mist, attempted to elude his pursuer, but a shot across his bows warned him that the experiment was too hazardous to be repeated.

"How long do you think this chase will continue?" asked Horsham. "As far as I can see, we stand every chance of going round and round the world indefinitely!"

"Or until the gas gives out!" laughed Thornhill.

"Then I trust ours will last a little longer than the others!" said Horsham.

Thorpe shook his head.

"The two ships are made from exactly the same measurements, and when one ceases to work the other will," he replied. "Let us hope we may be over dry land, at any rate."

Horsham shrugged his shoulders.

"It must be as our friend Major Seigner decrees, for we will not leave him an inch so long as our engines work, eh, Thorpe?" he said.

"Not an inch," returned Thorpe determinedly. "Good heavens! The fools on board the Night Hawk have destroyed her! See, she is falling!"

It was true. Swaying from side to side, the Night Hawk was dropping earthwards like a stone into the lovely Swiss valley over which they were flying.

Pale as death, grasping the railing near which he stood to keep himself from falling, Thorpe Thornhill watched what he believed to be the end of his brother and all on board the Night Hawk.

The next moment a cry of astonishment and relief burst from his lips. Within two hundred feet of the earth the Night Hawk's downward flight had been arrested, and she was skimming along as though nothing had happened, but in a north-easterly direction.

"Follow her, Pat!" cried Thorpe, turning to the steersman.

The next moment a cry of alarm burst from his lips as he felt the solid deck slipping away from under his feet. Down they went—down, down, down, down; and yet—although there was little time to think then—they afterwards remembered that there was no rush of air past them. It was simply a noiseless fall through space, until the racing screw of the Falcon resumed its regular beatings, and she darted on ahead once more.

"Good heavens, Thornhill, what a terrible experience! Your ships must be built strangely alike, for both to fall at the same time, in the same place, and to save themselves the same distance from the earth."

Thorpe wiped the perspiration from his brow as he turned to his friend, saying, with a short laugh:

"Don't you recognise what it was we struck?"

"By Jove! I think I do—a hole in the air," declared Horsham, a look of intelligence dawning on his face.

"Yes, you're right. We have encountered what until some means of detecting their presence in the atmosphere is discovered, will render aerial navigation on a great scale full of unknown peril," replied Thorpe.

Great was the consternation which reigned on board the Night Hawk as her German crew felt their craft sinking beneath their feet.

Loud shrieks of terror came from every side. Seigner, who was at that moment indulging in a siesta, rushed, pale and terror-stricken, on deck, whilst the German sailors threw themselves flat on the decks, trembling and speechless.

Alarmed though he was, Dick Thornhill was the only one who kept his head at that awful moment. Here was the chance he sought. Seeing the steersman abandon his post, he rushed to the wheel, and had got it half round when Seigner, springing forward, with a cry of rage, felled him to the deck with the butt-end of his revolver.

The next moment, as he saw the Falcon falling, he realised that Dick had unwittingly done him a good turn, for he had enabled him to double on his foe at the very moment when it was impossible for the Falcon to open fire upon him.

Still Thorpe Thornhill hung on his van, and that evening Seigner ordered Dick—who, since his futile attempt to stay the Night Hawk's flight had been kept a prisoner in his cabin—to be brought before him.

"Curse these English! Can nothing subdue them!" muttered the German major under his breath, as he surveyed his prisoner, who, tightly bound, was regarding him with calm defiance. "Well, Mr. Thornhill," he continued aloud, "the time has come when you must do your part in baffling our pursuer. Now I have done with you. You may go—over the side. Attach two hundred feet of rope to the English cur's waist, and lower him over the stern," he added, turning to Dick's guards.

Too proud to offer a useless resistance, Dick allowed the Germans to hoist him over the stern of the Night Hawk, as, in obedience to Seigner's orders, she sank to within a hundred feet of the earth.

Looking down, Dick saw that they had left the rugged Alps behind them, and were flying swiftly over a wide stretch of

marshland towards where a dense fog crossed their path, like some mighty wall barring their way.

"Wave your hand to your dear brother, Herr Thornhill: he is looking this way," sneered Seigner, pointing to the rapidly approaching Falcon. "But perhaps it is not worth while, as you will so soon meet him—that is, if he is fortunate enough to find you."

Then, for the first time, Dick realised the true meaning of Seigner's action. Thorpe would stop to pick him up, and in the meantime the Night Hawk would escape.

He opened his mouth to speak, but ere a word could pass his lips he was lowered to the ground, and a minute later was being dragged, like a helpless rag, over the coarse, rank grass.

But only for a short distance. No sooner had the Night Hawk entered the fog, than, to his dismay, he found himself being hauled up again, until at last he lay, bruised and breathless, his clothes torn to rags, on the airship's deck.

In high spirits, for he evidently thought he stood every chance of leaving the Falcon behind him, now, Seigner approached the captive boy, who, wet through, was shivering with cold.

"Aha, my young cockscorn, you tremble now, do you? You have learned at last what fear is!" he cried, in tones of malicious triumph.

"Not fear, you idiot, but cold!" cried Dick, almost beside himself with rage and disappointment. "I leave fear to you Germans. We English know not its name!"

"Bah! You scold like a woman. Is not your proud spirit subdued yet? By Heaven, I will see what a scourging with the cat-o'-nine-tails will do!"

"That is about the kind of thing a man of your stamp would do!" replied Dick contemptuously.

Seigner sprang forward, with outstretched hand; but ere the blow could fall, there was a sudden jar, and a shower of leaves and broken branches clattered on the deck of the Night Hawk.

"You clumsy idiot!" cried Dick, turning angrily upon Seigner, who, with white face and starting eyeballs, was clinging to the charthouse door. "You have run us into a forest!"

Then, half her propeller disabled, the Night Hawk plunged headlong earthwards, cracking, like some enormous projectile, through the branches of an enormous oak, until her downward career was checked, and she came to rest, supported by its mighty trunk, with a suddenness that precipitated all on board her to the ground, a dozen feet below.

Following every movement of the Night Hawk through his field-glasses from the bows of the Falcon, Thorpe Thornhill saw his brother lowered over the flying vessel's stern. A lump rose in his throat, a fierce anger surged in his brain, for he believed that Seigner was hanging his prisoner in a spirit of revengeful bravado. But the next moment a sigh of relief escaped him, as he saw the rope by which the swaying form was attached paid out, until its burden rested on the earth, just as the Night Hawk was lost to view in the midst of the fog.

For a moment Thorpe hesitated; then, realising that, freed from his foes, with liberty to wander where he would, Dick was well able to take care of himself, he smiled grimly, and in obedience to his order, the Falcon soared high above the fog, then slowed down, waiting for its chase to emerge.

They had, as we have before intimated, left Switzerland behind; but, except for the marsh immediately beneath them, the scenery was still wild and rugged, broken by pine-clad mountains, or forest-hidden hills. To the south arose the snow-tipped summits of the Alps; far away to the north the sun was reflected on the blue waters of an inland lake; but all was rendered vague and uncertain by the curtain of mist on the outskirts of the fog into which the Night Hawk had plunged.

An hour passed, and Thorpe Thornhill began to grow uneasy. Could Seigner have escaped him after all? It seemed impossible, for from their exalted eyrie their stretch of vision was enormous.

Suddenly a puff of wind lifted the fog like a curtain, and for a moment the sun shone brightly upon the glittering hull of the Night Hawk, embowered amongst the branches of the trees on the summit of a large hill surmounted by a forest of thick oak-trees.

The next moment the fog hid the scene once more; but Thornhill had marked the position of his brother's ship, and, taking the wheel, steered his aerial craft straight to its goal.

By this time, although it had not entirely lifted, the fog had grown lighter, and some twenty minutes later the Falcon came to rest on a small, clear space within a hundred yards of her disabled consort.

Aware that the Germans greatly outnumbered his own little

party, Thornhill was obliged to act with great caution, the fact that no life appeared on the Night Hawk being in itself a matter of suspicion.

Impressing on Pat Denver and Benson the necessity of keeping a sharp look-out lest the foe should attack them, Thorpe Thornhill and Horsham, armed to the teeth, cautiously approached the Night Hawk.

Their rifles at the "ready," they came to a halt beneath the mighty tree on which the airship rested.

Still no sign of life appeared; and, slinging their rifles over their shoulders, they scaled the gnarled trunk of the oak to the deck of the airship.

Yes, she was deserted. Doubtless fearing the vengeance of the pursuing Falcon, Seigner and his crew of ruffians had fled. But for his anxiety regarding his brother, Thorpe Thornhill would have been well content with the result of his chase, for a brief examination showed that the Night Hawk had not received any injury that, with the aid of his skilled assistants, he could not make good on the spot, if Fortune and his foes allowed him to do so, for a murky twilight prevailed beneath the canopy of leaves spread above their head, under cover of which the Germans could easily creep upon them unperceived; indeed, for all they knew, each tree might hide a lurking foe.

However, they must risk that. Leaving Horsham in charge of the Falcon, Thornhill, Benson, Denver, and even Tom Evans, the cabin-boy, were soon busy on the Night Hawk, straightening her bent ribs, repairing her torn aeroplanes, and testing her engines, which Thorpe was delighted to find uninjured.

But barely had they got a good grip of their work ere from the deck of the Falcon came the deep booming of the ship's bell, the agreed signal from Horsham that danger was approaching.

Snatching up their rifles, the three men ran to the side of the Night Hawk, ready to defend themselves to the last.

As they did so, the leaves of a huge bush were thrust aside, and a man—evidently a German—rifle in hand, approached the oak on which the Night Hawk rested.

"Don't shoot—don't shoot!" he cried, in German, dropping his weapon and holding up his hands. "I give in! I am your prisoner!"

"Keep him covered, boys!" cried Thornhill. And, without another word, he slid down the rope.

"Who are you? Where did you come from?" he demanded, his hand on the butt of his revolver, ready for immediate use in case of treachery.

The man looked curiously around, as though he feared eavesdroppers, then whispered huskily:

"Be careful! The very trees may have ears! I come from the English prisoner. You have to give me fifty pounds for the message that I bring. Do not hesitate. Your brother's life depends upon your promptitude."

"What is the message? Speak, quick!" cried Thorpe.

"The fifty pounds first!" insisted the other stubbornly.

"And perhaps find I have been sold, after all!" growled Thorpe. "Never mind, if you deceive me it will be the worst day's work you ever did in your life. I promise you the money."

"The herr's word is his bond," returned the other. "Your brother is still in Major Seigner's hands, who, with his companions, eight in number, are hidden away in a valley the other side of this hill, by the waters of the Watcher-in-Sea. They fear to leave the shelter of this forest lest you should swoop down and destroy them. Seigner hates your brother, whom he accuses of having wrecked the airship, and has sworn to shoot him at sunset."

Whilst the man was speaking, Thorpe Thornhill had been thinking rapidly.

"How many men did you say Seigner had?" he asked.

"Eight, including myself. But I must hasten back lest suspicion fall upon me."

"Eight!" repeated Thornhill. "And we are but four! No matter, we must risk the Falcon, and trust to a sudden attack to achieve our end."

"And my fifty pounds?" insisted the messenger.

"That shall be paid when Mr. Richard Thornhill is at liberty."

"No, no, no! It is impossible. My life would not be worth a minute's purchase if Seigner knew I had betrayed him. Besides, your brother promised that you would give it to me at once."

"But how do I know that you would not leave me to find this valley that you speak of, to find my way as best I could, if I paid you in advance?" asked Thornhill.

"I have provided for that. See, my bandolier is empty. When I left the valley it was full. I dropped the cartridges at intervals on my way hither. Follow that trail, and it will lead you to your destination."

"By Jove, that's a smart trick! Come, I think you have

earned your money, at any rate," cried Thorpe, leading the way to the Falcon. "But how is it you fellows managed to plunge the Night Hawk into this wood?"

"Major Seigner had lost his bearings. He thought the marsh over which we were flying stretched for many miles. He did not remember that this range of hills interposed between it and the lake, and did not find out his mistake until it was too late."

"Ah, well, his loss is our gain," laughed Thorpe. "Stay here till I return."

Then, without another word, he clambered on to the Falcon, presently returning with five ten-pounds notes, which he handed to the messenger, who, with many protestations of gratitude, shouldered his rifle, and slunk off into the undergrowth.

Great was the excitement amongst the little crew of the Falcon when Thorpe Thornhill repeated the German's message. Eagerly they rushed to the armoury, and filled their bandoliers with cartridges. Then, leaving Tom Evans, a keen-witted London arab, whom Dick Thornhill had picked up half starving, and had taken into his service a year or so before, in charge of the airship, they set forth on their perilous mission.

Thornhill had at first to put up with no little good-natured chaff from Captain Horsham, who declared that they would not find a single cartridge—in fact, that the whole message had not a word of truth in it; but the finding of first one cartridge, then others, leading into the forest quieted the scoffer.

On went their strange trail, until the rounding summit of the hill was crossed, and they caught a brief glimpse of the Watcher-in-Sea, spread, a sheet of blue water, beneath them.

Then the undergrowth grew thicker and thicker, and it was with difficulty they forced their way along the path the cartridges led them.

The air was heavy and oppressive. Not a breath of wind fanned their brows, and, but for the friendly shade of the trees, the heat would have been unbearable.

On they pressed, unconscious that dark storm-clouds were gathering overhead. Suddenly they came to an abrupt halt, and stood as though rooted to the ground, each looking into the other's face with startled eyes, for from immediately behind them had come the deep, resonant boom of the Falcon's little saluting gun, which Thorpe Thornhill had loaded ready for Tom Evans to fire in case of need.

"Back—back to the Falcon, lads! We have been duped and betrayed!" cried Thornhill.

Turning on their heels, the four men, careless of torn clothes and scratched faces, rushed headlong back towards the Falcon.

Suddenly Pat Denver stopped, and, too excited to speak, pointed upwards. Thorpe followed the direction of his outstretched hand, and as soon as he did so it seemed as though a heavy leaden weight had fallen upon his heart; for, soaring gracefully through the air, five hundred feet above them, was the Falcon.

Almost beside himself with anger at the neat way in which he had allowed himself to be fooled, Thorpe Thornhill unslung his rifle.

A minute later an explosive was dropped through the Falcon's well, and, alighting some twenty yards from where they stood, burst with a terrific report, which brought the leaves fluttering down upon their heads, and hurled more than one tree, torn and shattered, to the ground.

The Englishmen ceased firing. The firing was too unequal. One well-aimed bomb would wipe them out of existence.

At that moment, as though Nature was answering with an exhibition of her Titanic might the puny efforts of man, a blinding flash of lightning flew from north to south; a deafening roar of thunder reverberated through the air, whilst the rain descended with almost tropical violence upon the scene.

But they cared little for that. Their eyes were fixed on the rapidly receding hull of the Falcon, now looking like a ball of moving fire as the continued glare of the lightning was reflected from her hull.

She was in the very centre of the storm, and it seemed to the onlookers as though no earthly power could save her.

Then the wind, which had been beaten down by the force of the torrential deluge, seemed to spring from every quarter of the globe at once, and the onlookers saw the Falcon struck and buffeted, now this way, now that, in the grasp of one of the most terrible storms they had ever witnessed.

"Thank Heaven Dick is not on board her!" ejaculated Thorpe.

Horsham saw his lips move, but the roaring of the thunder was too great to distinguish what he said.

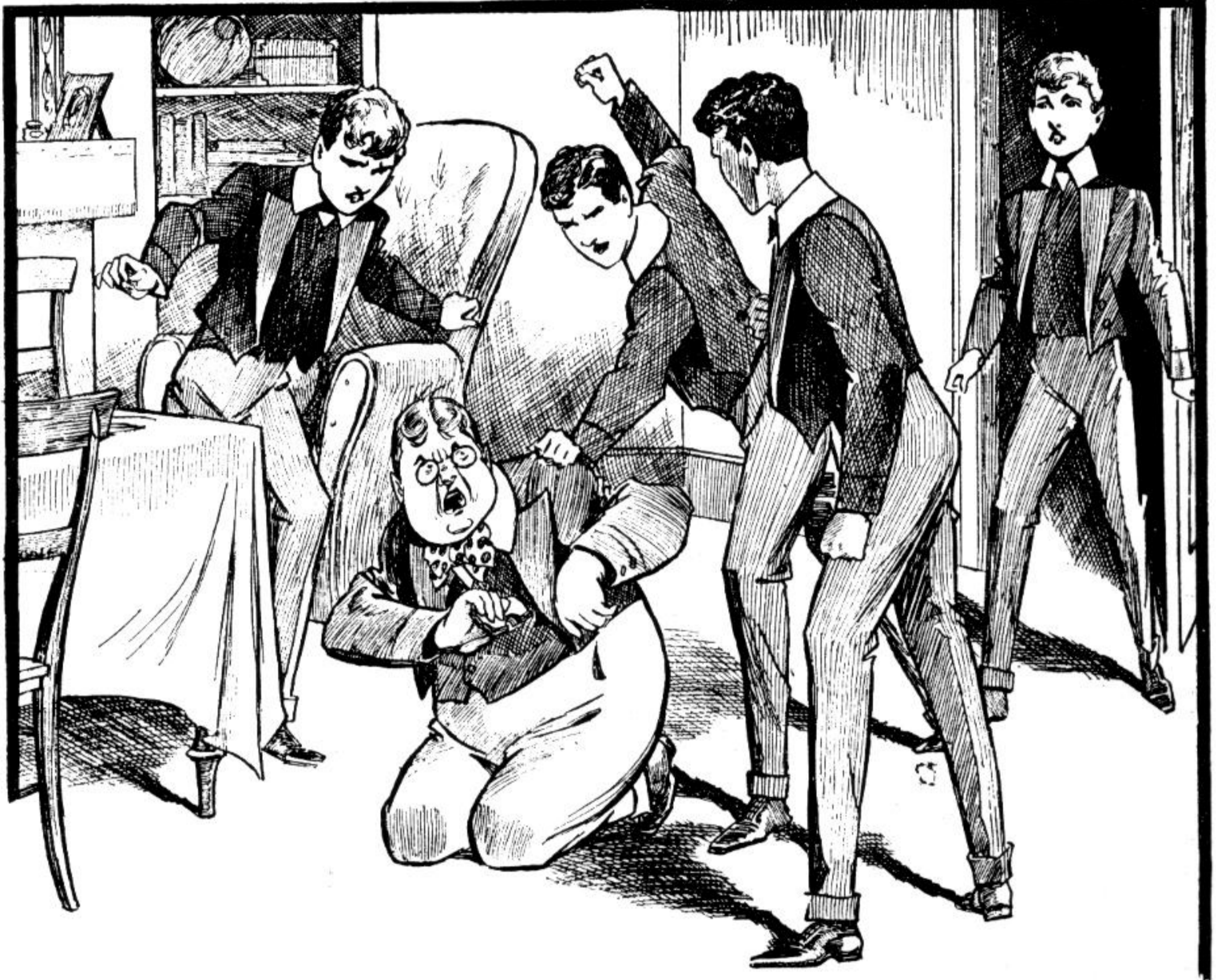
Then a cry of alarm rose from every lip, for a broad, blue band of flame tore apart the black thunder-clouds, and flew, as though guided by an unerring hand, straight at the airship!

(Another grand long instalment next week.)

# HARD UP!

A New and Amusing, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The enraged juniors grasped the Owl of the Remove, and dragged him backwards over his chair. Billy Bunter roared and rolled on the floor, with the toast still in his hands. "Squash him! Jump on him!" "I—I say, you fellows," mumbled Bunter, "don't be waxy!" (See Chapter 9.)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Tar and Feathers!

"LOOK out! He's coming!"  
"Shush!"

Bob Cherry peered cautiously through the gap in the hedge, and then drew his head back quickly.

There was a stir of excitement among the six juniors of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, in cover behind the hedge.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in ambush. The chums of the Remove were on the war-path. Harry Wharton was holding a small tin pail, which was full to the brim with tar. Frank Nugent had a bag in his hand, which was crammed with feathers. Evidently there was something exceedingly unpleasant in store for the fellow who was coming down the quiet leafy lane.

An elegantly-dressed junior, swinging a cane, sauntered down the lane.

It was Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

Ponsonby hummed a tune as he came along, little dreaming of what was waiting for him behind the hedge.

The faces of the Greyfriars juniors were very grim. They had a score—a heavy score—to settle with Ponsonby, which would not brook delay. Hence the ambush behind the hedge, and the pail of tar and the bag of feathers.

"He's coming!" murmured Johnny Bull. "I can hear the beast!"

"Shush!"

"The shushfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in his wonderful English, "and the ragfulness of the esteemed Ponsonby will also be terrific."

"Collar him as he goes by," muttered Frank Nugent, "and when he gets the tar and the feathers, I fancy he will be sorry that he got Squiff a flogging."

NEXT  
MONDAY—

"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

And the juniors chuckled softly.

Only one of them did not chuckle—it was Squiff, the new boy at Greyfriars. He did not feel like chuckling. He was still smarting from the flogging he had received that morning from the Head of Greyfriars.

Squiff—his name was Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, but he was called Squiff for short—had been through it that morning. Squiff was tough—very tough—but his toughness had not been quite proof against that castigation, administered by Dr. Locke in the presence of the assembled school. And Squiff was still wriggling painfully, and had a marked disinclination to sit down.

And it was all Ponsonby's doing. The case was simple. Ponsonby had played a trick on the chums of the Remove, which they unanimously regarded as "rotten." And, in return, Squiff had japed the Highcliffe fellows in a way that was unique, and simply stunning, from the juniors' point of view. Being a new boy at Greyfriars, and unknown then to the Highcliffe fellows, he had coolly visited Highcliffe School in the character of a new boy, and in Ponsonby's own quarters had caused Ponsonby & Co. to "sit up" in the most thoroughgoing manner. The Removites had chuckled loud and long over the success of that astounding jape. But the hour of reckoning had come.

They knew that Ponsonby would discover the trick, but they expected him to keep silent, not from motives of school-boy honour—they didn't expect that of Ponsonby—but because they knew things about him, which would have earned him the "sack" from his school if they had chosen to speak out. That they had fully intended to do, if Ponsonby should "sneak"—but when the time came they felt that they could not. Ponsonby had risked it—and Squiff had been duly flogged for his escapade—more than a week after it had happened.

And then the chums of the Remove had debated the matter, and come to the conclusion that they couldn't give Ponsonby away to his headmaster in turn. He was a sneak—but they could not follow his example. And it was especially exasperating, because they knew that Ponsonby had counted upon that. He knew them well enough to know that they would not sneak under any circumstances. And he had taken the most unscrupulous advantage of it.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the suffering Squiff had hotly debated the matter, but they came to the only possible conclusion—they could not play the sneak for the sake of getting Ponsonby, in turn, the punishment he deserved.

But that he should escape unpunished, was out of the question.

He had to be punished—his cup of iniquity was full. And the punishment had to be a heavy one—something in proportion to his offence. The chums of the Remove had talked it over at great length. Bob Cherry had suggested something lingering, with boiling oil in it; but that was out of the question, and the Co. had finally decided on tar and feathers.

That Ponsonby fully deserved the punishment was all they thought about. The probable consequences to themselves they left for future consideration.

Hence the pail of tar, the bag of feathers, and six exasperated juniors, lying in wait for the cad of Highcliffe, behind the hedge.

Their knowledge of Ponsonby's peculiar manners and customs made the matter of the ambush an easy one. It was a half-holiday at both schools—and Ponsonby frequently spent a half-holiday playing billiards at an inn by the river. The chums of the Remove had spotted him there, and ambushed him on his way home to Highcliffe.

It happened that he was alone—though if there had been a crowd with him it would have made no difference to the avengers.

They waited in suppressed excitement.

Nearer and nearer came the humming voice, as Ponsonby came sauntering on to his doom.

The elegantly-clad form of the Highcliffe junior came abreast of the gap in the hedge, and six pairs of eyes fastened vengefully upon him; and Harry Wharton gave the word.

"Collar him!"

Six juniors bounded out into the lane at once. Ponsonby uttered an exclamation, and started to run. But six pairs of hands closed grimly upon him, and he was dragged back.

"No, you don't!" said Bob Cherry, cheerfully.

"The don't-fulness is terrific, my esteemed and disgusting Ponsonby."

"Got the cad!"

"Hold him!"

"Holdray!"

Ponsonby struggled furiously in the grasp of the Greyfriars juniors. But he had no chance. He was dragged out

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of the road, behind the hedge, and into the field where the tar and feathers were waiting.

"Let me go, you cads!" yelled Ponsonby, fiercely. "I'll go straight to your headmaster about this—"

"You'll hardly be in a presentable state to go to any giddy headmaster, when we've done with you," grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters—six to one—"

"If you want a fair fight, to begin with, you can choose your man," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Pick out which one you like, and the rest of us will see fair play—and see that you don't run! You've got Squiff a flogging—and Squiff will be glad of a chance to whop you."

"By gum, I should say so," said Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, pushing back his cuffs. "Let him come on—I'm ready, Ponsonby! I've licked you at Highcliffe, you cad—and I'll give you another of the same now. Come on."

"I'm not going to fight you," said Ponsonby sullenly.

"Not in your line, eh?" said Johnny Bull. "Sneaking is your forte. You know we've only got to go to your headmaster, to get you worse than you got Squiff. And you know we won't do it."

"Do as you like, and be hanged," snarled Ponsonby.

"We're going to do as we like, but it isn't sneaking," said Harry Wharton. "You are a cad, a bully, a rotter, and a sneak, and you're going to be made an example of. You're going to be tarred and feathered."

"Wha-a-at!"

"The tarfulness will be terrific, my esteemed sneaking Ponsonby."

"Likewise the featherfulness," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nuff said!" exclaimed Squiff. "Pile in!"

Harry Wharton raised the pail of tar. Ponsonby began to struggle wildly at the sight of it. He had expected the chums of Greyfriars to seek to get their "own" back in some way or other, but he had not looked for this. At that moment, Cecil Ponsonby repented sincerely that he had sneaked. But it was too late!

"My hat! He's like a blessed eel," said Bob Cherry. "Keep still, you ass! You'll get some of the tar over us if you wriggle like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Perhaps Ponsonby did not object to getting some of the tar over the raggers. At all events, he continued to struggle furiously.

But it was in vain. Harry Wharton raised the pail, and Nugent knocked off Ponsonby's silk hat.

Squash!

The pail came down on Ponsonby's head, inverted. It fitted him like a bonnet. The tar squashed out over his head and face and shoulders.

"Grooooooogh!" came in muffled accents from under the pail.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The pail clanged to the ground. The chums of the Remove burst into a yell of laughter at the sight of the Highcliffe junior.

Ponsonby's face was as black as the ace of spades. Tar covered his head, sticking to his hair, and streaming down his face, his collar, his neck, and shoulders. He had suddenly been transformed into a Christy minstrel.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh! Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"Now the feathers!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Nugent ripped open the bag, and the contents were flung upon the tarry junior. The feathers clung to the tar, turning the victim into an extraordinary-looking imitation of a fowl. The chums of the Remove shrieked with merriment.

"Gug-gug-gug-groooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's some more tar in the pail!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Let him have the lot!"

Ponsonby made a bound towards the gap in the hedge to escape. He had had enough. Indeed, he felt as if he had had too much.

"Hold him!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You hold him!" grinned Nugent. "He ain't nice to touch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody felt inclined to hold Ponsonby. The Highcliffe junior, gasping and gug-gug-gugging, bounded through the hedge into the lane, followed by a yell of laughter.

But the laughter of the raggers died away suddenly, as a shocked and horrified voice was heard on the other side of the hedge:

"Bless my soul! What ever is this?"



"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Our luck is out!"

For the juniors knew that voice—knew it only too well! It was the voice of Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars School. And in utter dismay they gasped:

"The Head!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Paying the Piper!

"THE Head!"

The Head it was!

Dr. Locke was walking quietly and sedately along the lane, under the shady trees on that sunny September afternoon, meditating upon a most important matter—a new edition of Horace, which he had been busy upon for a good many years, and into which he hoped to introduce some emendations which would cause considerable excitement among some dozen or so of spectacled and bald-headed old gentlemen who were authorities upon the subject.

But Q. Horatius Flaccus was driven utterly from his mind by the sight of the weird and fearsome figure that bounded through the gap in the hedge, and almost ran into him.

Dr. Locke started back.

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Grocoogh! Hoooh—hoooooh!"

"What ever is this?"

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Bless my soul! It is a boy!" gasped Dr. Locke, adjusting his glasses, and staring blankly at the tarry and feathery figure. "It—it is unmistakably a boy! He is covered with some adhesive substance—some black substance of an adhesive nature—apparently tar. Yes, the smell is undoubtedly that of tar!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"And a considerable quantity of feathers appears to be attached to the tar," the Head ejaculated, peering in wonder at Ponsonby. "What a very extraordinary thing!"

"Grooh! Gug-gug! Dr. Locke—"

"What! You know me! I do not recognise you, my boy! Surely you do not belong to Greyfriars?" exclaimed the Head.

"Grooh! I belong to Highcliffe!"

"Indeed! I am glad you do not belong to my school! I should punish you severely for appearing in a public road in that disgusting state if you were a Greyfriars boy!" said the Head severely. "The best thing you can do is to go and clean yourself. You are in a revolting condition!"

"Yah! I'm Ponsonby—"

"Really, I thought your voice was familiar! I trust, Ponsonby, that your headmaster will cane you severely for this ridiculous and disgusting escapade!"

"Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"How any boy," pursued the Head, with indignant scorn, "could deliberately cover himself with tar—yes, and with feathers—and then appear in public, passes my comprehension. It is conduct of which a Hottentot in the wilds of Africa might be ashamed. You are revolting to the sight, Ponsonby. Pray go away at once!"

"Those cads did it—gug-gug-gug!" gurgled Ponsonby, blinking furiously at Dr. Locke through the tar. "Your rotten Remove beasts—"

"What!"

"They're behind the hedge now!" spluttered Ponsonby.

"Indeed! That alters the case!"

Dr. Locke's expression changed. His face took on a grim expression, and he turned towards the gap in the hedge.

"Come out!" he said briefly.

The chums of the Remove exchanged hopeless glances. There was no help for it. They had not had the faintest hope that Ponsonby would not "sneak." They had tarred and feathered the cad of Highcliffe, and now they had to pay the piper.

"Come on!" said Squiff grimly.

And the Australian junior strode through the gap in the hedge, followed by the Famous Five.

Dr. Locke looked at them sternly as they appeared in view.

"Wharton—Field—Nugent—Cherry—Bull—Hurree Singh!" he said. "Is that all?"

"That's all, sir," said Wharton meekly.

"No other boys are concerned in this disgraceful business?"

"Only Ponsonby, sir."

"Ponsonby!" said the Head, frowning. "He appears to be your victim! Do you mean to say, Wharton, that you and your companions have covered this boy with tar and feathers?"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton fearlessly. "He played us a dirty trick, and he's sneaked. He is an utter cad, and he deserved it. And now we're ready to be punished!"

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NEXT MONDAY—

"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"

EVERY MONDAY,

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ONE PENNY.

"The readyfulness is terrific, my esteemed and honoured sir!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"Your punishment," said the Head drily, "will certainly follow. You need not have the slightest doubt of that. I am shocked—disgusted—revolted!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"Such an outrage has never occurred in my recollection at Greyfriars before!"

"He asked for it, sir."

"What! You tell me that Ponsonby asked you to treat him in this manner?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I mean, he deserved it!"

"And what could Ponsonby possibly have done to deserve this treatment?" demanded the Head sternly. "I wish to be just. I will hear both sides."

"He played a dirty trick on us, sir, and then we japed him, by Squiff—I mean, Field—going over to Highcliffe as a new kid—"

"A most outrageous practical joke!"

"We told Ponsonby that if he sneaked we'd give him away to his headmaster. We know things about him that would get him sacked, if we liked to tell. But we did this instead. We can't play the sneak as he does!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

Dr. Locke's expression relaxed a little. He had had his own opinion of Ponsonby, when that youth betrayed Squiff to him; but he had had no alternative but to flog the reckless junior for his escapade.

He was not surprised that the chums of the Remove had taken the law into their own hands in dealing with Ponsonby, nor did he doubt Wharton's statement as to what he knew of Ponsonby's manners and customs. Many of the Highcliffe fellows had a bad reputation, and Dr. Locke had heard things about Ponsonby in particular.

Angry as he was, Dr. Locke could not help feeling a certain degree of respect for the honourable scruples of the juniors in refusing to repay Ponsonby in his own coin. There was a pause.

"Gug-gug-gug!" came from Ponsonby again.

"I have no doubt you were provoked," said the Head at last. "But such a thing as this is beyond all bounds. Your punishment will be severe indeed. You will all return to the school, and stay in for the remainder of the afternoon. When I return, I shall administer a severe caning—very severe. Further than that, you have ruined Ponsonby's clothes, and they must be paid for. Ponsonby!"

"Gug-gug—yes, sir—gug-gug!"

"You will oblige me by making a calculation, as soon as possible, of the value of your clothes which have been spoiled, and sending it to me. The money will be paid immediately. You—the Head turned to Harry Wharton & Co.—" will pay! Your pocket-money will be stopped for the purpose until the whole sum is paid. This shall be done, even if you are left without pocket-money for the whole of the term. As the amount will probably be large, I shall instruct your Form-master to take in all letters for you, and add any remittances you may receive to the sum until the debt is liquidated!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The hatfulness is terrific!"

"Now go!" said the Head sternly. "And if anything of this kind occurs again, the punishment will be a flogging—if I do not have to consider the necessity of sending you away from Greyfriars!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Wharton.

And the six juniors raised their caps very politely to the Head, and departed. Ponsonby grinned after them through the tar. He had been tarred and feathered, but he fancied that the Greyfriars juniors would be sorrier than he was before the matter was finished with. As for the bill he was to send in for his clothes, he had already determined that it should not err upon the side of moderation.

"You had better go back to Highcliffe, and get yourself cleaned, Ponsonby," said the Head drily. "You may inform your master that I am fully cognisant of the matter, and that I intend to administer exemplary punishment. At the same time, Ponsonby, I should recommend you to reconsider your ways, which are not those of which any honourable lad could approve."

"When I want your advice, sir, I'll ask for it," snorted Ponsonby.

"What!"

# ANSWERS

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

Ponsonby shambled away, dripping with tar, leaving the Head of Greyfriars rooted to the ground, almost trembling with indignation at the insolence of the Highcliffe fellow.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head. "What an insolent, bad-mannered, incorrigible young rascal! Really, really, I think that, upon the whole, I need not cane those boys quite so severely as I had intended! Bless my soul!"

The tarry and feathery Ponsonby disappeared from sight, and Dr. Locke resumed his walk, and his thoughts returned to Q. Horatius Flaccus. He found it easy to dismiss the matter from his mind; but Harry Wharton & Co., tramping home to Greyfriars with the prospect of a record licking before them, did not find it quite so easy.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. Ponsonby's Little Bill!

"I SAY, you fellows, you're looking rather down-hearted, ain't you?"

Billy Bunter greeted the chums of the Remove thus, as they came in at the gates. The Owl of the Remove blinked at them curiously through his big spectacles.

"Didn't it come off?" he inquired.

"Didn't what come off, ass?" growled Bob Cherry. The Famous Five had not confided their little scheme to anyone outside their own select circle. They did not want other fellows to be drawn into the consequences.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"The tarring and feathering," he replied.

"So you know, you fat toad?" growled Johnny Bull.

"I happened to hear you talking about it," Bunter explained. "Quite by accident—I was stopping to tie my shoelace near your study, and—"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Peter Todd, coming up with Dutton and Mark Linley. "How did it go?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! So you all know?"

"Why, everybody knows," said Todd. "Bunter spread it round after you were gone out. He knew, of course."

"Of course!" sniffed Nugent. "He won't want for information so long as they make doors with keyholes in them."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Why, he said you had consulted him in the matter, and asked his advice!" exclaimed Mark Linley.

"And he lent you the money to buy the tar," said Bolsover major.

Billy Bunter backed away from the Famous Five. They were looking dangerous.

"Ahem! I—I didn't exactly say that, Bolsover," he stammered.

"You did," said Bolsover. "You tried to borrow a bob off me, and said you'd pay it back when Wharton squared up for what you'd lent him."

"Ahem! I—I—yaroooooh! Keep your beastly boots away from me, Wharton, you beast! Ow! Ow! Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he said you'd begged him to help in the jape on Ponsonby, with his blessed ventriloquism," said Tom Brown; "and he declined, because he didn't really approve of your goings-on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! I was only j-j-joking!" yelled Bunter. "Stop kicking me, you beast, or I'll—yow-ow—I say, you fellows, I say—yarooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter fled, roaring. The Famous Five and Squiff walked on moodily towards the School House. They were not in a cheerful humour. But nearly all the Remove gathered round them, eager for information. They all wanted to know how the tarring and feathering of Ponsonby had prospered.

"Did you tar him—did you feather him?" demanded Todd.

"Was it a success?"

"Get it out, you fellows."

"We did—it was a success," growled Wharton. "He looked a wonderful sight when we'd finished! And then the Head came along and caught us."

"Oh, what rotten luck."

"And we've got to stay in the afternoon, and be caned when the Head comes in, and we've got to pay for Ponsonby's clothes—whatever he likes to ask."

"Phew!"

"He won't let you off lightly," remarked Vernon-Smith. "I know Ponsonby! He pays a lot for his clobber—never less than eight pounds for a suit. And I fancy he'll make up a giddy price for you to pay."

"We know that!" grunted Bob Cherry. "He's every sort of a rotter, so I suppose he's a swindler as well."

"Begad," said Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove. "You're in a hole, my dear fellows—fairly bunkered, by Jove. How are you going to raise the tin?"

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The chums of the Remove groaned in chorus.

"The Head's going to pay, and then stop our allowances until the money is made up."

"Begad! That will mean your allowances for the rest of the term or longer."

"Faith, and a term's allowance won't do it, if I know anything of Ponsonby, the spalpeen," said Micky Desmond, with a shake of the head.

"And Quelch is going to open all our letters, and take out the remittances we get, to go towards it," groaned Johnny Bull.

"Phew!"

"Never mind—your remittances and your allowances together will pay it off in a few weeks," said Skinner comfortingly. "You must write to all your kind aunts and uncles to dub up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at," snorted Bob Cherry. "We shall be hard up—stony broke—for weeks and weeks! Wow!"

"For months and months and months," sang Skinner; and there was another laugh.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Begad! I've got an idea," exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "We'll have a whip-round—a general subscription of all the Form, my dear fellows. I'll stand a fiver to start it."

"Hear, hear!"

"I'll stand a French penny," said Skinner.

"And you can put me down for a bad ha'penny," remarked Stott. "What's your little bit, Snoopey?"

Sidney James Snoop shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing," he said. "They're not going to sponge on me!"

"You rotten cad!" exclaimed Harry Wharton wrathfully. "We're not going to sponge on anybody. We're going to pay the money ourselves."

"Yes, rather. Much obliged to you, Mauly, for your kind offer," said Bob Cherry. "But we went into this with our eyes open, and we're not going to land anybody else in the cart."

"But really, my dear fellow," urged the generous millionaire of the Remove, "I've got plenty of dibs, you know, and it's only fair—"

"No thanks," said Wharton. "Thanks all the same, Mauly; but it can't be done. You're a good chap, and I know you've got plenty of dibs, but we're not taking any."

"The goodness of the esteemed Mauly is terrific; but we cannot act spongefully like the estimable Bunter."

"It wouldn't be sponging," growled Lord Mauleverer. "Snoop is a dirty rotter to suggest such a thing. I'd punch his rotten head if I didn't feel so fagged. Begad, I'll punch it anyway," said Lord Mauleverer, looking round for the cad of the Remove. But Sidney James Snoop had discreetly retired.

"'Nuff said!" said Johnny Bull. "There's not going to be any subscription. We'll see the things through ourselves. You can keep your French penny in your pocket, Skinner. Let's get in and have tea, you chaps. We want bucking up, considering what we've got to go through."

"And it'll be about the last tea we shall have in the study," groaned Nugent.

"May as well blue all we've got on it," suggested Squiff.

"As soon as Ponsonby's bill comes in, we shall have to dub up all we have—so it's a jolly good idea not to have anything left."

"Hear, hear!"

And the chums of the Remove proceeded to No. 1 Study, where they prepared the final feed. Bob Cherry and Squiff went to the tuck-shop, with the collected funds of all the Co., and the cash was expended in a "blow-out," which Hurree Jamset Ram Singh justly described as terrific.

Tea in No. 1 Study was over when the Head returned. The Famous Five saw him come in, and they waited in grim expectancy for the dreaded summons in his study. Trotter, the page, brought them word that the Head was expecting them, and the six juniors made their way to the awe-inspiring apartment. They found their Form-master, Mr. Quelch, with the Head. Dr. Locke had explained the matter to him, and Mr. Quelch was looking very severe indeed.

The scene that followed was brief—but it was painful.

Ponsonby's insolence to the Head had, perhaps, the effect of making him lay it on a little more lightly than he would otherwise have done. But it did not seem very light to the unfortunate juniors.

Each of them received six cuts, and they were heavy ones; and the Removites left the study with gloomy faces, twisting their hands under their arms, and emitting all sorts of queer ejaculations.

The Remove fellows were very sympathetic. But their sympathy did not have the effect of easing the pain; and for the next hour the chums of the Remove were in an exceedingly uncomfortable state of mind and body.



"Try again, sir—if at first you don't succeed, try, try, again!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly, as Sir Hilton Popper made a terrific swipe at the ball. Sir Hilton made a furious stride towards his caddie, and boxed his ears. "Ow!" roared Bob Cherry. "Yow! That ain't in the game, you silly old duffer!" (See Chapter 7.)

And later in the evening, when Wharton and Nugent were beginning their prep in Study No. 1, Nugent minor looked in with a sympathetic grin.

"You're wanted," he remarked. "I've told the others."

"Quelchy?" asked his major, with a grunt.

Dicky Nugent nodded.

"Yes; he's sent me for you."

"Tell him we're coming, and he can go and eat coke."

Dicky Nugent grinned and departed; not with the intention of delivering that message to the master of the Lower Fourth.

In a lugubrious frame of mind, Squiff and the Famous Five proceeded to Mr. Quelch's study. They found Mr. Quelch with an open letter before him on the table, and a frown upon his brow.

"You doubtless know why you are sent for," Mr. Quelch observed. "The Head has already received Ponsonby's claim to compensation for the damage done to his clothes, and he has handed it to me to deal with, as your Form-master. The amount claimed by Ponsonby seems to me to be somewhat excessive, though I have heard that he is a boy of expensive tastes, and no doubt spends a great deal on his clothes. If you are not satisfied with the amount, you are free to object to it, and the matter can be referred to Dr. Voysey, the Head-master of Highcliffe."

"How much is it, sir?" asked Wharton.

"Sixteen pounds."

"Wha-a-at!"

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NEXT MONDAY—**"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"**

"My only hat!"

The chums of the Remove had expected the amount to be large, but they had not expected that Ponsonby would have the outrageous nerve to demand sixteen pounds in payment for a suit of clothes. However expensive the cad of Highcliffe might be in his personal attire, certainly his clothes were not worth so much as that, even when new. And they had not been new.

"You seem surprised at the amount," said Mr. Quelch, eyeing the juniors. The Remove-master was evidently surprised himself, and probably suspected that Ponsonby was seeking to make a considerable profit on the transaction.

"Yes, sir. His clothes certainly couldn't have cost that," said Wharton indignantly.

"He explains that a whole suit of clothes has been completely spoiled, also a shirt, collar, necktie, and hat," said Mr. Quelch. "If Ponsonby pays so much for his clothes, he must be a very extravagant youth. However, if you take exception to the amount, I will make a representation on the subject to Dr. Voysey, and Ponsonby will be asked to produce the bills, showing what he paid for the articles, or, in default of that, to give references to the tradesmen who supplied them."

"As if he couldn't work that as he liked!" muttered Johnny Bull.

"What did you say, Bull?"

"Ahem! I think very likely Ponsonby's tailor would say

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

whatever Ponsonby liked, rather than lose a good customer," said Johnny. "Ponsonby is a spiteful beast, and he would make the man sit up if he didn't."

"H'm!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "However——"

"We don't want to haggle with the fellow, sir," said Wharton abruptly. "I don't believe his clothes were worth more than half as much as that; but if he asks that he can have it. We don't want to haggle, and it would end the same way if we did."

"If Ponsonby's tradesman should corroborate Ponsonby's statement, certainly I cannot see how the payment could be avoided," said Mr. Quelch. "The sum seems to me excessive. But you must remember that you have brought this upon yourselves by playing an outrageous and unheard-of prank. That Ponsonby is an exceedingly disagreeable lad, and that he provoked you, the Head is aware, otherwise I think it very probable that Dr. Locke would have expelled you from the school. I see no course but to pay this money."

"Very well, sir."

"The Head will send a cheque to Highcliffe for the amount, then," said the Form-master. "Until it is paid up by you, your allowances will be stopped for the purpose. And all remittances received from your friends and relations will be devoted to the same purpose. Your letters will be taken charge of by me, and the remittances taken as they arrive. This is part of your punishment for what you have done, and I think you should be thankful that there is no greater severity used towards you. You may go!"

And the juniors went.

"Well, this is a go!" said Squiff lugubriously, as they went sadly down the passage. "And Quelch hasn't asked us for what we had about us, either. We needn't have squandered our last few bobs on that feed. We might have saved it up for a rainy day. Our luck is out all along the line."

It was truly exasperating. That act of thoughtfulness which had seemed so deep and sapient to the juniors at the time, had been superfluous after all. They had left themselves with only a few coppers in their pockets; and now their allowances were stopped, their remittances were to be confiscated, they were to receive no cash from any quarter till sixteen pounds had been repaid for the Head's cheque to Highcliffe!

Sixteen pounds!

The juniors all had pretty good allowances, and they sometimes received quite handsome tips from affectionate paters and uncles and aunts. But it would take a long, long time to liquidate a debt to the extent of sixteen pounds.

"Oh, it's too rotten!" exclaimed Wharton, with an angry shrug of the shoulders. "That cad Ponsonby wins all along the line! He'll get over his tarring and feathering before we get over being hard up!"

"We'll make the beast sit up for it somehow," snorted Johnny Bull.

Nugent made a wry face.

"Ahem!" he said. "Better think twice about that. Making Ponsonby sit up comes rather expensive, you know."

"The expensiveness is terrific!" groaned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "In the future I shall decline to touch the esteemed rotter with a barge-pole."

That evening the Head's cheque went to Highcliffe, and six unfortunate juniors were faced with a prospect, for the rest of the term, of being hard up—in fact, as Inky put it pathetically, the hardupfulness would be terrific.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Hard Up!

**D**URING the following two or three days the looks of the Famous Five were much less cheerful than usual.

The Co. had been hard up before—it was nothing new.

Funds would run out—it was not at all an uncommon happening in junior studies. Many a time they had found themselves broke to the wide, as they expressively termed it.

But then, there had always been the regular allowance to come on a regular date, and there had always been a chance of a remittance dropping like the gentle dew from heaven, to borrow an expression from the immortal bard of Avon.

On such occasions, heretofore, they had felt, like the celebrated Mr. Micawber, that something was very likely to turn up.

Now it was different.

The allowance was stopped. It would come, but they would not receive it. Remittances might arrive, but not for them.

On all sides, as Bob Cherry said, there was a stony horizon.

Indeed, the juniors were not at all anxious for remittances now, as they were going to liquidate a never-ending debt. Several of them astonished their people by writing home and stating that they didn't want any more remittances for a time. As Nugent sapiently remarked, that would make an

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excellent impression on the old folks at home, and it cost them nothing.

Stony periods before had always ended sooner or later. As the Famous Five went on, in most things, a remittance for one was a remittance for all. But a dreary prospect of never-ending stoniness stretched before them now.

What was to be done?

Bob Cherry made the really desperate suggestion that they must earn some money somehow. He pointed out, quite correctly, that a very large number of people in these islands actually did earn money to supply their daily wants. Indeed, Bob quoted statistics on the subject, proving that the people who earned their bread far outnumbered all the other classes in the country, and he stated his belief that it was just the same in other countries. The thing was evidently possible.

But the rest of the Co. were dubious.

"That's all very well for fellows who know how to do it," said Nugent disconsolately. "There's young Linley, he worked in a factory before he came here on a scholarship; but you see, he was told how to do it when he was a kid. There's Penfold, he helps his pater to cobble shoes on a half-holiday. I can't cobble shoes. Blessed if I know how to cobble."

"I don't know whether there's an opening for another cobbler in Friardale if you could," admitted Bob. "I believe cobbling's a bit difficult, too. But there are lots of other things. A chap who's worth his salt ought to be able to earn his living. Suppose all the people in the country who work were to die suddenly, what on earth would fellows like us do then?"

"Blessed if I know. Starve, I suppose."

"But they won't," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bob's quite right, a fellow ought to be able to earn his living. But our education has been neglected in that line. Not much good asking somebody to give us a bob at construing Virgil."

"And we couldn't earn a bob an hour at mathematics!" said Johnny Bull.

"What about French and German translations?" asked Bob hopefully. "Men earn money in London translating things into French and German."

"Not into Lower Fourth French and German," said Wharton drily.

"H'm! I suppose not."

"Besides, we ain't in London or Manchester. I suppose nobody in Friardale or Courtfield is likely to want any French or German translations done, or to give us the job if he did."

"It don't seem likely," Bob Cherry had to admit.

"Yes, Bob's talking out of the back of his neck," said Nugent. "We can't earn any money. May as well admit that we haven't brains enough."

"Well, what's going to be done?" asked Bob, not at all pleased at this general rejection of his brilliant idea, but at the same time not seeing at all how it could possibly be worked.

"I give it up!" said Wharton.

And the others had to give it up. It really seemed as if there was nothing to be done. Yet to settle down to a state of hard-upness for the rest of the term was impossible. The chums of the Remove had never been in so desperate a strait before.

Their last few coppers had long been expended. They had sold their bats; not needing them now, as the cricket season had come to an end. Certainly they would want them again next season; but sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof, as Bob remarked. But it unfortunately happened that nobody else wanted the bats, either, as there was nothing to do with them but to stack them away till next year. And so the prices they went for were simply ruinous.

Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, who had a keen eye to business, purchased four of them, which were expensive ones and in good condition, at a price that might have made Shylock weep. He had the benevolent intention of re-selling them to their original owners for three or four times as much, when they were wanted again.

And one bat, which Fisher T. Fish refused to take on any terms, was disposed of to Snoop for a shilling. The supply thus obtained was small, and lasted the Famous Five only over one day. Squiff refused to part with his bat, which he had brought with him from Australia, but he sold a tipin to Fish for half-a-crown. It had cost a pound in Melbourne, he told Fish—to which Fish cheerfully replied that buying and selling were two quite different matters. Undoubtedly they were.

There were plenty of fellows in the Lower Forms who would have stood by the juniors quite cheerfully and generously. Lord Mauleverer, who had as much money as he wanted, begged them almost with tears in his eyes to accept the loan of a fiver. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, placed his study cupboard at their disposal; and Smithy's study cupboard was really a gold-mine to hungry juniors. Tom Brown and Bulstrode and Peter Todd and

Mark Linley, and even Bolsover major, pressed them to accept loans.

But to all those kind offers the Co. returned a steady though polite refusal.

To accept loans which they could not possibly repay until some dim and distant time in the far future was equivalent to sponging. They did not intend to drop into the manners and customs of Billy Bunter.

Indeed, in their dreadfully hard-up condition, they began to have more sympathy for the Owl of the Remove, who was in an incessant state of impecuniosity.

But the scorn they had always felt, and expressed quite candidly, for his borrowing and general sponging and shiftiness, made them very careful to avoid anything that looked like following in his footsteps.

An occasional invitation to a feed was all they would accept; and even that they accepted sparingly, since they could no longer return the hospitality that was offered them.

Day by day they parted with little articles—always at ruinous prices—but that resource had to come to an end.

Then they took to having tea in hall.

Tea in hall was substantial enough, certainly, and a good many fellows took it there as a matter of course. But they missed the cosy tea in the study. The chums of the Remove had always stood themselves tea in their studies when the funds ran to it. Now there were no longer any funds, tea in the study was a thing of the past.

If a little stroke of luck came their way, it was shared out at once. The Famous Five and Squiff were all "in the cart" together, and they stood loyally shoulder to shoulder in these troublous times. Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, asked Harry Wharton to tea on Saturday, and gave him leave to bring a friend or two. He was a little surprised when Wharton came in with five companions. And the six hungry guests politely affected to notice nothing when old Wingate despatched his fag to the tuckshop for fresh supplies.

The half dozen juniors made a pretty complete clearance in Wingate's study, and the captain of Greyfriars, who had heard of their peculiar predicament, laughed heartily when they had gone.

There was another stroke of luck on Sunday. In their usual "Sunday walk" Harry Wharton and Nugent met Mr. Lambe, the fat and kindly vicar of Friardale. Mr. Lambe invited them to tea at the vicarage. There was quite a peculiar expression upon Mr. Lambe's face when six guests presented themselves.

However, it was a very good tea, and the juniors did not mind the peculiar expression on Mr. Lambe's countenance.

On Monday, Hazeldene of the Remove took them over to tea at Cliff House School, with his sister Marjorie. Marjorie, who had heard of the disaster, had prepared a spread that beat all records, and Miss Primrose, the principal of Cliff House, presented them with a tremendous cake on their departure.

That cake was a windfall. Half of it was ample for the juniors' tea on Monday, and they traded off the other half in the Remove for small quantities of tea and sugar and milk and sardines and a loaf.

That tea-time Study No. 1 presented quite its old festive appearance.

But alas! it was but for a day.

The next day, and the next, these casual resources failed them. It is true there was another invitation to Cliff House, but the chums of the Remove politely declined it. Kind as Marjorie and Clara were, the Co. did not intend to sponge on them, any more than on their Form-fellows at Greyfriars.

Tea in hall every day, and nothing in their pockets! Not twopence for a beggar; not a penny for a ginger-pop; not a halfpenny for a stale bun. Not a tanner for the requisite materials to mend a puncture. Not a stamp for a postcard home. As Bob Cherry tragically declared, matters were getting desperate. Sincerely enough the unfortunate juniors wished that they had let Ponsonby alone. If the Head intended this period of famine as a lesson to impress upon their minds a respect for law and order, it was completely successful. They would have untarred and unfeathered Ponsonby with pleasure, if it had been possible.

Unfortunately it was not possible. Matters were getting desperate, and something had to be done.

The question was—what? And it was a question which Harry Wharton & Co. found it exceedingly difficult to answer.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Fishy's Scheme!

"FISHY!"

Bob Cherry uttered that exclamation quite suddenly.

It was Wednesday afternoon—a half-holiday at Greyfriars—just a week since that deplorable tarring and feathering of the cad of Highcliff.

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NEXT MONDAY—

"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"

EVERY MONDAY.

The "Magnet" LIBRARY.

ONE PENNY.

The Famous Five and Squiff were met together in No. 1 Study, holding a council of war; or a committee of ways and means, as Nugent called it.

Matters had gone from bad to worse, and the six chums were determined that something should be done, and that promptly.

Bob Cherry had been buried in thought for some time; and his sudden exclamation was the outcome of his cogitating efforts.

"Fishy—Fishy, by gum!"

The other fellows looked at him inquiringly, but not very hopefully. They did not see how Fishy could help them in their hour of distress. Fishy, in fact, was not much given to helping anybody but himself. One person filled up Fishy's whole horizon, and that person was Fisher T. Fish.

"Fishy!" growled Johnny Bull. "What can Fishy do?"

"What's the good of that silly ass?" asked Squiff. "If you mean we can sell him some more things—"

"Fishy's always open to buy anything for a tenth part of its value," snorted Nugent. "That is when he's got any money. What can we sell him now?"

"I wasn't thinking of selling him anything," said Bob. "I was just thinking of Fishy. Fishy is a chap with ideas, you know. He's always starting some scheme for making money. He did a moneylender bizney in the Remove once, and started a tuckshop, and all sorts of things—"

"And made a muck of them," said Nugent.

"Well, yes. But, all the same, he might think of something. With our superior brains, we could carry out an idea that he couldn't carry out himself," Bob suggested.

The juniors exchanged glances. Bob's idea did not make them feel very hopeful. It was true that Fisher T. Fish frequently started some "dodge" for making money. But it was equally true that he always ended in disastrous failure. Nor were his methods such as would recommend themselves to fellows like Harry Wharton & Co. With Fisher T. Fish the word "business" covered a multitude of sins, but the Co. were a little more particular.

"Let's go and speak to him, anyway," urged Bob. "He's an awfully sharp beast, you'll admit that, and if he's got some dodge, we may be able to work it, with our brains. Some of his dodges would have worked out all right if he hadn't been such a thumping ass!"

"Any port in a storm," said Harry Wharton resignedly. "Let's try Fishy."

Fisher T. Fish was in his study, and the impecunious juniors proceeded there to interview him. The American junior was seated at the table, with a stump of pencil in his hand, and a paper before him, apparently making calculations of some sort. He looked up as the half dozen hard-up juniors came in.

"Sorry!" he said at once.

"Eh! What are you sorry about?" demanded Wharton.

"I guess I've got nothing to lend."

The juniors glared at him.

"You worm!" said Frank Nugent. "Do you think we want to borrow money of you?"

"Well, I guess you're hard up, you know, and I reckoned that was the stunt," said Fisher T. Fish calmly. "But if you don't want a loan it's all right. Any old thing I can do for you?"

"The fact is, we've come to you for a tip, Fishy," said Bob Cherry. "You've always been scheming schemes for making money, and some of them might have been successful if you'd had enough brains to carry 'em out—"

"Why, you jay, I guess I can lay over any brains you can produce in this sleepy old island!" exclaimed Fish indignantly.

"Ahem! Well, my idea is that perhaps you could supply a suggestion, and we could supply the brains for carrying it out," said Bob.

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"I guess you don't know enough to go in when it rains," he said. "Still, if you want advice, I'm your antelope. As a matter of fact, I've got an idea. I've been making some calculations now, I guess."

"Oh, good!"

"Capital will be required, of course!" added Fish.

There was a general grunt.

"Ass!" said Johnny Bull. "How are we going to supply capital when we're stony broke? We want money because we haven't any!"

"But there would be lots of profit in it," explained Fish, his eyes beginning to gleam. "The fact is, I guess I was going to speak to you fellows about it, anyway. You can raise a few quid by selling your bikes, some of you."

"We want our bikes!"

"Yep! But after you've made some money at this wheeze, you can buy the bikes back again, see?—and still be money in pocket. Wharton's bike is a good jigger, and he could sell

it to old Lazarus in Courtfield for a good sum—quite enough for the scheme."

"Could I?" growled Wharton, not at all taken with the idea.

"In a week!" said Fish impressively. "In a week you'd have enough money to get it back, and quids over!"

"Hum! I know your rotten ideas, you see," said Harry dubiously. "However, let's hear it. What are we going to do?"

"Sell things to the fellows."

"Sell things?"

"Yes. I guess I've got on to a firm that supplies you with articles to sell, and you sell them—rolled-gold watches and things, you know. Sell 'em for what you like—as much as you can. F'rinstance, this firm sends you a whole set of watches and clocks and tiepins and things for a couple of quid. Well, you keep 'em dark."

"Keep 'em dark?" said Harry, puzzled.

"Yep! Produce 'em one at a time—see?"

"No, not quite."

"Oh, I guess you're dense," said Fish, impatiently. "Brains work slowly in this old country, when they get work at all. I'll explain. You don't go round to the fellows saying 'Here's a lot of rubbish I've bought cheap and want to sell dear.' You couldn't do any business on those lines."

"Ha, ha, ha! I suppose not!"

"Nope! You keep the things dark—don't let on a whisper about getting them from a cheap firm in Birmingham. You lock 'em up in your desk, and start business with a rolled-gold watch, all on its own—it's lonely own. You take it to some chap, and explain to him that your uncle gave you that watch for a birthday present; but as you have one already,

you'll sell it for a quid. Make it a quid, or fifteen shillings, or ten bob—according to the chap you're dealing with—see?"

Wharton's eyes began to gleam.

"I don't quite see," he replied. "How much would the watch be worth?"

"Oh, two or three bob, perhaps."

"Wouldn't it be swindling to charge ten bob for it if it's worth only two or three?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Fish despairingly. "I suppose you galoots will never understand business. You charge what you like for your own goods, of course. If you get hold of a simple kind of chap, and he believes the watch was a present from your uncle, he may give you a quid."

"But it wouldn't be from my uncle."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Do you mean that I'm to start with a stock of rolled-gold watches and thundering lies?" demanded Wharton.

"Ahem! A certain amount of—of diplomacy is allowed in business."

"Do you mean lying?"

"Well, diplomacy is only a polite word for lying, isn't it?" demanded Fish. "Only in business it ain't called lying any more than it is in diplomatic circles. Now, you fellows work this together, you see. Johnny Bull, f'rinstance, will take a tiepin, costs about a bob. He explains that it was an heirloom in the Bull family, and going for ten shillings, as he's hard up. See?"

Johnny Bull made a movement towards the American junior, but Bob Cherry held him back. He wanted to give Fisher T. Fish a chance to explain his scheme fully.

"And you, Nugent, you take, say, a pocket-knife—German silver—worth, say, two bob. Make out that your pater gave it to you last time you were home for the holidays. See?

You'll get ten times as much as you paid for it."

"M-m-my hat!"

"That's the wheeze," said Fisher T. Fish, with great satisfaction. "Get a crowd of rubbish cheap—keep it dark—and work off the articles one at a time as birthday presents and things that you want to dispose of. It's a corker, I guess."

"And what will the fellows do when they find out they've been swindled?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Tain't swindling; it's business!" snapped Fish. "Besides, they can't do anything. If the galoots can't look out for themselves, they get it in the neck, naturally. The weakest go to the wall in this hyer wicked world."

"So that's the best advice you can give us?"

"Yep!"

"You're satisfied that it's quite honest?"

"Sure!"

"Seems to be a difference of opinion on that point," said Harry Wharton. "Well, we're going to have nothing to do with a swindling scheme like that."

"I guess you'll be sorry when I'm raking in the dollars and dimes, and you're left out of it!" snapped Fish.

"You're not going to rake in any dollars and dimes with a swindle like that. If you start selling any rotten articles to the fellows, we'll show you up—and knock you down, and jump on you!" growled Johnny Bull.

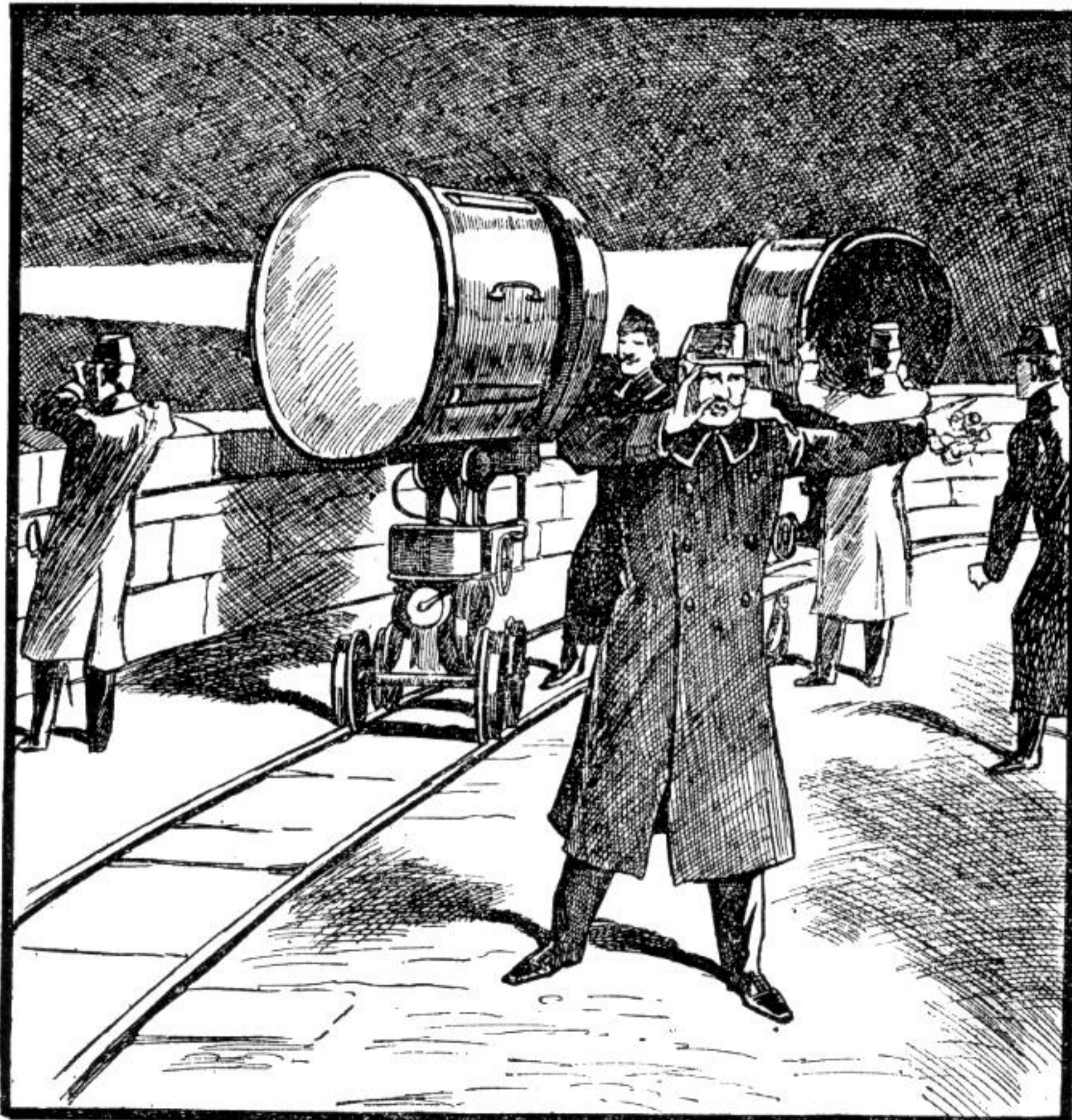
"Look hyer—"

"Bump him, anyway," said Bob Cherry. "We came here for a wheeze for making money, and the beast is trying to turn us into pickpockets. Bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, hold on—look hyer—I guess—yarrooh!" roared

**SPECIAL WAR PICTURE.**



This picture shows two of the enormously-powerful searchlights which are used in the Belgian army for defence work. These searchlights did splendid work in the devoted forts at Liege, which made such a gallant resistance against the German hosts. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 346.



Dr. Locke stared blankly at the tarry and feathery figure. "Bless my soul!" he gasped. "It is unmistakably a boy—covered with some adhesive substance. It is apparently tar!" "I'm Ponsonby, of Highcliffe!" howled the unfortunate junior. (See Chapter 2.)

Fisher T. Fish, as the chums of the Remove grasped him, and whirled him off his chair.

Bump, bump, bump!  
"Yowp! Yaup! Yah! Help!"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked out of the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish gasping on the floor. They stalked away in great wrath, and Fisher T. Fish picked himself up, dusty and dishevelled, and panted for breath.

"Grooh! The silly jays! Yow! I'm hurt! I guess I won't try to help them out of a hole again in a hurry—ow! I guess they can go and eat coke! Grooh! Yow!"

#### THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Wharton Has an Idea!

"N. G.!" said Bob Cherry sadly, as the impecunious juniors gathered once more in Study No. 1.

Fisher T. Fish had been drawn blank, so to speak. It was possible that there was money in the scheme he had propounded to the hard-up juniors, but that method of  
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getting money did not appeal to them. The Oriental proverb says that the smell of all money is sweet; and apparently Fisher T. Fish was a believer in that proverb. But Harry Wharton & Co. had not yet come to that.

"Oh, that silly ass is no good!" growled Johnny Bull. "What the dickens is going to be done? It's a half-holiday this afternoon, and if we could think of anything, we have time to do it. Blessed if I can think of anything but holding horses outside the Cross Keys. Might earn twopence that way."

The chums of the Remove were in a parlous strait. Like the young man of olden time who was in the same financial condition, they could not dig, and to beg they were ashamed.

"Toss up which of the bikes shall be sold?" suggested Squiff.

But that suggestion was met with grim disagreement. Nobody wanted to part with his "jigger."

That was a desperate resource which had to be reserved till the very last. But what was to be done?

Squiff rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"There must be some way of earning money," he growled. "Here we are, six fellows, with brains, all in good condition—and all stony. It's disgusting if we can't think of some wheeze for raising a few bob at least. No good being proud when you're hard up—any kind of work ought to be welcome to a chap who's stony."

"I heard of a chap once who started a Punch-and-Judy show when he was hard up," said Nugent.

"But we haven't got the show."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Wharton suddenly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you got it?"

"I think so! Golf!"

"Golf!"

"Yes, golf!" said Harry determinedly. "You know the Courtfield golf-links, that were cut up by the Suffragettes some time back. Well, we could go there—"

"And play golf?" asked Bob sarcastically. "Start as golf champions without having learned the game, and bag some big prizes?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!" said Wharton. "What's the matter with being caddies?"

"Caddies!" yelled the juniors.

"Yes; golf-caddies."

"Great Scott!"

"It's a good idea," said Wharton. "A caddy gets a bob, I believe, for carrying a golfer's bag round the links. Then there are tips."

"Tips!" gasped Nugent.

"Certainly!"

"My hat! Let me catch anybody giving me a tip!" said Johnny Bull. "I know I'd jolly well dot him in the eye."

"Fathead!"

"Look here—"

"It's no good being proud when you're poor. Poor people can't afford to be proud. If we can get a job as golf caddies—"

"B—b—but we can't!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Those jobs are all taken up. There's a caddie-master on the links, and he engages the caddies, and there are always more than are wanted, I believe."

"Not always! I believe some of the Courtfield chaps get a carrying job on the links on a half-holiday at their school, and earn a bob or two. If it's good enough for Trumper and Co., it's good enough for us. No good being snobbish—especially when you're hard up!"

"Hum!"

"All we've got to do is to walk over to the links, and offer our services as caddies," said Wharton. "I think it's a good idea. It's a healthy occupation—tramping round in the open air, you know, all the afternoon, carrying a bag. Sometimes they want more caddies than they can get, when there's a rush on the links. On a fine afternoon like this there's bound to be a big crowd of players. Very likely we shall all get engaged, and get a bob each—and tips."

"Blow the tips!"

"Well, you can decline the tips if you like; but if you're engaged, you're entitled to your caddie fee."

"Don't you have to put your name down, or something, to get a job as a caddie?"

"Well, we can go to the caddie-master and give our names."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And if we get any luck, we may raise enough for tea in the study to-day, at any rate."

"What about the other caddies? They may cut up rough—look on us as blacklegs, you know—think we're trying to get their jobs away."

"Let 'em cut up as rough as they like. Lots of kids about the neighbourhood go on the links on the chance of getting jobs as caddies. We've got as much right as anybody else. Why, I've heard that in busy times, when there ain't enough caddies, players have been known to tip kids to stay away from school and play truant."

"That's a rotten thing to do, anyway."

"It shows that there's sometimes a big demand for caddies. Look here, it's no good being snobbish when you're stony broke. I'm going!"

"Oh, we'll all go," said Bob Cherry. "I'm not proud, for one. There's nothing to be ashamed of in it, so far as I can see. I don't how the Head would take it if he knew, though."

"We're not going to take the Head into our confidence in the matter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, he has no right to grumble, as he has reduced us to this awful state. Come on; the sooner we get on the ground the better—unless anybody has anything else to suggest?"

Nobody had anything else to suggest. The idea did not

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exactly recommend itself to the minds of the juniors, but it was a case of any port in a storm. They made up their minds to it, and sallied forth.

Certainly it was something a little new, for public-school chaps to appear on the golf links looking for jobs as caddies.

But there was nothing snobbish about Harry Wharton & Co. So long as the work was honest, they were ready to do it. And it was honest enough, so there was nothing more to be said about it.

Billy Bunter met them as they left the School House. The fat junior blinked at them curiously through his big spectacles.

"Anything turned up?" he asked, with great interest and solicitude. Bunter's interest was not altogether altruistic. If anything had turned up, he intended to have his "whack" in it, if he could contrive it.

"Nothing!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Where are you going, then?" asked Bunter inquisitively.

"I'm going to mind my own business," said Bob cheerfully, and he walked on.

Bunter blinked after the six juniors suspiciously. He had a strong suspicion that they had succeeded somehow in raising the wind; that was the only way he could account for the new briskness in their looks. He rolled after them as they strode down to the school gates.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!" exclaimed Wharton.

He did not intend the Peeping Tom of the Remove to "get on" to the little scheme. He did not want it to become the talk of the Lower School.

"But I say, you fellows, where are you going?"

"Out!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, I'll come for a walk with you," added Bunter.

"No, you won't!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

The juniors strode out of the gates. Billy Bunter trotted after them. In the road the chums of the Remove paused. They did not intend the gossip and newsmonger of the Lower Fourth to follow them to the links.

"Collar him!" said Harry briefly.

"Here, I say, you fellows, chuck it, you know—ow—I'm coming—I jolly well know you're going out for a feed—yow—I say—Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled through a gap in the hedge, propelled there by six pairs of hands, and he reposed in a bed of nettles. The chums of the Remove strode on towards Courtfield, and Billy Bunter's indignant howl died away behind in the distance.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bob Cherry—Caddie!

"HALLO! What do you young shavers want?"

A big man in a golf cap asked that question, as Harry Wharton & Co. passed through the white gateway that gave admission to the Courtfield Golf Links.

Harry Wharton & Co. paused. They did not exactly like being addressed as young shavers, but it was not a time to be proud. They were looking for a job; and anybody who was looking for a job might be addressed as a young shaver, and no harm done.

They took off their caps, therefore, very respectfully, instead of collaring the big man and bumping him, which was their first impulse.

"Please, we want a job!" said Harry.

"What!"

"Do you want any caddies, sir?" asked Bob Cherry meekly.

The man stared at them.

"You want jobs as caddies?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"All right! You can get over there and take your turn," said the big man, who was apparently the caddie-master.

"This way! Caddies are wanted to-day."

"Oh, good!"

"We're in luck!" murmured Bob Cherry, as they followed the big man. "There seems to be quite a crowd on the links."

"The luckfulness is terrific."

"I wonder if there's anybody who knows us?"

"Doesn't matter if there is," said Johnny Bull independently.

"Well, no!"

"There's old Popper!" said Nugent, as a tall man with a red face came striding out of the clubhouse.

It was Sir Hilton Popper, a great magnate in the neighbourhood, with whom the chums of the Remove had had some little difficulties, owing to a certain picnicking expedition on an island in the river. Sir Hilton Popper did not notice the juniors, however; he strode away, with a little



caddie at his heels labouring along under a heavy bag crammed with clubs.

There were several caddies waiting by the professionals' house, near the clubhouse, and the juniors joined them. The regular caddies looked at them with surprise and suspicion. Caddies in Etons were something new on the Courtfield Golf Links.

"'Ere, what do you want?" demanded a big fellow, a head taller than any of the juniors, coming towards them with an ugly look. "You ain't caddies."

"Yes, we are!" said Bob Cherry politely. "Don't be alarmed—we're going to take our turn."

"Bally swell, eh?" said the big fellow. "Wot are you arter caddies' jobs for?"

"Hard up!" said Bob cheerfully. "Same reason as yourself, I suppose!"

"Look 'ere—"

"None of that, Blooker!" said the caddie-master sharply. "I've told you before about quarrelling with other caddies. Any more of it and out you go!"

"All right, Mr. Gimbey, but—"

"Shut up!" said Mr. Gimbey.

Blooker shut up, but he gave the chums of the Remove a very unpleasant look. Evidently Master Blooker did not approve of their presence on the links.

There seemed to be a brisk demand for caddies, and one by one they were called away to attend on players. Harry Wharton & Co. seemed pretty certain to have a chance. They had walked over the links before, and had an idea of the lie of the land. Wharton had carried for his uncle, who was a golfer, and knew something of the game, but the other fellows were quite uninitiated in the mysteries of golf. They had heard of such things as brassies, and putters, and tees, and fozzles, and bunkers, but they would have been hard put to it to explain which was which of those mysterious things.

The little caddie who had carried Sir Hilton Popper's bag was seen returning, without the baronet. He had no bag, and he was in tears.

"Please, Sir Hilton Popper wants another caddie, sir," he said to Mr. Gimbey.

Mr. Gimbey growled.

"Well, don't 'owl," he said. "Wot's the matter?"

"He's lost a ball, sir, and he says it's my fault I can't find it."

"I dessay it is, too," snapped Mr. Gimbey. "Not but wot he's a Tartar. 'Ere, one of you kids can run along!" The demand for caddies had been so brisk that only the chums of the Remove now remained unengaged. "Where is Sir Hilton, boy?"

"He's waiting at the second tee, sir."

"Get off, kid!" said Mr. Gimbey, signing to Bob Cherry.

"Certainly, sir!" said Bob.

He knew where the second tee was, fortunately, and he hurried off. It did not look as if his engagement would be a happy one, as the irate baronet had already succeeded in reducing one caddie to tears. However, Bob Cherry was made of sterner stuff than the little fellow upon whose devoted head Sir Hilton Popper's wrath had fallen, and he was certainly not likely to take to tears.

Sir Hilton was waiting, fuming, beside the tee. He had a long driver in his hands, and looked red and impatient. Another party was waiting to drive off, but Sir Hilton was in possession of the ground, and he declined to make way. He was not an accommodating gentleman. As Sir Hilton was playing on his own—against bogey—he was bound to make room for a party, but he didn't.

"Your caddie, sir," said Bob Cherry, touching his cap.

Sir Hilton stared at him, but did not recognise him. But he could see that he was a schoolboy.

"Oh, so you're my caddie!" he grunted. "I hope you've got more sense than that other little idiot!"

"I hope so, sir," said Bob.

"Take up that bag!"

"Certainly, sir."

"Don't talk!"

"No, sir."

Bob Cherry shouldered the bag, which was crammed with clubs, Sir Hilton being one of those golfers who provide themselves with every variety of instrument useful or useless.

Sir Hilton took his stance, and addressed his ball, and then turned his head to Bob Cherry.

"Bogey for this hole?" he snapped.

Bob jumped.

As Bob did not know anything about golf, he was not in a position to answer that question. Sir Hilton ought to have known, as he had played over the Courtfield course before, but he had forgotten.

Bob Cherry dimly remembered hearing that "Bogey" was an expression meaning the fixed number of strokes in which a player should hole out on any given green.

"Well?" snapped Sir Hilton. "Are you deaf or dumb or stupid?"

"Yes, sir! I—I mean, no, sir!" stammered Bob. He had

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heard of bad-tempered golfers, but this was his first experience of one. "Bogey, sir—bogey—"

"How many?"

"Five, sir," said Bob, making a wild guess.

"Huh!"

The players who were waiting for the tee smiled. Bogey for the second hole was three, as a matter of fact. But a caddy's business has to be learned, like every other, and Bob could not be expected to learn it all at once. Rome was not built in a day.

Sir Hilton took his stance again, and the driver swept up. Bob Cherry jumped back, as the heavy head of the driver nearly caught him. He learned then that it was dangerous to stand too near a golfer.

Who-o-osh!

The driver came down and missed the ball, and Sir Hilton Popper very nearly tumbled over.

Bob Cherry smiled. Sir Hilton had put enough force in that stroke to land the ball on the green, if he had hit it, but he hadn't. He murmured things under his white moustache, which it was just as well that Bob Cherry's youthful ears did not hear.

"Tee!" snapped Sir Hilton.

"Tea?" repeated Bob.

"Yes; don't waste time!"

"You—you want me to fetch you some tea, sir?" asked Bob, with a wild idea of running to the clubhouse for a cup of tea.

Sir Hilton glared at him.

"You—you—you—"

"A cup, sir?"

"Fool!"

"Full?" asked Bob, still not comprehending. "Very well, sir. I'll leave the bag here, and I'll have the tea here in a jiffy—full!"

Sir Hilton spluttered. He would have sent Bob away, as he had done with his first caddie; but he wanted to get on with his game. He pointed to the tee.

"Make up the tee at once, and if I have any more insolence from you, I'll report you to your employers!" he said.

"Oh! Excuse me, sir! All right!"

Bob understood then. He put down the bag and renewed the little mound of sand upon which the ball should rest, and which was called the tee. Then he stepped back, and the baronet took his stance again, and glanced along towards the distant green, and then fixed his eyes upon the little white ball. The driver swept through the air again with terrific force, and this time it hit the ball. The direction was not good, however, and instead of whizzing straight towards the green, the ball slanted off, and dropped into the rough outside the fairway.

Sir Hilton Popper said more things to his moustache. Bob Cherry started off with the bag to find the ball, and Sir Hilton Popper tramped after him. Sir Hilton was not at all likely to do that hole in bogey, even if bogey had been five instead of three, as his amateur caddie had cheerfully informed him.

Sir Hilton suffered severely from "golfers' temper," which is a very disagreeable form of bad-temper, indeed. He would have liked that elusive white ball to be alive, so that he could have jumped on it with keen pleasure and delight.

"Where is the ball?" demanded Sir Hilton, as he came up to Bob Cherry, who was looking round in the grass.

"Just a minute, sir, and I'll find it."

"Fool!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"Idiot!"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't stand talking there!" roared Sir Hilton. "Find the ball!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Bob demurely. "I thought you wanted to talk to me, sir."

"Imbecile!"

Bob Cherry had his own opinion as to who was the fool, idiot, and imbecile in the case, but it was no part of a caddie's duty to state that to a golfer, so he held his tongue, and hunted for the ball.

Finding a ball in the rough was not an easy task, but Bob Cherry's eyesight was good, and he was active. Sir Hilton muttered and fumed while he was looking for the ball, but it was found at last.

"Here!" called out Bob Cherry.

Sir Hilton grunted, and came stalking up. He muttered some more golfing expressions as he saw that the ball was almost hidden under a tuft of tough grass. It was not an easy shot for a good player, and Sir Hilton did not seem to be a remarkably good player.

"Mashie!" he growled.

NEXT  
MONDAY—

"CHANGED BY ADVERSITY!"

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of  
the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

Bob Cherry looked almost despairingly over the bag of clubs. Which of them was a mashie was a hidden mystery to him.

"Do you hear, boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"The mashie!"

"Yes, sir."

Bob grabbed the first club that came to hand, and handed Sir Hilton a brassie.

The golfer glared at him like a basilisk.

"Fool!"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you think this is a brassie shot?" shrieked Sir Hilton. "Are you insane? Are you mad? Give me the mashie, or—"

Bob grabbed the next club, which, fortunately, happened to be a mashie. Sir Hilton took it with a growl.

He addressed the ball, and licked at it with the mashie. The mashie hacked the ball, which jerked a yard away. Sir Hilton had expected that lick to land the ball on the green, and he gazed through the air to follow its flight, quite unconscious of the fact that it had simply rolled a few feet away.

Bob Cherry watched him cheerfully. It was no business his to give information until it was asked for.

"Did you see where that ball dropped, boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it on the green?"

"No, sir."

"Where is it, then, confound you?"

"Here, sir."

Bob Cherry pointed to the ball, and Sir Hilton glared at it as if he would eat it. He addressed the ball again, vocally this time, and the things he said to it made Bob Cherry almost blush. Bob thought that the business of a golf caddie was not quite suitable for a really nice boy—in some cases.

"Niblick!" hissed Sir Hilton at last.

Bob Cherry had never even heard of a niblick before, but he guessed that it was one of the clubs, and he jerked one of them out of the bag.

"You utter idiot!" shrieked the golfer. "Don't you know the difference between a cleek and a niblick?"

"No, sir! I—I mean, here you are, sir!"

It was the niblick this time, and Sir Hilton almost snatched it from his caddie's hand.

It was necessary to lift the ball to get it out of the hollow it had rolled into, and Bob watched the golfer's performance with the niblick with great interest. Sir Hilton made a swipe, which nearly broke the club, but had no perceptible effect on the ball. He addressed it again, in his own peculiar way.

Another lick with the niblick, and the ball rose, and by sheer chance dropped on the green. Sir Hilton's purple face cleared a little; he prided himself on a good shot. Golfer and caddie tramped through the grass towards the green.

"Four!" murmured Sir Hilton, apparently not counting the miss on the tee. "I think I shall do it in bogey—huh!"

At the green they had to wait for a foursome to hole out, and Sir Hilton fumed again. When the green was free at last, he snapped out:

"Putter!"

Bob ought to have had the putter in his hand ready, but as he did not know a putter by sight, and did not even know that a putter was required on the green, he hadn't.

He groped wildly in the bag and produced the cleek again, but the expression on Sir Hilton's face showed him that that wasn't a putter, and he extracted the right club and handed it over. The foursome had trotted off, giving Sir Hilton unpleasant looks for dropping on the green before he had a right there. But Sir Hilton did not mind unpleasant looks. Apparently, his view was that the golf course was designed for his especial benefit and amusement, and that all other players were mere outsiders and intruders.

The ball was six yards from the hole, and it certainly did not look as if Sir Hilton would hole out in one. He spent five minutes in eyeing the ball, and the flag, and the hole, and making abstruse mental calculations. He swung and twirled the putter several times, and at last addressed the ball.

Click!

The ball rolled a yard past the hole, and Sir Hilton's face became perfectly thunderous. "Bogey" was beyond his powers now.

He tramped over to the ball and bent over it again. At a yard's distance he certainly ought to have holed out, but perhaps his bad temper spoiled his form. The ball ran from the putter and rested a foot on the other side of the hole. Sir Hilton gnawed his moustache. Again he tackled the elusive ball and gave it a click with the putter, and the

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wretched thing rolled round the little sunken tin as if it were deliberately tantalising the infuriated baronet. Sir Hilton's face was purple, and there was perspiration on his brow. He glared at his caddie, as if suspecting him of smiling, but Bob Cherry kept his face as solemn as that of a wooden image. If he had smiled, he might have received the next stroke of the putter instead of the ball. Sir Hilton was getting dangerous.

With only two inches required to hole out, Sir Hilton certainly ought to have done it that time, but again his luck was out. He knocked the ball right across the hole, and swore. Then he made a savage swipe at the ball with the putter, as if to punish it, and with such terrific force, that the shaft of the club broke in two.

"Oh, my only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry involuntarily. Sir Hilton spun round at him.

"What—what? You insolent little rascal——"

"Try again, sir. 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again!'" said Bob Cherry encouragingly.

That was really good advice, but it seemed to have the same effect on Sir Hilton Popper as a red rag has upon a bull. He made a furious stride towards his caddie, and boxed his ears.

"Ow!" roared Bob Cherry. "Yow! That ain't part of the game, you silly old duffer!"

"What—wha-a-at!"

"Yow-ow! You silly old josser, you can't play golf for toffee!" yelled Bob, forgetting his duties as a caddie altogether. "You're a silly idiot, sir! You ought to be playing marbles. You can keep your bob, and go and eat coke!"

And Bob Cherry slammed the bag of clubs down on the green, and stalked away.

"Boy!" yelled Sir Hilton.

"Rats!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Bob walked away quickly, leaving Sir Hilton Popper rooted to the green, transfixed with amazement and rage. He had ragged caddies often enough himself, but it was a new experience for him to be ragged by a caddie himself. He remained thunderstruck; and Bob Cherry walked off, having completed his first—and last—experience as a golfer's caddie.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Two Bob!

OUTSIDE the golf links the chums of the Remove met to compare notes, later in the afternoon. It was getting dusk, and high time to get back to Greyfriars. Harry Wharton's brilliant idea had been carried out, but it could not be said that it had been a brilliant success.

In fact, what the schoolboy caddies had to show for their afternoon's work was not what could be called gratifying.

Bob Cherry had a burning ear. Johnny Bull had a swollen nose and a black eye. He explained that there had been trouble with Blooker, that ill-tempered youth having cornered him in a lonely corner of the links, and pitched into him. He stated with satisfaction that he had "whopped" Blooker in the most thoroughgoing manner, and that was perhaps some comfort. Blooker had two black eyes, so the matter had not ended so very badly. But from a financial point of view Johnny Bull's exploit was not satisfactory.

Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh had waited for a job in vain. Harry Wharton and Squiff had earned a shilling apiece.

"Total results," said Bob Cherry, calculating—"one thick ear, one black eye, and two bob! Might have been worse."

"Well, I suppose it might," agreed Wharton. "I don't see how it could have been much worse—but perhaps it might."

"Might have been two black eyes and only one bob, instead of two bobs and only one black eye!" said Bob, evidently determined to take a cheerful view of the matter. "Never was anything that mightn't have been worse. I ought to have another boblet to add to the collection, but Sir Hilton Popper didn't pay me for caddying for him. I took it out of him in slanging, though, so that's all right!"

"Right as rain!" said Johnny Bull, rather sarcastically. "All the same, we won't spend our next half-holiday as golf-caddies."

"No fear!" said Bob promptly; and Hurree Janset Ram Singh observed emphatically that the no-fearfulness was terrific.

"Still, it was the best idea we've had so far," said Harry Wharton. "Anyway, we can stand some sort of a tea in the study with two bob. We can feed at fourpence a head."

The chums of the Remove walked back to Greyfriars, and arrived there just in time to avoid being locked out. They

proceeded to the school shop in the corner of the Old Close, and interviewed Mrs. Mimble. That good lady was very glad to see them. The Famous Five were generally among her best customers, but during the past week they had paid very few visits to the tuck-shop. Mrs. Mimble was not a believer in credit, nor would the Co. have run up bills they could not settle, even if Mrs. Mimble had been willing. Now they had the humble sum of two shillings to expend, and there was deep calculation in the tuck-shop as to the best possible value that could be obtained for it. As Bob Cherry thoughtfully remarked, they were beginning to have a glimpse of how the poor lived. They had come in too late for tea in Hall, and only two bob stood between them and famine. Luxuries, under the circumstances, had to be barred with a stern hand. They could not think of jam or preserves; strict necessaries were all that they could afford.

Half an hour was spent on the purchasing, and then the Famous Five and Squiff carried off their supplies, having obtained the utmost that two humble "bobs" could supply them with.

But No. 1 Study presented a cheerful aspect once more when they prepared the evening meal. Coal, at least, was supplied by the school, within limits, and there was a cheery fire; and a smell of hot tea and toast quite enlivened the juniors. They were sitting down to their frugal meal, when a fat face, adorned with a pair of large spectacles, looked into the study.

"I say, you fellows——"

Wharton pointed to the door.

"Buzz off!" he said crisply. "No room for porpoises!"

"I jolly well knew there was going to be a feed," said Bunter, "and I don't mind your—ahem—little joke about leaving me out. I knew it was only a joke. I've refused several invitations to tea so as to have a feed with you fellows when you came in."

"Then you'd better go and recall the giddy refusals," said Bob Cherry. "We've earned two bob by the sweat of our brow, and we're not whacking it out with a lazy porpoise."

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I wonder what Quelchy would say if he knew that Greyfriars chaps had been acting as golf-caddies?" he remarked.

"You fat toad!" roared Johnny Bull. "You've been spying again!"

"I suppose a chap can take a walk down to Courtfield if he likes," said Bunter, "and I suppose he can look over the links if he chooses. Not that I'm going to tell Quelchy—especially as I am going to have a feed with you. I'll keep it dark."

"You can keep it dark or not—just as you like!" said Wharton grimly. "But you're dead in this act, Tubby. Clear off!"

"Oh, really, Harry——"

"And if you call me 'Harry' I'll lay a cricket-stump round you!" growled Wharton. "'Nuff said. Buzz!"

"Wharton!" It was a sharp, metallic voice from the direction of the stairs. "Wharton—and you others—come to my study at once! I am perfectly aware of your proceedings this afternoon, and I am shocked—extremely shocked. I am surprised at you. Follow me to my study instantly."

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Wharton. "That's Quelchy's voice. Come on; we've got to go through it now!"

Dismay fell upon the chums of the Remove. The voice sounded as if their Form-master was angry, and they had no choice about obeying his orders. They marched out of the study, and went towards the stairs. Mr. Quelch was not in sight, and, as he did not like to be kept waiting, they hurried downstairs, and to his study.

Billy Bunter blinked after them until they disappeared down the stairs, and then whipped into the study; and in a second more he was busy upon the frugal tea the six hungry juniors had prepared for themselves. There would have been barely enough for Harry Wharton & Co., and there was not nearly enough for Billy Bunter; and the rate at which he travelled through it was amazing.

Wharton knocked at Mr. Quelch's door, and opened it. The study was empty. Harry looked round the room in surprise.

"He isn't here," he said. "He told us to follow him here."

"Got to wait, I suppose!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry, a sudden suspicion coming into his mind. "Bunter——"

"Blow Bunter!"

"I forgot his rotten ventriloquism!" exclaimed Bob hurriedly. "I'll bet you that wasn't Quelchy at all. We didn't see him——"

"My hat!"

The juniors ran back down the passage. If Bunter had played a ventriloquial trick on them they knew the reason, and how much of their tea would be likely to be left. They met Peter Todd at the end of the passage, and Wharton caught him by the arm.

"Have you seen Quelchy?"

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"Quelchy?" said Todd. "He's out!"

"Out! That fat rotter——"

Wharton said no more, but rushed upstairs, with his chums at his heels.

They burst like a cyclone into No. 1 Study.

Billy Bunter was seated at the table, and the poached eggs and most of the toast had already disappeared. Bunter had a round of toast in either fat hand, and his mouth was full, and his jaws were working busily. He blinked round through his spectacles in alarm; he had not expected the juniors to discover the trick so quickly.

"I—I say, you fellows——" he mumbled apprehensively.

"Collar him!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"I—I say—— Ow—ow!"

The enraged juniors grasped the Owl of the Remove and dragged him backwards over his chair. Billy Bunter roared, and rolled on the floor, with the toast still in his hands. The tea-table was almost cleared, and the hungry juniors were in an almost homicidal mood. They gathered round the fat Remove on the carpet and debated his fate, with looks that made Billy Bunter shiver like a huge jelly.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Saves His Bacon!

"SQUASH him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Bump him!"

"Boil him in oil!"

The chums of the Remove were so enraged that they really felt inclined to jump on the wriggling, fat junior. They had worked hard enough that afternoon for their tea, and to have it ravished away like this was utterly exasperating. They were hungry—very hungry. Tramping over the golf-links had given a keen edge to their appetites—which were always very good, anyway. And Bunter had left hardly anything, short as was the time he had had for bolting the feed.

"I—I say, you fellows," mumbled Bunter. "Don't be waxy, you know. I—I came here to do you a good turn."

"You fat toad——"

"You beastly fat burglar——"

"You villainous and esteemed rotter——"

"Slaughter him!"

"I—I say, chuck it, you know! I—I was only giving you a sample of what I—I can do, you know," said Bunter. "I've got a good idea for raising the wind, and I really came here to tell you chaps about it. It's a really ripping idea, and I'm willing to go co. with you chaps. I am really."

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"Only some more of his whoppers," said Bob Cherry wrathfully. "Catch Bunter doing anybody a good turn! Collar him!"

"I—I say, give me a chance, you know!" stammered the Owl of the Remove apprehensively. "I've got a really spiffing idea for raising the wind, and I'm going to take you fellows in——"

"You've taken us in too often, you rotter! Bump him!"

"Hold on!" roared Bunter, as the angry juniors grasped him and yanked him off the study carpet. "I tell you I mean business—honour bright——"

Bump!

"Yaroooh! I tell you it's a ripping wheeze—heaps of money in it—you fellows back me up, and we'll make money hand over fist—ow!"

Wharton looked sharply at the fat junior. Billy Bunter seemed to be telling the truth for once—at least, he was very much in earnest. Wharton made a sign to his followers, and they slammed the fat junior into the armchair.

"We'll give you a chance," said Harry grimly. "If you've really got an idea in your thick noddle, spout it out. If it's any good we'll let you off. If it isn't we'll rag you till you won't know yourself in the looking-glass! Now, pile in!"

"Grooogh!" gasped Bunter.

"Buck up!" growled Bob Cherry. "The fat beast has only left half a loaf and a bit of toast! What are we going to have for tea?"

"I—I say, you fellows, just listen to me!" said Bunter, recovering his breath a little. "You heard me imitate old Quelchy's rasp just now?"

"Yes, you spoofing porpoise!"

"That was really only to give you a sample of what I could do," Bunter explained. "You know what a splendid ventriloquist I am——"

"We know what a pilfering spoofer you are!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Buck up with the idea, and don't jaw," said Wharton. "Mind, if there isn't anything in it you're going to get

the ragging of your life! And I don't suppose for a moment that there's anything in it!"

"Well, give a chap a chance!" said Bunter. "Don't you do all the talking, Wharton. You know what a first-class, ripping ventriloquist I am!"

"Come to the point!" roared Nugent.

"That is the point!"

"What?"

"That's the point," said Bunter. "You remember once there was a ventriloquial professor giving a show in Court-field, and he was seedy, and got me to take his place, dressed up like him. It wasn't much of a success, I admit——"

"What is the fat idiot driving at?" demanded Bob Cherry, addressing space.

"I'm coming to the point, fathead! Why shouldn't we get up a ventriloquial show here, at Greyfriars?"

"Eh?"

"I'm a splendid, first-class ventriloquist——"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"And we could give a show worth seeing—worth hearing, I mean. With me doing all the business it would be bound to be a success."

"Is that the idea, you fat duffer?"

"Yes, it is," said Bunter, with dignity—"and a jolly good idea, too! I require you fellows to back me up, and I'll do the whole thing."

"You utter ass, the fellows are all fed up with your rotten ventriloquism, and nobody would be ass enough to pay to hear you playing the giddy goat!"

"You don't understand yet. I've thought this idea out," said Bunter loftily. "Some chaps can do thinking—not all—and I'm one of those who can. Now, they say that nobody's a prophet in his own country; the fellows who get fed up on my ventriloquism would pay to go and hear a professional ventriloquist, who wouldn't do the thing half so well."

"I dare say there's something in that," admitted Wharton. "Nobody denies that you can do ventriloquism, you fat duffer! But getting fellows to pay for hearing you do it is a horse of quite another colour."

"They wouldn't know it was me," explained Bunter. "You've got lots of stage props belonging to the Junior Dramatic Society, and you could make me up as a professor, and the fellows wouldn't know me from Adam. Make me a chap with whiskers and beard, in a frock coat, and there you are! Put up a notice that Professor Something-or-Other is coming here to give a ventriloquial entertainment in the Rag, admission sixpence. Lots of the fellows would come, and we'd divide the profits—ahem!—I mean, you fellows could divide five per cent. of the takings, and I'd have the rest."

"You're too generous, Bunt!" said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"Well, I'm a generous chap," said Bunter. "Always was. You deal fairly with me, and I'll deal fairly with you."

"You'd have to if we go co. with you," growled Johnny Bull. "But my opinion is that the idea is silly rot; and we'd better bump the beast for scoffing our tea."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on!" yelled Bunter, as Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and Inky made a movement towards him. "I say, you fellows—— Wharton, look here——"

Wharton held up his hand.

"Order!" he said. "We'll think over this. I don't know that there's anything in it, but it's a chance. What Bunter says is right—fellows will pay to see a stranger do things when they won't let one they know bore them with anything of the kind, even if it's better. We could make Bunter up so that the chaps wouldn't know him; and there's no denying that the fat beast can ventriloquise. It's the only thing he can do, but he can do that well."

"Good enough for a show," said Squiff. "What about getting permission for the entertainment, though? The Head would have to know."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Wharton. "We use the Rag for our plays and meetings, and we could ask Quelchy if we can give a ventriloquial show there. That's all we need tell him, and he's bound to say 'yes.'"

"And if the fellows pay to come in they will get a good ventriloquial show for their money, if that's what they want," said Nugent thoughtfully. "We shall give them value for their money."

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Better than they'd get from the regular ventriloquial entertainers, anyway. You know what a ripping——"

"Yes, we know. Don't tell us again, for goodness' sake!" said Johnny Bull.

"Besides, I could make the doll say all sorts of things that would tickle the fellows," said Bunter. "They wouldn't know me, but I should know them; and I'd make the ven-

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triloquial doll talk to them and say things—I'd keep 'em in a roar all the time. And making a doll talk is much easier than the kind of ventriloquial bizney you've heard me do. The fact is, I'm a ripping——"

"Shurrup! Shall we give it a trial, you chaps?" asked Harry Wharton, looking round. "We'll make all the arrangements, provide all the props, and manage the whole bizney, and Bunter can do the ventriloquism. And all the proceeds will be whacked out equally—divided into seven equal parts among the lot of us."

"If there are any proceeds!" said Johnny Bull sceptically.

"Look here!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "If I'm going to do all the work, I'm going to have more than an equal share. I could do it on my own if I liked, only I've let you fellows into it out of sheer generosity."

"Go and do it on your own, then!" growled Bull.

"Ahem! I'd rather have the help of you chaps, of course. I should want to borrow your stage props, and you'd have to make me up. Then we should want doorkeepers, or the fellows would get squeezing in for nothing, and—and——"

"Then play the game, you spoofer!"

"I'm willing to let you fellows have half the profits to divide, and I'll take half——"

"You'll take a thick ear if you jaw much more," said Wharton savagely. "But we won't haggle with the beast. Let him take half."

"That's right, then," said Billy Bunter. "You fellows can make all the arrangements and get the Rag ready, and—and do all the work, you know. I'll give the entertainment—the brainy part of the bizney."

Wharton looked round inquiringly.

"Is it a go?" he asked.

"It's a go!" said the Co. unanimously.

"Good! We'll give it a trial. If it doesn't come to anything, it will be a lark, anyway, and no harm done."

"I say, you fellows, it's bound to be a tremendous success. You know what a ripping——"

"Rats!"

"Ain't we going to bump him for scoffing our tea, then?" demanded Johnny Bull indignantly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No. You can buzz off and practise your rotten ventriloquism, Bunter, and we'll make the arrangements for the show. The sooner the quicker. We'll give it to-morrow night in the Rag. Get out!"

"But I say——"

"Well, what do you want now?" demanded Wharton.

"There's some more toast——"

With one accord the chums of the Remove hurled Billy Bunter forth from the study. And then they had a frugal—an exceedingly frugal—repast upon the fragments that the Owl of the Remove had not had the time to "scoff."

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Professor Packer—Ventriloquist!

"MY hat! That's something new!"

"Professor Packer! Who's Professor Packer?"

"Tanner a time, too!"

"'Tain't worth it!"

"Well, a tanner ain't much if the show's any good."

"Rats! We can hear Bunter ventriloquise whenever we like for nothing—not that we're likely to like."

"But this is a professional show."

"Might be worth a tanner."

"I'm going, anyway."

Those remarks, and a great many more like them, were made by a crowd of juniors standing before the school notice-board the next day, after lessons.

When the Remove came out of their Form-room they found a new notice on the board, and it surprised and interested and puzzled them. It ran:

"This evening, at 6 o'clock precisely, Professor Packer will give a Grand Ventriloquial Entertainment in the Rag. Admission SIXPENCE! Fags under twelve, THREE-PENCE!"

"The Grandest Show on Earth! Professor Packer's Talking Doll is a Marvel! Tells the members of the audience all about themselves!"

"COME AND SEE!"

ADMISSION SIXPENCE AND THREEPENCE!  
TO-NIGHT AT 6!"

The notice was typewritten upon an ordinary sheet of typing paper, and the juniors wondered who had done it, and who had pinned it up on the notice-board.

"I guess I've never heard of Professor Packer, and I reckon I shall keep my tanner in my trousers-pocket," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Same here," said Snoop.  
"Begad! We might as well go," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "If the chap's coming here, my dear fellows, it would be only civil to give him an audience."

"Pooh! Can hear Bunter play the giddy goat in the same way any day without paying anything!" said Skinner. "I don't see why we should pay Professor Packer for what we can get for nothing."

"Bunter ain't the real thing," said Bolsover major. "He's only an amateur. This chap is a professional. I'm going, for one."

"Hallo, Bunter!" called out Russell, as the fat junior came along. "Here's a giddy rival for you! Ever heard of Professor Packer?"

The Owl of the Remove grinned at the notice on the board. "Yes, rather! He's a tremendous great ventriloquist," said Billy Bunter impressibly. "Quite as good as I am, in fact!"

"That's not saying much!" snorted Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"Of course he'll be better than Bunter!" said Bolsover major, in his dictatorial manner. "No doubt at all about that. Bunter might pick up some tips about the bizney from him, if he can raise a tanner to go in."

"I sha'n't be there," said Bunter loftily. "I've got nothing to learn about ventriloquism. You won't see me in the audience."

"Hallo, Wharton! Are you going?"

Harry Wharton paused, and read the notice on the board with a grave and composed face. There was nothing about Wharton's look to hint that he had written that notice himself, borrowing Mr. Quelch's typewriter for the purpose.

"Yes, I shall be there," said Harry.

"Do you think it's worth a tanner?" jeered Skinner.

"Any fellow who doesn't think it worth a tanner is welcome to stay away, I suppose," said Harry. "It's a free country, and you can go in or not, as you like. As a matter of fact, I'm helping the professor."

"Then you know something about it?" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"Certainly."

"And what are you going to do?" asked Skinner.

"Take the money at the door."

"Does the professor know how hard up you are?" grinned Skinner. "Must be a confiding gent if he does, to trust you to take the money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob's going to help me. Nobody will be admitted without paying. That's understood with the—ahem—the professor."

"And you take a whack in the profits—what?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"Begad! Is that so?"

"Ha, ha, ha! This is a new scheme for making some tin!" howled Skinner. "Ha, ha, ha! Those bounders have roped in the professor to give a performance."

"Well, why not?" demanded Bob Cherry. "If we provide a good entertainment, that's all you want. You needn't go if you don't want to."

"Members of your own Form admitted half-price, I suppose?" asked Hazeldene.

"No jolly fear!"

"Anybody who thinks the show worth a tanner can come," said Johnny Bull. "Anybody who doesn't can stay away and go and eat coke. We guarantee a good ventriloquial entertainment—in fact, we've engaged the professor at a very great expense—a very great expense indeed!"

"Where did you get the tin?"

"You haven't paid him in advance, then, bejabbers?"

"Don't you inquire into business transactions that don't concern you," said Harry Wharton loftily. "We don't ask anybody to come. We simply say that there's a good entertainment, worth the money, and if you choose to come, there you are. If you don't choose, there you are again! That's all."

"And quite enough!" said Squiff.

"The 'nuff-fulness is terrific."

And the Famous Five walked away, leaving the juniors still talking and laughing over the notice on the board.

Quite a number of them decided to go to the show. As Bolsover major remarked, it would be a mighty poor show if it wasn't worth a tanner. And the professor's undertaking that his talking doll should tell them all about themselves excited the juniors' curiosity. They did not see how a stranger to Greyfriars like Professor Packer, of whom they had never even heard before, could know anything about them. And if he didn't know anything about them, he couldn't tell them anything, that was certain. Bolsover major said that that was spoof, and if the professor's doll didn't tell him something about himself he would demand his money back—and get it too.

Although a considerable number of juniors had decided to go to the entertainment, they had not all decided to pay.

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Quite a little army of fellows had resolved to see the show without that necessary preliminary. Some of them said they would pay afterwards if it was good. Some declared they would settle the following week, or the week after; and some said they had a right to be in the Rag any time they liked, anyway, and they weren't going to be kept out because a set of hard-up juniors had engaged a blessed ventriloquist to give a blessed entertainment.

It was somewhat surprising that Billy Bunter was not among these latter. The Owl of the Remove could generally be depended upon to get something for nothing if he could; but Bunter, to the surprise of the Removites, was very emphatic in declaring that a fellow ought to pay to go in. He said he couldn't raise a tanner, and he disdained to borrow one, so he was going to keep out. As for a right to be in the Rag any time he liked, he declined, as an honourable chap, to insist on that right, and expected as much as others.

"Why, he's off his dot!" said Skinner, when he heard Bunter make these remarks in the common-room. "Blessed if I ever heard of Bunter being an honourable chap before! Has he been drinking?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you get going in without paying, that's all!" said Bunter loftily. "I despise dishonest persons, Skinner."

"My hat!"

"I'm going to stay out, as I can't afford the tanner," said Bunter, with great virtue. "You take example by me."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Begad, I'll lend you the tanner, Bunter, if you like!" said Lord Mauleverer generously.

"Thanks!" said Bunter, accepting the sixpence at once. "I'll let you have this back out of my postal-order tomorrow, Mauly. I don't think I'll go to the show, all the same. I'm not keen on ventriloquists. Thanks!"

And Billy Bunter made a bee-line for the school shop, where he speedily expended Lord Mauleverer's sixpence in ginger-beer and tarts.

Bunter was finishing that windfall when Bob Cherry bore down on him, and marched him out of the tuckshop.

"I've been looking for you, you fat chump!" growled Bob. "It's time to make-up."

And Bob marched Bunter up to No. 1 Study, where the heroes of the Amateur Dramatic Society were waiting for him, with the property-box and the box of grease-paints and disguises open and ready for business.

"Here's the fat beast!" said Bob. "Lock the door, and let's get to bizney. It will be six o'clock jolly soon, and we mustn't be late, or a crowd of bounders will be squeezing into the Rag on the nod."

"The nodfulness will be terrific!" agreed Hurree Singh. "Let us proceed buck-upfully with the esteemed and ludicrous Bunter."

And the chums of the Remove proceeded "buck-upfully," as Inky expressed it in his beautiful English.

Billy Bunter's appearance was soon remarkably changed. In a black frock-coat—which he nearly burst—and dark-grey trousers, and button boots with white spats, and with a big rolled-gold watch-chain across his waistcoat, the Owl of the Remove looked very unlike the usual fat figure in Etons.

A pair of grey whiskers, a big beard tinged with grey, and long moustaches of the same colour, changed his fat face wonderfully.

His complexion was touched up, his eyebrows roughened and darkened, and a flowing wig affixed to his bullet head.

His glasses were changed for a pair with gold rims—the gold rims having been gilded by Nugent with bronze paint from his colour-box.

When Bunter was finished, the metamorphosis was extra-

ordinary. The chums of the Remove would not have known him, and he hardly knew himself when he blinked into the glass.

"Quarter to six," said Harry Wharton. "Time we got down. You stay here, Bunter, and slip out quietly when the coast is clear. We don't want Professor Packer to be seen coming out of our study, or the fellows may smell a rat."

"All right. Anything to eat here?" asked Bunter.

"No, porpoise. Come on, you chaps."

Harry Wharton & Co. descended the stairs, and made their way to the Rag. The Rag was a large room on the ground floor, which was used by the juniors for their meetings, and sometimes by the Fifth-Form fellows. It was admirably suited for the entertainment, and Wharton had duly obtained permission to give a ventriloquial show there, discreetly omitting to inform Mr. Quelch that Professor Packer was to be the performer, and that cash was to be charged for admission. Little particulars like that the captain of the Remove deemed it more judicious to keep to himself.

There was a crowd outside the Rag. Wharton had locked the door and taken the key away, to prevent the room from being crowded beforehand, and there was great indignation on the subject.

"What's that blessed door locked for?" howled Skinner, as the Famous Five joined the crowd of juniors. "You know anything about it, Wharton?"

Wharton inserted the key in the lock by way of reply.

"My hat!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth. "You've had the nerve to lock us all out of the Rag, you cheeky fag!"

"What an awful nerve!" ejaculated Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"The room's engaged for to-night," Wharton explained calmly. "We have permission to use it for a show. Now, all who go in have to pay at the doors. Sixpence each—excepting fags of the Third and Second. We take the money."

"You don't take any of mine!" growled Skinner. "I'm going in!"

"So am I!" yelled Snoop. "We've all got a right to go into the Rag whenever we like. If your blessed professor chooses to give a performance while we're there, that's his bizney, not ours."

"Oh, rather!"

"Rush 'em!"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This looks like trouble. Line up!"

And the Famous Five and Squiff lined up heroically in the doorway of the Rag, prepared to stop that rush of fellows who wanted to admit themselves to Professor Packer's entertainment "on the nod."

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Plenty of Audience!

SIX sturdy juniors lined up in the doorway of the Rag, and the rush was stopped.

Skinner, rushing on a little too fast, received a gentle prod on the chest from Squiff, and sat down in the passage, and Snoop stumbled over him and fell.

Then there was a pause.

"Order!" rapped out Harry Wharton. "No admittance except on business! Shell out your tanners, and roll up in your thousands!"

"And giddy millions, if you like!" said Bob Cherry.

"Free list entirely suspended!"

"Look here, I'm coming in!" howled Stott.

"Tanner, please!"

"Rats!"

"Then you stay out!"

And Bob Cherry playfully took Stott by the shoulders, and sprawled him over Skinner and Snoop.

"Begad, here's my tanner, my dear fellows!" said Lord Mauleverer, and he tendered his sixpence and passed into the Rag.

Bolsover major and Bulstrode and Tom Brown followed his example, and then the other fellows began to pay up.

Quite a number of sixpences were taken, and the Rag began to fill. Nugent minor and a crowd of the Second Form turned up, but there were more fags than threepences. Dicky Nugent demanded a reduction for quantity; and as the fags were clustering round the door in great numbers, Wharton decided to let them in for what they could hand out.

The Second-Formers crowded in at the rate of about a penny a time. Then came an army of the Third, led by Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor. Tubb loudly insisted upon his right to go into the Rag if he wanted to; but

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Paget handed out threepence, and another compromise was made—Third-Formers going in for twopence each. As Bob Cherry remarked, all was grist that came to the mill.

So far there had been no serious trouble. Skinner & Co. were still waiting outside, like very discontented Peris at the gates of Paradise. But trouble loomed ahead when Coker & Co. of the Fifth Form came along.

Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth Form bestowed patronising smiles upon the Removites who guarded the door.

"Hear you're getting up a little entertainment—what?" asked Coker affably.

"A first-class entertainment," corrected Bob Cherry.

"We're going to give you a look-in—I may call it a leg-up," said Coker. "Of course, it's all rot—hardly worth our attention—but I believe in encouraging the fags."

"Oh, certainly!" said Potter. "We'll look on for a few minutes, anyway."

"You're in the way, Cherry!" remarked Coker.

Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully.

"And I'm going to keep in the way till you've handed out your tanners," he replied.

Coker laughed good-humouredly.

"We're giving you a look-in, just to encourage you," he explained. "Of course, we're not going to pay anything."

"Then we'll manage to do without the encouragement," said Bob. "Next, please!"

"Look here!"

"No admittance except on business. Move on, and make room for the quality!" said Bob tersely.

"We're going in!" roared Coker.

"Tanner, please!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Tanner a time!"

Coker & Co. exchanged a glance. Fitzgerald and Bland of the Fifth joined them. The five seniors pressed forward in a body. Harry Wharton & Co. opposed their entrance manfully, but six juniors were not much use against five big seniors. Coker & Co. shoved their way through, and marched triumphantly into the Rag, leaving most of the doorkeepers strewn on the floor.

Then there was a rush of Skinner & Co. before the Famous Five were prepared to deal with them. Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Fourth followed with a rush, and fellows crowded in in great numbers. Coker & Co. had broken up the defence, and the way was open, and the Famous Five had no chance of lining up across the doorway again. Juniors and seniors and fags crammed in, but the money-taking was at an end.

"Play the game!" roared Bob Cherry, in great indignation. "We haven't engaged Professor Packer to give you rotters a free show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove in, you chaps!"

"Come on!"

"Boot 'em out!" roared Johnny Bull.

But for six juniors to boot-out that rushing crowd verged on the impossible. The fellows seemed to be taking it as a huge joke, and they crowded in, laughing and cheering. The Rag was getting packed now, but only a minority had paid at the doors. The general opinion was that it was like the cheek of the Famous Five to "bag" the room for their show. They had asked Quelch's permission; but they hadn't asked the permission of the Fifth, the Shell, the Fourth, the Third, and the Second. Partly, therefore, from indignation at their "cheek," and partly from a desire to rag the Famous Five, the fellows crammed in without paying for admission. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite helpless to stem the torrent, and they gave it up at last, in a considerably dishevelled state.

The audience—those who had paid and those who hadn't—were shouting for the performance to begin. All the seats and forms, arranged with so much care by the Co. to accommodate a large audience, were occupied, and a crowd of fellows were standing. Coker & Co., in the front seats, kept up a steady stamping on the floor, in the style of an impatient "pit" waiting for a performance to commence.

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

"Where's the professor?"

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

"Begin! Begin!"

"On the ball!"

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

"Where's that blessed professor?"

"Faith, and we're waiting for the show!"

"Begin, you bounders, or we'll rag the place!"

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

Bang! Bang!

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "We shall have the prefects here if this goes on. And three-quarters of the rotters haven't paid!"

"We're in for it!" said Harry ruefully. "Anyway, the professor can get here now without being spotted."

"Here he comes!"

"Right-ho! I'll announce him."

Harry Wharton went on the raised stage at the end of the room.

"Gentlemen——"

"Begin!"

"Produce your professor!"

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

"Gentlemen, the performance is about to commence. The professor is here. Gentlemen are requested to behave themselves, and not play the giddy goat, or we shall have the prefects down on us, and there won't be any performance at all."

"I guess I shall want my tanner back, then!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Why, you rotter, you haven't paid at all!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I shall demand a tanner if there's no performance. I ain't coming here for nothing. No, sir—not F. T. Fish!"

"Here comes the professor!"

"Bravo!"

Professor Packer walked into the Rag. All eyes were turned curiously upon him. Nobody recognised Billy Bunter in his new guise. They beheld a middle-aged-looking gentleman, with beard and whiskers and moustaches, in a black frock-coat and white spats, with gold-rimmed glasses, with a silk hat in one hand, and a bag in the other. He was an extremely fat gentleman, but in no other point did he resemble the Owl of the Remove.

"This way, professor!" called out Harry Wharton.

The audience cheered the professor as he mounted upon the stage, and laid down his black bag upon a table. They watched him curiously as he opened the bag and took therefrom a large doll. It was not much like the usual ventriloquist's doll, the juniors having manufactured it in No. 1 Study with their own hands, and certainly in finish it left something to be desired. But it answered the purpose, and that was enough.

The professor sat down, and took the doll upon his knee.

"Gentlemen," said the professor, in a high-pitched voice,

"I have the honour——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Get on with the washing!"

"To present to you the celebrated talking doll, Albert, who has performed before all the crowned heads of Europe, America, and the Colonies."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess we don't have any crowned heads over there," growled Fisher T. Fish. "We don't take any stock in such trash in the Yewnited States, I guess."

"Go it, professor!"

"Go it, Albert!"

"Pile in!" roared Coker of the Fifth. "Not so much jaw! Get on with the washing!"

"Professor," came a squeaking voice, apparently from the talking doll, "I shall not speak this evening unless that little boy is quiet."

"Which little boy, Albert?" asked the professor.

"That little boy in front, with the face like a kite, who is standing up."

Coker turned crimson.

"Why, you—you cheeky rotter——" he began.

"Sit down! Ha, ha, ha! Shut up, Coker!" came a yell from the rest of the audience.

Coker sat down, and scowled at Potter and Greene, who were grinning. And, some degree of quiet having been obtained, the professor proceeded with his entertainment.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

### The Professor Goes Strong!

"ALBERT!" said the professor, in a deep voice

"Yes, papa!" came the squeaking voice. Certainly the answer seemed to proceed from the doll, and the audience were satisfied that the professor was a genuine ventriloquist, at all events.

Bolsover major remarked to Bulstrode that this was very different from Bunter's rotten ventriloquism, and Bulstrode agreed that it was.

"Albert, you are going to entertain the young gentlemen this evening."

"Yes, papa."

"You are going to tell the young gentlemen things about themselves, Albert."

"Yes, papa."

Coker snorted loudly.

"What rot!" he said. Coker's temper had been ruffled by Albert's previous remarks. "Of course, it's all spoo. He doesn't know anything about us."

"Order!" called out Squiff.

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ONE  
PENNY.

"Rats!"

"Albert, who is the young gentleman who is talking?"

"He's a silly ass, papa!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——" roared Coker, getting up.

"Order!" bawled the audience. "Sit down, Coker!"

"I'm not going to stand——"

"Then sit down!"

"I'm not going to stand any check!"

"Yah! Sit down! Order!"

"Tell us something more about the young gentleman, Albert," went on the professor, when Horace Coker had subsided again, with a frowning brow.

"Yes, papa. His name is Broker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He is the biggest ass in the school. He was in the Shell, but his Aunt Judy came down on the Head, and threatened to larrup him with her umbrella if he didn't shove Broker into the Fifth."

The audience yelled with delight. It was often said that Coker owed his remove into the Fifth to the influence of his Aunt Judith, who had interviewed the Head on the subject no end of times; though probably the story of the umbrella was quite imaginary.

Coker's face was quite purple now.

"You rotters!" he roared, glaring at the Famous Five.

"You've been telling that old donkey things about me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!"

"Tell us something more about the young gentleman, Albert."

"He thinks he can play cricket," squeaked Albert. "But he can't play cricket for toffee. He thinks he can play footer. But he can't play footer for toffee. He thinks he can keep his end up against the Remove. But he can't keep his end up against the Remove for toffee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!" roared the Removites.

"And he hasn't paid to come in," squeaked Albert. "He has come in on the nod. He can't afford to pay sixpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Has anyone else come in on the nod, Albert?" asked the professor, deeming it prudent to give Horace Coker a rest.

Coker was in a state of fury, and looked as though he were about to rush on the stage and take summary vengeance upon Albert and the professor together.

"Yes, papa."

"Who is it, Albert?"

"A Yankee bounder, with a face like a pocket-knife."

"That's you, Fishy!" roared Bolsover major. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is his name, Albert?"

"His name is Codfish, papa."

"Look hyer!" roared Fisher T. Fish, jumping up. "I guess——"

"Sit down!"

"Order!"

"Why hasn't Codfish paid to come in, Albert?" asked the professor.

"Because he hasn't a tanner about him, papa. He says his father is a millionaire in New York, but he ain't."

"He is!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"What is he, then, Albert?" asked the professor.

"He's a pawnbroker, papa."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess my popper ain't a pawnbroker, and you know it, you jays!" howled Fisher T. Fish, shaking a furious fist at the Famous Five, who sat in a grinning row on the stage.

"You've put that mugwump up to this!"

"Order! Sit down, Fishy!"

"Can you tell us anything more about Codfish's father, Albert?"

"Yes, papa. He has a face like a knife, just like Codfish's chivvy, and talks through his nose. He is in prison at present, and ought to have been there long ago."

"It's a lie!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish leaped up and made a rush towards the stage. He bounded upon it, only to fall into the grasp of the Famous Five, who closed upon him like one man. Fish went hurtling back among the audience, and landed on the floor with a bump and a yell. He sat up, looking very dusty and dazed.

"Ow! Yow! I guess—— Grooogh!"

"Sit down, or get out!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

"You didn't pay to come in, Fishy, and you can travel as soon as you like."

"Ow! I guess——"

"Order! You'll be put out if you don't ring off!"

Fisher T. Fish limped back to his seat. The audience was

grinning with delight. Certainly Albert's remarks were very personal, but there was no doubt that he was exceedingly entertaining. Indeed, Temple of the Fourth remarked that it was worth a tanner, and stated his intention of paying after the performance, an intention which he soon had reason to change. For as it happened, Temple of the Fourth was the next victim of Albert's personal remarks.

### THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Spoo! !

"Go it, professor!"

"Pile in, Albert!"

The audience were in great good-humour—with two exceptions, naturally. Coker and Fisher T. Fish couldn't see anything funny in it, but the rest of the crowd thought it very funny indeed.

"Who is the young gentleman with the pink necktie, Albert?"

"That's Temple of the Fourth, papa."

Temple shifted uneasily in his seat.

"They've told the professor my name, of course," he murmured to Dabney. "I'm jolly well not going to stand any rot!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. But he was grinning with anticipation. Cecil Temple, of the Fourth Form, was somewhat given to "swank." The audience waited with keen interest to learn Albert's opinion of him.

"Is he a nice boy, Albert?"

"No, papa. He is a swanker. He sets up to be a nut. He curls his hair with curling-tongs in his study."

"I don't!" yelled Temple.

"Yes, you do!" squeaked Albert. "And you use a face-wash."

Temple looked just now as if he had been using a face-wash of the deepest crimson. He sat and glared at the professor and the doll.

"He sings in the choir," went on Albert, "and he practises in his study. When he practises, the other fellows stuff cotton-wool in their ears."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They don't!" screamed Temple. "It's a whopper!"

"He's got a pair of curling-tongs in his pocket now," went on Albert.

"I—I—I haven't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The audience shrieked. Temple's dandified ways were well known, and more than one fellow had suspected that the beautiful curl on his brow was not due entirely to nature.

"Look here, this is too thick, and I'm not going to stand it!" exclaimed Temple, jumping up. "I'll jolly well knock the stuffing out of that silly doll! I'll—"

"Order!"

"Sit down!"

"Tell us something about those bounders on the stage!" shouted Fry of the Fourth. "Let's have something about Wharton!"

Harry Wharton gave the professor a warning glance, but the whiskered and spectacled ventriloquist did not seem to see it. He addressed the doll.

"Will you oblige the gentlemen, Albert, by telling them something about the young gentlemen on the stage?" he asked.

"Yes, papa. The chap at the end of the row is named Wild Bull. He owes Bunter of the Remove two shillings."

"Why, you—you rotter!" spluttered Johnny Bull wrathfully. "Owe you two shillings! Why, I—"

"Shurrup!" whispered Bob Cherry hastily. "Don't give the show away, you ass!"

"The next chap is named Bob Cherry. He takes number elevens in boots."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you silly ass!" growled Bob Cherry. "Let my boots alone! Get on with the entertainment, you thumping chump!"

"The next one is Nugent. He is his mamma's darling, and—"

"Shut up, you silly idiot!" howled Nugent.

"The next one is Hurree Skurry Jampot Bang. He is a nigger."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh jumped up.

"I will not permitfully allow the esteemed rotter to call me a nigger!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "I—"

Harry Wharton dragged him back into his seat.

"Don't give it away, Inky," he muttered. "We'll bump him afterwards for his cheek."

"The bumpfulness will be terrific!" growled the Nabob of Bhanipur, as he reluctantly sat down again. "The cheekful beast is pulling us by the esteemed leg."

"Go it, Albert!" chorussed the audience. They were

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highly delighted to hear Albert "going for" the promoters of the entertainment. The faces of Harry Wharton & Co. were an entertainment in themselves now.

"Who is the next young gentleman, Albert?" asked the professor, apparently oblivious of the furious looks and signs of the Famous Five.

"His name is Wharton, papa. He never has any money, and he has got up this entertainment to raise the wind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What else can you tell us about the young gentleman, Albert?"

"He is hard up, papa. He goes up and down the Remove passage looking for somebody to stand him a feed."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Wharton; but his words were drowned in a yell of laughter from the audience.

Billy Bunter had suffered many personal observations from the Famous Five, and he was taking this opportunity of "getting his own back." And he was doing it very thoroughly, too. He had not finished with Wharton yet. It was scarcely possible for the chums of the Remove to stop him without giving the whole show away, and that, of course, was out of the question. William George Bunter had the whiphand for once, though the Famous Five were mentally promising him all sorts of things afterwards.

"He pawned his Sunday bags yesterday with old Lazarus at Courtfield," went on Albert's squeaky voice.

"I didn't!" yelled Wharton.

"He's got the ticket in his pocket now!" squeaked Albert.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He owes Bunter of the Remove five bob, and won't pay him. He's jealous of Bunter."

"Why is he jealous of Bunter, Albert?" asked the professor.

"Because there's a certain young lady who thinks a great deal of Bunter, and won't have anything to say to Wharton."

Harry Wharton gave the professor a furious look.

"Shut up, you fat fool!" he whispered fiercely. "If you mention Marjorie here I'll smash you, and chance the consequences!"

But the professor went on unheeding.

"What is the young lady's name, Albert?"

"Marjorie!" squeaked Albert.

Hazeldene of the Remove jumped up in his place, his face very red.

"Look here, you chaps, I'm not going to stand this!" he shouted. "What the dickens do you mean by bringing my sister's name into your rotten entertainment, I'd like to know?"

"We didn't!" stammered Wharton. "It's that fat beast—I mean—I—"

"Where does the young lady live, Albert?" went on the professor, enjoying the furious and discomfited looks of the chums of the Remove.

"At Cliff House School, papa. She—"

Albert got no further.

Bob Cherry, forgetting everything else in his wrath, made a sudden rush at the professor. Bob's big fist smote Professor Packer, and the professor gave a roar and rolled over on the stage. The doll crashed on the floor. Albert's squeaking was at an end. The audience roared with laughter; this unexpected development of the entertainment struck them as funnier than what had preceded.

"Hurrah! Go for him, professor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared the professor, sitting up. "Bob Cherry, you beast—ow—yow—yah! Don't kick me, you rotter! Yow-ow! Help!"

"My hat, I know that voice!" shouted Vernon-Smith. Bunter had forgotten to disguise his tones. In fact, he had no time to think about such things. Bob Cherry was kicking him round the stage, and the ventriloquist was dodging and squirming wildly to avoid Bob's heavy boots.

"Who is it?" yelled the juniors.

"Ow! Yow! Help! I say, you fellows— Help! Keep him off! Ow—yow—wow!"

"Bunter!" yelled the Removites.

"Billy Bunter!"

"It's all spoo! It's Bunter!"

"Yah! What a swindle!"

"'Taint a professor at all! It's Bunter!"

The game was up now with a vengeance! All the audience were upon their feet, wildly excited. There was no doubt now that it was Bunter, for in his wild rolling on the stage his hair and beard and whiskers and moustache had come off, and the fat face of the Owl of the Remove was revealed. The make-up was not sufficient to disguise him without the hirsute additions, and everybody in the room recognised William George Bunter.



"Ow! Help! I say, you fellows— Help! Yaroooh! Draggimoff! Yow—ow—ow!"

"Bob, for goodness' sake——"

"Chuck it, Bob!"

"The jig's up!" groaned Squiff.

"The jigfulness is up, with an esteemed vengeance!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Under the esteemed circumstances, I may as well give Bunter the kickful recompense he has been asking for."

"Yow-ow-ow! Inky, you beast—keep off! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience. "Go it!"

The chums of the Remove "went it." Bunter's rascality had spoiled the whole show; the game was up, and the Famous Five meant to make the fat junior wriggle for it. And Billy Bunter was wriggling now. The angry juniors dribbled him round the stage as if he had been a football. Bunter jumped and dodged, and squirmed and wriggled, but he could not escape six pairs of boots, all busy on him at the same time.

He rolled off the stage at last, and floundered among the audience, where Hazeldene swooped down on him, and started booting him. The fat ventriloquist, lowling with rage and anguish, bounded away towards the door. He presented a shocking appearance now. His face was streaming with perspiration, his hair was tousled, the make-up on his fat features was mingled with dust, his frock-coat was split up the back. He gasped spasmodically as he fled to the door, and many of the audience helped him along with shoves of their boots as he fled. The dishevelled Professor vanished out of the doorway—it was the Professor's first—and last—appearance on the professional stage, and it could not by any stretch of the imagination be called a success.

Amid the yells of laughter of the audience, Fisher T. Fish waved his hand and roared:

"It's a swindle! Money back!"

And the other fellows took up the cry.

"It's a swindle! 'Tain't a professor at all! Money back!"

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## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Not a Financial Success!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & Co. looked utterly dismayed. The entertainment, which had been designed to replenish the exchequer, had been an utter, hopeless, ignominious failure. It had all been Bunter's fault—and the chums of the Remove could have kicked themselves for having entered into any compact with Bunter at all. From a financial point of view it had hardly been a success, for more than half the audience had come in without paying—the door-keepers had not succeeded in collecting more than ten shillings from the whole crowd. And now the audience, discovering that the great professor was only the old familiar ventriloquist of the Remove, in whiskers, were demanding their money back. And the demand came loudest from the fellows who had not paid at all. Skinner, and Snoop, and Fish, and some other unscrupulous young rascals were "on the make."

"My hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "There's going to be a row! I—I'm sorry I lost my temper with that fat beast, you chaps, but—but——"

"Oh, he asked for it," said Wharton, savagely. "He would have gone from bad to worse, if he hadn't been stopped. We were asses to trust him at all."

"The ass-fulness was terrific," said Inky, ruefully. "But what are we going to do nowfully, my beloved chums? They are asking for their esteemed money returnfully back."

"The rotters—most of 'em haven't paid at all."

"Blessed if I know which have paid and which haven't," said Johnny Bull. "They came in jolly quickly——"

"Money back!" roared Bolsover major. "Where's my tanner? It's a swindle."

"Yah! Give us our tanners."

"Where's my three-D?" yelled Dicky Nugent.

"Where's my tuppence?" howled Tubb of the Third.

Coker of the Fifth jumped on a form. Coker had smarted under the personal remarks of Albert, and Coker intended to make matters warm for the Famous Five now.

"Hand the money back, you young rotters!" he shouted. "If you don't pay up, we'll jolly well make you!"

"You didn't pay anything, Coker, you rotter!" howled Bob.

"I'm going to see justice done, as a senior," said Coker, loftily. "I'm not going to stand by and see the fags swindled."

"Bravo, Coker!" yelled Tubb. "Where's my tuppence?"

Harry Wharton waved his hand for silence. But it was not easy to reduce that excited crowd to order. They were swarming towards the stage now.

"Gentlemen——"

"Yah! Money back!"

"Gentlemen, listen to me! You can't call it a swindle—it was a fair show! We gave you a good ventriloquial en-

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tainment, and it doesn't matter a brass farthing whether the ventriloquist's name is Bunter or not."

"Begad, that's quite true," said Lord Mauleverer. "Chuck it, my dear fellows. We've had a jolly good tanner's worth."

"The last scene was easily worth a bob," grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Yah! Spoofers!"

"Money back!"

There was a rush at the stage, headed by Bolsover major and Coker and Skinner. Matters began to look serious for the promoters of that ventriloquial entertainment.

"Give the rotters their money back," growled Johnny Bull. "we don't want their measly tanners, anyway. It was a rotten idea from the start."

"Gentlemen!" yelled Harry Wharton. "Anyone not satisfied with the entertainment will have his admission money refunded——"

"Where's my tuppence?"

"Step up one at a time, and money will be returned to all who are not satisfied," yelled Wharton desperately.

"I guess I want a tanner——"

"You spoofing bounder, you didn't pay to come in."

"I guess——"

"Chuck that spoofing Yankee out."

The exasperated entertainers grasped Fisher T. Fish, and hurled him off the stage.

The voice of the Yankee schoolboy was heard no more. Apparently he had decided that he would make no further claim for a "tanner."

The Co. poured out the evening's takings on the table, and there was a rush of fellows for their admission money. Some of the audience who had paid did not claim the return of their sixpences and threepences, being satisfied that they had had their money's worth. Some of those who hadn't paid contented themselves with yelling. But quite a crowd demanded sixpences and threepences, and there certainly weren't enough sixpences and threepences to go round. Skinner insisted upon sixpence, and Bob Cherry gave him a "dot" on the nose that put an end to his unscrupulous claim. But Snoop secured a sixpence, and had the unparalleled "nerve" to come back again in the crowd and demand another—whereupon Tom Brown and Bolsover major seized him and "chucked" him out. In the scuffle, the table was upset and the coins that had not been distributed rolled about the floor, with eager fags rushing after them.

"Pay up!" roared Coker. "Pay up! Shell out, you young rotters! Shell out."

"We've parted with every blessed cent," howled Bob Cherry. "You can divide it up as you like. There's no more."

"I haven't had my tanner yet!" roared Ogilvy.

"Where's my tuppence?" shrieked Tubb.

"Somewhere on the floor," said Wharton desperately.

"Scramble for it."

"I ain't going to scramble for it—I want my tuppence."

"Oh, go and eat coke."

"Here, you hold on!" shouted Coker, as the six entertainment-promoters started for the door. "You haven't paid up yet."

"I tell you we've got nothing left, idiot!" yelled back Nugent.

"Hold 'em!" shouted Coker. "Turn their pockets out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five and Squiff were surrounded by grinning juniors. Their tempers were at boiling point now, and they hit out recklessly, and several fellows rolled among the seats—but there were too many for them. Some of the Remove rallied to the rescue—but they were hustled back by the ragers. Temple and a crowd of the Fourth were in the lead, with Coker & Co. and a horde of fags. The Famous Five were seized, and rolled over, and their pockets turned inside out. Not a coin was revealed, however, and the claimants who were not satisfied had to go without, or to join in the scramble for the sixpences and coppers that had rolled away, into corners, and under the seats.

"Let us go, you rotters!" roared Johnny Bull, who was pinned down with Temple and Dabney sitting on him.

"No hurry," said Temple, coolly. "It was your turn a little while ago, and now it's ours! This is where you get it in the neck, you spoofer."

"Bump them!" shouted Coker. "They've spoofed us all—passing off that fat rotter on us for a ventriloquist! Bump them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The six chums struggled desperately, but they struggled in vain. The fellows who had been spoofed, whether they felt that they had had their money's worth or not, intended to make things warm for the spoofers—and they did. Six un-

happy youths were bumped on the floor—hard—and then rolled over, and helped towards the door by a couple of score of boots. They picked themselves up and fairly ran for it, with a hooting crowd chasing them out of the Rag.

Dusty and dishevelled, the Co. reached No. 1 Study, and sank down there exhausted and gasping for breath.

"Oh, my hat! What an evening!" groaned Bob Cherry.  
"Any more schemes for raising the wind?" gurgled Johnny Bull. "I think we shall get rich quick at this rate! Ugh! Ow! Oh!"

"The hard-upfulness is better than this," murmured Hurree Singh. "I for one do not want any more schemes for raising the esteemed wind. I prefer to remain stony brokeful."

"It has been a sell, and no mistake," said Harry Wharton. "It was all Bunter's fault, of course—not that we should have made much anyway, and most of the rotters never paid anything to come in. We've had all our trouble for nothing—and a ragging in the bargain."

"I say, you fellows—"  
Six deadly glares were turned upon the fat figure that appeared in the doorway. Billy Bunter had removed his guise of the Professor, though there was still plain traces of grease-paint about his fat face. He blinked at the chums of the Remove through his big glasses.

"I say, you fellows, where's my share?"  
"Your share?" repeated Wharton.

"Certainly. I was to have half the takings. I suppose you've taken about five or six pounds?"

"Ass! We took about ten shillings!"

"Oh, crumbs! Look here, you didn't do your part of the bizney properly! You undertook to act as doorkeepers, and you ought to have seen that they all paid. You haven't carried out your part of the bargain," said Bunter indignantly.

"Have you, you fat villain?" hooted Nugent.

"Yes, I have. I was getting on splendidly, when you fellows interrupted me. Why, I kept the audience in a roar from the very start. I'm a born entertainer."

"You—you—you—"

"I say, you fellows, you're jolly well not going to spoof me, you know. If you've been silly idiots enough to take only ten shillings from a big audience like that, I claim the lot of it. Little enough, too, for the trouble I've taken. You can jolly well hand it all over to me."

"You're welcome to all we've got," grinned Johnny Bull. "The audience asked for their money back, fathead, when they found out it was only a silly porpoise and not a professor at all, ass!"

"You've handed the money back!" gasped Bunter blankly.

"Yes, you fat reptile!"

"You—you rotters! You've swindled me! Look here, I'm going to have my ten bob!" roared Bunter furiously.

"It was agreed—"

"We promised him half what we got," said Bob Cherry, jumping up. "What we've got is a jolly good ragging. We'll pass on half of it to Bunter."

"Good egg! Collar him!"

"Here, I say, you fellows! Hold on! Yah!"

Bump, bump, bump, bump!

"Yow-ow! Help! Murder! Fire! Yow!"

Billy Bunter flew into the passage, and rolled over there, and the study door slammed after him. Bunter did not open it again.

For the rest of that evening the chums of the Remove were suffering from various aches and pains—the only results obtained from that excellent scheme of a ventriloquial entertainment for raising the wind. They were as hard-up as ever. But the next day, when Harry Wharton proposed to hold a council of war to consider a new plan for raising the wind, he was answered by a general groan from the Co.

"Oh, don't!"

"'Nuff's as good as a feast!"

"Fed up, old man!"

"Cheese it!"

"But we're hard up!" exclaimed Wharton.

"The hard-upfulness is great, my worthy chum, but the raisefulness of the wind is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "I, for one, prefer to remain hard-up. Let us bear it grinfully."

"You know what Shakespeare says—"

"Blow Shakespeare!" said Wharton crossly.

"Blow him as much as you like; but he says it's better to bear the ills we have than to fly to others that we know not of. I've had enough of trying to raise the wind. It will make me an old man before my time," said Nugent pathetically.

"I believe my hair's going grey already," said Bob Cherry.

"For goodness' sake let's stay hard up. The cure is worse than the disease—it is really, Wharton, old chap."

"My sentiments exactly," grinned Squiff. "We'll take Inky's advice and bear it grinfully."

And Harry Wharton gave it up.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### All's Well That Ends Well!

"A TELEGRAM for Master Wharton!"  
It was Saturday afternoon, and the chums of the Remove had come out from dinner. It was a half-holiday, and the Famous Five were debating what was to be done. It was upon half-holidays that they felt the pinch of poverty most severely. So far, there had been no break in the clouds on the horizon. The state of hard-up was as bad as ever—in fact, worse than ever. It began to look as if it would come to casting lots for a victim, as Bob Cherry put it, like a shipwrecked crew in an open boat at sea. In this case the victim, of course, was not to serve as a cannibalistic repast—matters had not reached that stage. But it was agreed that if something did not turn up by Monday they should cast lots as to which fellow should sell his bike for the common good.

Since the disastrous entertainment in the Rag, the hard-up juniors had not tried any more schemes of raising money. Bob Cherry had been active, in a way. He had spent some of his spare time looking for Ponsonby of Highcliffe, and had given him a licking. That caused considerable satisfaction among the Famous Five, but of course it had no effect upon the exchequer.

The sight of the telegram for Wharton raised new hope in their breasts. It was possible to send money by telegram, as Bob Cherry instantly suggested. Remittances that came in letters were confiscated at once by Mr. Quelch, who had kindly taken charge of their correspondence for the purpose. But the telegram was brought to Wharton himself, and if by a providential chance it contained a telegraphic remittance, the unfortunate Co. might be set up in funds once more.

"Get it out of sight, quick," murmured Bob. "Don't let Quelchy spot it! Might be something in it—you never know."

Wharton hurried into an empty Form-room with the telegram, before opening it, followed by his chums.

"Now, buck up!" murmured Squiff. "I'm on giddy tenterhooks."

"If it's a remittance, we'll have a picnic, and ask Marjorie and Clara," said Bob gleefully. "You can buzz down to the post-office on your bike and cash it—"

Wharton's face fell as he opened the envelope, and Bob broke off.

"Nothing in it?" he asked.

"It's not a remittance."

"Oh, what rotten luck! What does anybody want to wire you for, at a time like this, excepting to send a remittance?" said Bob crossly. "I call it unfeeling."

"It's from my uncle," said Wharton ruefully, "and he's coming to see me this afternoon. He's wired so that I sha'n't go out before he comes. What rotten, rotten luck! What are we going to do?"

The juniors all looked grave. They had spent part of the last vacation with Colonel Wharton, and enjoyed his hospitality thoroughly. And the good old colonel had been pressed on all sides to come to Greyfriars as soon as he could, and have a feed in the study with the juniors, all the Co. promising him a right royal time if he would only come.

And the veteran colonel, who had a boyish heart with all his sixty years, had said that he would come, and that he would remind him of his own long-past schooldays.

And now he was coming—and the Co. were penniless—and as for the feed in the study, there was nothing in the study to feed a mouse.

"Might have caddied again to-day, and got a few bob," said Wharton. "But there's no time for that now. Uncle may be here any minute."

"Any minute! My hat!"

"And there's nothing—"

"Not a crumb! Not a stiver! Oh, what luck!"

"Borrow something of Mauly for once," said Bob desperately. "On an occasion like this, considering what an old sport the colonel is—"

"Mauly's gone out with Smithy!" groaned Wharton.

"By Jove, so he has! It never rains but it pours! But we must do something. We can't tell your uncle he can't have any tea."

"Leave it to us— My hat!"—Squiff looked out of the window—"there's a johnny looks like an old soldierman coming in now! Gosling is taking off his hat to him!"

"Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle!" as the immortal William put it, grinned Bob Cherry. "There's your avuncular relative, Harry!"

"Go and meet him! Can't let him see us raiding a feed! Buzz off!" exclaimed Squiff.

Harry Wharton, without much hope that the Australian junior would be successful, hurried out of the house to meet

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his uncle in the Close. The juniors watched him from the window, and saw him meet the colonel and pilot him off towards the playing-fields.

"Now what's going to be done?" said Bob Cherry.

"Coker!" said Squiff. "I know Coker's got a good supply in his study cupboard. I saw him shopping with Potter and Greene. We're going to raid it. Coker has raided us in his time, and what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gander. Come on!"

Squiff led the way to the Fifth Form passage. They had seen Coker & Co. in the Close, so they knew that the coast was clear so far as Coker's study was concerned. They entered that study without ceremony, and Squiff opened the cupboard. The juniors' eyes danced as they looked at the contents. Coker had been laying in supplies for a really gorgeous feed that afternoon to several of his friends in the Fifth. He could not have chosen a more suitable date.

"Buck up!" said Squiff.

In three minutes the cupboard was cleared. Five grinning juniors, heavily-laden with excellent things, marched out of Coker's study. Fitzgerald of the Fifth looked out of his study, and gazed at them with wide-open eyes, but they were gone before he could speak.

The plunder was dumped down on the table in Study No. 1. Nugent opened the window, and gave the signal whistle, which reached the ears of Harry Wharton on the cricket-ground. Wharton was surprised to hear it—and very pleased. His chums had evidently lost no time in raiding a feed for the entertainment of Colonel Wharton.

"I suppose you're hungry after your journey, uncle," said Harry demurely. "We've got rather a good spread in the study—ahem!"

The colonel laughed good-humouredly.

"As a matter of fact, I am hungry," he said. "And I have been looking forward to a tea in the study, too!"

"The chaps are getting it ready," said Wharton. "We'll have a stroll round for ten minutes, to give them time, and then go in to tea."

"Right, my boy!"

Meanwhile, the five juniors in Study No. 1 were very busy. They cheerfully raided the other studies in the Remove passage for chairs, crockery, and cutlery. The table was laid, and the good things arrayed upon it made quite an imposing show. Certainly there was a handsome spread ready for the distinguished visitor—the only cloud on the horizon was the possibility that Coker of the Fifth might miss his good things, and guess whither they had gone. In that case, Study No. 1 would undoubtedly receive a visit from the great Coker, and the proceedings would be interrupted. But that, as Squiff remarked, was a risk that had to be run.

The five juniors were busily putting the finishing touches to the preparations, when there was a heavy tread in the passage.

"Here comes the colonel!" said Squiff.

But it was not the colonel! It was Horace Coker of the Fifth! Coker fairly bounded into the study, his face purple. His eyes almost started from his head at the sight of the spread upon the study table.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry with feeble politeness. "Would—would you like to stay to—tea, Coker? You're welcome!"

"The welcomefulness of the esteemed Coker is terrific," murmured Inky.

"You—you young sweeps!" bellowed Coker. "You've been in my study—you've raided my prog—you—you—"

"I say, Coker, old man—"

"You see, old chap—"

"Come in, Potty!" roared Coker. "Come in, Greene! Come in, Fitz! We'll take the grub back, and wreck the study while we're here!"

"What-ho!" said Potter. "Never heard of such awful cheek! Go for 'em!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "The—the fact is, Coker, old man, we—we're sorry; but it's a special occasion, you see, and—and—"

"I'll special occasion you!" roared Coker, rushing at Bob, and grasping him, and waltzing round the table with him. "I—I'll pulverise you! I'll slaughter you! I—I'll—"

"Line up!" roared Squiff. "Kick them out!"

There were five juniors, and three of the Fifth—and the battle that ensued was quite a battle-royal. Bob Cherry and Coker rolled into the fender, struggling wildly, and Potter and Johnny Bull and Nugent crashed into the table and sent it flying. There was a terrific crash of crockery on the floor, and pots of jam, and jars of preserves, and plates of cake and biscuits and nuts and other good things, were mixed up with the trampling feet of the combatants.

It was at this cheerful moment that Harry Wharton arrived with the distinguished guest.

Colonel Wharton looked in at the doorway, with a grim smile on his bronzed face.

The combat ceased. Fifth-Formers and Remove fellows picked themselves up and sorted themselves out, dusty and

untidy, and panting for breath. The study looked as if a cyclone had passed through it.

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "Ahem! I—we were just admistering a little chastisement to these cheeky juniors, sir. We have to keep 'em in order, you know. They've had the awful nerve to raid a feed from my study, so— But I'm sorry you should have found the place like this, sir!" concluded Coker gracefully.

The colonel burst into a laugh.

"I'm sorry, too, that your feed has been raided, Coker," he said. "I'm afraid I was the unconscious cause of it. You young rascal!" he added, turning to his dismayed nephew. "You have raided Coker's feed for me—what?"

"Ahem! We—we often raid old Coker, sir," murmured Harry. "You—you see—"

"Yes, I see! It doesn't look as if the feed will be of much further use to either party," the colonel remarked, with a glance at the wreckage that strewed the study carpet.

"My hat!" said Coker. "You're right, sir. Of course, we didn't know you were coming here, sir. I'd have let the feed go with pleasure!"

"We—we've done our best, Wharton," gasped Squiff. "Our blessed luck is out, all along the line!"

"You—you mustn't think we wanted to stand a feed on the cheap, sir," stammered Bob Cherry. "The fact is, we're all stony, and so—"

"Stony!" said the colonel, looking at Harry. "But you've had your allowance, and I sent you something this week, I believe—"

"Ahem! Yes; but—but it's all gone!" stammered Harry. "We—we've had bad luck—an—an old debt to pay off. It—it's all right—"

"So you've been getting into debt—"

"Not exactly. The fact is—ahem!"

"Better make a clean breast of it," said the colonel, with a smile. "What trouble have you young rascals been getting into?"

There was no help for it—and the whole story came out. The colonel listened in amazement at first, and then he laughed—laughed till the tears ran down his bronzed cheeks.

"Times haven't altered much since I was a boy," the colonel remarked, as he wiped away his tears. "I think you young fellows go it a little more than we did; that's all. I won't give an opinion about what you did to Ponsonby—you seem to have suffered for it pretty severely. Now, I want tea in the study, and you'd better let me stand the tea. And perhaps our friends here"—with a glance towards Coker & Co., who were dusting themselves down energetically, and trying to look as respectable as possible. "Perhaps they will do me the honour to be my guests on this occasion."

"Hear, hear!" said Potter and Greene, at once.

"You do us proud, sir," said Coker gracefully. "We shall be awfully pleased. We don't generally have tea with fags; but on an occasion like this—"

"Exactly," said the colonel. "Now, I will go and give some orders at the tuckshop. I think you may rely upon me to know your tastes, and you young fellows can put the room into—ahem!—a little better order."

"Yes, rather!"

The colonel was judiciously absent for a quarter of an hour, and in that time Study No. 1 was put to rights. Coker & Co., for once, were on the best of terms with the Famous Five; it was agreed on all hands that the raid and the combat should be forgotten; and if Horace Coker's manner was a little lofty and condescending, the juniors did not mind. When the colonel returned, followed by Mrs. Mible's little boy laden with huge parcels, all was merry and bright, as Bob Cherry put it.

Study No. 1 was crowded for that great celebration. There wasn't much room, but there was plenty of everything else, and there was great satisfaction on all sides. Juniors and seniors agreed that Colonel Wharton was an old sport, and a real brick; and when the colonel departed from Greyfriars, Coker & Co., and the chums of the Remove walked down to the station to see him off, and returned to Greyfriars together in a state of unusual cordiality.

And that was not the only result of the colonel's visit; but, before leaving, he had, of course, called upon the Head. And later on, Harry Wharton & Co. learned that he had not forgotten their piteous plight while he was talking to the reverend Head of Greyfriars. The kind old gentleman had settled that troublesome debt for the Famous Five and Squiff, and allowances and remittances were no longer to be confiscated for the purpose; and the chums of the Remove rejoiced exceedingly when they heard the news. Funds had risen once more, and Harry Wharton & Co. were no longer "hard up."

THE END.

(Another grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "Changed by Adversity," 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 Eskimo, 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 the men aboard. Barry, donning his diving-dress, leaves the ship to try and attract the Lord of the Deep with the peculiar bell which Ferrers Lord invented—which can be heard for miles by any submarine fixed with a "receiver" constructed by the millionaire. Barry's attempts are not in vain, and Ferrers Lord, who, with his men, is delighted at the prospect of once more seeing their friends and the Unconquerable, watches the little machine that gives them the position of the signallers. But the needle whizzes madly for a moment, and then swings back to its former position. It has broken.

(Now go on with the story.)

### Good News!

"The instrument has failed us, lads," said Ferrers Lord, "or half of it has failed us. It has brought us good news, so we must not grumble too much. They are alive, and able to signal to us. That in itself is the best of news. Unfortunately, it is still only the blind calling to the blind. We have no idea from what direction the sound came, for our little machine has betrayed us. To work, Honour—to work! We must have another!"

Hal Honour held up three fingers. In three hours he would have completed another instrument. Ferrers Lord turned to Thurston.

"Tell the men, Rupert," he said. "It will cheer them up."

Thurston dashed out to spread the glorious news. Cheer after cheer rang through the ship. Gan-Waga rushed dripping from the swimming-bath, and flung himself into the boatswain's arms.

It was a wet embrace, but Ben Maddock did not slay him on the spot. Then Gan made a dash for Herr Schwartz.

The cook was as delighted as anybody at the joyful news, but he objected to familiarities, and presented a carving-knife at the exuberant Eskimo.

Schwartz—not the cook, but the dog—celebrated the event by eloping with a leg of mutton, and not a soul tried to stop him.

"O-oh, de butterfuls, butterfuls, butterfuls times!" warbled Gan, whose dripping pyjamas were forming a lake on the galley floor. "I losts alls my appertites, but nows I haves some taller cangles, ands we laugh like dis: Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, hoo, hoo, ho-o-o-oh! Fo ole Toms and ole Barrys dey nots comes homes till mornings wid de milkmans. Yah, hah, yah! And dens we laughs like dis. Go it boyeses!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, hoo, hoo, ho-o-o-oh!" roared the whole of the occupants of the galley.

"Do her once more!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, hoo, hoo, ho-o-o-oh!" trilled the chorus. "Hoo, ho-o-o-oh!"

Gan-Waga shuddered, and crawled out on his hands and knees, remarking wittingly that he could get a better laugh out of a box of hairpins and a bottle of pickled onions. After wiping himself down, he borrowed one of Ching-Lung's elaborate silk dressing-gowns, and glided into the saloon.

"Not a sound, Gan!" said Ching-Lung.

Gan-Waga nodded, and found a cigar. Ching-Lung was

still wearing the telephone-cap. The submarine crept along at her lowest speed.

Like one of the lost ones, Prout himself, Gan was utterly confident that they would soon be safe and sound. He stole out again on tiptoe, for the saloon was somewhat too warm.

"Any more news, Gan?" asked several eager voices. "Oh, dere plentifulness newses," said Gan, "but I nots allowed to tells yo'."

They followed him right to the door of the swimming-bath, but Gan was adamant. Then he relented.

"Yo' nebbers lets on dat I tellses? Yo' swearses yo' nots?"

"Yes, yes; we'll never tell."

Gan kept his hand on the door.

"Den I tells yo' in confidences," he whispered solemnly.

"Prout—"

"Yes, yes?"

"Prout he gots a big reds necks," yelled Gan, "and whens he comes backs to-morrers, I'se goings to paints dat necks blues. Ho, ho, ho, hoo, ho-o-o-oh!"

The door shut with a crash on its spring-lock, and from behind its panels came a howl of mocking laughter and a sudden splash.

Gan was safe in his watery bed, and as his shiny head bobbed up, he grinned at Schwartz the dog, and Schwartz the dog, who had dined right royally on the leg of mutton, grinned back at his master, for they were a pair of rollicking rogues together.

Three hours crept by. Ching-Lung had not stirred. Hal Honour entered, and he moved aside to watch the engineer at work with his screwdriver. He was fixing the new instrument he had made.

"Ready!" he said. "The cap!"

The instant Hal Honour adjusted the cap a crash of sound that almost deafened him struck his ears. The needle luzzed round, and stopped quivering. It pointed north-west. The engineer flung out his arm, and nodded at the dial.

"Dead nor'-west and full-speed ahead!" cried Ching-Lung, who had learned to read every gesture.

Hal Honour had not relaxed or tightened a muscle of his inscrutable features, but there was a roaring in his ears like the thunder of waves against cliffs, and a weight of dread upon his heart heavy enough to burst it.

### Jeff Sanday's Startling Declaration.

A tug towed the Fatality back for repairs. Kennedy had been quick enough to cut Big Jeff's bonds and remove the cords before they were hauled by the police-boat. The yacht was flying the Chinese flag, and, had it been possible, Kennedy would have claimed his right, after giving his own version of the affair, to proceed on his journey. With a broken tiller-chain and rather an awkward leak, such a course was impossible. Sanday was unconscious, but Kennedy determined to have the first interview with him. Except for the pilot himself, Chan-song-Pu, and the chief engineer, who had seen nothing of the collision, there was no one aboard who could speak English. Kennedy was in a vile temper.

"Hang the police!" he said to Barber, the engineer. "The police are a bigger nuisance than the damage. How long will it take to patch her up?"

Barber wiped his freckled face with a ball of oily waste. The Chinamen at the pump were crooning a tuneless song as they worked.

"Not more than a day when money isn't any object," he answered. "It's a rum go. Somebody used a file on that chain, Mike!"

"Gammon!"

"Not gammon at all, but a steel file," said Barber. "I've got the bits of the link in my pocket. Queer merchants, these Thames police, and mighty sharp; so sharp that I bagged the filed link quick and smashed another for their benefit. Guess you're wanted. The chap has come round."

"Ol' ri, ol' ri, ol' ri!" said the gentle voice of Chan-song-Pu. "Ol' ri, captain!"

Kennedy hurried below after the stout Celestial. Jeff Sanday was lying in a bunk drinking gruel strongly dashed with brandy. He pointed with the spoon to a broad belt with leather pouches that hung over the back of a chair.

"They've skinned me out," he said. "Every red cent of it's gone. By gum, I was born lucky, wasn't I? I 'ad twelve thousand pound in there."

He went on with his gruel, and then, throwing away the spoon, gulped down what was left, and flung the bowl across the cabin. Kennedy waited.

"Thames water's rotten stuff to swallow," went on Sanday, with a shudder, "specially when you takes it down through your nose like I did. I'll tell you about it. They've broke my bank, but they ain't broke my 'art yet, Mike. There'll be a day when I shall settle up. Why we ain't all been blowed moon-high is what I can't fathom. She was full of dynamite!"

"What an escape!" said Kennedy. "Let's have your yarn."

(Another Grand, Thrilling Instalment Next Week.)