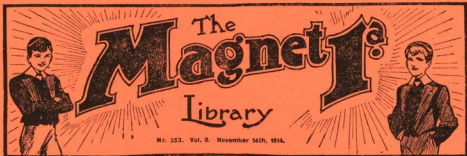


THE REIGN OF TERROR!

A Magnificent New Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



No. 353. Vol. 9. November 14th, 1914.



THE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE!

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

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

**"THE BLACK FOOTBALLERS!"
By FRANK RICHARDS.**

In our next long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, Mr. Quodh, the Remove-master, assumes to a certain extent the role of a tyrant, and comes down very heavily on his charges. In forbidding them from taking part in the usual football practice, he incurs the wrath of the Remove, but when the irate Form-master cancels a forthcoming fixture with St. Jim's the feeling runs very high indeed! Of course, Wharton and his merry men intend to play the match at all costs, and their plan of campaign proves as successful as it is ingenious. After many exciting incidents, Harry Wharton & Co. succeed in the face of authority, and

"THE BLACK FOOTBALLERS"

come through a gruelling contest with flying colours.

A STORY NONE SHOULD MISS.

This Wednesday's issue of our famous companion paper, "The Gem" Library, is one which I am confidently expecting to create a considerable sensation, since the story of St. Jim's deals with the further adventures of Reginald Talbot, who has been known in turn as "The Schoolboy Crackman," "The Toff," and "The Outcast." From the day Talbot came to the old school his progress has been followed with intense interest by thousands of readers, and Mr. Martin Clifford's latest addition to his adventures,

"SAVING TALBOT!"

will make a great hit. Levison, the unscrupulous young rascal who at one time was a member of the Greyfriars Remove, is placed in a very awkward position as a result of his nocturnal revels at low resorts in Rylcombe. It is Talbot who rescues him from disgrace, and in return the cad of St. Jim's does his benefactor a really good service, and plays the man for once. Tom Merry & Co. are amazed to find Levison acting the part of Good Samaritan, and the boy who is instrumental in

"SAVING TALBOT"

advances considerably in their estimation.

My chums should make a special note to secure this sterling yarn. I can give my personal assurance that they will have no cause to regret so doing.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

H. Monk (Wimbledon).—It has been impossible to issue an autumn double number of the "Magnet" for various reasons.

H. M. (Camden Town).—The extreme pressure on our space readers your suggestions impracticable at present. Best wishes.

J. H. S. (Rotherham).—A French dictionary can be obtained from Messrs. Glaisher, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.

Alfred Hayes (Liverpool).—Many thanks for your letter, and for obtaining new readers.

J. Oliver (Freezantle).—Greyfriars is situated in Kent.

"Paddy" (Birmingham).—The use of hot water and soft soap at night is an effective remedy for blackheads.

"A Dublin Reader."—The feelings entertained by the Famous Five towards Marjorie and Clara are solely of a friendly nature.

"A Loyal Girl Reader."—I was very pleased to hear from you. The persons you speak of are purely fictitious.

"Stamp Collector."—Stamps can be detached from envelopes by steaming. Sorry I have no space in this column for an article on stamp-collecting at present.

A. M. (Leigh).—Peter and Alonzo Todd are both 14½ years of age. Alonzo has returned from his holiday.

Maurice Gould and Tony Weller.—An article recently appeared in our Chat page on the subject you mention, and you should refer to this for your information.

"A Weekly Reader" (Ireland).—The one and only way to cure your fading is to acquire complete confidence in yourself; never imagine that others are taking notice of you. Best wishes.

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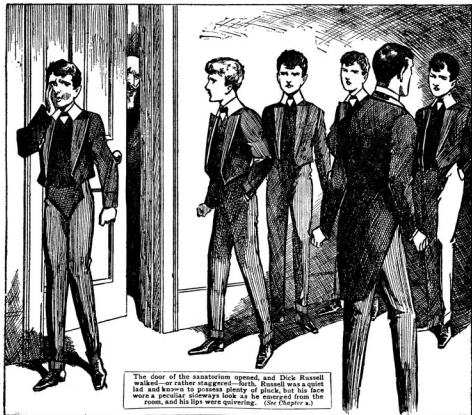
BUY TO-DAY!

The Editor

THE REIGN OF TERROR!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The door of the sanatorium opened, and Dick Russell walked—or rather staggered—forth. Russell was a quiet lad and known to possess plenty of pluck, but his face wore a peculiar sideways look as he emerged from the room, and his lips were quivering. (See Chapter 2.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. An Unwelcome Visitor!

YOW! Groo-g-g-gh! Ugh!" Frank Nugent staggered along the Remove passage at Greyfriars, with his handkerchief clasped lovingly to his mouth.

"Ow! The beast!" he gasped angrily. "The unspeakable cad! I'll make him sit up for this! I feel like the shattered flank of a German regiment! Ow Yarool!"

Biff!

Nugent had been too preoccupied with his verbal attack upon some person unknown to heed where he was going, and Wharton and Bob Cherry hurried round a turn of the passage just too late to avoid the unfortunate Frank, who was sent reeling against the wall.

Nugent pulled up, half-dazed by the shock.

"You dangerous asses!" he panted, still dabbing away with THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

the handkerchief. "You burbling chumps! Can't you see where you're going? I'm damaged enough already!"

"Sorry!" said Wharton. "But we're in a hurry. Why haven't you changed, Frank?"

It was a mild November afternoon, and the great winter game, beloved by the youth of Britain, had come into its own. Wharton, looking very fit, carried a brand-new football under his arm; and Bob Cherry was with him, his sturdy limbs enveloped in a long coat.

"Yes, where are your togs, Frank?" he exclaimed. "We can't wait about all the afternoon. It'll be dark before we get a kick!"

"Blow the togs!" said Nugent savagely.

"Well, that's a nice, polite way to address your uncle. I must say!" said Bob cheerfully. "What on earth's the matter? An hour ago you agreed to get ready to join us at footer; now you're like a bear with a sore head. Been in the wars, or what?"

Nugent withdrew the handkerchief from his mouth, and it came away red.

"The beast!" he muttered fiercely. "I'll get even with him! See if I don't!"

"Get even with whom?" asked Wharton. "Who's been knocking you about? You don't mean to say you've had a licking?"

"Worse than that!"

There was a dangerous gleam in Frank Nugent's eyes—a gleam which only asserted itself when his back was up, for he was not as a rule of a fiery disposition, neither was he the sort of fellow to make a fuss over trifles.

His chums felt genuinely concerned. Of late Nugent had been having more than his share of the ills which flesh is heir to. He had the misfortune to be saddled with a minor; and a young brother at Greyfriars was not exactly looked upon as a boon and a blessing. Certainly Dicky Nugent was not. He was a lasting source of mischief, and Frank often had to suffer through his continued waywardness. It was a case of the sins of the minor being visited upon his older brother.

"Kid been playing the giddy goat again?" suggested Bob Cherry. "Beastly nuisance, minors! If I had one I shouldn't know whether to boil him in oil or merely fry him alive! I suppose the young scamp has been getting into bad company again, and you have been doing the Good Samaritan bizney, and scapping on his account? But there, don't worry so much about that silly young ass! He's hardly worth it! Let 'im follow the broad road that leads to somewhere or other, and come on down to the footer!"

"Yes, come along, Franky!" urged Wharton, taking his chum by the arm. "We must get all the practice we can. Being skipper of the Remove eleven, it's my thankless duty to select the team for our next match—on Saturday, you know. We're up against a team we've never met before—Harley College—and they're hot stuff, by all accounts. It would be too fool to get licked. Buzz along and get into your tops, kid, and Bob and I will wait here for you."

"I don't feel much like footer at the moment, you fellows," said Nugent, with what the novelists describe as a mirthless laugh.

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton testily. "This is not a time for brooding over grievances—real or imaginary. We must all pull together, for the sake of the Remove, and I think you ought to know that by now, Franky."

"Half a mo', Harry! Better let him explain," said Bob Cherry. "I believe he's got something on his mind. Come on, Franky, old son, pour out your woes into our fatherly ears, only don't be too long-winded; and then we'll 'vamoose the ranch,' as Fishy would say, and punt a ball about till darkness bids us disperse. Fire away! Get it off your giddy chest!"

Frank Nugent groped in his pocket, and brought to light what appeared to be a visiting-card.

"Look at that!" he said briefly.

Wharton and Cherry glanced at the card. The printing thereon had been executed with many flourishes, and the wording was as follows:

"MR. THEODORE LUGG,
Dental Surgeon."

"Well!" exclaimed Bob. "Nothing to shed tears over in that. Is there? Visiting-cards have been issued before now, and no bones broken. What's all the giddy tumult about?"

"You don't understand," said Nugent. "I've seen him!"

"Nothing wonderful in that, either. I've seen mightier men than dental surgeons before now. In fact, every time I look in the glass I make the acquaintance of a greater celebrity than this Mr. Lugg. How did you come by this card?"

"I collared it from the table in the sanny."

"Is the Lugg bird at Greyfriars, then?"

"Yes. You'll have the doubtful pleasure of seeing him before long," said Nugent, with a grimace. "He's in the 'sanny now."

"What in the name of all that's wonderful is he doing there?"

"Extracting teeth."

"What?"

Wharton and Cherry gave a jump. "My only aunt!" gasped Bob. "This not only takes the biscuit, but walks off with the whole giddy factory! But how do you know that Mr. Theodore Lugg's here?"

"Didn't I tell you I'd seen the chap?" said Nugent impatiently. "He's a holy terror! The half-hour I've just spent in the sanny was one of the most painful I can remember. The Spanish Inquisition was a feeble form of torture compared to it!"

"But you don't mean to say he's taken some of your teeth out?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, football forgotten for the time being by reason of this startling intelligence.

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"Only one, thank goodness!" said Nugent. "But that was bad enough. The brute would have wrenched three of my back teeth out had I been fool enough to let him. But I told him I drew the line at one, and that if he attempted to go any further I would complain to the Head. That threat seemed to jolly well frighten him, for he let me go without doing anything further."

"But where does the man come from?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Courtfield, I believe. He came at the Head's special request, to examine the teeth of everyone in the Remove and Lower Forms. He's started on the Remove already."

Harry Wharton pondered for a moment.

"Blessed if I knew there was a dentist at Courtfield!" he said loudly.

"Well, that's where he's supposed to have come from," said Frank. "He's making merry up in the sanny, I can tell you; and I shouldn't be surprised to see you chaps sent for before long."

"Oh, crums!" groaned Bob Cherry, in dismay. "This is too thick! Why can't the seniors be made to go through it, the same as we've got to?"

"They're chucking over it," said Nugent indignantly. "In fact, Loder has volunteered his services to this Lugg fellow, and is scouting round for more victims. He's got a whole giddy list of 'em!"

"But it's nothing to be funky about," said Wharton.

"Surely you are given chloroform or something?" "No jolly fear! Lugg doesn't believe in kindness to dumb animals! If you've got any rotten teeth he'll wrench 'em out without ceremony. Look out! Here's Loder!"

Gerald Loder, the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars, came along the passage, with a list in his hand, and a disagreeable smile on his face.

He accosted the chums of the Remove with a vindictive glitter in his hard, steely eyes.

"Wharton! Cherry!" he rapped out. "You're wanted! Come with me at once!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Ruotions in the Remove!

L ODER of the Sixth did not speak politely. He wasted very little politeness on the Lower Fourth. Harry Wharton & Co. were old enemies of his, and nothing gave the unscrupulous prefect so much pleasure as to see them "get it in the neck." He had tried on numerous occasions to bring about the Co.'s downfall, but his nefarious schemes had, like those of a great many mice and men, been wont to "gang agley."

Loder experienced an exultant thrill as he glared at Wharton and Bob Cherry. He felt that he was on a good thing this time.

"Back up!" he said curtly.

"No particular hurry, is there?" asked Wharton leisurely.

"You see, we were just thinking about a game of footer—"

"Footer can wait! Chuck that ball away, Wharton, and follow me at once to the sanatorium. You too, Cherry."

Wharton tossed the ball to Frank Nugent, who gave him a commiserating glance; then he and Bob Cherry followed in the prefect's wake until they reached the sanatorium.

Here a startling sight met their gaze. Half the Remove had assembled on the landing outside, and were lined up against the wall, looking very sheepish. Some had flatly refused to come at first, but Loder's threat of reporting them to the Head had had the desired effect, and they waited in painful suspense for Mr. Theodore Lugg to commence operations. Most of them had been deprived of their football practice, and their feelings towards the aforesaid Mr. Lugg were not exactly amiable.

"You will line up on the landing in this order!" shouted Loder. "Russell is in the room now. Cherry, you will go in next; then Wharton, Brown, Bulstrode, Snopce, Hazeklene, Linsley. The rest of you can stay here and await instructions. And pull yourselves together, for goodness' sake! Anyone'd think you were preparing for execution. White-livered lot of cowards!"

The juniors clenched their fists, but it was not an opportune moment to deal with Loder. Their revenge could wait.

At that moment the door of the sanatorium opened, and Dick Russell walked—or, rather, staggered—forth. Russell was a quiet lad, who was known to possess plenty of pluck, but his face wore a peculiar sideways look as he emerged from the room, and his lips were quivering.

"What did he do?" asked the juniors breathlessly.

Russell paused, and was compelled to clutch at the banisters for support.

"He didn't take any teeth out, thank goodness!" he muttered. "But he's been hacking me about as though the place was a giddy slaughter-house! He's a murderous beast."

Reminds me of Nero at his best. The way he wrenched my jaws about has properly upset my nerves. Ow!"

He turned, and groped his way disconsolately down the stairs.

"Here, I say!" exclaimed a harsh voice, as the door of the dentist's room opened, and an irate face was thrust forth. "Am I to be kept waiting here all day? Procrastination, the port tells us, is the thief of time. Send the next boy in at once—or—Loder!"

The prefect scowled, and, grasping Bob Cherry by the shoulders, pushed him through the open doorway without ceremony.

"When Cherry comes out, Wharton, you will take his place without delay," he said, with ill-concealed pleasure. "You kids have only yourselves to blame. You gorge on coffee and all manner of vile stuff calculated to produce bad teeth, and this is where you get it in the neck!"

"Shut up, Loder!" growled Johnny Bull.

The prefect frowned.

"None of your cheek, Bull!" he said. Johnny Bull subsided with a grunt. In ordinary circumstances the juniors would have closed in on Loder, and, prefect or no prefect, would have smitten him hip and thigh—wiped the floor with him, in fact. But they felt a curious sense of helplessness in awaiting their fate at Mr. Lugg's heavy hand. True, there were no wild yells issuing from the interior of the room, such as a less hardy youth than Bob Cherry might have emitted. But, all the same, the Removites felt that Bob was experiencing a stormy time, and that their turn was to come.

"No footer practice to-day!" growled Balstrode. "This is a bit too thick! Why can't we have our teeth seen to elsewhere, if they're as bad as the Head makes out?"

"I can't think what the old man was about in letting such a brute come here," said Tom Brown. "Our people pay for us to be at Greyfriars, but I don't think tooth-pulling is included in the extras. It's a rotten shame! And apart from that, it lowers the dignity of the Remove, having to come up here like delicate infants! Temple & Co. will crow over it no end, and Coker's bound to make a song about it. Myself, I'd half a mind not to go in."

Loder stepped forward.

"If you attempt to clear off, Brown," he said, in his blustering manner, "I shall report you to your Form-master!"

"All right, Loder; keep your hair on!" said the New Zealander junior cheerfully. "I'll go in and face the music like the rest. Besides, I'm curious to see what this Lugg fellow's like. I didn't see him when he poked his napper out just now, but to judge from his voice, he ain't over-gentle. Wish Bob Cherry would buck up. He's been in the room over a quarter of an hour already."

"I shall jolly well write home to my pater about this!" whined Snood.

"Shut up!" said Wharton contemptuously. "It's rotten, we know; but we must grin and bear it."

"Hear, hear!" echoed Mark Linley. "At least, we must bear it, if we can't grin. Hallo, here's Bob!"

Bob Cherry made his exit from the torture-chamber with a wrathful countenance. He had obviously been getting it "in the neck." Usually Bob's was a face through which a genial soul beamed forth upon the world. But this was one of those rare occasions when his temper was up, and it would have fared ill with anyone who crossed his path at that moment.

Bob did not heed the inquiring glances of his fellows, or Loder's unpleasant grin—which was perhaps fortunate for the prefect. At the head of the stairs he turned and shook his fist menacingly at the door of the dentist's room.

"Boss!" he said dramatically. "You'll suffer for this!" "How many has he pulled out?" asked Balstrode sympathetically.

"None," was the reply. "I rather wish he had. It would have been painful but swift. He's been stopping up some of my back molars—made out they were hollow, and wanted star-filling, but I knew jolly well they were all right. However, he wouldn't be-brought to reason, and set his filling machine going. I wouldn't mind so much if he had worked scientifically, but he was as clumsy as they make 'em. Doesn't seem to be an experienced dentist at all. He handled the blessed machine like a nunny."

"I don't see that you've got much to grumble at," said Tom Brown. "Your teeth are still intact, and I reckon you ought to be devoutly thankful. We may not get the same luck."

"Thankful!" echoed Bob. "I like that! Fat lot to be thankful for—two minutes with a brute like old Lugg! The sight of his face was sufficient torture. I jolly well wish he had pulled a tooth out! It would have given me an excuse to lash out and slaughter him!"

"That's enough, Cherry!" said Loder sharply. "Mr. Lugg is a gentleman, and if you are not more careful with your words you'll hear from me!"

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"Rats!" said Bob wrathfully. "Lugg's no more of a gentleman than you are!" He shook his fist once again at the door of the dentist's room. "Look out for yourself!" he cautioned, addressing the unconscious Mr. Lugg. "You'll only have yourself to blame if you're ragged bald-headed! You've sown the wind, and now you can reap the giddy whirlwind!"

And Bob Cherry tramped angrily away down the stairs.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wharton Puts His Foot Down!

MEANWHILE, Harry Wharton had passed into the room, where the amiable Mr. Lugg was engaged in gleaning over his array of instruments. The dentist was a repulsive-looking man at close quarters. His malicious eyes and scrubby beard made Wharton loathe him at first sight, and his thin lips were twisted into a mocking smile. Evidently he loved his vocation.

The room reeked like a pharmacy, and the fearful and wonderful instruments which Mr. Lugg was fussing made Wharton shudder. A large, cumbersome chair had been placed near the window, and on a side-table was a tabulated list of the Remove scholars, so that none should flee the wrath to come.

Wharton took in all these details, and clambered into the uncomfortable chair with a heavy heart.

"Aha!" said Mr. Lugg, turning to survey the new arrival. "What is your name, young man?"

"Harry Wharton."

"Oh, yes! You are the head boy in the Remove Form, I understand?"

"That is so, sir."

"Indeed! Well, well; some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them. I suppose you are to be numbered among the latter. Now we'll proceed. Open your mouth—wider—wider yet. That's right."

Mr. Lugg then made a lengthy examination, and looked very grave.

"Your teeth are in a rather bad state," he observed.

"I shouldn't have thought so, sir. I did have two which were decayed, but they were extracted a short time ago by the dentist in Friarisle."

"Ah! A most incompetent man," said Mr. Lugg sadly—"most incompetent! He overlooked several serious defects in the back teeth. It is essential that one of them should be extracted without delay, and two others must be star-filled, for they are hollow, and will certainly decay if not seen to. I will set to work at once."

Wharton shuddered. He was not a coward, but the man's callous manner unnerved him. There are certain individuals who, while prepared to face shot and shell and run grave risks for the sake of their country, draw the line at having their teeth tampered with. Persons of wonderful fortitude and endurance outside the dentist's room have been known to quail with frightened apprehension when inside the dread sanctum. Of such was Harry Wharton. He sat back in the chair with a beating heart.

"We will take the star-fillings first," said Mr. Lugg pleasantly. "It is a somewhat tedious operation, but if you keep still and the machine works all right, we'll have 'em completed in half an hour."

He jerked the filling machine up to the chair.

Be-r-r-r!

Wharton experienced a sharp, grinding sensation, which seemed to shoot through his whole system, and it needed all his pluck to refrain from crying out. He recalled a passage from Shakespeare, which he had once recited in the Remove Dramatic Society:

"Diseases, desperate grown,
By desperate appliance are relieved
Or not at all."

Mr. Lugg was seeing to the "desperate appliance." "There!" he exclaimed at length. "Now we'll remove this troublesome johnnie at the back. Dear me, what a formidable fang! Still, we'll have him, my boy, if we have to dig till Doomsday—eh?"

Wharton did not answer. He had not yet recovered from the shock of the star-filling.

The whole thing seemed repulsive to the junior. His head swam, and as he thought of the distant playing-fields he felt inclined to wade in and slaughter Mr. Lugg.

"Now," said that individual, advancing with the forceps. "Pray keep as quiet as you can."

Wharton shifted uncomfortably in his seat. He resented

this treatment at the hands of a stranger, and commenced breathing threatenings and slaughter against the Head for ever having engaged such a man. Moreover, Harry did not relish the idea of pursuing the ups and downs of school life in a toothless condition. The star-fillings were all right so far as they went; they would cause no harm, at any rate. But to be deprived of a tooth which he knew to be perfectly sound, was quite a different matter. It was another form of robbery with violence.

"He'd better leave me alone," thought Wharton grimly. Mr. Lugg seemed to be aware of what was working in the boy's mind, for he frowned.

"No nonsense!" he cautioned. "If you scowl at me in that manner, things will go hard with you!" "You sha'n't touch me, sir!" said Wharton firmly. "I don't consider you have a right to take our teeth out. It wouldn't be so bad if we were placed under chloroform or something, but the way you are going about it is sheer butchery."

"Boy," shouted Mr. Lugg, "are you trying to give me important hints on how best to manage my own business?" "No," said Wharton, between his teeth; "I simply warn you that if you come a step nearer I shall hit out!"

Mr. Theodore Lugg spluttered with wrath. That he would meet with defiance from a mere schoolboy was a contingency he had not provided for. He stood and glared at Harry Wharton like a tiger, but only for a moment. Then he strode towards his would-be victim.

In an instant Harry Wharton leaped from the chair, and hit out hard and true with his left. The blow caught Mr. Lugg full in the chest, and hurled him back against his filling machine. There was a terrific crash as the machine and its owner came to the floor together, and Wharton, now fully roused, stood over the prostrate dentist with blazing eyes.

"Get up and leave some more!" he cried. Mr. Lugg declined the invitation. Wharton's blow had been a severe one, and it was some time before the dentist realised that he was still on earth. After a time, however, he recovered his breath, and staggered frantically to his feet.

"Wretch!" he stuttered. "Do you realise the enormity of the offence you have just committed? That was a most unprovoked assault, perpetrated with malice aforethought! I shall report you to Dr. Locke, and you will be made to suffer for this, you—you young hooligan! I will demand—"

But Wharton did not wait to hear more. With a glare of contempt, he turned on his heel, and strode from the room.

The landing outside was thronged with Removites as Harry Wharton made his appearance, for Loder had gathered them in from the four corners of the school, so to speak. The two Todds and Dutton and Billy Bunter, commonly known as the Four Freaks, were waiting their turn with the rest; and not one of the large assembly of juniors wore a cheerful countenance.

Vernon-Smith and Bolsover, and one or two of the bolder spirits, leaned defiantly against the wall; but they looked very grim.

Sidney Snoop and the others of his kidney were actually snivelling; while Billy Bunter, whose teeth were by no means a typical illustration of the proverb about cleanliness being next to handkerchief, was frantically rubbing them with his pocket-handkerchief.

There was a stir as Harry Wharton came out on to the landing; but, not wishing to pose as an injured martyr, Harry vouchsafed no reply to the excited queries which arose, but strode down the stairs with a clouded brow.

Neither had he seen fit to tell the other fellows what had occurred in the dentist's room. They would find out soon enough when Gosling, the school-porter, hoisted him on his shoulders for a public flogging, Wharton thought bitterly. In the meantime, he would say nothing, except perhaps to his intimate chums.

"This man Lugg's a tartar," he said to himself; "and why the Head permitted him to come here is beyond me! Such a thing is without parallel at Greyfriars, and I reckon there'll be ructions before long!"

And Wharton went on his way with malice and all uncharitableness in his heart—so far as Mr. Theodore Lugg was concerned, at any rate.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter in a New Role!

WHEN Harry Wharton entered Study No. 1 he found Cherry and Nugent seated before a blazing fire—one of the first signs heralding the approach of winter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, passing in the act of grappling with the poker. "You look THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

as though you've just returned from a giddy funeral! Been through the mill?"

"To a certain extent, yes; but not more so than Mr. Lugg."

"What's happened, then?"

Wharton described the scene in the dentist's room.

"I hit out straight from the shoulder," he said simply. "The fellow got on my nerves, and I was forced to do something. He'd have reduced me to a toothless skeleton if I hadn't clipped him. I don't know if he's at all keen on astronomy, but I made him see stars—myriads of 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry rose to his feet, and executed a war-dance on the study carpet.

"Harry, old son, you're worth your weight in gold!" he chuckled. "Come to my bosom and weep!"

"Ow!" gasped Wharton, as his humorous chum clasped him in a fond embrace, and commenced waltzing him round the study. "Hands off, Bob, you ass! Chuck it!"

Bob Cherry desisted at last, and Wharton staggered into a chair, gasping for breath.

"I'm glad you clipped the wings of the Lugg bird," said Frank Nugent. "He was asking for it badly, and his blood will be on his own giddy head!"

Wharton looked doubtful.

"He's bound to report it to Dr. Locke," he said, "and it strikes me I shall get it in the neck!"

"I expect he'll keep mum," said Bob Cherry hopefully.

"You see, it would be rather infra dig. to have to confess to the Head that one of the Removites bowled him over. And even if he does report you, you can face the music. After all, it's worth a flogging to be able to use old Lugg as a punching-ball! Don't you think so, Frank?"

"Rather!"

"Yes, it's all right for you bouncers!" said Wharton, laughing. "Your hides are quite safe. But let's chuck talking about Lugg. He makes me feel ill!"

"What shall we do?" queried Nugent. "It's too early for tea, and too late for a game of foote!"

"I've got a fearfully stiff task on hand," said Wharton, "and you fellows can help me if you like!"

"What is it?"

"The team to play against Harley on Saturday has to be drawn up, and it's the most thankless job that ever was. Only eleven chaps in the Remove will be satisfied when the list is posted up. The rest will be in a state of seething discontent. We shall have chaps like Bunter grumbling because they're excluded from the forward line!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

A fat face, adorned with a pair of spectacles, peered into the study.

"Talk of angels," said Bob Cherry, "and you're bound to hear their giddy wings fluttering! Why aren't you at the dentist's, Billy?"

"He's gone," said Bunter, closing the door and advancing into the room.

"Gone!" exclaimed the three juniors together.

"Yes. Wharton was the last chap to be dealt with. He sent for Loder, and told him he was going, as he was indisposed."

The chums exchanged glances, and Bob Cherry chuckled.

"We've got rid of the old tyrant quicker than I thought!" he exclaimed. "Good riddance! No more dentistry for me, thank goodness! It's too gruesome!"

"Are you sure he's really gone?" asked Nugent doubtfully.

"It certainly seems like it."

"But he might come back."

"No jolly fear! He'd get too warm a reception if he did. I fancy we've seen the last of Theodort Lugg!"

"I say, you fellows—"

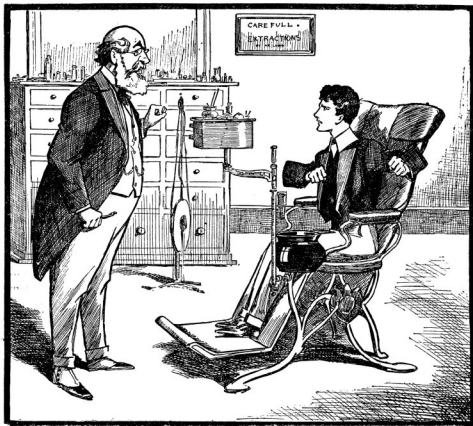
Billy Bunter blinked at the trio through his big spectacles. "No grub here?" said Bob Cherry promptly. "You've come to the wrong shop, Billy. Try some other study, where the fellows are a little more innocent. You've got an appetite equaling that of a blessed hen-costrifer, and if we give you a tea now we shall be set of grub for the rest of the week! Good-bye, Bluelish! Mind the step!"

"Half a mo!" said Harry Wharton. "Might as well give him a tart or two, as he's the bearer of such good tidings. You'll find some on the top shelf of the cupboard, Bunter!"

"I don't want any tarts, thanks!" said Billy Bunter.

"What!"

The three Removites gazed at each other blankly. They could scarcely believe their ears. Bunter—the fat, greedy comorant, who devoured sufficient food in one day to keep the British forces for a month—was actually refusing the primest jam-tarts Mrs. Mumble supplied. Wonders would never cease.



"Boy," shouted Mr. Lugg, "are you trying to give me impertinent hints on how best to manage my own business?" "No," said Wharton, between his teeth. "I simply warn you that if you come a step nearer I shall hit out!" (See Chapter 3.)

"You—you— What did you say?" gasped Bob Cherry feebly.

"I said I didn't want any tarts. I hope I've got a soul that rises above eating and drinking!" said Bunter loftily.

"My hat!"

"What I came in to see you about," Bunter went on, addressing Harry Wharton, who lay back in his chair, utterly stupefied, "was the match with Harley!"

"Oh!"

"Yes. I've been thinking the matter over for a long time, and I've come to the conclusion that what the Remove needs is a really first-class centre-forward!"

Wharton sprang to his feet.

"Do you mean to infer that I'm rotten, then?" he asked ominously.

"Oh, no; certainly not! I should never dream of such a thing!" said Bunter, edging nervously towards the door.

"You're quite good, you know, Wharton; but I think I know someone who would fill the position better!"

"Really! Why hasn't he been selected before, then? Did he play for the Remove last season?"

"No. Personal jealousy on the part of the other fellows kept him out of the team. But he's a stunning player. You should see him flash down the wing!"

"What, the centre-forward?"

"Ahem! I mean—that is to say—you see——"

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"I see you're a blessed Ananias!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"If this chap's so dazzling as you make him out to be, I should be glad of his name," said Wharton. "I don't want to overlook anyone with a decent claim to the position. Do you mean Smithy?"

"No."

"Whom are you referring to, then, for goodness' sake?"

"Perhaps he means Russell!" suggested Nugent. "He's a pretty good, you know, but not a bit up to your standard, Harry."

"Flattery, thy name is Nugent!" said Wharton, laughing. "I don't mean Russell at all," said Bunter scornfully. "Neither is nor Smithy is in the same street with the chap I refer to!"

"Who is it, then?" shouted Wharton and Cherry together, a horrible suspicion beginning to form itself in their minds.

Bunter bowed as low as his pottish frame would allow.

"You have the honour to be addressing him now?" he said.

"What?"

"I think the time has come," continued Bunter coolly, "to bury all ill-feeling and petty jealousy, and play the game square!"

"My hat!"

"Great pip!"

NEXT MONDAY— "THE BLACK FOOTBALLERS!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"This is the absolute giddy limit!" The juniors gazed at Bunter in amazement. That this fat, greedy porpoise, whose eating powers were a byword among the people, could fancy himself as a centre-forward, was astounding. But, astounding or not, it was nevertheless true.

Wharton was the first to recover from the shock. His next command was brief and explicit.

"Bunk!" he said, pointing to the door.

Bunter looked resentful.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Scout!" thundered the three juniors together.

The Owl of the Remove backed towards the door.

"You're a set of rotters!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"You've got no sense of fair-play!" The team is composed of your personal friends, Wharton, and— Ow!"

Bob Cherry strode forward, and gripped the fat junior by the collar.

"Bump him, you chaps!" he said. "I'm fed up! Get hold of his legs, Franky, old man! I'd bump him alone and unaided, but he's got too much overweight! Now, then! One, two, three!"

"Ow! You! Yareeh!" roared Bunter. "You beastly esk! I wouldn't play now if you went down on your hands and knees to me! You're a set of—"

"Bump!"

"Ow! Groog-g-gh! Stoppit! You!"

"Once more!" sang out Bob Cherry cheerfully. "This'll give us an appetite for tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo, you rotters!" shrieked Bunter. "I'll tell Mr. Quelch, and the Head as well, you beastly bullies! I'll go and fetch Loder, and ask him to—"

"Bump!"

Wild yells arose as Billy Bunter came to earth for the third time, and then three pairs of well-shod feet proceeded to beat him forth into the passage, where he lay, gasping and squirming.

"Exit, Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry, closing the door.

And the centre-forward position remained unchanged.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Many Claimants!

KNOCK!

Knock, knock! Harry Wharton looked up from the list he was compiling, and growled. Cherry and Nugent echoed his growl.

"I'm fed up with those blessed interruptions!" exclaimed Wharton. "A chap wants peace and quiet for an occupation like this. Who's to play in goal? Bulstrode or Hazeldene?"

Knock, knock, knock!

"If he doesn't chuck it I'll, go out and slaughter him!" growled Bob Cherry. "Lemme see! I think Bulstrode should be given the goalie's place. With regard to the back—"

Knock, knock!

The juniors rose to their feet with one accord. Bob Cherry dived for the poker, and Nugent availed himself of the toast-fork.

"Steady on, you chaps!" said Wharton. "Might as well see who it is before proceeding to assault and battery."

Knock, knock, knock!

"Come in!" bellowed three voices in unison.

The door opened, admitting no less a person than Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Oh, erumps!" grunted Bob Cherry. "It's Alonzo! No time to be sermonised now! Louzy, old son, scout! You can teach us the error of our ways another time. Close the door after you!"

"My dear Cherry—"

"Sheer off!"

"Vamoose!"

"Absquatulate!"

"But really, my dear fellows" murmured the gentle Alonzo. "I have called in to see you on a most pressing matter. It admits of no delay."

Wharton sighed wearily.

"Might as well let him ramble on," he said, sitting down with an air of resignation. "He's like the brook in the poem—he goes on for ever. But look here, Toddy, old man, for once in a way please be brief! We're busy."

"Quite so, my dear Wharton," said Alonzo, advancing into the study. "Brevity, my Uncle Benjamin once informed me, is the soul of wit. I will condense the terms of my communication in a manner befitting to the period of time at your disposal."

"Cut the cackle and get on with the washing!" growled Bob Cherry.

Alonzo looked distressed.

"Such vulgar phrases, my dear Cherry," he observed, "are scarcely in keeping with one of your classic temperament. I consider—"

"Are you coming to the point, or would you prefer to go out on your neck?" asked Nugent ominously.

"Really, Nugent—"

Harry Wharton took out his watch.

"We'll give you three minutes," he said graciously. "Say what you've got to say, and get out!"

"I consider that three minutes is totally inadequate, bearing in mind the importance of the subject on which I would like to converse with you. In these cases nothing should be done rashly. My Uncle Benjamin once impressed upon me—"

"One minute!" said Wharton.

"My dear Wharton, I implore you not to be so utterly reckless," pursued Alonzo. "A word hurriedly spoken has often gravely affected the issues of a lifetime, and this is a matter of considerable importance, not only to myself, but to the Remove Form, and, in fact, the whole of Greyfriars. Careful consideration and deliberation," said my esteemed and highly-respected uncle—"

"Two minutes! I should advise you to get it off your chest!" hinted Wharton.

Alonzo Todd glanced round him wildly. Nugent was armed with the toast-fork, and seemed inclined to thrust it into the intruder's body at a moment's notice; Bob Cherry brandished the poker aloft; and, under the circumstances, Alonzo seemed destined to be cut off untimely from a harsh and unsympathetic world. He realised that he would further his own safety by plunging into the subject at once.

"It is about the match with Harley College—" he began desperately.

"Oh, I see!" said Wharton. "We'd better give him a few minutes, you chaps, as it's in a good cause. He probably wishes to act as linesman."

"I am not cognisant, my dear Wharton, of the full meaning and derivation of the word 'linesman.' I assure, however, that it refers to a scholar who is kept under detention and instructed to write passages from Virgil. If my supposition is correct, I venture to suggest that the term is scarcely applicable. A better definition would be 'linesboy.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows, I fail to observe any cause for ribaldry," murmured Todd mildly.

"Oh, Toddy, Toddy!" sobbed Bob Cherry, falling back in his chair and kicking up his heels in a paroxysm of merriment. "You'll bring down my curly locks in sorrow to the grave! Don't—don't keep on gassing in that strain, as you love me! I shall expire on the carpet!"

"I assure you," said Alonzo, blinking reproachfully at the humorous Bob, "I was merely seeking for information on a certain point. One should never be backward in acquiring knowledge, even though it be imparted by persons less steady than one's self. My Uncle Benjamin—"

"Give Benjy a rest!" implored Wharton. "We are waiting to know your object in coming here. You've been in this study over ten minutes, and we are none the wiser."

"He's wound up like a blessed alarm-clock when he once starts!" growled Nugent. "It needs the patience of half a dozen Jobs to listen to his never-ending jaw!"

"I consider you are most impolite, Nugent," said Alonzo. "However, to save further unnecessary wrangling, I will state in a nutshell the object of my visit. I am in receipt of a letter from my generous and good-hearted uncle—"

"Oh, lor!" growled Bob Cherry.

"In which he states that I am to devote more attention to the athletic branches of school life. He especially desires me to become pedicant at the game of football."

The juniors grinned. Alonzo Todd playing football would be a sight for the gods.

"With that object in view," continued Alonzo, "I have come hither to state my intention of playing for the Remove on Saturday in the engagement with Harley College."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Three loud and distinct guffaws followed Alonzo's statement.

"You really mean it?" stuttered Wharton at length.

"You are quite resolved to have a place in the Remove eleven on Saturday?"

"Most decidedly, my dear Wharton."

"Has it not occurred to you, you burbling chump, that the

ANSWERS

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captain of the team has a say in the matter? Supposing he decides to leave you out?"

"That he would never do," said Alonzo promptly, "if he were a person of tact and common sense. I have been perusing the rules of the game, and shall be pleased to take up the question of outside-left."

"You'll be left outside, you mean," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you really serious about this, Toddy?" inquired Wharton.

"Certainly! I gather from the book of rules that football is a very simple game. One has to apply one's foot to the ball, and repeat this process until stamps are drawn."

"Well, I'll apply our feet to you if you don't stop being such an idiot," said Nugent. "Stamps aren't used in football, you silly ass!"

Alonzo raised his eyebrows in mild surprise.

"Are you sure of that, my dear Nugent?"

"Yes, my dear idiot!"

"Well, well, it is immaterial. Suffice it to say that I shall take up my position at outside-left on Saturday."

"You jolly well won't!" said Wharton warmly. "Smithy's outside-left, and there are a great many more chaps with decent claims to that position. I'm sorry to have to be so candid, Toddy, but I'd only come to you as a last resource—in fact, I'm not sure whether I shouldn't give Bunter the preference. I don't know which of you is the bigger idiot. I'm rather inclined to call it a dead heat. We'd lose the match, anyway."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I am not to play?" asked Todd mournfully.

"No; if you want the Remove to keep up its glorious reputation."

"I am most disappointed," said Alonzo. "You little dream what fatal results may accrue from your rash decision. Pray alter your mind, my dear Wharton, ere it is too late."

Wharton pointed to the door.

"Time's up!" he said. "We've listened to your gassing for nearly half an hour. Now leave us in peace."

"This will be a great blow to Uncle Benjamin," sighed Alonzo. "He stated in his letter that every British boy should devote himself heart and soul to the pursuit of athletics, especially in these troublous times, when we are surrounded with wars and rumours of wars."

"Will you leave this study in peace, or in pieces?" asked Nugent, fingering the prongs of the teasing fork.

"I suppose I must retreat," said the aspirant for athletic honours. "But I deeply regret not being able to assist you in this momentous engagement. I fear the Remove will lose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you will live to regret your present decision, Wharton," Todd went on, unheeding. "I have a great desire to become proficient in this somewhat rough game, which my Uncle Benjamin declares is a splendid thing for my constitution. He says—something to my surprise, I must admit—that it is a noble and manly form of recreation."

"Manly cock!" growled Nugent. "Sheer off, Toddy, or you'll get it in the neck!"

"My dear fellows," said Alonzo, "let me linger awhile to point—"

"Come on, you chaps; out with him!"

Three pairs of hands seized the unfortunate Duffer, and he was dragged unceremoniously to the door.

"Ow! My dear fellows—"

Bump!

With a wild yell, Alonzo went whirling forth into the passage, where he collided heavily with Bolsover major, who was about to enter the study.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bolsover, as he fell backwards on the floor, with Alonzo's arms clanging lovingly round his neck.

"Gerroff, you silly ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton & Co., watching the struggling mass on the floor. "Go it, Bolsover!"

"Stuck to him, Toddy!"

"Bolsover, old son," he admonished, "this is where you but in due course he managed to free himself, and scowling fiercely at the prostrate Todd, he commenced to prod him vigorously along the passage with his heavy boots."

"Yow!" moaned the Duffer. "Yaroooh! My dear Bolsover, pray desist! You are hurting me!"

"I meant to!" said Bolsover grudgingly, implanting a final kick in the vicinity of Alonzo's ribs. "Perhaps you'll be more careful next time."

"Ow! Oh dear! I am severely hurt. Yow!" gasped Todd, rising slowly to his feet.

He was seen to limp painfully along the passage to his own study, his voice raised in tones of wild anguish.

"Well, Bolsover," said Harry Wharton, when Todd had retired. "Do you wish to speak to me?"

"I do," growled Bolsover.

"Then be brief. We're jolly busy!"

"I won't keep you a second. I suppose my name's down to play against Harley on Saturday?"

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"You suppose wrong, then!" said Wharton curtly. "It isn't!"

Bolsover scowled.

"I see you're still determined to be down on me," he said bitterly. "It's always the same—you select the team from your own friends, and presently you'll be surprised to receive a series of lettings!"

"Rot!" said Wharton sharply. "You know jolly well you'd play if I thought you were up to the mark. But there's a better man for the place, so you must drop out. And if you say anything more about favouritism, there'll be trouble."

"What I said was true, and you know it," blustered Bolsover. "It's heastly favouritism, and it's time you chaps learnt how to play the game!"

That was the last straw. The juniors laid hold of the burly Remove, and yanked him into the study. Bob Cherry produced a cricket-stump.

"Shove him across the table!" he exclaimed.

Nothing loth, Wharton and Nugent hoisted their victim on to the study table, and Bob Cherry proceeded to wield the stump with much gusto.

"Bolsover, old son," he admonished, "this is where you get it in the neck. You have behaved like a beastly cad" whack!—and must be taught"—whack! whack!—the error of your ways." Whack, whack, whack!

The dust rose from Bolsover's trousers in a cloud, and he strove to yell, but Frank Nugent's hand was clapped over his mouth.

"There; I think that will do!" panted Bob Cherry, throwing aside the stump. "It's no more than he deserves. Now you can cheer off, you cad!"

Bolsover, in too bruised a condition to retaliate, slunk from the study, writhing and squirming. Bob Cherry possessed a very strong arm, a fact to which Bolsover could bear excellent testimony.

"Now," said Nugent. "we'll complete the formation of the Remove team. Goal, Bolstrode; backs, Johnny Bull and Tom Brown. They're all right, I suppose?"

Wharton nodded.

"Half backs, Bob Cherry, Peter Todd, and Mark Lindley."

"Good! That's stunning! Now we've got the forwards to consider, and it's no easy matter. Inky's away from Greyfriars for a few days. Who shall take his place?"

Nugent pondered thoughtfully for a moment.

"Let me see," he mused. "There's Ogilvy, Micky Desmond, Morgan, Russell, and a whole giddy crowd of 'em worth the place. It strikes me this is a case which calls for the judgment of Solomon. They can't all play!"

"No; that's perfectly obvious."

Knock, knock! Rat-tat-a-tat!

"Hang it all!" muttered Wharton, running his fingers distractedly through his hair. "Are we never going to get any peace?"

Bob Cherry sprang to the door and flung it open. Instantly half a dozen Removes trooped into the study.

"Well, what do you fellows want?" asked Wharton testily.

"I want to know—"

"I came to find out—"

"I looked in to see—"

"Dry up!" roared Bob Cherry. "It's like a blessed Tower of Babel! Can't you speak one at a time?"

"Faith, and it's Orl! be the spokesman!" exclaimed Micky Desmond. "Am I playing on Saturday, Wharton dhrilnt!"

"The team is not yet made up," said Wharton. "At least, the forward line isn't."

"You've decided on the half-back line?" queried Morgan.

"Yes."

"That's all right, then," said the Welsh boy, turning to quit the room. "I'm centre half, of course?"

"No, Peter Todd is."

"What?"

"You heard what I said. Now clear out. I'm busy. No time to bandy words."

"I reckon it's a howling shame!" hooted Morgan. "Fancy putting a freak like Todd in the most difficult position on the field!"

"Peter Todd is not a freak," said Wharton. "He is the best man available. I did think of including you at outside-right, Morgan, in Hurree Singh's place, but since you've cut up so rusty, you can stay out of the team altogether."

"What about me?" demanded several voices in unison.

"I suppose I'm playing?"

Wharton rose to his feet and indicated the door.

"The list will be posted up this evening," he said briefly.

"Until then you must curb your curiosity."

"But, I say—"

"Hold on, Wharton—"

"I'll give the lot of you three seconds to get clear of this

study!" said Wharton. "One, two, three! Out with 'em, boys!"

Although outnumbered, Harry Wharton & Co. held the advantage, inasmuch as they were fully armed. A poker, a cricket-stump, and a teasing-fork, in the hands of determined individuals, will work wonders. The would-be members of the Remove team were soon compelled to beat an inglorious retreat.

Harry Wharton resumed his seat, panting. "We'll put a stop to this giddy in-rush of applicants!" he exclaimed. "Hand me the pen and ink and a sheet of paper, Frank!"

Nugent did so, and a few minutes later the following notice was pinned outside the door of the study:

"The Remove Eleven for the Harley match on Saturday is complete. All future applicants will be ejected forthwith on their necks!
(Signed) HARRY WHARTON."
"Captain."

There were no more callers at Study No. 1 that evening.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Painless Extractions!

AFTER tea two interesting declarations appeared on the school notice-board, round which the Removites surged in a seething mass. The first notice was the Remove team to meet Harley on the following Saturday, and it had the unanimous approval of eleven fellows—those immediately concerned. The rest of the Remove were obviously disinterested.

Bolover major, by sheer brute strength, pushed his way through the crowd of fellows, and effectively marred their view. He yet possessed a lingering hope that his own name would be included, and scowled fiercely when he found it conspicuous by its absence.

"What's the team, Bolover? Am I playing?" clamoured half a dozen voices.

"Find out!" growled Bolover surlily. "And he strode from the notice-board with a frowning brow. Dick Russell sprang to the fore, and clambering on to the oblique shoulders of Micky Desmond, commenced to bawl out the names to the feverish crowd, after the manner of a town-crier.

"Goal, Bulstrode!"
"Hoary!" observed that worthy. "That's all I wanted to know. Wharton's getting wise in his old age. He couldn't have made a better selection."

And Bulstrode strolled away, mightily pleased with himself and with the world in general. "Backs: Bull and Brown!" thundered Russell, whose position on Micky Desmond's shoulders seemed fraught with considerable danger.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Tom Brown, slapping Johnny Bull lustily on the back. "Ripping defence—eh? What-ho!"

"Ow!" gasped Bull. "You needn't puncture a chap. It's nothing to go into hysterics about. What other pair of backs could Wharton have chosen? You don't suppose he'd shove in Gosling and Bunter, do you?"

"Ha, ha! Hardly," laughed Tom Brown. "Half a mo. Might as well see who else is playing."

"Half-backs: Cherry, Peter Todd, and Linley!" shouted Russell.

"Just as it should be!" observed Peter Todd, walking off in high feather. "Everything in the garden is lovely!"

"Beastly favouritism!" sneered Skinner; but his comment passed unheeded as Russell resumed his declaration.

"Forwards!" he announced. "Russell—ho-giddy-ree! I'm playing in Hurree Singh's place!"

"Get on with it!" roared the waiting crowd. They were practically certain as to who the remaining four would be, but surprises were often inflicted in cases of this kind. And Harry Wharton was in many respects a peculiar fellow. One never knew what he would do next. He didn't care two straws for public opinion. If he considered Billy Bunter would make a capable half-back, for instance, he would have included his name in the team without a qualm.

Dick Russell evinced no desire to "get on with it." His own name was on the list, and that was sufficient.

"I'm off!" he said promptly.
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"Faith, and I'm sure ye are!" exclaimed Micky Desmond, who was finding the burden on his shoulders fast becoming intolerable. He took a sudden step backwards, and the unfortunate Russell was propelled into space. He came to the floor with a crash.

"Ow! Yeeooh!" he roared. "Desmond, you silly chump, I believe I've fractured my spinal column! Ow!"

"It serves ye right for being such a selfish spalpeen!" said Micky unsympathetically.

"I'll slaughter you!" gasped Russell angrily. "Lemme get at you, you Irish hoodlum! Ow! Gerroff! Chuck it!"

The crowd had closed in towards the notice-board, and the prostrate junior was trampled underfoot. He yelled with anguish as drivers' boots prodded him in various parts of his person, and it was not until the Removites had satisfied their curiosity that he was able to extricate himself.

"Ripping forward line!" exclaimed Dick Penfold, catching sight of his own name. "Russell, Nugent, Wharton, Penfold, and Vernon-Smith. Harley will be up against it this time, and no mistake!"

Vernon-Smith smiled at the knowledge that he was to be included in the Eleven. The Boulder was feeling very fit, for of late he had given cigarettes and nocturnal revels the go-by, and he meant to justify his inclusion in the team. The Boulder dearly loved the limelight, and was determined to play the game of his life.

"There was another notice on the board when we arrived," said Mark Linley suddenly. "What's happened to it?"

The juniors had become so engrossed with the football announcement that they had quite forgotten the existence of another until Mark Linley spoke.

"Perhaps it's fallen down in the giddy rush," suggested Penfold.

"So it has," said Linley, stooping to pick up a large sheet of paper from the floor. "Wonder what it's about? Great Scott! My only Aunt Sempson!"

Mark broke off suddenly, and gazed with blank amazement at the document in his hand.

"What is it?" cried the Removites.

Linley scanned the paper again, and a grin came over his countenance. With calm deliberation he pinned the sheet on to the board, high enough for all to behold. And this is what met the astonished gaze of the juniors:

"THE AMERICAN DENTAL SURGERY, (Fisher T. Fish, Proprietor). Study No. 14, Remove Passage.

Painless Extractions at a Tanner a Time!
Removites are requested to roll up by the score and receive skilful attention!

All rotten teeth will be removed by the latest American methods, under the personal direction and supervision of the Proprietor.

Business opens to-morrow!
Patronise this Establishment without delay, and there will then be no necessity to submit to the tyrant, Theodore Lugg!

Extractions guaranteed painless!!
Only a Tanner!!!

(Signed) FISHER T. FISH,
"My hat!" Proprietor.

"Great pop!"
"That's the absolute giddy limit!"

The Removites gasped as they read the notice.

There seemed to be no ending to the initiative and business enterprise of Fisher T. Fish. He had formed heaps of money-making devices which somehow hadn't quite turned out in the manner he had anticipated, and one would have thought that a long series of bumpings and lickings from his enraged clients would have brought him into subjection. But no! The Yankee junior invariably came up smiling as before, and staggered his schoolmates with yet another amazing business venture. This was Fishy's "latest."

It was some time before the Removites had recovered their voices. The astounding news of Fisher T. Fish had succeeded in taking their breath away.

Then a murmur arose—a murmur which lengthened into an angry roar.

"Wheve's Fish?"

"Where's that blessed Yankee spoofer?"

"Hyer, I calculate!" said a cool voice at the back of the crowd. "I guess I'm always on hand in an emergency of this kind!"

FOR NEXT WEEK:

"THE BLACK FOOTBALLERS!"

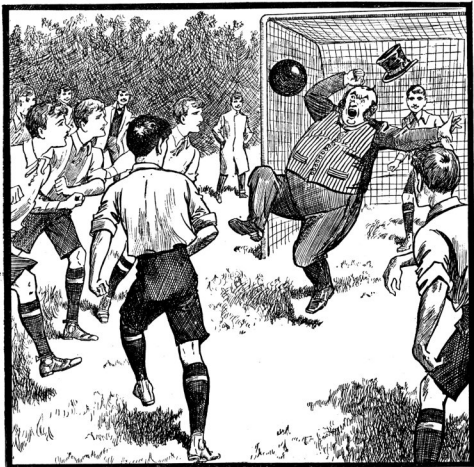
Another Splendid Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars.

—By—

FRANK RICHARDS.

Order in Advance.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



The joyous uproar suddenly changed into a deep groan. Gosling, the school porter, was seen to be walking across the front of the goal-mouth, and he was right in the line of fire, as it were. The leather struck him full in the chest, and he fell backwards with an angry roar. (See Chapter 7.)

"What—what on earth do you mean by shoving this up here?" demanded Ogilvy, pointing to the paper.

"I guess you'll do well to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it—some!" said Fish, pushing his way to the front of the crowd. "It'll save you from getting it in the neck from old Logg!"

"Well, of all the blessed nerve!"

"Fish, you rotten Shyllock!"

"We'll slaughter you, you Yankee spoofer!"

Fish started back in surprise from the threatening crowd.

"What's biting you?" he demanded.

"We'll jolly soon show you!" said Morgan wrathfully.

"Where's Johnny Bull? I dare say he'll have something to say about this!"

"Here he is!" growled Johnny Bull himself, striding forward in company with Wharton, Nugent, and Bob Cherry.

"What's on?"

"Read that!" roared the indignant juniors.

Johnny Bull glanced at Fish's remarkable advertisement, and then imparted such a ferocious glare upon the American

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junior that, if looks could have killed, it would have caused the instant demise of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

Bull advanced upon the amateur dental surgeon, and shook a huge fist in his face.

"You rotter!" he roared.

"What's the trouble?" asked Fish soothingly.

"Trouble? Why, you're turning my study into a rotten, evil-smelling surgery! And, what's more, I'm jolly well not going to have it!"

"I sorter calculate that I've got a share in that study," said Fish calmly.

"And I kinder sorter guess and calculate that your share in it will jolly soon expire!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no good, Fishy, old man," said Harry Wharton.

"We're fed up with your blessed swindling schemes. We've had sufficient to last us for a decade. You've been money-lender, pawnbroker, and goodness knows what beside, and have come to grief at every turn. Chuck it while there's

yet time, or you stand a good chance of being wiped off the face of the earth!"

Fish snorted.

"I guess you're a set of silly galoots!" he exclaimed. "You prefer to go and get tormented by this Lugg merchant, when, for a measly tanner, you could get your molars seen to by an experienced American firm! I guess you're slow in this prehistoric island—some! It lays over me!"

"It wouldn't be the only thing laid over you if I had a cricket-stump handy!" growled Johnny Bull. "Look here, you blessed Yankee sharper, you're not going to turn Study No. 14 into a giddy slaughter-house!"

"No; rather not!" echoed Sampson Quiner Ilfrey Field—or Squiff, to give him his more familiar pseudonym. "You can carry on your rotten dentistry in the Close or the Cloisters, but you certainly won't do anything of the kind in our study! That's straight!"

Fisher T. Fish shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess you silly jays can't frighten me!" he said confidently. "When I commence a colossal undertaking of this hyer kind, wild horses wouldn't drag me from my purpose. No, sir! Besides, I've ordered the surgical instruments and the filing-machine. I expect 'em to arrive in the morning, and then things will begin to hum. Just a few!"

"What?" yelled the juniors. "You've ordered the things already!"

"I guess so. When these plans come into my cabzra. I execute 'em!"

"Into your what?" gasped Wharton.

"Cabzra—head, in your stupid old language! I guessed it was a top-notch idea, and wrote off for the things this afternoon. There's ain't no flies on Fisher Tarleton Fish; sirs! Nope!"

Johnny Bull grabbed the enterprising Yankee by the collar.

"The first time you bring an instrument of any kind into my study," he said, with deadly directness, "you'll see more stars in a single giddy second than the 'cutest astronomer ever beheld in a lifetime! Got that?"

"Hands off!" roared Fish, as Johnny Bull shook him like a rat, in order to emphasise his remarks. "The things are ordered, and I guess no yew-man power can prevent 'em turning up! You call 'em wamoses, the ranch!"

"Hot on earth did you get the money to pay for them?" asked Frank Nugent.

"The bill will be sent to my popper in New York City. His name is well known even in this sleepy little hollow you call a country! I've written to one of the biggest dental supply firms in London, and the stock will be sent down by return. Ow! Chuck it, Bull, you slab-sided guy!"

"You'll come with me at once to the post-office in Friarade," said Bull, yanking Fisher T. Fish along by the collar.

"Woffor?"

"To send a wire cancelling the order. This has gone far enough. I've no wish to be had up for manslaughter, which would be the case if you carried on your old tricks again. Come on! We must get a pass out of gates."

"Lemme go!" howled Fish. "I tell you this is going to be a paying concern; and, between you and me and the gatepost," he added, lowering his voice, "I'll take you into the business, and we'll go shares in the profits!"

"What?" spluttered Johnny Bull.

"I shall need an assistant in this hyer business. You can do the manual part of the bizny while I sit at the receipt of customs. Yow! Ow! Wharrer you up to?"

"I'm fed-up!" shouted Bull. "You'll come down to the post-office with me at once before it closes. Wingate'll give us a pass."

Fisher T. Fish yelled and expostulated, but his puny frame was helpless in the strong grip of Johnny Bull. He was dragged forcibly away from the group of grinning Removites.

"Leggo, Bull!" roared Fish, who felt at that moment like an obscure infant aged one. "I guess I've a good mind to wipe up the floor with you! I'm dangerous when I get my mad up!"

"Leggo, I tell you!"

"Don't get this evening!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Some other evening! Go it, Johnny!"

Johnny Bull was "going it." He whizzed the unfortunate Fish in the direction of Wingate's study, where he applied for a pass out of gates, which Wingate, who happened to be in a good humour, readily accorded.

The Remove saw nothing more of Fisher T. Fish or Johnny Bull until bed-time that evening. The long, thin face of the junior from the "Yew-nited States" seemed longer and thinner than ever. Johnny Bull, however, gave a quiet chuckle of satisfaction as he entered the Remove dormitory.

"Well, did you work the giddy oracle?" inquired Bob Cherry.

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"Rather!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Fishy was rather unwilling at first, but I brought a little gentle persuasion to bear upon him. He wired to London cancelling the order for the goods, and the American Dental Surgery is now non est."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I give you best this time," said Fisher T. Fish, wrenching off his collar and hurling it to the floor. "But I guess you're a set of silly magwumps! When old Lugg turns up again, and you have to go through the giddy mill, you'll wish you had given my firm a trial! Yep!"

"But how do you know Lugg's coming back?" asked Wharton. "He got such a rotten reception the other day, that I reckon he won't show his face inside Greyfriars again."

"Just you wait, my sons," said Fish prophetically. "His reign of terror ain't ended yet—not by long chalks! You mark my words!"

"Rats!"

With which expressive retort the juniors turned in, leaving Fisher T. Fish to his own reflections. And they were not pleasant ones.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Quite Beyond a Joke!

"GOAL!"

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Well played, sir!"

It was the afternoon preceding the day of the fourth match with Harley, and the Remove had an engagement with the Upper Fourth. There was not a great deal of importance attached to the game; in fact, the Remove looked upon it, as Bob Cherry remarked, as "a bit of mild practice just to get our giddy eyes in!"

So assured were Harry Wharton & Co. of lowering the Fourth Form colours in the dust, that it came as a fearful shock to them to be two goals in arrear at half-time.

Temple & Co. were in unusually good form, and for once in a way had caught the Remove napping. Temple, and Dabney had each netted the ball in the earlier stages of the game, and the Remove had not made reply.

When the second half commenced, however, "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream," as Byron has it. The Remove forward line seemed to wake up to the situation, and the Remove forwards, when playing at top form, were a very powerful and aggressive quintette, as Temple & Co. discovered. The second half was only five minutes old when Vernon-Smith terminated a beautiful run on the left wing by scoring a grand goal.

A ding-dong struggle then ensued. Temple & Co. did not mean to be so easily deprived of their lead, and they played up like demons. The Remove goal was in constant danger, but Bultrode was in great form. He seemed to be a mass of arms and legs and hands, and time and again effected a brilliant save when a goal seemed inevitable.

Then, from a throw-in, the Remove right wing got going, and Russell and Nugent sped down the field in fine style, passing the ball one to another in a manner which left the Fourth Form defenders helpless. Smith major, at back, made a desperate rush in order to rob Russell, who was about to shoot; but the winger anticipated this, and passed the ball neatly across the goalmouth, where Harry Wharton pounced upon it, and banged it into the net with a velocity which made the unfortunate goalie think of a firework display on the evening of the Fifth.

A burst of cheering accompanied the Removites as they lined up again in the centre of the field. They were out for blood now, for the score was two all, and another goal would probably decide the issue.

"Go it, Remove! Sock it into 'em!" roared the loyal band of Removites congregated on the touch-line.

And Wharton and his merry men responded gallantly. Twice they came very near to taking the lead. On one occasion Peter Todd, at centre-half, skimmed the cross-bar with a magnificent effort, and a moment later Nugent shot a foot wide. The Fourth Form-citadel seemed to possess a charmed life.

"Buck up, Remove! Keep the pot boiling!"

Temple & Co. had fallen back before the terrific onslaught of the Remove forwards. Nearly half an hour still remained for play, and it was obvious to all which side would win. Harry Wharton & Co. were fresh as paint, but Temple and his comrades were finding the pace too hot for them, and not a few had bellows to mend.

The minutes passed, and the score was unchanged. Dazzling though their play undoubtedly was, the Fates were in direct opposition to the Remove that day. They could do nothing right in front of goal.

But presently Harry Wharton found himself with a clear opening, and cries of delight arose from the crowd on the

touch-line as he let fly at the goal from about twelve yards out.

But the joyous uproar was suddenly changed into a deep groan. Gosling, the school porter, was seen to be walking across the front of the goal-mouth, and he was right in the line of fire, as it were. The leather struck him full in the chest, and he fell backwards with an angry roar. But instead of entering the net, the sphere, after striking Gosling, rolled harmlessly wide.

"You blithering idiot!" roared Bob Cherry, advancing upon the prostrate form of the school-porter. "What on earth did you want to obstruct the field with your fat carcass for? You robbed us of a certain goal!"

"Ow!" moaned Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—I'm 'urt'!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" growled Bob Cherry, prodding the unfortunate porter in the ribs. "Get up, you silly beast, and explain!"

Gosling rose to his feet rather unsteadily. His flushed face and watery eyes seemed to suggest that he had been looking on the wine when it was red.

"Which I'll report yer to the 'Ead for assault!" he muttered surlily. "Wot I says is this 'ere—all boys ought to be drowned at birth. Young warmints! You're to come along of me at once!"

"Rats!"

"Get off the field, Gosling?"

"We'll slaughter you, you clumsy idiot!"

The Remove felt Gosling's interruption keenly. They were deprived of a goal, and as only a quarter of an hour remained for play, it was a serious matter. The spectators had not seen Gosling approach, and no alarm had, therefore, been given.

But the porter had no intention of going.

"You're to come along of me, you raskin'!" he repeated.

"Ow, come on!" said Wharton impatiently. "Bundle him off the blessed field! Temple'll think we aren't keen on re-suming if we hang about like this!"

Two or three of the players strode up to Gosling, and, lifting the porter bodily in the air, ran him off the field. Gosling was no light weight, but the energetic juniors succeeded in getting him to the touch-line, over which they hurled him with a bump.

"Ow!" moaned Gosling, blinking vaguely around him.

"Which I'll tell Mr. Quelch as 'ow you refusa to come, and that you hassaulted—savagely hassaulted—a man of my ripe years!"

"You should have kept out of the way," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose you were potty or something. If I were you, Gosling, old son, I'd take a little more water with it."

"Ho!" roared Gosling. "So you haddis hinsult to injunry, do you, Master Cherry? I'm a sober man, and a honest one at that, and wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Oh, dry up!" exclaimed Bob. The teams were preparing to renew the encounter, and there was no time to bandy words with Gosling.

"Hain't you a-comin' hup to the school?" demanded the porter, rising slowly to his feet.

"No!" roared Bob. "Who wants us?"

"The dentist wot come the other day. He arst me to come down and fetch all them wot was in the lower Fourth, and I promised 'im I'd do it. Besides, he's made it worth my while. Better come quiet, Master Cherry!"

"Rats!"

"Come on, Bob!" shouted Harry Wharton. "No time for gadding now. Deal with Gosling later!"

Bob Cherry ran over to the group of players, and explained what had happened.

"The Lugg bird is here again," he groaned, "and we've got to go through it!"

The Removites looked wrathful. They thought that Mr. Theodore Lugg had shaken the dust of Greyfriars from his feet for ever, and the news was as unexpected as it was unwelcome.

"Hang him!" said Wharton savagely. "We'll finish the game first, you chaps?"

"What-ho?"

"Better go along with Gosling, like good little boys," advised Temple.

"Rats! We'll go when we've given you the licking of your lives, and not before."

The game was set in progress again, and Gosling slouched off, grumbling to himself. He went in search of Mr. Quelch.

"Come in!" cried the Remove-master testily, as a loud knock sounded at the door of his study. He was manipulating a typewriter, and was busily engaged in the compilation of the "History of Greyfriars," a colossal task, to which he had already devoted many hours of strenuous labour.

Gosling stamped furiously into the room.

"Which I 'ave a wery painful dooty to perform, sir," he began.

"Very well, Gosling. Be as brief as you can."

Gosling, however, seemed in a hurry to discharge the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

"painful dooty." As a matter of fact, he was at a loss for words.

"I am waiting," hinted the Remove-master.

"The himpsin' young scoundrels!" Gosling managed to splutter forth at length. "Drat 'em, the confounded warmints! Wot I says, sir, is this 'ere—"

"I wish you would modify your manner of conversation in my study!" interrupted Mr. Quelch coldly. "To whom are you referring?"

"To the young himps in your Form, sir."

"The boys in my Form are, for the most part, young gentlemen," said Mr. Quelch. "It strikes me, Gosling," he added, his gimlet eyes scrutinising the porter's injured face, "that you are the worse for drink. If such is the case, you had better quit this study at once, lest I think fit to acquaint Dr. Locke of the occurrence!"

"I hain't a'd drop, sir," quavered Gosling, calming down; "but I've bin 'andled in a way as would have mad any man do something desprit afore this. The young scamps—"

"Be careful," warned Mr. Quelch.

"Beg pardon, sir. The young 'uns—Gosling could not bring himself to say "gentlemen"—the boys in your Form, sir, have been guilty of direct disobedience. They were requested to haccpany me to the sanatorium had once—but once, sir, you understand!—instead of which they goes on playin' football. I promised Mr. Lugg faithfully as I would take 'em up to 'im without delay."

"Mr. Lugg?" ejaculated the Remove-master, raising his eyebrows. "Who is he? I have never heard of the man before."

"A dentist, sir, from Courtfield."

"A dentist?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is certainly very odd," said Mr. Quelch, with a frown. "Who engaged him to come here?"

"The 'Ead, I suppose, sir. Mr. Lugg came the other day to see to the boys' teeth. It's my belief as he's comin' regular."

"I was not aware of this. I suppose, however, that it was pre-arranged by Dr. Locke, and, if so, I shall not interfere with the man in the discharge of his duties. The boys must go and see him at once, if he commands it."

"They won't!" said Gosling, with the air of a man who has done his best but cannot achieve the impossible.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I will see to it that they interview Mr. Lugg without delay," he said, preparing to quit the room.

"One minute, sir!" cried Gosling. "I hain't a-finished makin' my complaints. When I walked on the field, I respectfully, the young raskin'—"

"That will do, Gosling."

"But, sir, I 'opes as 'ow you will punish—"

"Silence, Gosling! Do you not hear me?" roared Mr. Quelch in tones which resembled the rumble of distant thunder. "Go back to your lodge at once!"

Gosling looked at Mr. Quelch as though he meditated taking off his coat and snitting the Remove-master hip and thigh, in spite of the rheumatism which accompanied what he mournfully termed his "ripe hold hage." Then he glanced at the door, wavered, and finally passed out of the study without a word.

Mr. Quelch locked his study door, and made rapid tracks for the football field. He felt decidedly irritable at being compelled to abandon his "History of Greyfriars," a work in which nearly all his interest was centred. It was not surprising, he thought, that the Remove should ignore a command from Gosling; but where he—Mr. Quelch—was concerned, it was a different matter.

He arrived on the football field to find a scene of extraordinary excitement. The Form match was nearly over—in fact, the referee was already consulting his watch preparatory to sounding the final whistle. The score was 3 goals all for Temple and Frank Nugent had n'ted for their respective sides since Gosling's interruption.

The last desperate effort on the part of the Removites was now being made, and these supreme final efforts in football are often very fine to watch. This one certainly was; but the jersey-clad figures with a flaming hoar.

Vernon-Smith had secured, and was racing down the field at top speed. His fellow-forwards were far behind, and the Bounder knew that the issue now depended on his own individual effort. Even at that moment he smiled—smiled at the thought of the popularity he would gain should he score the winning goal. He sped on, dodged the Fourth Form backs, and braced himself up for the final effort.

"Shoot, Smithy!"

"Bang it through!"

"Bang it through!"

"Bang it through!"

"Bang it through!"

"Bang it through!"

"Bang it through!"

"Bang it through!"

"Good man!"

But before the Bouncer's boot came in contact with the leather the sharp metallic tones of Mr. Quelch bade him stop instantly.

"The boys in my Form will come here at once!" came the sharp exclamation.

The Removites obeyed, scowling. The gods were not good to them that day—in fact, they were very much the reverse.

"Things are coming to a pretty pass," muttered Wharton, "when we can't play a giddy Form match without constant interruptions!"

"Wharton!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir?"

"I am informed by Gosling that you refused to accompany him to the Sanatorium."

"Yes, sir. But we thought we might be allowed to finish the match first. You see, it was very exciting—"

"So I presume, judging from the catcalls which greeted me on arrival!" said Mr. Quelch crushingly. "Excitement of a most repellent and reprehensible form, Wharton. Are you aware that Mr. Lugg has been waiting over half an hour for you?"

Wharton made no reply.

"It strikes me very forcibly," went on Mr. Quelch, his gimlet eyes scanning the little cluster of Removites who stood near, "that you boys are afraid to see Mr. Lugg to have your teeth attended to. I will not admit of such cowardice in my Form. You will cease your prevarications with that muddy ball and go to the Sanatorium at once."

An angry murmur arose. It was bad enough, the juniors felt, to have to abandon their game at such an inconvenient moment, but to be classed as cowards in addition was a little too thick. Mr. Quelch was usually a kind-hearted and just master, in spite of his severe frown and penetrating glance. But he, too, had been the victim of an interruption, compared to which an abandoned game of football was of no moment. Of what account was a muddy skirmish like this when such a mighty work as the "History of Greyfriars" was in course of compilation?

Harry Wharton spoke up sharply.

"We are not funky of Mr. Lugg, sir," he said, with a curl of the lip.

"It seems remarkably like it, Wharton."

"There's only another minute to go. May we finish our game, sir?"

"No, Wharton, you may not!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "All you boys will go to Mr. Lugg immediately, and if you linger here a moment longer than is necessary I will inflict a severe imposition upon each of you."

The Remove Eleven got moodily into their coats.

Temple & Co., exempt from the doubtful pleasure of interviewing Mr. Lugg, chuckled among themselves.

"Lucky thing Quelch came on the field at that moment!" said Temple, addressing Harry Wharton.

"Why?"

"Because, my dear kid, you would have been whacked to the wide!"

Wharton spluttered with wrath.

"Why, you—you—" he stammered.

"Dry up!" urged Fry. "Take it like a sportsman, Wharton!"

"But Smithy was on the point of scoring when Quelch came on the scene. It's the Upper Fourth who ought to feel devoutly thankful."

"Rats!"

Wharton vouchsafed no reply to this, for Mr. Quelch was glancing over in his direction. He buttoned his coat and accompanied the other members of the team to the Sanatorium.

And had anyone played the Dood March in "Saul" as they walked Wharton could not help thinking it would have been most appropriate.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Lugg Makes Merry!

GERALD LODER encountered the juniors as they trooped up the stairs to the Surgery, and he grinned maliciously.

"You kids are in for it!" he said, with infinite satisfaction. "Lugg's been waiting nearly an hour!"

"Serve him right!" said Wharton passionately. "I'm fed up with this blessed tyranny!"

"Same here!" growled a dozen voices.

Loder frowned.

"You'd better understand," he said, "that Mr. Lugg is not to be spoken of as a tyrant. He is here with a worthy object, and the chap who resents it is a cad." It suited Loder to speak thus. "Mr. Lugg must be cruel," he went on, "only to be kind!"

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"Rats!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "He's a rotten outsider, and has no right at Greyfriars at all! And, judging by the way you stick up for the brute, I reckon you're in the swim with him, Loder!"

"Hear, hear!"

The perfect spluttered with wrath.

"You cheeky young rascals!" he roared. "I'll make things warm for you before I've finished! Cherry, go in to Mr. Lugg at once!"

Bob felt in the mood for mutiny. He threw a questioning glance at Harry Wharton.

"Better go, old man," advised the Remove captain. "We've got sight on our side so far, at any rate, and if we kick against the chap we shall probably get it in the neck."

"All the same, I'll go for the brute if he mauls me about too much!" growled Bob Cherry, advancing into the room.

Mr. Theodore Lugg, meanwhile, was behaving like a ramping and a roaring lion. To say that he was in a rage was to put it mildly. At the moment Bob Cherry entered the apartment he was engaged in stamping furiously to and fro, in order to let off steam—an occurrence which boded ill for his next victim.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Bob cheerfully, strolling up to the big chair. "Nice weather for the time of year, sir!"

Mr. Lugg snorted.

"I have been waiting here for an interminable period!" he exclaimed.

"Really, sir!" said Bob sympathetically. "Then you must be nearly overdone."

"What do you mean, boy?"

"There's an awful niff in this room, sir!" said Bob, sniffing.

"Sea-breezes aren't in it! Bless if I should care to live, move, and have my giddy being among chemicals that advertise their presence a mile off! It's a wonder you aren't apprehensive!"

"This is impertinence!" roared Mr. Lugg. "I will not countenance such remarks!" Said down in that chair, sir!"

Bob Cherry obeyed meekly. Beneath his calm and cheerful exterior, however, lurked a smouldering fire of wrath, and should Mr. Lugg commence any sort of brutality Bob meant to "down" him, regardless of the consequences to himself.

"You came up to see me the last time I was here, did you not?" asked Mr. Lugg.

"I did, sir; and I don't think anything more requires to be done to my teeth."

"That is for me to decide," said Mr. Lugg, advancing with the forceps.

Bob Cherry's teeth were as near perfection as it was possible for a boy's teeth to be. Mr. Lugg realised this, and scowled. He dearly wanted to inflict some of his choicest tortures on this calm, fearless junior, who faced him with a look half docile, half defiant.

A shad thought flashed through the dentist's mind. Why not extract one of Cherry's teeth, irrespective of the necessity for so doing?

"Conspiracies," Shakespeare wrote, "no sooner should be formed than executed," and Mr. Theodore Lugg apparently placed great faith in the writings of the immortal William.

He roughly requested Cherry to open his mouth, and Bob felt the cold instrument closing in on one of his back teeth—a tooth which he knew to be perfectly sound.

"Mr. Lugg, stop!" he exclaimed. "Take those forceps away, or I'll land out with my left!"

"You'll what?" gasped Mr. Lugg.

"I shall hit out!" said Bob desperately. "That's a good tooth you were going to extract! Don't you think you're playing it a bit low down, you rotter!"

Mr. Lugg choked and spluttered, and his limbs fairly shook with rage. He seemed on the verge of an apoplectic fit.

"Boy," he roared, renewing his grip of the forceps, "such an insult is unparalleled! You will pay for this!"

He strode savagely forward.

"Look out!" warned Bob. "Remember what I told you!"

The dentist glanced at Bob Cherry's ponderous fist, clenched ready to strike, and drew back quickly. He was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and there was that in Bob Cherry's manner which would have made many a bolder spirit than Mr. Lugg quail.

"Where are you going?" he asked feebly, as the Remove slipped from the chair and made tracks for the door.

"I'm going to see Dr. Locke. I will ask his opinion about my teeth, and if he thinks I ought to have any of them extracted I'll come back."

Mr. Lugg looked seriously alarmed. His purple face turned quite pale.

"No, no!" he exclaimed. "Come back at once, boy!"

Bob paused in the doorway.

"Er—on due consideration, perhaps I was a little too hasty," said Mr. Lugg. "It will not be necessary to extract the tooth. In fact, I don't think I shall want you again. I



The ambushed juniors started in surprise at the mention of their names, but still greater was the surprise yet in store for them. Mr. Lugg savagely wrenched at his beard, and there was a stifled gasp from the Removites as it came completely off, revealing the features of Gadsby of Highcliffe! (See Chapter 10.)

can quite understand your feelings in the matter. It was perfectly natural that you should resent having your teeth wrenched out for no apparent reason—perfectly natural. We'll forget all about our little tiff, and call it square—eh?"

The man spoke sincerely enough; and the warm-hearted Bob was not one to bear malice.

"Very well, Mr. Lugg," he said, and quitted the room.

"Wonder why the fellow climbed down so quickly?" he mused. "Directly I told him I'd go to the Head he seemed to shake in his giddy shoes. Queer sort of hazy altogether!"

The rest of the fellows, under the vigilant eye of Loder, were waiting their turn. It seemed to their imaginative minds that Bob Cherry had been confined for hours to the dentist's room, a victim to all sorts and conditions of weird tortures. They considered that the words of Dante should have been inscribed upon the door of the Sanatorium:

"Alondro hope, all ye who enter here!"

Tom Dutton passed Bob as the latter came out. He was to be the next victim.

"Sit down!" growled Mr. Lugg, as Dutton approached.

"What is your name?"

"I know it is!" said Dutton indignantly.

"W—what do you mean?"

"I know it's a rotten game. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Mr. Lugg fumed with wrath. If all the Removites who came into the room intended to use him as a target for their impertinent shafts, it would be far wiser not to come to Greyfriars at all. Of course, he did not know that Dutton

was as deaf as the proverbial door-nail, and that he was not being intentionally cheeky. But even had he known it, it is doubtful whether the knowledge would have lessened Mr. Lugg's brutality.

"Boy," he shouted, "is this open impertinence, or are you dense? Your name!"

"I'm glad you have a sense of shame," said Dutton drily, looking with extreme disfavour at Mr. Lugg's stubby beard and hard, remorseless eyes. "You have enough to be ashamed of, goodness knows!"

"Shame!" roared Mr. Lugg. "I said nothing about shame! I asked you your name!"

"Oh," said Dutton, comprehending at last. "Well, you needn't blare at a fellow like that. I'm not deaf—only a little hard of hearing."

"Take a seat in that chair!" said the dentist, who was fast becoming "fed up." Dutton did not even address him as "sir," as the other Removites had done. But then, Tom Dutton was no respecter of persons.

"Who are you calling a bear?" he demanded angrily.

"Bear yourself!"

"Chair! Chair!" thundered Mr. Lugg.

He gripped the Removite by the collar and swung him into the seat. It was madness to attempt to hold a conversation with Dutton without the aid of a megaphone.

Mr. Theodore Lugg was in deadly earnest. Hitherto, he had been defied by his victims, and had been unable to reap such a rich harvest from the Removite as he had fondly

anticipated. Russell and Nugent were the only two fellows who had had teeth out.

Dutton constituted the third victim. The deaf boy had a monstrous tooth which it was really necessary to extract; in fact, Dutton had been thinking of paying a visit to the dentist in Friarshade for that purpose.

Mr Lugg made short work of the offending tooth. One nighty wrench, and it was gone. He would dearly have liked to detain Dutton and proceed to extract some more, but he had wasted enough time already, and nearly all the Remove were congregated on the landing awaiting attention. Mr Lugg believed in an equal distribution of pain and pleasure alike.

"You can get out!" he said briefly.
"Shout!" said Dutton contemptuously. "Of course I didn't shout! It'd take a jolly sight more than that to make me start howling!"

"Go!" bellowed Mr. Lugg, pointing to the door.
"Oh, I see! You want me to get out!" Well, you needn't yell at a chap as though he's stone deaf!"

And Dutton quitted the room, grumbling as he went. His appearance on the landing was hailed with considerable interest.

"Been through the mill?" asked Peter Todd sympathetically.

"No, I don't!" said Dutton scornfully.
"Don't what?"
"Feel ill. I shall begin to think you're a set of funks presently."

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Peter. "A megaphone—a megaphone—my kingdom for a megaphone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"What did he do?" roared Tom Brown.

"Well, I must admit I felt pretty blue. I reckon any other chap would have done, under the circumstances."
Tom Brown gave vent to a despairing grunt.

"Give it up, Brownie!" laughed Mark Linley. "There's no information to be extracted from Dutton."
And Tom Brown gave it up.

"Bulstrode, you're next!" said Loder sharply. "Mr. Lugg is waiting!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith on the Warpath!

"EXCUSE ME!" It was the quiet, cool voice of the Bounder. "I think I'll go next. I haven't seen Mr. Lugg at all yet."

And before a hand could be stretched out to stop him, Vernon-Smith had passed into the room.

"Rather queer, that!" said Bulstrode. "Blessed if I can see why Smitty's so anxious to face the music, unless he wants to pose as the Dying Gladiator."

"There's method in his madness," said Peter Todd sagely.
"He's some wheeze under way, you bet!"

As a matter of fact, the Bounder, although he had formed no definite plan of campaign, felt very curious on the subject of Mr. Lugg, and a dark suspicion had more than once crossed his mind. He went into the room with a curious blend of feelings, but fear was not one of them.

"Come in, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Lugg, in tones of dark foreboding; "and close the door behind you."

"Hallo! He knows my name!" muttered the Bounder under his breath. "There's something fishy about this!"

He sauntered across the room and sat down in the chair, cool and self-possessed. It needed something more than dentistry to shatter the iron nerve of the Bounder.

"You have not been to me before?" queried Mr. Lugg.
"No, sir."

"Ah! I thought not. I had to leave somewhat hurriedly the other day, owing to a sudden—ahem—indisposition."

He did not add that Wharton's fist had a very prominent share in his hurried departure.

"We must make up for lost time," continued Mr. Lugg briskly. "Dear me, what a thing is Time! What was it the immortal William wrote? 'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day; and all our yesterday have lighted foils the way to dusty death.' Duty death!" he repeated, dwelling lovingly on the words.

"Your mind seems to run in very morbid channels, sir," observed the Bounder.

"Silence, Smith! Open your mouth at once, that I may make an examination."

"Before you begin, sir," said the Bounder coolly, "I may as well state that I will not allow any of my teeth to be taken out. I don't possess much personal beauty—nothing to write home about, as they say in America—and I refuse to be made to go about like a toothless and decrepit old man of eighty. I will submit to star-fillings, if necessary, but to extractions, never!"

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Mr. Lugg's face went purple.

"And who arranged," he asked scathingly, keeping his rage under control with a great effort, "who arranged that I should receive my instructions from you?"

"No one, sir. But I'm going to stick up for myself, and chance the consequences."

"And what will you do if I disregard your absurd command?"

"I shall knock you down, and then go straight to Dr. Locke and tell him what I did, and why I did it."

Mr. Lugg's face paled perceptibly at the mention of the Head's name.

"You—you wouldn't dare!" he exclaimed.

"Try me, sir, and see," said the Bounder cheerfully.
"And will the other boys in your Form adopt this defiant attitude?" asked Mr. Lugg.

"Yes, sir, I fancy they will. They are fed up with this dentistry, and if it continues, a petition will be drawn up and presented to Dr. Locke."

Mr. Lugg looked seriously alarmed. His one desire seemed to be to get off the premises as quickly as possible.

He took out his watch, and gave a gasp of well-feigned astonishment.

"Dear me! I must be going. I have an important function to attend at home. You may go, Vernon-Smith, and come to me again next week. We will then thrash this matter out between us."

The Bounder quitted the room. He was conscious of having won the day, though why Mr. Lugg should be so anxious to shake the dust of Greyfriars from his feet was a mystery. The Bounder's suspicions were now fully aroused.

"It's all serene, you chaps!" he exclaimed to the crowd of waiting Removites. "Lugg's going to shoo off, and you won't be wanted."

"Hooray! What giddy luck!"

And the juniors clattered joyfully down the stairs, greatly relieved.

"Don't see why we should cheer, though," observed Peter Todd. "Three groans would be more appropriate, and then Lugg will understand that we don't want to see his chivvy at Greyfriars again. Nothing like a gentle hint, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Three groans for Lugg!" shouted a voice.
And the groans were given with right good will. The tuneful voices floated up to the landing, where Loder and the Bounder still lingered.

"Stop that row!" roared the prefect, leaning over the banisters and pouring reprimand on the groaning mob. But his voice was drowned in the uproar.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Lugg, coming out on to the landing with his hat on, and his implements of torture packed in a handbag. "What is this appalling din? Have the boys gone mad?"

"They appear to be giving three groans for someone, sir," said Vernon-Smith suavely. "At least, they started with the intention of giving three. They've got up to about three hundred by this time!"

Mr. Lugg frowned.
"They are causing a most unseemly disturbance!" he said.

The Bounder chuckled softly.

"Yes, sir. The chap they're groaning at must be pretty unpopular, I should say."

Mr. Lugg looked at Vernon-Smith closely.
"You imagine that appalling uproar is intended for my ears?" he demanded.

"It seems remarkably like it, sir."

"Then I shall stop it at once!"

"I don't think so, sir," said the Bounder lightly. "There's no school rule against groaning, and I expect they'll groan till they get tired. Personally, I like the sound. But, then, I'm fond of music."

The dentist realised that to attempt to interfere would be futile. He might have ordered Loder to quell the disturbance, but the prefect, realising that he would receive a very severe handling if he attempted to remonstrate with the noisy Removites, had discreetly slunk away.

Mr. Lugg turned to Vernon-Smith.

"You might fetch my machine from the cycle-shed," he remarked. "I will wait at the foot of the stairs."

The Bounder scowled. The position of errand-boy was rather a unique one for the son of a millionaire.

"Do you hear me?" demanded Mr. Lugg.

"Yes, I hear you, right enough. But if you think I'm going to act as your menial, you're quite off-side. I reckon it's thinking-creep on your part to suggest such a thing, and if it wasn't for the fact that you've passed the flower of your age I'd wipe the floor with you!"

"You would wipe—wipe—"

Mr. Lugg was almost inarticulate.
"Wipe the floor with you!" repeated the Bounder coolly.
"Get the rotten machine yourself!"
Theodore Lugg seemed inclined to box the Bounder's ears, and that right soundly. He restrained himself, however, with a mighty effort, and strode off down the stairs.
"You'll hear more from me about this, Vernon-Smith!" he said passionately. To which outburst the Bounder merely smiled.

Mr. Lugg's next movements were somewhat peculiar. His main object seemed to be to avoid being seen.

He crossed the Close in a stealthy, catlike manner, and wheeled his machine out of the bicycle-shed. Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form master, passed through the Close the next moment, and the dentist hurriedly deserted his bicycle and popped into the shed, where he remained until the coast was clear again. He then recovered his machine, and made rapid tracks for the school gates.

Gosling, the school porter, was engaged in sweeping the autumn leaves from his doorstep, and the dentist passed to bestow upon him a tip, to be expended in liquid refreshment.

"My heye!" muttered Gosling, as he watched Mr. Lugg pedalling away down the road. "He ain't no surgin-dentist, as sure as my name's wot it is! Wot I says is this 'ere: There's some trickery going on here. Still, it ain't no business of mine." And the porter resumed his task, the richer by a shilling.

Gosling was not the only person who witnessed Mr. Lugg's departure. Vernon-Smith, who had a strong element of the detective instinct in him, had kept close observation on Mr. Lugg's movements, unknown to that worthy gentleman. He had seen the dentist deliberately avoid Mr. Prout, and had watched him tip Gosling, with a thoughtful frown.

The Bounder stood for a moment irresolute; then he hurried away in the direction of No. 1 Study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's Smithy pouncing in upon us like a giddy whirlwind! What's the trouble, Smithy? Break it gently, there's a good chap. My nerves ain't over-strong."

"No time for playing the giddy goat!" said the Bounder excitedly. "I want you three chaps to get your bikes and come with me. There's something very fishy going on, and I mean to get to the bottom of it. Don't sit there like graven images! Quick! Every minute's precious!"

Harry Wharton & Co. sprang to their feet, and gazed in astonishment at the gleaming eyes of the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith seized Wharton by the arm and hurried him from the study, while Nugent and Bob Cherry followed, inwardly wondering what could be the cause of the Bounder's extraordinary behaviour.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Tracked Down!

"**M**AD!" exclaimed Nugent.
"Mad as a March hare!"
"Look here, Smithy, what's the little game?"
"Get your jiggers out!" said the Bounder impatiently.
"I explain as we go along."
"Seems to me like a jiddy 'oal's circus!" growled Bob Cherry.
"Still, I suppose we'd better humour him."
Vernon-Smith stopped at the entrance to the lodge and accosted Gosling.

"Mr. Lugg?" he exclaimed. "Which way did he go?"

"Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Which way?" shouted the Bounder.

"My heye, Master Smith! Nice goings-on, I must say!"

The Bounder groped in his pocket for a coin, and thrust something into Gosling's palm.

"Quick—tell me!" he ordered.

Gosling pointed in the direction taken by the cyclist.

"Come on, you chaps!" cried the Bounder. "Full speed ahead! We'll catch him yet!"

"What on earth are you chasing Lugg for?" panted Harry Wharton, as the four machines skimmed along the dusty road.

"I think he's an impostor!" said the Bounder grimly.

"What!"

"He's certainly no dentist. The clumsy way he handled the instruments proves that. Besides, his behaviour has been jolly strange all through. He has always turned funky when the Head's name has been mentioned, and instead of leaving Greyfriars in an open-handed manner he has sneaked off on the Q.T. every time. I caught him just now skulking in the bike-shed to dodge Prout."

"Well, I'm blest!" gasped Bob Cherry, as the four cyclists swung round a bend in the road. "This takes the giddy bun! I reckon you're too suspicious, Smithy. You've got a very slender reed to lean upon, in my opinion. Do you suspect anything else?"

"Yes, I believe the chap was disguised."

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"Here, I say!" gasped Wharton. "That's coming it rather strong, isn't it, Smithy?"

"I stick to what I say," said the Bounder obstinately.

The juniors sped on in silence. Their machines were in splendid condition, and at length Vernon-Smith, who had shot to the front, had the satisfaction of seeing the object of pursuit.

"Put the pace on, you chaps!" he cried excitedly.

"We've got him!"

"Hoory!"

The next moment the Bounder uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Something gone wrong!" asked Bob Cherry.

"My hat!" muttered the Bounder. "Look!"

Harry Wharton & Co. pedalled swiftly along the white road, and gazed ahead. Mr. Lugg had dismounted, and was wheeling his machine into the gates of Highcliffe School.

"I knew he never came from Courtfield," said Vernon-Smith. "This must be a gigantic jape on the part of someone of Highcliffe."
"Wh-a-a-at!"

The juniors pulled up and stared at each other blankly. The thought was terrible—overwhelming! They had been japed by the cads of Highcliffe before, but never to such an extent as this.

No! The Bounder must be wrong—carried away by his suspicions. Yet the more they thought about it the more feasible Vernon-Smith's theory became.

"After him!" yelled Bob Cherry suddenly. "I believe Smithy's right, after all! Spurt, my sons, or we shall miss him!"

Reckless of the consequences, heedless of the fact that if they were caught within the walls of Highcliffe they would be severely handled by fifty men their number, the four cyclists dashed through the open gateway of the school in hot pursuit of their prey.

Mr. Lugg, however, had no intention of entering the building in the orthodox manner. He wheeled his bicycle to a quiet spot near the wall which fronted the school, and then paused, apparently waiting for someone.

The juniors of Greyfriars, seeing his action, hastily dismounted, and wheeled their machines silently across the grass. They halted a few yards from the unsuspecting Mr. Lugg. Then they crouched in the shrubbery and waited developments.

"Shush!" whispered Bob Cherry. "Keep in ambush, my sons! Methinks there's something under way!"

Three Highcliffe fellows were in sight—Ponsonby, Vavasour, and Merton. They were strolling along with an air of exaggerated carelessness, which in itself looked suspicious. The hidden juniors saw them glance stealthily round from time to time. Finally, satisfied that they were unobserved, they dashed across to the spot where Mr. Theodore Lugg was waiting.

So close were they to the Greyfriars juniors that the latter had to be as still as mice to avoid detection. A cough, a slight sneeze, and all would be over. With beating hearts, they crouched in the shelter of the friendly shrubs, waiting to see what would transpire.

"Well, ole man," drawled Ponsonby, slapping Mr. Lugg on the shoulder, "how are things going on—hey?"

"Rotten!" growled Mr. Lugg. "I reckon I shall have to cry off, you fellows. The kids at Greyfriars are beginning to tumble to my little game."

"No!"

"Fact, though! Wharton and his set, and that cad Vernon-Smith are beginning to suspect things."

The ambushed juniors started in surprise at the mention of their names; but still greater was the surprise yet in store for them.

Mr. Lugg savagely wrenched at his beard, and there was a stifled gasp from the Removites as it came completely off, revealing the features of Gadsby of Highcliffe!

The next few seconds were agonising ones to Harry Wharton & Co. Their outstanding impulse was to rush out at the Highcliffians and avenge the astounding jape of which they had been the victims. Fools sometimes rush in where angels fear to tread. But the Removites were far from being fools. They realised that discretion was, in their case at least, the better part of valour.

"I think I'll chuck it now," said Gadsby, cramming the false beard into his pocket. "I've had my fill of fun out of the game, and some of the Greyfriars rotters caught it in the neck. I wrenched one of Nugent's back teeth out—quite a good one, too, you know."

"Oh, ripping!" cried Ponsonby.

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

Bob Cherry stirred in his place of concealment, and growled.

The methods employed by the Highcliffians in their japes

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A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT MONDAY—

"THE BLACK FOOTBALLERS!"

15

were too contemptible to be treated lightly, and Bob felt greatly incensed as he heard the pseudo dentist describe his dealings with Nugent.

Ponsonby swung round sharply.

"Thought I heard something growl!" he said uneasily.

The others paused and listened.

"Couldn't have been any of the chaps," said Merton lightly. "A dog out in the road, perhaps."

And the rascals proceeded with their conversation, while Harry Wharton nudged his indignant chum into silence.

"I think you ought to pay one or two more visits to Greyfriars, Gad," said Ponsonby. "We want to make this the finest hoax of the century! You've given some of the bouncers a smack in the eye, and no mistake! Pity you couldn't nab Wharton and some of his set. I think you ought to go again, Gad, ole man, and complete the bizny."

"Absolutely!" chimed in Vava-our.

Gadsby shook his head.

"No good going again!" he said. "The sneaks will complain to the Head, and there'll be an awful row if old Locke caught me on the premises. Besides, I'm a precious poor actor, and I think this has gone far enough. After all, it's been a ripping jape, and the kids at Greyfriars have been scared out of their wits. Better chuck it before I get twinged. I believe that cad Smith has got wind of something already."

"I reckon you're a giddy marvel, Gad!" said Merton admiringly. "How on earth did you get into the school without any doozed awkward questions being asked?"

"Simple enough!" said Gadsby. "That idiot Gosling, the porter, had the impression that I was a real dentist, and so long as he got a few liberal tips to get gin with he didn't care to err from that impression."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And then there was Loder," Gadsby went on. "He owed you some money, you remember, Pon, through backing gee-gees."

Ponsonby nodded.

"Well, I threatened him a bit, and he jolly soon came round. In fact, he lugged the blessed kids up to me like lambs going to the slaughter!"

The Highcliffians chuckled.

"I managed to interrupt a footer match, too!" said Gadsby. "Form match, or something. Gosling got Quivch on the scent, and the game had to be abandoned in order that the dear little boys could have their toofies seen to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping, ole man!" drawled Ponsonby.

"Absolutely!" exclaimed Vava-our.

"But we'd better lie low for a bit now," said Gadsby seriously. "It would be awful to be bowled out after japing 'em so completely."

"Something in that!" said Ponsonby thoughtfully.

"We'd better be getting in," remarked Merton, "or we shall miss calling-over."

"Right-ho! What do you fellows say to a little card-party in my study to-night after lights-out?" asked Ponsonby.

"I'm on!" said Vava-our promptly.

"Bat risky, isn't it?" asked Merton dubiously.

"Risky be hangod! We can shove a blanket or something along the bottom of the door to hide the light, and it'll be as safe as houses. We ought to have a giddy celebration at the downfall of the Greyfriars-Remove-oh, Vav!"

"Rather!"

"All serene, then?" said Merton. "What time?"

"Directly the lights are out. The other chaps in the dorm will keep mum, so there's no difficulty. You're coming, too, of course, Mr. Lugg—I mean, Gad!"

"Trust me!" grinned Gadsby.

"That's settled, then! Bring your bike along, ole man, and we'll be getting in. Greyfriars is bottom dog now—oh, what!"

"Oh, absolutely!"

And the four young scoundrels sneaked off in the direction of the school buildings, chuckling at the success of their ill-timed and decidedly un-sport-manlike jape on the Greyfriars Remove.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Avengers:

It was very fortunate for the four juniors crouching in the shrubbery that Ponsonby & Co. retired when they did, for owing to cramped limbs and the general discomfort of their position they could not have held out much longer.

They waited till the Highcliffians had passed into the quadrangle, and then rose to their feet.

Harry Wharton & Co. were astounded at the conversation they had overheard. Not one of them would have credited THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

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Gadsby with sufficient nerve to carry out such a daring scheme. Yet he had done so, with a vengeance! The Highcliff fellows were for the most part hopeless funks, and seldom took risks in their campaigns against the rival school. They very rarely attacked the boys of Greyfriars unless their own numbers were far superior, and were known to value their skins dearly. Taking all this into consideration, it was small wonder that the Removites were amazed.

They were silent for some time. Even the calm and imperturbable Bouncer was momentarily thrown off his balance.

"Dished!" muttered Frank Nugent at length.

"Diddled!"

"And done!"

"Just think of it!" gasped Wharton. "To be mauled about like that by a rotten Highcliff bouncer! We shall never survive it!"

Dusk was beginning to set in, and the four juniors wheeled their machines through the gateway and walked slowly along the road.

"We must have done this!" said Vernon-Smith earnestly.

"And that right soon!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"But what can we do?" asked Wharton hopelessly. "We can't play them at their own game; it's too shady. A jape's all right when it's a jape pure and simple; but just think what would happen if that rotter Gadsby had pulled everybody's teeth out in the Remove! We shouldn't have been fit for anything."

"Ah! Loder, too!" said Bob Cherry angrily. "I guessed he was in the swim—the cad!"

"We'll deal with him later on," said Vernon-Smith. "In the meantime, we must settle with Highcliff."

"Nothing can be done to-night," said Wharton. "It's as much as we can do to get back to Greyfriars in time for calling-over."

"Hang calling-over!" exclaimed the Bouncer recklessly. "I for one shan't be able to sleep to-night without having put a spoke in the Highcliff wheel!"

"Nor I!" said Nugent.

"We're only four, you know," said Wharton. "I'm not funky, of course, but it would be sheer lunacy to pit ourselves against the whole of Highcliff!"

The Bouncer stopped short in the roadway, gripping the handlebars of his machine tightly. There was an excited gleam in his eyes.

"Why not chip in to-night at Ponsonby's card-party?" he exclaimed. "I do know where his study is, and we can catch the cads on the hop and sock it into 'em."

"Bat, my dear chap, what about getting back to Greyfriars?" asked Wharton.

"We must chance that. If there's a row we can face the music. It won't be a new experience."

Wharton did not reply.

"I agree with Smithy," said Bob Cherry. "The blood of the whole giddy Remove cries out for vengeance. We can't—we simply can't—go back to Greyfriars and tell the chaps that we've been hopelessly spoofed, and haven't raised a single finger against the spoofers!"

Wharton gave in, carried away by his chum's eloquence.

"Right! I'm game! We must hang about at Highcliff until bedtime, then wade in and give the cads the licking of their lives. No time for deep-laid plots now; the honour of the Remove's at stake. We must rush straight in and smite and spare not."

"That's the ticket!" said Bob Cherry heartily.

"Precious little mercy they'll get from me!" groaned Nugent, ceasing his jaw. "My hat! To think it was that rotter Gadsby all the time! I didn't think the cad had a ha'porth of nerve!"

"Ponsonby put him up to it, you can let your bottom dollar on that!" said the Bouncer savagely. "My word, we'll make it warm for the cads when we collar 'em!"

"Warm ain't the word! They'll be mangled beyond recognition when we've finished with 'em!" growled Bob Cherry.

The juniors halted in the dusk to hold a brief council of war. They were eager to set to work at once, and the monotony of idly loitering in the road was maddening. Still, as Bob Cherry remarked, their revenge would be all the sweeter when it did come.

"Might as well leave our jiggers in the hedge here," suggested Nugent. "We don't want to be hampered with them at all. We shall have to shin over the wall for a start, and they will only be in our way."

"Right-ho, then!"

The Removites hid their machines in a convenient spot, and strolled leisurely back towards Highcliff. It was dark now, and there was little fear of their being observed.

"'Tis now the very witching hour of night, when churchyards yawn and graves give up their dead!" quoted Bob Cherry.

"It's quite a novelty being out here when we ought to be safe in our little beds!" chuckled Nugent.

"Rather a queer sort of novelty, I think!" grunted Wharton. "After the feast comes the reckoning, you know."

"You're scarcely going to carry this through, Wharton!" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Of course, Bob. But I was thinking—"

"Well!"

"We shall catch it pretty stiff, you know."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I certainly never regarded you as a funk, Wharton," he said.

Harry flushed.

"I'm as keen on downing Highlife as anybody," he said quietly, "but I can't help feeling uneasy. We're raiding a rival school after dark—breaking bounds, and goodness knows what. Fellows have been expelled for less."

"Great Scott! You don't imagine we'll be sacked!" gasped Bob Cherry, in consternation.

"It's quite within the bounds of possibility. The Head always gets his back up over chaps breaking bounds, and—well, to be quite candid, I think you, Smitty, would get it where the chicken got the chopper—in the neck. It wouldn't be a first conviction, you see."

"That's so," said the Bounder. "But, hang it all, it's quite on the cards that we sha'n't get nabbed at all!"

"We'll stand together in this, anyway," said Nugent.

"Hear, hear!"

Wharton scanned his watch in the darkness.

"Time we got a move on," he observed. "The cads have commenced their card-party by now."

With grim faces, the four truants from Greyfriars sealed the wall of Highlife and crossed the dusky quadrangle. They knew their way about the school building quite as well as any Highlifian, for more than than one pitched battle had been fought on the premises, and raids innumerable had been made by the outstanding Removites. Vernon-Smith in particular was well acquainted with the place, for at one time he had been the honoured guest of Ponsobny & Co.—a time when he had fully earned his nickname of "Bounder." Vernon-Smith's past was in no way a stainless one, and he wished to erase his many dark doings and make amends.

"This way!" he said softly.

The Removites tiptoed silently along the deserted corridors. No light was visible beneath any of the study doors, for Ponsobny had taken wise precautions.

The four raiders paused outside Ponsobny's study, and, listening intently, caught the sound of subdued voices within.

"They've started!" said Wharton.

"Rush 'em!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Rather! Pile in!"

But Ponsobny, though a rogue, was no fool. He did not mean to brook any interruption of his nightly revels, and had locked the door.

Wharton turned the handle, but no sound came from within the study.

"Are you there, you cads?" he demanded. This was not a time for deception, and Wharton had no wish to conceal his identity.

The four inmates of the study were seriously alarmed on seeing the handle of the door turned. If the intruder chanced to be the Head, or even a master or prefect, they stood a good chance of getting sacked.

Their game of poker ceased instantly, and Merton whipped the offending cards into his pocket. Then Wharton's voice sounded through the keyhole.

"Great pip! That's Wharton!" murmured Ponsobny in a low tone. He was half angry, half relieved.

"Impossible!" whispered Gadsby. "He's at Greyfriars! You're mistaken, Pon!"

"Absolutely!" muttered Vavasour.

Again the voice called:

"Open this door, you rotters!"

There could no longer be any doubt on the point. The voice was Wharton's.

"What's he doing here?" gasped Merton.

"Blessed if I know," Ponsobny muttered, "unless he's discovered your little jape, Gad."

"That can't be so?" Gadsby looked alarmed.

"Then why is he here?"

"I suppose you're right," Gadsby admitted at length. "The rotter must have tumbled to my game and tracked me to Highlife. That's the only explanation."

"He sha'n't come in, at all events!" whispered Ponsobny.

"Lie low for a bit, and perhaps he'll think we're not here."

And the four Highlife juniors remained in silence, their anxious eyes fixed upon the door.

Outside in the passage Harry Wharton & Co. stood fuming. Their united efforts would probably have smashed the door in, but the noise of such a proceeding would most assuredly bring someone on the scene. And that was what the juniors particularly wished to avoid—for a few moments, at any rate.

"The rotters!"

"They've dished us after all!"

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"They probably don't know there are only four of us," said the Bounder. "They've only heard Wharton's voice."

Bob Cherry felt the situation the keenest. Bob was in fighting trim that night, and to be deprived of their foes after waiting for what seemed an eternity in the Highlife lane was really too bad. At that moment a great wild knocking surged in Bob's breast—a longing for three things: A solid, uninterrupted five minutes, a cricket-stump, and Ponsobny. But he seemed destined to be disappointed.

"We can't wait about here much longer," said Nugent. "A book may come along at any moment."

"I vote we smash the giddy door in and chance it!" muttered the Bounder.

"It'll mean trouble, Smitty!" Wharton remonstrated.

"Let it! We shall get it in the neck in any case, I expect. Might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. Besides, I've got an idea. Let's bust the door down, pummed Ponsobny & Co. to a jelly, and bunk through the window. Once we are inside the study we can barricade the broken door, so that anyone who comes along the passage can't get in. Only we shall have to look slippy, or the alarm will have been given, and we shall find someone waiting for us in the quadrangle when we alight. You chaps game?"

"Yes. It's risky, but we can't stick out here chafing," said Wharton. "Now, then, kids! One—two—three!"

The juniors hurried thence with deadly accuracy against the door, but without result. It was a solid door, and withstood their united attack. They tried again, but the fates seemed to be against them that evening.

"No good!" panted Nugent, mopping his forehead.

"Half a tick!"

Bob Cherry tried the door of the next study, and finding it unlocked, slipped in and obtained the poker from the fire-grate.

"This'll do the giddy trick!" he murmured. "It'll make a row, but it can't be helped."

Bob commenced to wedge the poker beneath the door, and the inmates of the study apparently realised that the game was up. They had private reasons—quite their own—for not wishing a master to come on the scene at that moment.

"It's only Wharton!" muttered Ponsobny bravely. "We can soon shut him up between us."

His cronies nodded.

Bang!

Bob Cherry had started operations with the poker.

"Quick! Stop him, Pon, before he wakes the whole giddy school!"

Ponsobny rapped at the door on the inside, and the banging ceased.

"Let me speak, Bob," whispered Wharton hastily. "They think I'm alone."

He placed his lips to the keyhole.

"Is that you, Ponsobny?"

"Yes," answered the Highlife junior. "What d'ye mean by banging at our door like that? And what are you doing at Highlife, Wharton, I should like to know?"

"I've come to settle an account!" muttered Wharton grimly.

"What d'ye mean?"

"Open the door, and you'll see."

"Supposin' I don't choose to open it?"

"I've a poker here, and I dare say that will do the trick."

"But you'll make a row and get nabbed."

"So will you!" retorted Wharton.

Ponsobny growled, and prepared to unlock the door. Then a sudden thought occurred to him.

"Wharton!"

"Hallo!"

"I believe there's someone with you."

"Never mind about that. Are you going to open that door?"

"Get ready to collar him as he comes in, you chaps!" muttered Ponsobny. Then he suddenly turned the key in the lock, and flung the door wide open.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Nemesis!

THE instant Ponsobny unlocked the door the Removites bounded into the room like tigers. For several hours they had been stewing in an atmosphere like that of the inner room of a Turkish bath, and they were ready for anything.

The Highlife cads fell back in surprise before the unexpected onslaught. The sight of the four Greyfriars fellows set them wondering whether it were not all part of some strange dream. That they would have Wharton to deal with

they knew, but they little thought of encountering three of his staunchest allies in addition.

The Removites wasted no time in words. Each selected his opponent, and the cowardly Highcliffians offered little resistance. Harry Wharton tackled Ponsonby, and the latter received a crashing blow between the eyes which made him see whole solar systems. Frank Nugent, goaded to fury by the thought of Gadsby's cruelty, proceeded to give that individual a very warm time. He merely played with him at first, as a cat does with a mouse, but at length he sent the unfortunate "Mr. Lugg" sprawling into the fireplace with a staggering right-hander.

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry performed his part in the conflict with easy-going contempt. Vavasour, the prim and sedate dandy of Highcliffe, only needed one blow from Bob's fist to render him hors de combat.

Vernon-Smith was somewhat nettled at not being allowed to tackle Ponsonby. To do the Highcliffe captain justice, he was not without pluck, but the others were ever ready to show the white feather. However, the Bounder, making the best of a bad job, pummelled Merton in merciless fashion for five minutes, at the end of which period the wretched youth lay squirming on the floor, with all the fight knocked completely out of him.

"Hooraay! Sit on 'em, boys!" muttered Bob Cherry, with a subdued chuckle. "This is where Greyfriars comes into its own."

"Lemme gerrup!" groaned Vavasour feebly.

"Not just yet, my infant!" said Bob cheerfully, making himself comfortable on the victim's chest. "You can lie there for a bit and brood over past misdeeds."

"Ow, by dose!" gasped Ponsonby, writhing in the firm grip of Harry Wharton. "Yow! Groo-g-g-g!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Wharton curtly. "You've played us one of the shabbiest tricks I've ever known, and it was only through the cuteness of Smithy here that you were bowled out. We knew you were rank outsiders, but a jape of that sort is a bit thick, even for you! You're going through the giddy mill now, I can assure you!"

"I didn't have a hand in it!" whined Merton. "Ponsonby suggested the jape, and Gadsby carried it through. I told 'em I thought it was going too far, and that I wouldn't be a party to it."

"Shut up, you sneak!" said Wharton contemptuously. "You all had a hand in it, and anything you say now won't lessen your punishment, so I should advise you to save your breath! Got any cord, Bob?"

"No; but I'll jolly soon get hold of some, if you'll keep an eye on Vavasour!"

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry unlocked the door, and groped his way to the box-room. Here he found a substantial supply of good, thick rope, and the cads of Highcliffe were soon securely bound hand and foot. They were too exhausted to struggle, and the feeble resistance they had made all through filled the Removites with disgust.

"What's the next move, Harry?" asked Nugent, sitting astride the inanimate form of Gadsby in the fireplace.

"Soot and treacle wouldn't be bad," said Wharton thoughtfully. "We'll turn 'em into Christy nigger minstrels."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry rummaged round for a fishing-rod, and, having obtained one, opened it to its full length inside the chimney.

"Look out, Frank!" he cautioned. "There's going to be a giddy avalanche. It doesn't matter about Gadsby. Let him stay where he is; he's right in the line of fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry proceeded to rake out the chimney. The result was a thick shower of soot, brought down directly upon Gadsby's head. Gadsby yelled and squirmed, but his yells soon ceased, for the clouds of soot choked his mouth, and his voice died away in murmurs and gasps.

He was dragged away from the grate in a few minutes, and Ponsonby, Vavasour, and Merton took his place in turn, while Bob Cherry raked out the soot with a very liberal hand.

The Highcliffe juniors were as black as the arc of spades. Vernon-Smith found a large tin of treacle in the cupboard, and a quantity of this useful but sticky article were ladled out, and bestowed upon the four cads who lay groaning on the floor.

There was no mercy shown by Harry Wharton & Co. They mingled treacle lavishly with the soot, and the eyes, mouths, and ears of the victims were simply smothered.

Muffled cries arose; muffled because Ponsonby & Co. did not want a master to come on the scene. The consequences would be disastrous to the Removites, but considerably more so far as they were concerned.

"Ow!" moaned Gadsby, who was finding the fender rather an uncomfortable pillow. "I suppose you've finished now, you beasts!"

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"Not quite," answered Wharton grimly. "We're going to smash up every blessed thing in this study!"

"What?"

"You wouldn't have the nerve!" spluttered Merion, through a mouthful of soot and treacle.

"That remains to be seen. We'll make you cads regret the low-down trick you played on us! Think what the consequences would have been if Gadsby had wrenched out teeth right and left! It wasn't British. But then, you Highcliffe rotters never had, and never will have, any sense of fair play!"

"But it'll make an awful row. One of the beaks'll come in, and we shall get it in the neck absolutely!" groaned Vavasour.

"We'll chance that," said Vernon-Smith calmly.

The Bounder's blood was up, and he felt in the mood for smashing things. Bob Cherry had secured the poker, but there was a cricket-stump in the corner, and the Bounder's fingers closed over it in a loving embrace.

"Give the order to smite, Harry!" said Bob Cherry, gripping the business end of the poker.

"Fire away!" exclaimed Wharton.

Five crowded minutes followed, and in those five crowded minutes a great deal of damage was done. Chairs had been lugged asunder, pictures smashed to fragments, and the floor was strewn with broken crockery. In vain Ponsonby & Co. tried to free themselves from their bonds, and all their entreaties and expostulations fell on deaf ears.

"Someone coming, I think," panted Vernon-Smith, springing forward and crashing his boot through the book-case as a final act of vengeance. "Best to retreat. We can't do any more damage."

"Ha, ha! No!"

Clamorous voices were heard outside the door. The terrific din had brought half Highcliffe from their beds.

"Through the window—quick!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I say—"

"Ain't you going to untie us?"

"Let us go—"

"We shall get collared!"

The voices of the four victims rose in wild appeal.

"You should have thought of that before," said Wharton coldly. "Now I come to think of it, Gadsby, you were very fond of quoting Shakespeare when you came to Greyfriars in the role of Mr. Lugg. I know a ripping proverb of the immortal William which you'd do well to bear in mind:

"Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot—"

Gadsby scowled.

"That it do singe yourself!" concluded Wharton sweetly.

"Shakespeare said some wonderfully true things, didn't he?"

Bang! Bang!

Heavy instruments were being brought to bear upon the door by the crowd outside, and, kissing their hands to Ponsonby & Co., the Removites rushed to the window, and swiftly disappeared down the ivy. Not a soul was in sight as they scuttled across the quadrangle, and they reached the road in safety.

"Retribution!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the four avengers rescued their "jiggers" from the hedge and set their faces towards Greyfriars. "I fancy we've seen the last of Mr. Lugg."

And his comrades, with minds greatly relieved, and with many chuckles withal, heartily agreed.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble for Four!

"COME in!"

Dr. Locke, the respected Head of Greyfriars, laid down his pen as a knock sounded at the door of his study. The good doctor was engaged in burning the midnight oil. It was not a rare occurrence for him to be steeped in classic lore during the silent watches of the night, when the rest of Greyfriars had retired.

The hour was very late, and the Head wondered curiously whom his nocturnal visitor could be.

"Come in!" he repeated.

It was Mr. Quech who entered, and the Remove-master's face was very grave. He certainly did not seem to be the bearer of good tidings.

"What is it, Mr. Quech?" asked the doctor patiently.

"Something is very much amiss, Dr. Locke, I am sorry to say. Loder reported to me an hour ago that four of the boys in my Form were absent from their dormitory. I have been waiting up for them, but to this time they have not returned."

The Head looked alarmed.

"Who are the boys?" he asked.

"Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, and Vernon-Smith."

"But were they not present at calling-over?"

"No, sir."

"This is very singular, Mr. Quelch. I trust they have not deliberately absented themselves from the school," said the Head, with a troubled frown.

"I am afraid it seems remarkably like it, sir."

"When were the boys last seen?"

"At five o'clock. They took their machines from the cycle-shed and left the school shortly after the departure of Mr. Lugg."

"Mr. Lugg?" exclaimed the Head. "I—er—fail to understand you."

"I refer to the dentist who was here to-day."

"The dentist?"

"Yes," said Mr. Quelch, a trifle testily. "The man who was engaged by you to see to the boys' teeth." "Have not you then assured you, Mr. Quelch, I have not given instructions for a dentist to come here, nor should I think of doing so."

"What?"

Mr. Quelch gave a jump.

"Are you not aware, sir, that a Mr. Theodore Lugg has been to Greyfriars on two occasions?"

"Certainly not."

"Then we must have been the victims of a gross deception!"

"But, really, Mr. Quelch—"

"I thought so from the first," said the Remove-master excitedly. "I could not understand how the man came to be here, but naturally concluded that he had your permission. He must have been an impostor—nothing more nor less. Possibly, the boys have got wind of that fact, and have left Greyfriars in pursuit of him. That is quite feasible, as they were seen to depart shortly after Mr. Lugg."

"I wish I could think so," murmured the Head. "Unfortunately, I have other sad graver fears. Do you not think it likely, Mr. Quelch, owing to the present—er—state of unrest in our country, that the foolish boys have absconded with the intention of joining some Territorial or Cadet Corps?"

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"That is highly improbable," he said. "In the first place, they are too young for enlistment. Then again, Wharton is a level-headed lad, and would not think of persuading his companions to take such a course."

"What are we to do in the matter?" asked the Head, greatly perplexed.

"I have told Gosling to bring the boys in to you when they arrive."

"Very good. But supposing they do not return—"

"They are coming now, I think," said Mr. Quelch, as the tramping of feet was heard in the corridor outside. Harry Wharton & Co. had possessed a wild hope that they would be able to get into the Remove dormitory without being "spotted." When they saw the light in Gosling's lodge, however, they realised that he was waiting up for them, and that to scale the school wall and get into the buildings unobserved, would be mere waste of energy, since it was certain that Loder had reported their absence to either the Head or Mr. Quelch.

They surrendered themselves to Gosling in silence. The school porter could scarcely conceal his pleasure as he escorted the Removites to the Head's study.

"My boys!" he murmured. "Nice goings hon, hindeed! Wat I says in this 'ere—you've done it this time, you ave! It'll mean your expulsion from the school!"

The juniors had too many inward misgivings to think of Gosling and his coarse insults just then. They were wondering what form their punishment would take. They tried to dismiss the idea of expulsion, with its consequent misery, from their minds. The Boulder had been dangerously near to being expelled on several occasions, and he looked very white. Not that he was a coward. Far from it. But it did seem hard that, after having established himself in the good graces of his fellows, he should be sent away in disgrace.

If the juniors were fortunate enough to escape the maximum punishment, there were other ways in which their offence could be visited—and very unpleasant ways at that. Now that the excitement of raiding the Highcliffe cads was over, they began to wonder whether the game had been worth the candle.

It was quite on the cards that they would each receive a public flogging, and be doomed to write lines for the rest of the term. It was not a cheerful outlook, anyway.

Gosling knocked at the Head's door and threw it open. The Removites trooped in, blinking sheepishly in the unaccustomed light.

"Wharton!" said the Head sternly.

"Yes, sir?"

"Kindly give me, in the presence of Mr. Quelch, an explanation of this—er—unprecedented behaviour."

Harry Wharton was not usually considered an orator, but he surpassed himself that evening. He spoke to the Head "like a giddy Dutch uncle," as Bob Cherry remarked afterwards, and pleaded the cause of himself and his companions in misfortune with an eloquence that would have turned

Philip Snowden or Daniel O'Connell green with envy. He described the dastardly plot of the Highcliffe juniors, and the Head and Mr. Quelch listened in amazement.

"We simply had to thresh this thing out, sir," Wharton concluded. "We've been shamefully imposed upon, and didn't mean to take it lying down. Now I suppose you will punish us, sir?"

"Your supposition is correct, Wharton," said the Head drily. "Such a breach of the rules cannot be passed over lightly. I quite realise that you were under great provocation in this matter, but breaking bounds at night is a thing I refuse to tolerate. You will go to your dormitory now, and I will tell you in the morning what form your punishment is to take."

The four truants turned to the door. Mr. Quelch followed, and the procession made its way to the Remove dormitory. Here the Form-master lit the gas, and left the juniors to get into bed.

He paused in the doorway.

"I trust there will be no more nocturnal escapades," he said coldly.

And, with a grim look at the Removites, he departed for his own room.

Instantly the mass of sleeping humanity in the dormitory stirred, and a dozen voices eagerly inquired what had happened.

"Another German spy captured!" asked Peter Todd.

Wharton grunted.

"No; we've been on a visit to Mr. Theodore Lugg."

"What on earth did you want to see him for?" gasped Peter. "He's not the sort of man I'd care to associate with in the day-time, let alone after dark!"

"Do you know whom he happened to be?" asked Wharton.

"Mr. Lugg, I suppose," said Tom Brown. "Don't—don't tell us we've been harbouring a German spy in the school! That'll be a little too much for my already over-wrought nerves."

"It was no spy, German or otherwise. It was Gadsby of Highcliffe!"

"What?"

"Oh, come off, Wharton!"

"It's quite true," said Frank Nugent. "Gadsby came to Greyfriars as a giddy dentist, and if Smithy hadn't smelt a rat, we should all have been toothless in a few weeks' time!"

"Great Scott!"

An angry murmur arose. It is never nice to know that one has been completely spoofed, and had Gadsby been present in the room he would have stood a good chance of being hanged, drawn, and quartered.

"This must be avenged!" said Johnny Bull, in solemn tones.

"Rather."

"Faith, an' we'll slay the spalpeens entirely!"

"Too late, my sons," said Bob Cherry. "We've been on the warpath to-night!"

"And got collared!"

Bob nodded.

"We've just been before the Head," he said gloomily.

"And what's the verdict?"

"Judgment is suspended until the morning."

"Pheh!"

"Loder had a hand in the bizny," said Vernon-Smith savagely. "He knew it was Gadsby all the time."

"Loder?"

"Great pip!"

"We'll slaughter the cad!"

The Removites were simply spilling for a row. Gadsby had already been dealt with, and even if that were not the case, he was unapproachable. But Loder was close at hand, and could be punished immediately.

"Come on!" exclaimed Peter Todd, springing out of bed. "Let's go to his room, and yank him from his downy couch. Then we'll decide what to do with him."

"Hear, hear!"

"Better give Quelch time to get into bed," said Wharton. "If he catches us again there'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

"Right-ho!"

In order to keep awake, the juniors chatted on the subject of the Harley match, which was to be played on the morrow.

"Balstrode's a bit queer," said Ogilvy. "He's caught a chill, I think, and had to go into the sanary. At any rate, he care how you go to-morrow."

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bob Cherry. "When troubles come they come, not in single spies but in giddy battalions!"

"You'll have to play, Hazel," said Wharton. "I hope you're up to form."

Hazelene flushed. He was not so reliable as Balstrode.

and had let the Remove down on several occasions in the past, and he fully realised the justification of Wharton's remark.

"I was never more fit in my life," he said earnestly. "I've put in a good deal of practice this week, and I don't think you'll regret having me in the team, Wharton. I'll play up all I know."

"Good man! That's the spirit," said Wharton heartily. "I've never heard anything about Hasley," said Johnny Bull. "What sort of a crowd are they?"

"They're supposed to be one of the finest school teams in the county," said Harry. "Chap named Wood is their captain, and they've got a winger who's supposed to be the fast word in speed. Hedley O'Mant, I think his name is. Irish Johnny, you know."

"Faith, an he would be a flyer, then!" said Micky Desmond emphatically.

"I think we can whisk them, anyway," said the Bounder, in tones of quiet confidence. "It's rotten about Bulstrode, though!"

"Time Quekhy's sleeping the sleep of the just," observed Bob Cherry at length. "Shall we sally forth in search of Loder?"

"Might as well," said Harry Wharton. "You and Nugent and Smithy had better come with me, and we'll collar the cad and bring him into the dorm. You other fellows stand by in readiness."

"What-ho!"

"He shall have the licking of his life!" exclaimed Johnny Bull grimly.

"We won't leave one bone upon another!" said Peter Todd, in a terrible voice. "The floor shall stream with his life-blood!"

From which remarks it will be gathered that Gerald Loder was booked for a very warm—in fact, what one might term a tropical—time.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Runs the Gauntlet!

GERALD LODER was not asleep. He was seated on his bed half-dressed, and wore a troubled look. As a matter of fact, Loder very badly wanted to pay a nocturnal visit to the Green Man in Friarale, but he had not been able to pluck up sufficient courage for the enterprise, and remained for nearly two hours in a state of irresolution. There were Territorials camped in the vicinity of Greyfriars, and should he encounter one of the night-centries he might find himself in a very awkward position.

He was about to abandon his scheme and turn in, when the patter of bare feet sounded along the corridor, and he sprang to the door, with the intention of locking it. He did not wish to be discovered in a state of deshabille at that hour of the night.

But before he reached his objective, four juniors rushed into the room. Loder glared at their flushed and angry faces in amazement.

"What do you kids want?" he demanded. "And why weren't you in the dormitory when I turned out the lights this evening?"

"In reply to your first question, we want you! And with regard to the second, you can go and eat coke!" said Bob Cherry.

"You cheeky young rotter!"

"Chuck that, Loder!" said Harry Wharton sharply. "We're here with the intention of yanking you off to the Remove dormitory for a little gentle chastisement. You're bowled out, you see."

"What do you mean?" asked the prefect thickly.

"I mean," said Wharton evenly, "that we have discovered Mr. Lugg's identity, and the part you played in the matter! Loder went white to the lips. He opened his mouth to speak, but Wharton cut him short.

"You needn't deny it, Loder. It will only mean wasting your breath. I reckon this is the most low-down trick you've played us, and you're responsible for a good many. Will you come along voluntarily, or will you need our assistance?"

"I certainly sha'n't budge from this room!" muttered the prefect, licking his dry lips. "And I shall report this outrage to the Head in the morning!"

"Do so, and see what happens!" said Wharton, with contempt. "There are one or two points which you would find it difficult to explain away."

Loder felt that he was cornered, and the knowledge was very unpleasant. He was too fly, as a rule, to be caught napping, but in his eagerness to see the juniors put to torture by the infamous "Mr. Lugg," he had over-reached himself.

He was now confronted with two alternatives. He must either submit to the humiliation of a licking from the Remove, or stand accused before Dr. Locke on a charge of aiding and abetting Gadsby in a cruel and callous plot. He knew that he could expect very little lenience if the affair came to the Head's ears, and finally decided to resign himself to the tender mercies of the Remove.

"I'll come," he said, with a great effort.

"Very well."

"We'll form a sort of guard of honour round him," said Bob Cherry. "The rotter will bunk in no time if he gets half a chance."

The juniors saw to it that Loder did not get the remotest chance; and the prefect, realising that he was no match for the four Removes, decided that quiet submission was the best course open to him under the circumstances.

There was a loud murmur in the Remove dormitory as Loder entered with his bodyguard.

"Here's the rotter!"

"Loder, you cad—"

"Seek it into him!"

Loder staggered back in alarm from the fierce faces he encountered. Fellows sprang out of bed on all sides, and closed round the tall prefect.

"What's to be done with him, Wharton?" asked Tom Brown.

"He shall run the gauntlet," said Harry.

"Oh, good!"

"Pile in!"

"On the ball!"

The Removes seized a motley assortment of weapons—slippers, bolsters, and towels—and lined up in stern array ready to smite. They were present to a man, barring the unfortunate Bulstrode, who little knew that a delightful experience he was missing. Even Billy Banter had crawled out of bed, and armed himself with one of Bolsover's shoes.

Loder's coward heart quailed within him.

"Hands off!" he cried. "I tell you I know nothing about it! It is all a mistake! I sha'n't submit to this! Ow!"

Harry Wharton gave the prefect a stinging flick with his towel.

"Run," he urged, "or it'll be the worse for you!"

Loder started to run between the two lines of Removes, and a perfect fusillade of blows was showered upon him as he staggered along. It was very seldom that the juniors could come to close quarters with the unpopular prefect, and they were making the most of their opportunity.

Slash!

Whack!

Biff!

The blows fell relentlessly upon Loder's half-dressed form, and he reared to threats, cryings, and entreaties, but all to no purpose. Finally, bruised in body, he reached the end of the long rows of Removes, and sank squirming to the floor.

"Ow! You heartless young hooligans! Yow! Ow!"

"Make him run back!" roared Bolsover.

"No; he's had enough," said Wharton quietly. "Get out of it, Loder! And thank yourself jolly lucky the Head knows nothing of the part you played in this affair. I fancy you wouldn't be a prefect much longer if he did!"

Glad enough was Gerald Loder to seek the shelter of his own room, where he might hide his diminished head. He had been punished with greater severity than he could ever remember, and was too sore—physically and mentally—to think of revenge just then. It has been said of old that the way of the transgressor is hard, and Loder was finding it so. One thing he was certain, as he crawled wearily between the sheets, He would never again, under any circumstances, co-operate with Gadsby of Highcliffe.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

At the Eleventh Hour.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned out of bed when the rising-bell clanged the next morning, and they did not look cheerful. It had been a night of suspense for the four culprits, and they wished the Head had arrived at a decision overnight, instead of leaving them to await their fate like condemned felons.

"I fully realise," the Head began, when the Removes stood before him, "that Gadsby gave you provocation, and I will, therefore, visit your offence more lightly than I should otherwise have done. You will each sit in the class-room this afternoon from two to four, and write out passages from the 'Henriade.' That is all. And you will please understand that I want no repetition of last night's conduct."

Harry Wharton gave a start.

"B-but we are playing in a match this afternoon, sir," he said.

"Then you will resign your places to some of your fellows," he said. "We'll take a flogging, sir—anything so long as we can play!" said Wharton desperately.

"I adhere to my original decision!" said the Head tartly. "Now you may go!"

"Oh, my sainted aunt!" groaned Nugent, as the unhappy quartette trooped out into the corridor. "That's done it—absolutely. We've got to grind out extracts from the 'Henriade,' while a fifth-rate team representing the Remove is being laced into a cocked hat!"

"Harley are winners in advance," said the Bounder, "unless—"

"Unless what?"

"I was thinking that we could get the kick-off timed for four o'clock instead of three. In that case, we should be free to play, after all."

"By Jove, I never thought of that!" exclaimed Wharton. "We'll try, anyway."

But once again the Removites were doomed to be disappointed. The Harley eleven arrived by train shortly after lunch, and Wood, their skipper, informed Wharton that they had to return by the five-ten from Friarade, as owing to the infrequent service there was not likely to be another train back that evening.

The Harleys wore a fine, athletic set of fellows, and their svelte forms paid a silent tribute to the school drill-instructor. They had walked up from the station, and now proceeded to the football-ground.

"Why haven't you changed, old chap?" asked Wood, as Wharton conducted his guests on to the field.

Harry looked ruefully at the rival skipper.

"I'm not playing," he said briefly.

"What!"

"Fact. Four of us got into a scrape last night, and we're under detention from two till four."

"I'm beastly sorry," said Wood. "This is awful. Won't the old man rescind your punishment?"

Wharton shook his head.

"No chance, and I will be able to play at four o'clock, which will be about the beginning of the second half. Till then we'll play with seven men."

Wood laughed outright.

"But, my dear chap, you're simply asking for it!" he exclaimed. "It wouldn't be anything to swank or gloat over, of course, but we should make rings round seven of your chaps. We should pulverise 'em—wipe 'em off the face of the earth! Don't you think it would be wise to field four reserves?"

"That would hardly be fair, seeing that we intend to play ourselves after the interval."

The Harley captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Right—ho! You know your own bizney best. But don't think we shall slack off because we've only got seven men to contend with. We shall play up like demons."

"That's all right," said Wharton, laughing. "Excuse me now, won't you? It's two o'clock, and I've got to begin slogging at the 'Henriade.' I suppose you're going to have a bit of practice?"

"We is!" said Wood heartily. "By the way, allow me to introduce to you Hedley O'Mant, our right-winger. He's a giddy meteor, I can assure you."

Wharton shook hands cordially with an Auburn-haired son of the Emerald Isle, who, although slightly-built, looked every inch a footballer. O'Mant was a treasure to Harley. The school would not have parted with him for untold gold. He came of a footballing stock, and had a cousin who occasionally played for Chelsea.

Wharton chatted with the Irish boy for a few minutes, and then made his way to the Form-room, where his companions in distress had already foregathered. The Head could not have fixed upon a more cutting form of punishment. The day was ideal for football, yet the four juniors were compelled to chafe in a stuffy room, where the noise of the distant conflict came to their ears.

There was consternation in the Remove when the news became known. It was bad enough to lose Bulstrode, but they would still have a sporting chance of victory even without their burly goalkeeper, especially if Hazlede filled the breach in a satisfactory manner. But without Harry Wharton & Co. the team was utterly disorganised.

Peter Todd assumed the role of captain, and tossed with Wood for choice of ends. Before the game commenced he drew his colleagues aside for a brief consultation.

"We must play on the defensive," he said earnestly. "and try to stick out the forty-five minutes. In the second half we shall be reinforced. Keep 'em out, Hazel, for goodness' sake!"

And in the Form-room, helpless and fuming, Harry Wharton & Co. wrestled with the "Henriade." But they could not concentrate their minds upon that noble and classic work. In the words of the poet, as their thoughts were elsewhere:

They had taken the precaution of slipping on football boots beneath their usual garb, and when, after what seemed an

eternity, the welcome notes of four sounded from the old school clock, they sprang to their feet with one accord, and made rapid tracks for the football-ground.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Crowning Triumph!

"WONDER what the score is?" panted Wharton, as the juniors sprinted on to the ground.

"It'll be more like the score of a giddy cricket-match than anything else!" growled Bob Cherry. "Harley," will be well into double figures now, I should imagine.

The second half was in progress, and the Harley forwards were swarming round Hazlede like bees.

There was a tremendous cheer of encouragement and relief as the four new-comers threw off their coats and dashed on to the field. It resembled the sudden relief of a beleaguered garrison.

Wingate would have suspended the game for a moment while they got into their places, but Wharton beckoned to him for the match to proceed.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Peter Todd fervently. "You've come at last! It's been like a giddy nightmare!"

"How far are they ahead?" asked Wharton, in a voice tense with anxiety. "Too much to catch up, I suppose?"

"Not a bit of it, my son. They're leading three—one, and lucky at that. Hazel's been showing ripping form, and Bull and Brown have worked like Trojans."

Peter Todd did not mention the part he had played in keeping the Harleys out of the hay; but it had been a noble part. Peter's football knickers were in a disgraceful state; his shirt was crumpled and torn; and his hair and face were plastered with mud. But the throng on the touch-line knew that they were honourable marks, and regarded Peter Todd—and rightly so—as a hero.

The presence of Harry Wharton & Co. had an enlivening effect. The seven stalwarts who had passed through such a grueling time recovered their second wind, as it were, now that the reinforcements had arrived.

Down the field the Removites rushed. Every man in his place, and moving like the unit of a regiment, they converged on the Harley goal. Russell's centre was perfect, and, without waiting to steady himself, Harry Wharton caught the leather "full toss" and slugged it into the bottom corner of the net.

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Well played, sir!"

Even Lord Maulvercrer, the slacker of the Remove, was stirred to enthusiasm.

"Ripping shot, begad!" he exclaimed.

The Remove warmed to their work, and after some clever combination on the part of their forwards, Frank Nugent shot a foot wide. Two hours in a musty class-room had not improved his eyesight.

The tide of the battle was turned now, with a vengeance. Again and again the Removites pressed, but the Harley goal seemed to possess a charmed life. Mark Linley, rushing up from his place at left-half, sent in a terrific shot which missed by inches, and then Harry Wharton headed over the bar.

Time was flying fast now, and the Removites received quite a fright when, play being suddenly transferred to the other end, Wood hit the post with a "scorcher." Greyfriars were still a goal in arrears, and the crowd on the touch-line had relapsed into silence. As Ogilvy remarked, it seemed "all over bar shouting."

Still the ding-dong struggle went on, and considering the terrific pace at which the game was being fought out, it was surprising how the players stuck to their guns.

"One to draw—two to win."

"They'll never do it!" was the unanimous opinion.

But the Removites meant to do it, and they put every effort of which they were capable into that last grim quarter of an hour. Vernon-Smith scurried from a throw-in, and raced towards the goal. He was challenged by the Harley backs, but the Bounder was fleet of foot, and possessed of iron nerve. He dodged past the two defenders, and wound up with a terrific shot which left the goalie helpless.

Level! And ten minutes to play!

News of the Remove's great rally had reached every corner of Greyfriars, and Mr. Quelch stood with Courtney of the Sixth on the touch-line.

The Remove-master gasped as the Bounder scored his grand equalising goal.

"I never knew Smith possessed such a marvellous turn of speed!" he exclaimed.

There is more latent talent in your Form, Mr. Quelch, than you imagine," said Courtney stiffly.

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)

A SPECIAL WAR SERIAL!**START IT TO-DAY!**

A WORLD AT STAKE!

A Stirring Story of the Supreme Struggle Between
the British Empire and Its Hated Foe.

READ THIS FIRST.

A wonderful airship, named the Falcon, is constructed by two brothers, Thorpe and Dick Thornhill. It is offered to the British Government; but they remain indifferent to the Falcon's qualities. Major Seigner, a German officer, manages to steal the Falcon, and despite all efforts made by Dick and his brother, the Falcon is retained by the Germans, who build a fleet of airships of the same pattern. Dick and Thorpe learn of this, and return to England to give the alarm. Dick is sent to warn Colchester and Woolwich, as all telegraphic communications have been cut by the Germans. A force of aliens in London are armed and uniformed by German agents, and, commandeering a ferry-boat, make for Woolwich. But the garrison is alarmed by Dick, and the enemy is repulsed. In London, the Germans endeavour to capture Liverpool Street Station, so as to ensure the safety of the two hundred thousand German troops already on their way to London via Harwich. Meanwhile, Thorpe Thornhill is valiantly defending the Night Hawk, their second airship, at Woolwich, and it is only after having suffered great losses, that the Germans manage to enter the shed. Things look very black for the small band of British defenders, until a rescue party appears on the scene, and the Germans are annihilated. Meanwhile, a much larger German force is

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about to effect the seizure of Liverpool Street Station, when the place becomes alive with Territorials, and the Germans are caught like rats in a trap and made prisoners of war. Major Seigner, in the Falcon, engages in a desperate fight with the Night Hawk in mid-air, and, Thornhill's machine being damaged, he is compelled to descend for repairs.

(Now go on with the Story.)

The Germans Land!

To return to Dick Thornhill.

"What are your intentions for the future, Mr. Thornhill?" General Smythie asked, turning abruptly to Dick.

"I am at your service, sir, if you can make use of me," replied Dick.

"I can, and gladly. You say you came a greater part of the journey on a motor-bicycle? I have an electric machine ready charged. Will you mount it, and see how things are going at Harwich?"

Dick eagerly consented.

"Good!" continued the general. "If you cannot get any nearer, Chesherton Church tower commands a fine view of both towns and sea. Hallo, what's up now?" he added, as a

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white-faced telegraph-boy handed him a telegram, which the receiving-clerk had not even stopped to put into an envelope.

"Telegram from Harwich, sir. Wire destroyed at the other end!" gasped the breathless boy, as he delivered the message.

"Six airships—nationality unknown—shelling Landguard Fort. Magazine No. 2 exploded. Large fleet of transports—in the offing. H.M.S. Mersey and Circe clearing for action. Volunteers—"

"The message ends here," said the general. "A shot must have hit the wire. It is unlikely they have already landed." And then, too agitated to say more, he hastened away.

This was no time to stand upon ceremony. Entering the general's study, Dick Thornhill looked round it. He was not very long in finding what he sought—a Mauser pistol and a bandolier full of cartridges. These he secured, and, five minutes later, mounted upon the general's splendid electric cycle, he flew like the wind towards Harwich, where he arrived some half-hour later, to find the airships had evidently not confined their attentions to the fort, for they had also reduced the town to a heap of shapeless ruins.

Clambering over heaps of masonry, Dick found some five hundred men—Territorials, artillerymen, sailors, engineers, and even civilians, firing doggedly at some large, flat-bottomed boats crammed with men, which were trying to effect a landing. Forgetful of his errand, he scrambled over the ruins towards the firing line.

As he did so he noticed a grey-haired old man, in the uniform of a colonel of the Territorials, who was directing the defence. It was Sir Harry Harkness, a man to whom the Territorials owed gratitude for many an act of hospitality.

"Ah, Thornhill!" cried Sir Harry, as soon as he recognised the new-comer. "Where is your brother and his airship now? How is it you have let the Germans get the start of you in this fatal manner?"

Dick Thornhill shook his head.

"Ask the Government, Sir Harry," he replied bitterly; then looked to where a cloud of smoke out to sea proclaimed the fact that the Mersey and Circe were, hopeless of victory, engaging the German battleships conveying an immense fleet of transports, whose object was to land in Harwich, and hasten to the rescue of the German force which they believed had secured Landguard Fort.

It seemed to Dick that the defenders of Harwich were but throwing away their lives in a useless struggle; but, realising that every minute, every second, they could delay the invaders would give the Colchester Garrison more time to reach the scene, he snatched up a rifle and bandolier from the body of a dead Imperial Yeoman, and, stretching himself alongside a ruined wall, opened fire upon the boats, which, covered by a constant hail of lead from the German Fleet, were gradually working their way ashore.

The Germans lost heavily, but nothing could stop that steady stream of living men; and, seeing the foremost boat about to discharge its living cargo, Sir Harry Harkness gave the order to retreat to a small wood, or spinney, the trees of which offered not only concealment, but excellent cover.

"Open up, lads! Mind, slow, steady firing whilst our ammunition lasts, then close in on our centre, and we'll die shoe in hand!" the gallant old veteran cried.

Finding the Germans, rapidly forming up as they landed, were hastening to the attack, these four hundred gallant heroes stood their ground. But the foe numbered as many thousands as they did hundreds, and after pouring a dozen crushing volleys into the wood, which decimated the ranks of the defenders, and covered the bodies of the remainder with broken twigs and leaves, they advanced at the double.

The end was at hand, and as their bugle rang out the "Prepare to receive cavalry!" the remnant of that band of Britons formed up in a glade which intersected the spinney, each looking eagerly towards their commander.

Sir Harry was equal to the occasion.

"Forward, lads! We will not stay to be shot down like rabbits in a warren!" he cried.

But barely had the words left his lips, ere, struck in the forehead by a chance bullet, he pitched heavily forward and fell to the ground without a moan.

For a moment the men wavered; but, snatching up the sword the stricken man had dropped, Dick rushed to the front, crying:

"Fix bayonets! At the double! Charge!"

A cheer burst from the devoted detachment as they followed their young leader from the wood, and the next moment they were in the midst of their foe, fighting as only Britons can fight, until their onward career was checked by a huge mass of infantry, when, back to back, the little body, now reduced to two hundred men, prepared to die and die.

"Throw down your arms! You are brave men, and deserve quarter!" cried a captain in the uniform of a Bavarian regiment.

"Silence!" thundered another, who wore a general's THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

uniform. "Shoot the dogs down! No quarter! It is the Emperor's orders!"

"Hurrah! Old England for ever!" cried the British, defiant to the last.

"Hurrah!"

Dick looked round him in astonishment. Could it have been an echo which had reached his ears above the firing?

No. For the next moment a loud shout burst from his lips, as he saw their foes turn from them with startled, frightened faces, and a minute later, above the smoke of battle, the sun flashed brightly on sword-blades and bright helmets, as, driving the Germans like sheep before them, the Queen's Bays swooped down upon their foe.

"Draw off your men, sir!" roared the colonel of the cavalry as he swept by.

Gladly Dick obeyed, and a few minutes later the little band of heroes were once more retreating towards the village of Chepperton.

From the top of a slight rise Dick looked back, just in time to see the Queen's Bay's re-forming in the roar of the demoralised German regiments. Then the cavalry trumpets blared forth once more, and, with a rousing cheer, they cut their way back through the blue-coated mass.

The Battle of the Nore.

Strange to say, the absence of the German aerial fleet had scarcely been noticed by the British. The fact is, they were so unaccustomed to airships, that unless actually on the scene, men could scarcely credit their existence.

To explain the absence of the German airships it is necessary that we should take the reader back to where we last saw Tom Evans, on the shoulders of the heroic leader of the mob.

Tom was naturally of a retiring disposition, so slipped away as quickly as he could, and, believing that Thorpe Thornhill would make for Woolwich Dockyard, after smashing the German airship, hastened in that direction.

The streets were crammed with uniformed Territorials, for, at the first alarm, without awaiting orders from headquarters, the citizen soldiers of London had flown to arms.

At Charing Cross Tom found the traffic disorganised, for, on the first hint of an invasion, the Government had taken over the railways.

However, a train was standing against one of the platforms, which a bewildered porter told him was going to Woolwich. So he jumped into the nearest compartment—a first-class one—in which were seated a midshipman and a naval officer.

"Hallo, young shaver, what are you doing in here?" demanded the officer, laying his hand on the collar of Tom's jacket, as though about to put him out.

"Drop it, can't yer?" cried Tom. "I've got to go to Woolwich, and—now we're off!" he added, as the train moved out of the station.

"Oh, you're going to Woolwich, are you?" asked the officer, sinking back on the cushions and laughing. "Well, it will be some time before you get there. This is a through special to Chatham."

"Oh, lor'!" cried Tom, in dismay. "And Master Thorpe will fly away without me."

"Fly away? What do you mean?" demanded the officer.

"I'm Mr. Thornhill's cabin-boy—him as built the flying ships. I've been a prisoner with Master Dick in Kiel, and if you'd ha' listened to us, you wouldn't ha' bin in this hole. Why, we telegraphed, and telegraphed, and telegraphed; and we didn't do no good whatsoever."

The naval officer gazed at the boy in astonishment, which turned to actual amazement, not unminged with respect, as Tom rattled on with a brief account of his adventures, saying in conclusion:

"And now, Master Thorpe will set sail, a-bustin' up them three Germans, and I won't be near to grin at 'em!"

"It's a pity, my lad, but we can't help it now," said the officer. "Why not come on with us? You will have plenty of fun, I can promise, and if we see anything of your master's airship, I will put you aboard her. Ever been on a turbine destroyer?"

"Seeing as how I don't know what they are, sir, I can't say!" returned Tom.

The lieutenant laughed.

"Well, you'll see one when we reach Chatham," he said.

And Tom, believing that Thornhill would be sure to sail without him—for, of course, he knew nothing about the damage the Night Hawk had received—consented, and an hour later was aboard a steam-pinnace, cutting through the water towards where—dense, black masses of smoke pouring from her funnels—the turbine destroyer Thrasher lay at anchor.

"Weigh anchor at once! War has broken out between Germany and Great Britain. We have to find the Channel

Fleet, with despatches for the admiral!" cried Commander Hawkins. Tom's new friend, as he stepped on the low-lying deck of his vicious-looking little craft.

His last words were drowned in loud cheers from the gallant sailors who heard him—cheers which were carried from torpedo-boat to gunboat, from cruiser to battleship, until the whole of the reserve squadron lying in the Medway joined in a universal shout of joy that at last the time had come when they might strike a blow for Britain.

The Thrasher, which had recently been fitted with turbine engines, was one of the fastest destroyers afloat. Indeed, the only other vessel which equalled her in speed was H.M. new turbine cruiser *Our King*, and, as they cleared the Medway, Tom, looking back, saw the latter vessel, from her station at the Nore, rapidly overhauling them, with as much ease as though the destroyer had been an ocean tramp.

Off the Maplin Sands they met what at first sight appeared to be a small steamer in flames, for dark columns of smoke were pouring from amidships. But, as they drew nearer, they found that she was the Hull and London boat, her funnels shot away, and a gaping wound in her stern. Her crew raised a cheer as the Thrasher dashed by, hailing huge sheets of water from her bows in ever circling cascades.

"Channel Fleet attacked by ironclads and airships!" shouted the captain of the Hull boat from his bridge.

"Report at Sheerness!" yelled back Commander Hawkins.

"All right! Look out for invisible!" returned the merchant skipper.

But the latter part of his sentence was lost, as the tremendous speed at which the destroyer was going carried her swiftly by.

"What the deuce did he mean?" asked the commander of his first "luff."

"Those invisible torpedo craft our Government refused a few years ago, I expect!" returned Lieutenant Hicks, with disgust. "The boats are covered with mirrors, so that they cannot be distinguished from the surrounding sea."

"Bug pardon, sir," interposed Tom who, clad in a suit of white ducks belonging to the midshipman with whom he had come on board, was standing near. "I once heard Master Thorne say just how he knew a way to get rid o' them look-glass boats."

"Then I wish he was here," declared Hawkins earnestly. "for we will need not only muscle, shot, and shell, but brains as well, if we would save Britain from destruction. What kind of apparatus was it, do you know?"

"Well, sir, it was something like a big tin funnel with a hole on it, to be fastened on a searchlight. You turn the light on, and when the beams fall on glass, it blazes up just like a spout o' fire," exclaimed Tom.

"By Jove, I see the idea!" cried Commander Hawkins. "Send the chief engineer up at once," he added, turning to a midshipman by his side, who immediately hastened below, returning a few minutes later with the officer.

For some minutes the two talked earnestly together; then Tom was sent for, and twenty minutes later the engineer reappeared on deck carrying a tin cone, which he placed over the forward searchlight.

Since leaving Sheerness, a low, distant rumbling had reached their ears, growing louder and louder as they hastened northwards. Then, right in their track, they saw a bank of thick, sulphurous smoke, like some yellow mist, darkened with vivid flashes of lightning.

Presently a puff of wind blew the smoke on one side, and those on board the Thrasher saw a wondrous yet terrible sight for, flying in stately majesty against an overwhelming force of Germans, was our grand Channel Fleet.

The roar of big guns rendered it quite impossible for a word to be exchanged on board the Thrasher; but Tom, seizing the commander's arm, pointed excitedly upwards, where, high above the cloud of battle smoke, were six large airships.

Presently a large British battleship, her guns spitting fire in every direction, the grand white ensign, torn but defiant, flying at her stern, emerged for a moment from the midst of the battle smoke.

Even as she did so, an airship swooped like a hawk towards her.

"Depress the forward guns!" roared Commander Hawkins.

Eagerly the crew elevated the long muzzles of their quick-firers, but, ere they could bring it to bear upon the distant airship, something fell like a stone from the latter, slighting with deadly aim full amidships of the man-of-war.

There was a loud explosion; and, when the smoke cleared away, they saw the huge battleship reduced to a wreck by the airship's missile, but still beholding forth death from her torn and shattered decks, rolling helplessly on the waves.

A thin, lance-like streak of light sweeping backwards and forwards along her course, the Thrasher swept through the German fleet.

The streak was almost invisible in the daylight, and for some minutes Commander Hawkins began to fear either that his roughly-made apparatus was not up to its work, or Tom had exaggerated the importance of Thorpe's discovery.

But presently what looked like a small ball of fire flashed from the sea. It was the concentrated glare of the electric light reflected upon the glass surrounding an invisible torpedo-boat.

The crew of the quick-firing gun mounted on the destroyer's turtle-deck had already received their orders, and five shots were hurled in rapid succession at the moving ball of fire. As each well-aimed missile reached its mark, splintering the plate-glass sides of the torpedo-boat, it seemed as though the craft was rising from the sea, and a "Waked boat, lads!" burst from the commander's lips as the unmarked boat sank in a cloud of steam beneath the waves.

Darting hither and thither amongst the German ships, the Thrasher continued on her deadly course, sending her wandering searchlight falling now on one, now on another, of the masked torpedo-boats, sending each in turn to the bottom, until those pests of our outnumbered fleet were practically destroyed.

In vain the enemy's cruisers and airships strove to destroy the daring vessel. The airships could not lodge a projectile upon her decks, so swiftly she darted from place to place, and the cruisers were simply useless against her.

But the battle was going badly against the Channel Squadron. One by one, battleship and cruiser were put out of action.

It is true, the admiral—Lord Walter Kerry—might have avoided an engagement, but he did not think it consistent with the traditions of his Majesty's Navy to flee before a hostile fleet, no matter how strong. Like the gallant old sea-dog he was, he preferred to fight whilst he had a spar standing or a deck beneath his feet, and, if destruction must come, meet it as became a British admiral.

How the Channel Fleet fought that day we have no space to tell. We must confine ourselves to the ship from which Tom Evans was seeing his first naval battle.

Presently, in answer to a signal from *Our King*, the Thrasher dashed alongside her, and together they rushed at the German admiral's flagship. With a deafening crash, the floating fort's guns thundered as they dashed in upon her on either side.

The next moment Tom heard three explosions in quick succession, and, in defiance of all orders, hastened on deck, just in time to see the German ship disappearing beneath the waves.

Then they flew to the rescue of the *Allison*, for, only kept afloat by her watertight doors, one screw torn away by a partly successful torpedo, launched from one of the invisible boats the Thrasher had destroyed, Lord Kerry's flagship was being attacked by two battleships and a cruiser.

The arrival of the two turbines altered the aspect of affairs, and half an hour later one battleship had struck to *Our King*, and the other two ships had beaten a hasty retreat.

But, alas! during the fight a shell had almost completed the torpedo's deadly work; and, signalling the two ships which had come to his rescue to return to where the Channel Fleet was barely holding its own, Lord Kerry steered shorewards, to beach his vessel ere she sank, subjected to a continual plunging fire from two airships, to which she could not reply.

But, owing to the presence of the German airships, the day was going against the British, and it seemed as though our fleet was destined to suffer its first defeat since Van Tromp had startled London with the sound of his guns.

Thorpe Thornhill to the Rescue.

The Germans were already confident of victory; but they had reckoned without Thorpe Thornhill.

The repairs to the *Night Hawk* had taken him rather longer than he had expected, and many frantic telegrams and orders, borne by galloping messengers, had reached Earl's Court ere Thornhill was able to board the *Night Hawk* and soar with her into the air.

There was no need to ask in which direction he should steer, the constant roar of guns to the east showing that it was there the Channel Fleet was fighting for its very existence.

But even as the Night Hawk flew over the low-lying Essex marshes the sound of firing grew less.

"Good heavens, we will be too late! The German beasts have done their work!" cried Thorpe, as he strained his eyes to where a haze of smoke, broken with intermittent flashes of fire, appeared in the distance.

It was a hazy afternoon, light grey the pervading colour of the atmosphere. And, approaching the conning-tower, he moved a lever, with the result that the Night Hawk became suffused with the same tone as the element through which she flew.

Presently a long, straggling line, battered, mastless, with torn funnels and rent sides, twisted into fantastic curves, but still doggedly holding its own, the Channel Fleet appeared in view, hemmed in by hostile ships. Hovering over them were four dark specks, which Thorpe knew to be German airships.

Even as they neared their foe a missile dropped from the foremost aerial warship on to the deck of a second-class cruiser, from which arose the next moment a pyramid of smoke and flame; and then the gallant vessel and her noble crew sank beneath the waves, the tiny boats in which some tried to save their lives being subjected to a pitiless magazine fire from the flying foe's deck.

"The brutes! Have no mercy, sir!" cried Thorpe, in hoarse, strained tones.

"None! Death to every German, no matter where or when we meet them!" replied the other.

Then the Night Hawk mounted upwards, invisible to the doomed foe, until at last she hovered five hundred feet above the German airships.

Then suddenly every gun she carried belched forth its messenger of death.

The airships were strong and well made, but the unstable element in which they floated offered no support, once their machinery went wrong. A shriek of unnerving terror rose from their decks as one after the other, their wings shot away, three swayed to and fro for a few moments, then plunged headlong to the sea.

From the fourth Seigner witnessed this sudden and unexpected shift of fortune. So far, he had carried all before him. Visions of imperial favour, of promotion, of reward had floated before his eyes; now, in a minute, in almost the twinkling of an eye, victory had been turned into defeat.

Mad with rage, he abandoned the deck of his vessel for his conning-tower, and, snatching a momentary glimpse of his foe, soared swiftly round, then rushed full at him.

But Thorpe was on the alert. He also had recognised Seigner, and was determined he should not now escape him.

Their guns belching forth fire and smoke, a fearful fire raged in mid-air. Now it seemed as though the German would be swept from existence, now as though the British vessel would herself succumb.

But whilst Seigner, eager only to destroy his all-too-successful opponent, tried to overpower him with the fire of his big guns, Thorpe Thornhill had brought every man he could spare to the side of his vessel, picking off the German crew, until at last, discipline overcome by terror, the survivors entered the conning-tower, seized their commander, and, despite his threats and ravings, turned their vessel's head northwards.

But, as ill-luck would have it, the last shot the Falcon fired skimmed the starboard wing of the Night Hawk. Six inches nearer the hull, and Thorpe Thornhill's ship would have been destroyed. As it was, it hampered her speed, and, gnashing his teeth with rage, Thorpe saw his enemy escaping.

But, partially disabled though she was, the Night Hawk was able to drive the remaining two airships off their prey, and then turned his attention to the hitherto triumphant German fleet.

Hovering for a moment over the centre of the Channel Fleet, Thorpe leant over the stern railing of his invincible craft, and waved his hat.

Load above the thunderous roar of the heavy guns came such a stirring, confident, triumphant cheer that struck a deadly chill into the enemy's hearts, for it told them that now their triumph was indeed short-lived, and that the tables would be turned upon them with a vengeance.

Then Thorpe hastened to the conning-tower, and, surrounded by the various appliances for controlling his ship and her armaments, headed straight for the nearest enemy.

The Germans had seen the destruction wrought by their own airships, and the sight was not calculated to steady their nerves now. They themselves were subjected to the same danger. Besides, the hammering had not been all on one side. There was not a ship but that had suffered severely, and, to their horror, they saw not only that they were threatened from above, but also that the battered Channel Fleet seemed to have taken a fresh lease of its life, and, from being the attacked, had become the attacker.

(Another splendid instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy now.)

The Reign of Terror!

(Continued from page 21.)

This was a hint to Mr. Quelch to take a more active interest in the school games, and another master might have been too obtuse to notice it. Mr. Quelch, however, did not possess that simple faith which is believed to be so much better than Norman blood. He glared at the prefect angrily.

"Do you mean to infer, Courtney——" he began.

But Courtney was too engrossed in watching the game to heed Mr. Quelch.

"My hat!" he murmured, in a disappointed tone. "They'll be licked after all!"

Harley woke up. They realised that what had once looked like a complete walk-over for them was now nothing of the kind. Had Hedley O'Mant, their speedy young winger, been "fed" more assiduously, they might have snapped their position long ago; and Wood, realising this, drove the ball out to the right wing. The Irish boy sped off with a "do or die" expression on his face. Johnny Bull essayed to stop him, but O'Mant, was of a class superior even to the Greyfriars Remove, and he drove the ball past Hazeldene in first-rate style.

Hazel picked the ball ruefully out of the net and punted it up to the half-way line. It was, indeed, hard lines on the Remove goal, for he had been playing magnificently, and it seemed quite that all his good work was to be undone.

But Dick Russell saved the situation. From his position on the right wing, Russell had heard some uncomplimentary remarks among the crowd as to the wisdom of his inclusion. He had not been noticed in the first half, for the Remove had had no forwards to speak of; and he gritted his teeth at the unfair comments which were passed.

Wharton kicked off, and Nugent, dodging the Harley halves, sent the ball out to the right. There was no time to stop and think, and Russell lunged out at the sphere, and banged it straight for goal. It was a perfect shot, although made from some distance out, and would have baffled many a professional custodian. It certainly baffled the Harley goalkeeper, who rolled over and over in a frantic, yet futile, endeavour to save the ball.

"Goal!"

"Hooryay for us!"

"We've drawn, at any rate!"

But the Remove players did not mean to rest content with a result where honours were divided. There was only another minute remaining for play—Wingate was already consulting his watch—and Wharton was desperate. He had come on the field, with the fixed intention of pulling the game out of the fire, and he meant to see his resolve through.

The Remove forwards cut their way through the Harley defence. They gained ground rapidly, and Penfold, when within shooting range, passed quickly to Wharton. The hero of the Remove braced himself up for the final effort, and a moment later the ball was reposing in the bottom corner of the net.

"Phe-e-ep!"

Wingate blew a triumphant blast on his whistle, and the crowd, surging on to the field, treated the winning team to a demonstration like of which Greyfriars had seldom known.

The Remove had beaten Harley College by five goals to four!

"Heave!" gasped Wood, limping up to Harry Wharton. "You deserved to win, if anyone did! It's a bitter pill for Harley, I can tell you, but—well, put it there!"

And Wharton shook hands heartily with the rival skipper. Three cheers were given for victors and vanquished, and then the visiting team left to catch their train. The Removites, covered with mud and glory, were carried in triumph from the field.

They bore the thumps of congratulation patiently. As Bob Cherry remarked, after such a titanic struggle as they had recently been through, they certainly deserved well of their country.

Details of the unhappy fate of the Highlife cads never reached the ears of Harry Wharton & Co. Gadaby had been made to pay dearly for his callous scheme to rid the junior section of Greyfriars of its teeth. "Mr. Lugg" was not likely to visit the old school again—not in the capacity of surgeon-dentist, at any rate; but some time had elapsed ere the juniors ceased to talk over the events which occurred during his exciting, though very brief, Reign of Terror!

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete school tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled "THE BLACK FOOTBALLERS!" Order Early!)

Our Grand Ferrers Lord Serial Story.



THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure.

By SIDNEY DREW.

A Wetting for Two!

"Dat had 'nuff rudeness ob yo'!" Gan remarked, as he cleared away the weed in handfuls. "Why yo' nobs knock at de doors, and den I know yo' comings? Dat awfols had 'nuff manners. I gots a good minds to give yo' a severdus thrashing. What fo' yo' means by— O-oh! Be off! O-oh!"

Gan clutched his scalp as a fairly weighty stick which Barry had dropped in whirled over the fall and alighted on his head with a crack.

"I not times. I stays here no longerful," sighed the Eskimo. "I no wants any firewoods. Where dat ole dawgs? Yi! Schwartz, Schwartz!"

Then Gan swiftly caught hold of his right ear, and just as swiftly fondled his left. A couple of neatly-aimed clumps of grass had caressed his organs of hearing. There were two peals of coarse and vulgar laughter, and when Gan gained the bank he was in ample time to see O'Rourke, who had crossed over the plank bridge, strolling away arm-in-arm with the curly 'sman of the Lord of the Deep.

"Yo' comes backs and I knocks yo' hof into de middles of nexst Christmas!" roared Gan-Waga. "Come backs, and I eats yo', yo' n'gful cowardliness!"

"Lie down, blubber!" cried Maddock.

"Pace, oil barrel!" shouted Barry. "Kennel, whale! Crawl under wan o' the sthones in the brook, and pretend yo're a bullhead, and bedad, nobody will be able to tell the difference! Ha, ha! He is a little Eskimo, wud hair as black as tar, and when we set about him, Ben, he damn where he are! U'g's the lovely flowers that make me feel poetical, Benny. O-oh, let's sit down and make daisy chains!"

"Souse me, I reckon we'd better get a bit further off, first," said the bo'sun cautiously. "And what do you want w' daisy chains? A good steel chain w' an iron ball on the end would suit you better. I'm not game for poetry or gath'rin' flowers, but I'm all ready for breakfast, souse me!"

A gamekeeper touched his cap to them. As it was barely half-past four, Barry suggested that Benjamin would have saved time by having partaken of breakfast the night previous. They passed at a side to watch Ferrers Lord's magnificent cows trooping towards the milking sheds.

"We can have a drink of milk, anyhow," said the bo'sun, "and then a snooze in the fresh air. How'll that suit, Irish? We ain't had a lot of sleep."

Barry said the programme would suit him admirably. After a luscious draught of warm milk, the two bronzed mariners stretched themselves out on the grass and snored. Then a little black dog came galloping along with his keen nose close to the ground, stopped, turned, and raced away.

"Yo' founded dems, hunk!"

Having hardly an atom of tail to wag, the little black dog crossed his body instead. Gan smiled as he buttoned up his pyjamas. Schwartz trotted on before, and led the way across two fields. Then he stood still on the edge of the moving grass, and Gan-Waga tiptoed forward.

There they were, like the village blacksmith, under the spreading chestnut-tree, but, unlike the village blacksmith, they were not doing any work. A fly was perched on Maddock's nose, listening to the music of Maddock's snores, and the gentle morning zephyrs toyed with Barry's golden beard.

"Is it not beautiful, is it not touching, is it not soulful, child?" whispered a voice in Gan-Waga's ear.

Gan started, and looked about him. It was the voice of his adored Ching-Lung, but Ching-Lung was not to be seen. Schwartz was gazing up into the leafy branches of the trees,

and, following the dog's gaze, Gan beheld his Highness of Kwai-hai.

"What yo' doings up derez, Chingy?" whispered the Eskimo. "What yo' doings, hunk?"

"I am waiting for the marmalade to get ripe, child," said Ching-Lung. "It is more healthy up here, for you do not get your feet wet with the dew. I have lodgings to let cheaply if you care to come. You will find the staircase round at the back, but use the scraper, for the Brussels carpets are quite new."

At a sign from his master, the dog snuggled down, and Gan hoisted himself into the tree, and muttered his tale of outrage in hushed tones.

"Did they, the rascals?" said Ching-Lung. "Did they sling bricks and stacks and things at you when you were taking your dip? They are boogymans, Gan. Look at their cruel, criminal faces. What are our goals for? Why do we support judges, magistrates, a police force, and dog licenses? Do you know?"

"No, I nots know hims, Chingy," said Gan, shaking his head. "I nervousness, Chingy. What yo' do if I slips off and falls into ole Barry's moufs? What becomes of yo' widout yo' darlings, butterfuls, splendids, handsomefuls Gan? Yo' dies, hunk, Chingy?"

"Lost in the yawning abyss, or did they push him over? What a fearful fate! Do you happen to know the time, sweetheart?"

"I tink him 'boutz nineteens o'clocks, Chingy. Wakez Beniz ups and axes, Chingy!"

"We must make sure of the time, for it is most important," said Ching. "But it would be unkind to rouse him."

A string with a hook fastened to it went dangling down. A few gentle pulls drew the swivel of Maddock's chain through the button-hole, and then, to the great delight of Gan-Waga, the fat gold watch slid out of his pocket and was drawn up.

"Several minutes to five," said Ching-Lung. "Take the watch, dear; you will find it useful for cracking nuts with. I wanted to know the time particularly. In ten minutes the sun will be shining full on those thoughtless fellows. We must save them from catching sunstroke, Gan. They may deserve even a worse fate, but we must not forget that once they were prattling babes in little pinafores. Gan, we must save them."

"Yes, yes, we musts saves dems, Chingy," said Gan-Waga eagerly. "I breaks my hearts, Chingy, ifs dey dies of strokes suns. I nots wants dem to die like dat, Chingy. I wants to kills dem myself said a battlesse, Chingy!"

"That will, and we will save them yet. They shall not die so long. You have a loving and tender heart, Gan. Wait for me here. If I do not return within ninety-nine years you will know that something has detained me. Fare the wells and cisterns!"

Barry and the bo'sun had chosen the shady side of the hedge, not because they were afraid of their complexion, but because the other field was thronged with cows. Ferrers Lord's dairy farm was a model one in all respects. Ching-Lung entered the shed, and asked for two of the longest hoses.

"Wheel them over to the chestnut," he said, "and unroll them as you go along. Don't make any noise."

"Very good, your Highness!"

"Plenty of water!"

"We pumped twenty-five thousand gallons yesterday, your Highness, if that will be enough," answered the head man.

"Myes! I don't think we shall need all that!" chuckled the prince.

"Find me a piece of cord!"

Presently he climbed up beside Gan-Waga. The boy from Ballybumson and Bo'sun Hen still slumbered and snored. Gan-Waga's ribs began to shake, and his sallow face swelled out and turned a faint purple hue. The nozzles were handed up on the end of a pitchfork.

"O-oh, takes 'em aims, Chingy!" gurgled the Eskimo. "O-oh, make hair runs straight. It be all dreadfulness if dey no wakesses, Chingy, and dies of stroke sun. O-oh, make hair squirts butterfuls straight, Chingy. Ho, ho, ho, hoo!"

"What dost think? Didn't you know I was a fine brigands, sweetest! How about that for accuracy of eye? Let us wander away far from the maddening crowd. We have saved their lives, and we ask for no medals. Jack," he added, "turn on the taps five minutes from now. Then turn 'em off, and get off the landscape, or you may get hurt. Here's five shillings for you."

Jack saluted! In a scented bover festooned with honey-suckle, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, and Schwartz, the dog, shared a jug of new milk and the contents of the prince's sandwich-box. And suddenly upon the perfumed breeze rang loud the yell of two human souls in agony. Ching-Lung fell upon Gan-Waga's ample bosom.

"We have saved them, Gan," he sobbed—"We have s-saved them. They will not d-d-die of a s-stroke sun."

And Gan-Waga could only weep for joy at the thought of the noble deed which they had performed in safeguarding two precious lives.

(Another grand, thrilling instalment next week.)