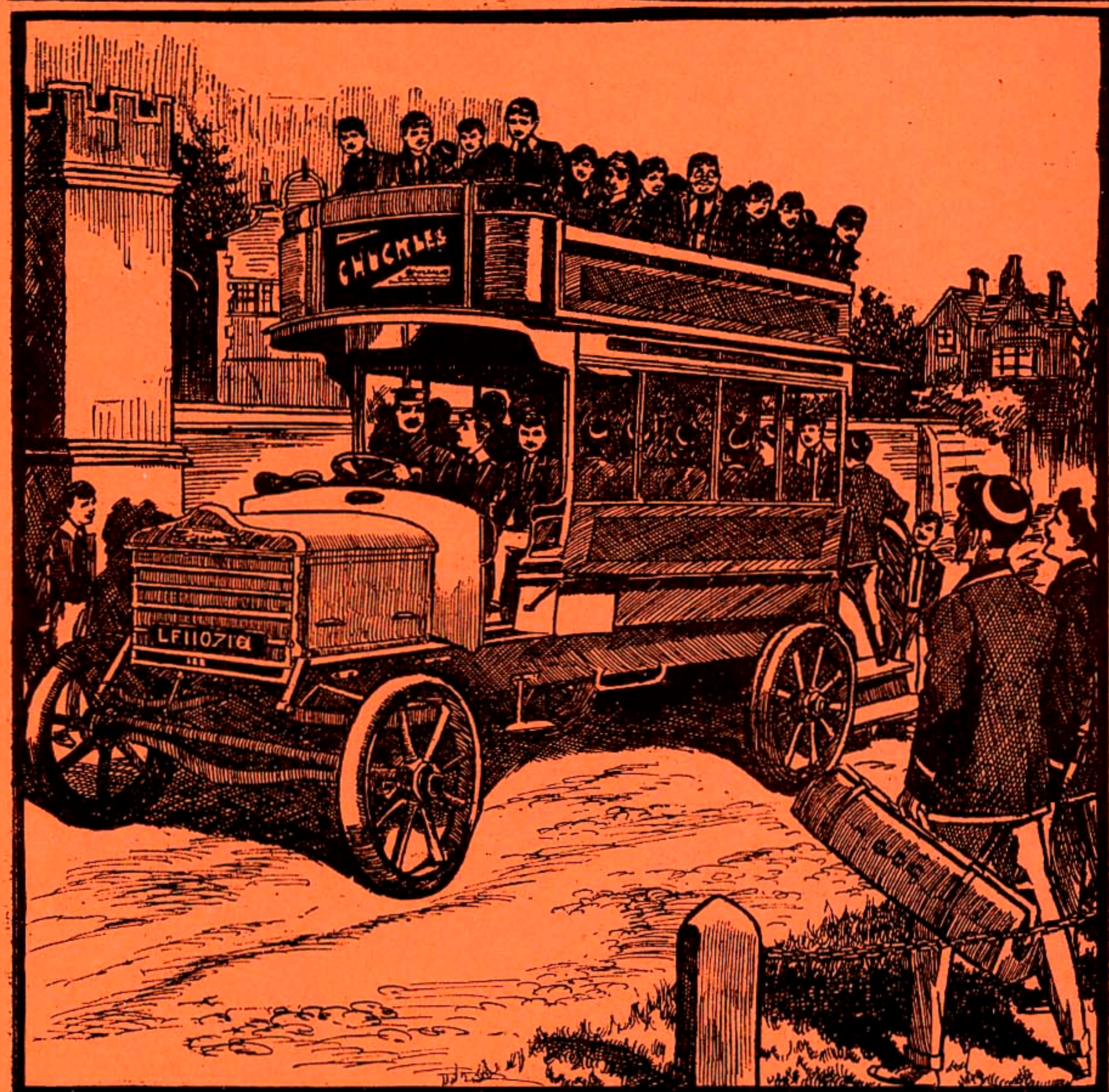


THE SLACKER'S ELEVEN!

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By Frank Richards.



No. 282. Vol. 9. June 5th, 1915.



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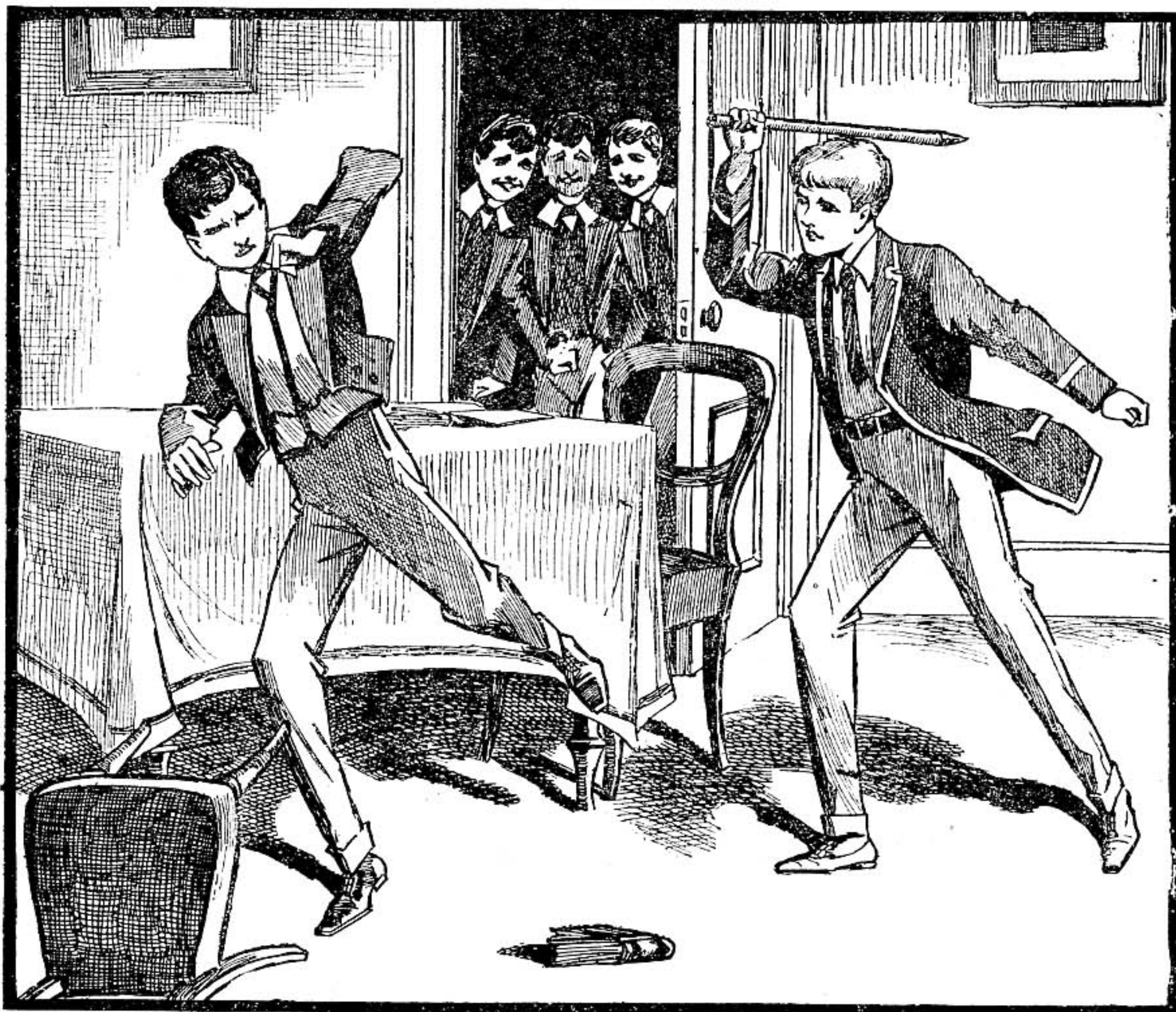


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THE SLACKER'S ELEVEN!

A New, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Lord Mauleverer bounded to his feet, and dodged round the table. He eyed Bob Cherry apprehensively as that cheery youth brandished a stump. "Oh, begad!" gasped his lordship. "Chuck it! Do let a fellow rest when he's tired—yow! Keep off, I tell you, begad." (See Chapter I.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Squiff's Idea!

WHY not Mauly?" Squiff, the Australian junior, made the suggestion to the cricket committee gathered in Harry Wharton's study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

And the cricket committee responded unanimously:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping!" said Bob Cherry.

"Top-hole!" said Johnny Bull.

"The top-holefulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Where does the esteemed Squiff get these splendid and ludicrous ideas from?"

"It's a chance for Mauly," pursued Squiff grinning—"the chance of a lifetime! We can't lose, anyway, so we can take the risk."

"Hear, hear!"

The cricket committee were unanimous.

It was quite an important subject that was being discussed in Harry Wharton's study, when Squiff's suggestion sent the committee into howls of laughter.

It was two days before the Rookwood match.

Harry Wharton & Co. never thought of the Rookwood match without grinning. Rookwood School had sent over a cricket team to Greyfriars earlier in the season, and the way they played had almost thrown the Remove team into hysterics. Smythe & Co. of Rookwood were such utter slackers and fumblerers, that a team of three Greyfriars juniors could have beaten them.

Harry Wharton, who took cricket seriously, had proposed to drop the fixture. Bob Cherry, who took everything humorously, including cricket, objected strongly to dropping the fixture. He truthfully stated that he had never laughed so much in his life as the day of the Rookwood match; and laughing was good for the health.

Besides, the Greyfriars juniors could hardly decline to play the return match, anyway. Rookwood had visited them, and they had to visit Rookwood.

But the idea of leading the mighty cricketers of the Greyfriars Remove against the Rookwood slackers did not appeal to Harry Wharton at all.

Any old team would do, and Wharton offered the captaincy, for the occasion, to anybody who would accept it.

But nobody was particularly keen.

There was no fun in slogging the fumbling bowling of the Rookwood slackers, and beating them by an innings and nine wickets.

It was agreed on all hands that the second-rate players in the Remove cricket club should be given a chance in that match of distinguishing themselves—what time they extinguished Smythe & Co. of Rookwood.

Wharton, in fact, flatly declined to captain the team. He declared that he would rather hand over the captaincy to Billy Bunter, than go through the farce of playing such a team of duffers. He didn't mind going over with the team, and looking on and laughing. But that was the utmost he would do.

The question was, then, a choice of captain. Then Sampson Quincy Ifley Field suggested Mauly.

Lord Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, was as big a slacker, perhaps, as any of the Rookwooders, but he was not nearly so big a duffer. But he was, as Squiff remarked, the nearest Greyfriars could produce.

Squiff's suggestion was carried with acclamation.

"That's settled!" said Harry Wharton. "Lord Mauleverer is skipper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It doesn't matter if he goes to sleep at the wicket—Smythe & Co. couldn't bowl him out if he did. Mauly shall be skipper, and he shall select his own team, so long as he leaves us out."

"Hear, hear!"

"Let's go along and tell him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, jumping up. "His face will be worth a guinea a box when we tell him he's got to play cricket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The committee adjourned at once. The knotty point was settled. Lord Mauleverer was to be skipper, whether he liked it or not. It only remained to tell Mauly, and to persuade him to agree.

It would not be easy to persuade Mauly to play cricket or to do anything else that required exertion; but the Removites had their own methods of persuasion. They were prepared to rag Mauly for his own benefit.

They proceeded in high spirits to Lord Mauleverer's study.

The dandy of the Remove had a study to himself—a most elegantly and expensively furnished apartment—Lord Mauleverer being a millionaire, and having an unlimited supply of that useful article—cash.

Bob Cherry thumped on the door and kicked it open. Bob generally entered a room like a cyclone.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he roared.

An elegant youth was stretched upon a silken sofa. He had a book in his hand, and was yawning over it. He

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looked up with another yawn, and gazed at the Removites sleepily.

"Hallo!" he said, in a tired voice.

"Busy?" asked Squiff.

"Yaas."

"What are you doing?"

"Readin'."

"What's the book?"

"I forget! Look at the cover."

Bob Cherry made a neat kick at the book, and took it out of Mauly's hand with his toe. The book crashed into the fender, and Lord Mauleverer yawned again.

"Tired?" asked Wharton.

"Yaas."

"Something like this, you know," explained Bob.

"Yaas."

"Feel as if you don't want to be disturbed?"

"Yaas."

"You'd like us to go away quietly?"

"Yaas."

"I thought so," assented Bob. "What you need, when you feel like this, is a good thorough rouse."

"Oh, begad!"

"Something like this, you know," explained Bob.

He seized the schoolboy earl by the shoulders, and whirled him off the sofa, and the noble limbs of Lord Mauleverer came down on the study carpet with a bump.

"Yaroooooh!" yelled his lordship.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Feel better now?" asked Bob.

"Ow! No."

"Hand me a stump," said Bob Cherry; "I'll soon make him feel better."

Lord Mauleverer bounded to his feet, and dodged round the table. He eyed Bob Cherry apprehensively, as that cheery youth brandished a stump.

"Oh, begad!" gasped his lordship. "Chuck it! Do let a fellow rest when he's tired—Yow! Keep off, I tell you, begad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors looked on, yelling, while Lord Mauleverer went round and round the table, with Bob Cherry after him, lunging with the stump. Every time the stump got home, Lord Mauleverer uttered a wild yell. He made a break for the door, but the juniors were crowded there, and there was no room to pass.

"Feel better now?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yow! Yaas!"

"Lost that tired feeling?"

"Oh, begad! Yaas!" gasped his lordship.

"Good! I'll keep the stump handy in case it comes back again."

"Ow!"

"Mauly," said Harry Wharton, "you're wanted. It's the Rookwood match the day after to-morrow, and you're wanted to play."

"Oh, begad! Can't."

"Why not?"

"Tired."

"Give him some more stump, Bob."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Tired now?"

"Oh, crikey! No!"

"Good! Any other chap would jump at a chance of playing for the Form," said Harry Wharton severely.

Lord Mauleverer groaned.

"I'm not good at jumpin'."

"You've got to captain the team—"

"Wha-a-at!"

"And pick an eleven—"

"Begad!"

"And keep 'em up to regular practice—"

"Help!"

"And lead 'em over to Rookwood to conquer! We're all coming along to see how you do it. And if you don't play a good game, we're going to scrag you. You don't get a chance every day of captaining the Remove eleven."

"Oh, begad!"

"You accept?"

"No!" yelled Lord Mauleverer desperately, "I don't!"



Wharton, who was looking on with his bat in his hand, glanced round. He came over cordially towards the Rookwood junior, and shook hands with him. "Jimmy Silver?" he asked. "I'm Wharton. Glad to see you."
(See Chapter 4.)

I won't! I sha'n't! You can go and eat coke! I'll see you blowed first! Rats!"

"Collar him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And bump him till he says 'Yaas,'" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Lord Mauleverer groaned dismally. The slacker of the Remove was in the hands of the Amalekites, and there was no escape for him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Billy Bunter in Luck!

BUMP!
"Oh!"
Thud!
"Ow!"

"What do you say now, Mauly?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Don't hurry, you know. We're willing to keep this up till you go through the floor, if necessary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, begad!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "You thumpin' asses! I'll do anythin' you like. Any old thing! Ow!"

"Bravo!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

The dandy of the Remove crawled back to the sofa. He sat down panting, and blinking in distressed reproach at the grinning Removites.

"You understand what you've got to do?" said Wharton. "The cricket committee of the Remove have appointed you captain of the eleven, for this occasion only. You ought to be as pleased as Punch."

"Oh, dear!"

"You've got to make up a winning team to beat Rookwood. That won't be difficult, as a baby girls' school could beat them. We expect to see the list on the board this evening."

"Now look here," said Lord Mauleverer, "I suppose you're rottin'—"

"Not a bit!"

"You really want me to captain the eleven?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I suppose you're pullin' my leg," said his lordship, "and I'm not goin' to have my leg pulled, begad. If you make me captain of the eleven, I'm goin' to stick to it, and see it through."

"Hear, hear!"

"Mind, it's no good askin' me to hand it back at the last moment, because I won't do it," said Lord Mauleverer. "Cricket is an awful fag, but I rather fancy

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myself as a cricket captain. If you're not pullin' my leg, you've got to give me your word, honour bright, that I captain the team for the Rookwood match. Then I'll do my best."

"Honour bright!" said Harry Wharton & Co. solemnly, all together.

"Then it's a go!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Now I'll have a bit of a rest, and then I'll think of it."

And the schoolboy earl stretched his elegant limbs on the sofa.

He reposed there in elegant calm for about a quarter of a second. Then he was rolled off by Bob Cherry's powerful grasp.

"Cricket captains don't go to sleep on sofas," explained Bob Cherry. "You're coming down to practice now."

"Oh, begad! Look here——"

"Kim on!"

"If I'm captain, you've got to obey my orders!" shouted Lord Mauleverer. "I order you to clear off, you asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But we're not in the team, now," said Harry Wharton. "You can give orders to your team, but not to the world generally, you know. We're simply friendly lookers-on in this business, anxious to help you to make a success of it."

"You needn't trouble."

"We're going to trouble, all the same," grinned Bob Cherry. "You're coming down to practice now. Take hold of his other ear, Johnny."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The slacker of the Remove was marched out of the study mumbling. There was no more repose for Lord Mauleverer, so long as he was captain of the Form Eleven.

In the midst of the grinning juniors, Mauly was marched down to Little Side, and planted at the wicket. He groaned and resigned himself to his fate. Squiff took the ball, and sent it down to Mauly's wicket. Bob Cherry took the place of wicket-keeper, provided with an extra stump, under his arm.

Lord Mauleverer's bat did not leave the crease. The ball passed it and knocked down the wicket. That was where Bob's stump came in. He made a sudden lunge with it at the batsman, and Lord Mauleverer hopped on the crease, with a wild yell.

"Hallo! Wharrer you at, you ass?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You get that every time you miss the ball!" explained Bob Cherry.

"Oh, begad! That ain't a wicket-keeper's bizney."

"It's a new rule."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer batted with one eye on the wicket-keeper. He could play cricket, after a fashion, when he exerted himself; and he exerted himself now. He stopped several balls in succession, and the juniors gave him a cheer. Perhaps the cheer bucked up his lordship, for he began to play quite keenly. Harry Wharton patted him on the back when he came off at last.

"That's better," he said approvingly. "You'll beat Rookwood all right."

"Begad, they will have to be a scratch lot if I beat 'em," said Lord Mauleverer. "Still, I'll do my best. Fellow can't do more than that."

"That's right," said Bob Cherry, "any ass could beat Rookwood. Besides, we shall be there, and if you lose, we shall scrag you on the spot."

"By Jove!"

A crowd of juniors had gathered round to see his lordship at practice. Lord Mauleverer was never seen on the cricket-ground excepting at the compulsory practice twice a week. On those occasions even the slackest slacker was unable to escape.

"What's the little game, Mauly?" asked Bolsover major, as his lordship came away, breathing very hard. "You taking up cricket?"

"Yaas."

"What for?" demanded Bolsover.

"I'm captain of the eleven."

"Eh?"

"Captain of the eleven!" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

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"You funny ass, what do you mean?" said Bolsover major, in astonishment.

"Captain of the eleven."

"For one occasion only," explained Harry Wharton, "Lord Mauleverer is going to captain the eleven at Rookwood on Wednesday."

"My only hat! Then you can play me, Mauly."

"Certainly, dear boy."

"Good!" said Bolsover major, with great satisfaction. It was seldom that Bolsover major had an opportunity of playing for the Form, and he was very quick to seize this one. "Put my name down. Make a note of it at once, in case you forget. You know what a silly ass you are."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer politely made a note of Bolsover major's name in a little, expensive, Russia-leather pocket-book, and sauntered away.

"I suppose you've done this for a joke on Rookwood," said Bolsover major, looking at Harry Wharton & Co., "but you can't jolly well keep me out of the team now, and be hanged to you!"

"The politeness of the esteemed Bolsover is always so terrific," murmured Hurree Singh.

A little later there was a notice on the board in the hall, in the handwriting of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove. It ran:

"Lord Mauleverer has been appointed cricket captain for the Rookwood match on Wednesday. There are nine places in the team to be filled, and aspirants should apply to his lordship."
"(BY ORDER)."

That notice was read with amazement and much chuckling by the Removites. The great cricketers of the Remove showed no desire to apply to Lord Mauleverer for the nine vacant places. They were not keen to play under Mauly's lead, or to appear in the field against an absurd team like Rookwood Juniors. But there were a good many fellows—who were by no means great cricketers—who were keen to play for their Form under any conditions. Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, having blinked at the notice first, through his big spectacles, rolled away at once to Lord Mauleverer's study. He found his lordship resting after his unaccustomed exertions on the cricket-ground.

"I say, Mauly," said Bunter eagerly.

"Yaas?"

"I want you to put me in the eleven on Wednesday."

"Certainly," said Lord Mauleverer, with his usual urbanity. Mauly never could say "No" to anybody. And at this rate, he felt that he would be saved all the trouble of selecting an eleven.

"They stand the fellows a good feed there," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I've heard 'em say that they have a decent time at Rookwood. The chaps there are very hospitable. Of course, that isn't what I was thinking of!"

"Oh, no," assented Mauleverer.

"The fact is, I'm a good cricketer, and I've been kept out of the eleven by envy and jealousy," explained Bunter. "Wharton doesn't like the idea of being put in the shade by a really first-class cricketer."

"Begad!"

"You haven't any petty jealousy of that kind, Mauly. You ain't afraid that I shall get all the limelight?"

"Not at all, dear boy!"

"Put my name down," said Bunter. "Mind, it's a promise that I play on Wednesday—on your word!"

"Yaas."

"That settles it. Those rotters will very likely try to get you to leave me out, because they want to keep me in the shade. But you've given your word now, Mauly."

And Billy Bunter rolled away in a state of great satisfaction. He blinked into No. 1 Study, where the Famous Five were at tea, unable to resist the inclination to triumph over those cheery juniors.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How did you know we had rabbit pie?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I haven't come here to tea!"

I've come to tell you that I'm playing for the Remove on Wednesday, and you can go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm in the Form team," said Bunter, with dignity.

"I understand that you fellows are left out——"

"Exactly! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, for once, you can't keep me out of the team," said Bunter disdainfully. "I've no doubt you'll try to get round Mauly to leave me out, but I've got his promise. You can be as jealous as you like. Yah!"

And with that emphatic "Yah!" William George Bunter retired and slammed the door, leaving the Famous Five yelling with laughter.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Remarkable Eleven!

LORD MAULEVERER had gone to his study for a rest. But there was little rest for his lordship after that notice had appeared on the board "by order." There was a regular procession to the schoolboy earl's study. Every fellow who was keen to get into the Form eleven jumped at the opportunity. Lord Mauleverer was a much easier captain to please than Harry Wharton. All that was necessary was to ask him for a place in the team, and he said "Yaas" at once, and wrote down the name in his pocket-book.

Bolsover major had been the first, and Billy Bunter the second. But a few minutes after Bunter's departure from his lordship's study, Skinner and Snoop came in. His lordship yawned at them.

"Captain of the eleven—what?" chuckled Skinner.

"Put us in!" chortled Snoop.

"Certainly!"

Skinner and Snoop walked away chuckling. They were not cricketers, and they never thought of cricket, excepting when they were inventing excuses for dodging the compulsory practice. But they liked the idea of playing for the Form in an easy match. There was a considerable amount of "kudos" attached to having played for the Form. They were well pleased to have their names down for the eleven. As for the kind of game they put up, they did not bother about that. One thing only was quite assured—they did not mean to make work of it!

Stott was the next caller—another slacker of the first water—and Lord Mauleverer politely put his name down. Already he had five members for his team—six, with himself. Only five more were wanted. He congratulated himself on getting an eleven together with so little trouble. Really, it wasn't such a fag, after all, being cricket captain.

Next came Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. Fisher T. Fish had a tremendous idea of his powers as a cricketer, and he had often offered to show Harry Wharton & Co. how to play really good cricket. But Fish's really good cricket was not quite good enough for the Remove, and he had never had a chance of figuring in the Form team. His chance had come at last.

"I guess you've been expecting to see me, Mauly," he remarked, as he came in. "I hope I ain't bothering you."

"Yaas?"

"I guess I'm playing in your eleven, Mauly."

"Certainly, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer—his usual answer.

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his bony hands.

"That's O.K.," he said heartily. "I guess, on this hyer occasion, sir, you'll see what cricket is like—good cricket, sir! You put my name down."

"Yaas."

"I guess you won't be sorry for it," said Fisher T. Fish, "and I guess there are some galoots in the Remove who will be green and blue with envy, sir, when they see me play! Yep!"

And off went Fisher T. Fish, in a state of great satisfaction. He looked into No. 1 Study to tell the Famous Five that he "guessed" he was in the eleven—a guess that was greeted with a shout of laughter.

The next visitors were Peter and Alonzo Todd, from No. 7 Study. Peter Todd was one of the mighty men of the Remove eleven, and he was standing out of that match. Alonzo Todd, who was sometimes called by the complimentary title of the Duffer of Greyfriars, was not a cricketer. Alonzo was very painstaking, and he

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would do anything to oblige anybody, so he had done his best to learn, and by this time he really knew one end of a bat from the other. Alonzo was too modest to seek a place in the eleven himself, but Peter considered that the opportunity was too good to be lost. So he marched Alonzo along to the new captain's study.

"I've brought you a recruit, Mauly," Peter announced.

"Yaas. You want to play?" asked Lord Mauleverer, taking out his pocket-book.

Peter Todd gave a snort.

"I? No fear! Excuse me, Mauly, but I wouldn't be found dead in your eleven! I've brought you Alonzo."

"Thanks."

"I shall be very pleased to play in your team, my dear Mauleverer," said Alonzo Todd, in his mild way. "I am not a good cricketer, but I will do my best."

"You'll play the game of your life, 'Lonzy, or I'll warm you afterwards," said Peter impressively.

"Certainly, my dear Peter. I will get as many goals as I can!"

"You'll get what?" roared Peter.

"Goals," said Alonzo innocently. "Dear me, how forgetful I am! I was thinking of football, which is, of course, quite a different game. I mean, I will take as many wickets as I can when I am batting."

"And as many runs as you can when you're bowling, I suppose?" asked Peter, with tremendous sarcasm.

"Certainly, my dear Peter," said the innocent Alonzo.

"I am determined to do my very best!"

"Oh, my hat! Put him down, Mauly. He's good enough for Rookwood, anyway!"

So Alonzo's name went down.

"Begad, I'm getting on with my eleven!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Only three more men wanted! I'll put up the list presently."

A few minutes later there was another visitor. This time it was little Wun Lung, the Chinese. The little Chinese was not a cricketer, but he was by no means insensible to the honour and glory of playing in the Remove eleven. He wriggled into Lord Mauleverer's study with an ingratiating smile on his queer little olive face.

"Handsome Maulevellee wantee clicketer?" he asked.

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"Yaas, but——"

The new captain was a very easily-satisfied skipper, but he felt vaguely that it was necessary to draw the line somewhere. So, for the first time, he uttered a "but." But Wun Lung had not come there to listen to "buts."

"Me playee," he remarked.

"Yaas, but——"

"Me playee gleat gamee. You putee me down, handsome skippee."

"Oh, all serene," said Lord Mauleverer resignedly. "Down you go!"

"Me tankee handsome Maulevellee. Me playee gleat gamee," promised Wun Lung, and he departed grinning with satisfaction.

"Only two more wanted!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Begad, this ain't such a lot of trouble, that I can see. I've seen Wharton lookin' as worried as thunder about such things. Blessed if I can see anything to worry about!"

The other two vacancies were not long in filling. Billy Bunter came in with his minor, Sammy, of the Second Form. Billy Bunter was not generally conspicuous for brotherly love, but it had come into his mind that he could do Sammy a good turn without any expense to himself, and he did it. There would undoubtedly be a good feed at Rookwood, and why shouldn't Sammy partake of it? That was how Billy Bunter looked at it.

"Here's your man, Mauly," he said.

"But your minor ain't in the Remove," said Lord Mauleverer doubtfully.

"That doesn't matter," said Bunter confidently. "This isn't a Form match, you know. You can play anybody you like."

"I'm going to play," said Sammy Bunter positively.

"I'd like a run over to Rookwood. You can pay the fare, Mauly, of course!"

"Oh, begad!"

"You're sure about the feed, Billy?"

"Of course," said Billy; "and if the Rookwood fellows don't do the decent thing, Mauly would—wouldn't you Mauly? Put Sammy's name down."

"Oh, all serene!"

Down went Sammy's name.

There was only one more member wanted, and Wibley came along to offer his services. Wibley was a great amateur actor, but he had never distinguished himself on the cricket-ground. He was naturally anxious to do so, however. Lord Mauleverer obligingly put his name down, and that made up the list.

After tea the list appeared on the board, and the Removites gathered round, and read it with many chuckles. Harry Wharton & Co. laughed heartily as they read it. Any kind of a team, certainly, was good enough for the Rookwood match; but certainly Lord Mauleverer had got together about the worst team that could possibly have been scraped up in the ranks of the Remove. Bob Cherry read out the list in a gasping voice:

"Mauleverer, Bolsover major, Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Fish, Bunter major, Bunter minor, Alonzo Todd, Wun Lung, Wibley."

"Oh, my hat!" said Squiff. "That takes the cake! We shall have to go over; I wouldn't miss the sight of it for worlds!"

"Not for whole solar systems!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Still, they're good enough for the Rookwood lot."

"Too good!" said Nugent. "You remember what happened at the last match—their own fellows ragged them for playing so rottenly—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But this match will be a sight for gods and men and little fishes!" said Harry Wharton. "It ought to be taken down on the cinematograph."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor From Rookwood!

"LETTER for you, Wharton."

The Remove had come out of their Form-room the next morning, when Bob Cherry, who had glanced over the letter-rack, tossed a letter to Wharton. The captain of the Remove glanced at it. It was in a hand unknown to him, and the postmark was "Coombe."

"Where the deuce is Coombe?" said Wharton. "Oh, that's the station for Rookwood. This is from Rookwood."

"Don't say they're putting off the match!" exclaimed Bob Cherry imploringly. "That would be too cruel!"

"Open the letter, my esteemed chum. We are on the tender-hooks," said Hurree Singh.

Wharton opened the letter, and read it out. It ran:

"Dear Wharton,—I am coming over on my bike after lessons Tuesday. I want to speak to you about the match.—Yours sincerely, JIMMY SILVER."

"Coming over after lessons to-day," said Wharton. "Good! We'll get in an extra kipper for tea. I wonder what it's all about, though."

"Can't be putting off the match," said Bob. "They'd say so. The chap wouldn't come over to tell us that. It's all serene!"

"Not a word of the eleven," said Nugent. "I remember that chap Silver—he came over with their team last time, and was awfully ratty at the way they played."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites could never think of that occasion without laughing. Rookwood had sent over a team that played an utterly absurd game, and were wiped off the field without an effort. Some Rookwood fellows had accompanied them, and had ragged Smythe & Co. on the spot, as a reward for their performance.

Apparently, there were some fellows at Rookwood who regarded cricket more seriously than did Adolphus

Smythe and his friends. Why Rookwood juniors did not put a better team into the field, when, apparently, they had the material, was a puzzle. Certainly, the team they played could have been beaten easily by the First Form at Greyfriars.

"Scratch lot" as Lord Mauleverer's eleven were, there was not the slightest doubt that they would beat Adolphus Smythe and his team at Rookwood. The Remove were running no risks.

Wharton put the letter in his pocket, and the chums of the Remove went down to the cricket-ground. Lord Mauleverer's eleven were there, for their first practice "ensemble."

Most of the Remove had turned up to see it. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth had come along to laugh.

Lord Mauleverer was really bucking up. Having taken on the post of cricket captain, his noble lordship had determined to do his best, and he was making—for him—unheard-of efforts.

The eleven were not making very great efforts, however. They did not feel called upon to exert themselves. Of all the team, Bolsover major was the only fellow who could be called a cricketer, and Wibley was the next best. The rest were of the scratch scratchy, so to speak.

The two Bunters, indeed, had had to be dragged by force out of the tuckshop, to come down to practice at all. Billy Bunter loudly averred that a player like himself wasn't in need of practice. But Peter Todd rushed him down to the ground with a grip of iron on his collar. Bunter had to practise, whether he needed it or not.

There was one long howl of laughter round Little Side as the heroes of Mauly's eleven batted and bowled.

Bolsover major snorted with disgust as he came off the field. He almost repented him of having joined such an eleven.

"Even Rookwood will have a chance against those howling idiots," growled Bolsover. "Look here, Mauly, you'd better make some changes in the team!"

"You want to resign?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"No," roared Bolsover. "You'd better kick out those fat Bunters, and that pigtailed little idiot, and that imbecile Alonzo, and that fatheaded Yankee."

"Can't."

"Why not?" demanded Bolsover. "There are plenty of fellows who would play if you asked them."

"I've promised to play them."

"I guess you're keeping that promise, too, Mauly," said Fisher T. Fish. "As for your opinion of my cricket, Bolsover, what do you know about it? I guess you're a jay, sir, and you don't know good cricket when you see it!"

"We'll put you through your paces after lessons, Mauly," said Harry Wharton. "You shall play your team against the regular eleven."

"Thanks!"

"And you'd better put in some practice after dinner," growled Bolsover.

"Can't!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I've got to see a man at the garage."

"What the thunder for?"

"About the car."

"What car, you ass?"

"Car to Rookwood to-morrow."

"My hat! Isn't the railway good enough for you?" demanded Bolsover.

Lord Mauleverer shook her head.

"You ass! It will cost a lot of money," said Bob Cherry.

"All the better for trade, dear boy," said his lordship. "I read somewhere that spendin' money bucks up trade. Patriotic in war time."

"But we're all going," said Harry Wharton.

"I'll get a big car."

"You'll want a whacking big car to hold twenty or thirty chaps."

"Yaas; I'll get a motor-'bus."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Lord Mauleverer was in earnest; and after dinner he sauntered down to the garage in Courtfield and made his arrangements. How much money it cost him the Remove never knew; but money was not an object with



Smack! Jimmy Silver held up his hand. Hot from the bat, the ball reposed in his palm. "Caught and bowled Silver!" roared Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 6.)

the schoolboy millionaire. Lord Mauleverer, finding himself unexpectedly in the position of cricket captain, was bent upon doing the thing in style.

When he came back from Courtfield, Billy Bunter bore down upon him.

"Engaged the car, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"It's a long, long way to Rookwood," said Bunter. "The best thing you can do is to ask Mrs. Mimble to make up a good-sized lunch-basket to put in the car."

"Yaas."

"I'll help you to select the things," said Bunter.

Billy Bunter helped in selecting the things for the lunch-basket—taking a "snack" or two every moment or two; and by the time that important business was finished, there was nearly as much in Bunter as there was in the lunch-basket. Billy Bunter was looking very fat and shiny when he came in to afternoon lessons, and his waistcoat, ample as it was, had an uncomfortable tightness. But his fat face was beatific in expression. He was thinking of that big lunch-basket in the car on the morrow.

Indeed, that lunch-basket ran in his mind so much, that when Mr. Quelch asked him to name the principal product of Lancashire, he replied promptly, "Lunch baskets!" and received fifty lines from his astonished Form-master.

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After lessons, the Remove eleven went down to the cricket-ground with Lord Mauleverer's eleven. They intended to put the new eleven through their paces. The juniors crowded round Little Side to watch and to grin.

The practice was still going on, when a cyclist arrived at the gates of Greyfriars, and jumped off his machine. He left his dusty bicycle outside Gosling's lodge, and walked down to the cricket round. He was a good-looking junior, with a Rookwood badge on his cap.

This was evidently Jimmy Silver of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, who had come over to talk about the match—for reasons best known to himself.

He joined the crowd round Little Side, unnoticed at first, and stood looking on. His face expressed his astonishment at the cricket Lord Mauleverer's eleven was putting up. Mauly's eleven was in the field, and Wun Lung was bowling to Bob Cherry. Wun Lung, being in his native Chinese garb, was a conspicuous object anywhere. His bowling made him still more remarkable. He nearly turned a somersault every time he sent the ball down, and, although the wicket and the batsmen were in no danger, the fieldsmen had to be very active to dodge it.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

Wharton, who was looking on, with his bat in his

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hand, glanced round. He came over cordially towards the Rookwood junior and shook hands with him.

"Jimmy Silver?" he asked.

"Yes. You're Wharton?"

"I'm Wharton. Glad to see you. You'll have tea with us in the study?"

"Thanks. And a little talk," said Silver. "I thought I ought to let you know what to expect."

"Yes," said Harry, a little puzzled. He thought he knew what to expect in a cricket match at Rookwood.

"What game is this?" asked Jimmy Silver, with a nod towards the field.

"Cricket!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Practice for some new hands?"

"Oh, no! Practice for a new eleven."

"Oh!" said Silver, puzzled in his turn.

Courtesy forbade Wharton to explain to a Rookwood fellow that a scratch team of sorts had been dragged together to play Rookwood. Jimmy Silver stood looking on till Harry Wharton & Co. were finished, and then the Famous Five took their visitor to the School House, leaving Mauleverer's eleven still at practice.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver's Tip!

JIMMY SILVER, of Rookwood, was very quickly feeling quite at home in No. 1 Study. He was a frank, cheery fellow, and the Famous Five liked him at once. The chums of the Remove had laid in supplies for tea on an unusually lavish scale in honour of their visitor. Billy Bunter rolled into the study as if it belonged to him, heedless of the five separate and distinct glares that the Co. fastened upon him.

"I say, you fellows, you forgot to mention that you had a visitor," said Bunter affably. "How do you do, Smythe?"

Jimmy Silver stared.

"I'm not Smythe," he said; "I'm Silver."

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him.

"Are you, really? You're like Smythe."

"Why, you duffer—" began Jimmy Silver wrathfully, much incensed at being told that he was like the slacker of the Shell at Rookwood.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Ahem! Excuse me," said Jimmy Silver, colouring, remembering that he was a visitor. "Sorry!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter is a duffer, and a fat idiot, and a howling ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You ought to be at practice," said Johnny Bull.

Bunter sniffed.

"I don't need so much practice as you fellows. I'm all right. You'll find that I shall beat Rookwood if the other fellows play up."

"You're in the team that's going to play us?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in astonishment. He had been watching Bunter in the field.

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter emphatically. "And you can tell 'em to look out, too! Pass the eggs, Bob, old man!"

Bob Cherry glared, and passed the eggs. He did not mind passing the eggs, but he strongly objected to being called "Bob, old man" by Bunter. But it was one of Bunter's little ways to assume those familiarities on occasions when he could not be kicked.

"Let a chap have a look at the toast, Harry, old chap!" went on Bunter.

Wharton passed the toast.

"Trouble you for the salt, Franky!"

Nugent glared, and passed the salt.

Billy Bunter had constituted himself into the chief guest in the study. In the presence of the Rookwood junior the Famous Five did not care to eject him "on his neck."

However, Jimmy Silver's wants were well looked after, and supplies were ample. For a time Bunter's jaws were busy with the provisions, and the other fellows had a chance to speak.

"About the match to-morrow," said Jimmy Silver. "I thought I'd run over and give you a tip. You remember the last time we played you?"

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"Ha, ha—I—I mean, yes!" said Wharton hastily.

Jimmy Silver laughed, too.

"You must have thought Rookwood was a home for idiots or a lunatic asylum, judging by the team we sent over," he remarked.

"Ahem!"

"Oh, don't mind saying so!" said Silver coolly. "You couldn't think worse of Smythe & Co. than we do. But we've got better cricketers than that at Rookwood."

"Why don't you play them, then?" asked Nugent.

"You see, there were difficulties. We have two sides at Rookwood—Classical and Modern. The Classics are top side, and the Moderns are regular worms!"

"You belong to the Classical side?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You bet!" said Jimmy Silver promptly. "Now, you see, both sides are in the junior cricket club, of course, and at electing a captain we're more keen about keeping out the Modern rotters than about getting a good skipper—I mean, we were. That's how Smythe came to be captain. He's a Classical, and we voted for him as the only way of keeping Tommy Dodd out. He's a Modern worm."

"Oh!" said the Greyfriars juniors.

"Smythe is a first-class ass, a giddy filbert, and can't play cricket for toffee! But you've noticed that, of course."

"Ahem!"

"He always made up a team of his own pals, slackers and duffers like himself, who couldn't play for nuts. But, of course, you noticed that, too?"

"H'm!"

"So we got fed-up in the long run," said Jimmy Silver, "and the long and the short of it is that Smythe's got the push. Why, a school we play sometimes actually sent over a team of Second Form fags to play us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So we thought it only fair to give you the tip," said Jimmy Silver.

"What tip?" asked Harry Wharton.

"About the change we've made. Smythe and his lot have been kicked out. We were so fed-up that we preferred even a Modern worm as cricket captain. Tommy Dodd shoved himself into the job. He's a topping cricketer, though he's a Modern, and he has a wonderful eye for picking out a good man. He's playing me."

"Oh!"

"And my pals, Lovell and Raby and Newcome. All topping! And Flynn, too. There are six Modern bounders in the team, but they're all topping cricketers. We've got an eleven it would be hard to beat."

"Oh!"

"That's the tip," said Jimmy Silver. "After the trick Bagshot played on us with their blessed fag team we thought we'd mention it. We don't want you to send over a ragged eleven of duffers to play us, for we've got a team that will try the very toughest eleven you can get together."

"Oh!"

"We've played some tough matches since then, and won them," said Silver. "Pass the cake, will you? I thought I'd give you the tip what to expect."

"Oh!"

The faces of the Famous Five had grown longer and longer as Jimmy Silver made that explanation, giving them the valuable "tip" he had come over to give them. They understood now the good-natured purpose of Silver's visit, but it had come a little too late.

The Famous Five looked at one another grimly. Jimmy Silver observed their looks, but he made no remark.

"I'm jolly glad to hear you say this, Silver," said Billy Bunter, breaking the silence. "I can tell you I felt a bit rotten about playing such duffers as Smythe and that set. A player like me would be wasted on them. I'm jolly glad to have a chance of meeting a foeman worthy of my steel, as Shakespeare says."

"Shakespeare?" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"Get together the best team you can," went on Bunter encouragingly. "We shall beat you, all the same, but it will be a better game."

"We'll try to give you a good game," said Jimmy Silver, with a very disparaging glance at the fat and unwieldy Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, you won't have an earthly, of course!" said Bunter. "I shall probably make a century myself!"

"I suppose it would take you about a century to do it, too?" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, really, Silver—"

Jimmy Silver looked at his watch, and rose to his feet.

"Time I got on the move," he remarked. "I've got a long way to go. You fellows don't mind what I've told you, I suppose? I didn't mean it as swank, you know, but we've really got a ripping team, and it was only fair to tell you, considering what a change it was."

"N-n-not at all!" stammered Wharton.

"We're awfully obliged," said Bob Cherry.

"The awfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, somewhat to the surprise of the Rookwood fellow. Hurree Singh's wonderful English was a new experience for Jimmy Silver.

"I—I say," murmured Wharton, "m-m-must you get off this minute? You—you haven't time to come down to the cricket for ten minutes or so?"

"Just as you like," said Silver cheerily. "Old Bulkeley's given me a pass out. I shall be back too late for locking-up, anyway. Let's go and have a look at the cricket."

"You—you might bowl us an over or two?"

"Pleased. I'm the bowler of our team."

"Oh, you're the bowler!" said Wharton. "Then—then we shall know a little better what to expect."

"Good egg! I'm quite at your service."

And the Famous Five quitted the study with Jimmy Silver. Billy Bunter did not follow them. He was not anxious to see what kind of cricket Jimmy Silver played, but he was very anxious to finish the cake.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

An Eye-Opener!

HARRY WHARTON'S serious brow as he came down to the cricket-ground with Jimmy Silver drew some glances upon him. Lord Mauleverer's eleven had knocked off practice. Bolsover major's booming voice could be heard, threatening Fisher T. Fish with instant slaughter for bowling at his head instead of at the wicket. Sammy Bunter was sitting in the grass in a state of exhaustion. Peter Todd was explaining to Alonzo, in infuriated tones, that a bowler was not supposed to hurl the ball behind him, and nearly brain a harmless looker-on. Apparently everything was not quite for the best in the new eleven.

"Chuck the ball here, Peter," said Wharton. "Silver is going to give us some bowling."

Peter Todd grinned.

"Oh, good! Here you are, Silver!"

He tossed the ball to Silver, expecting to land it on his chest. Jimmy Silver caught it easily with his left, and smiled. Peter looked a little surprised, and Silver grinned. He could see that Todd supposed all Rookwood cricketers to be cast in the mould of Smythe.

That opinion was generally shared by the Remove fellows. They gathered round gleefully when they heard that the junior from Rookwood was going to give them some bowling. They only took care not to be too near the bowling. As Vernon-Smith remarked, there was no telling in the least in which direction the ball might fly.

Jimmy Silver smiled serenely as he went down the pitch. Whether he could bowl or not, it was clear that he did not lack confidence in his powers.

"I'll go on and knock him all over the field," said Peter Todd.

"Do!" said Wharton hopefully.

"Play!"

Jimmy Silver sent the ball down to a smiling batsman. But the smile vanished from the batsman's face the next moment, and he stared. For the ball had, in some mysterious manner, eluded his bat, and the left stump was out of the ground.

"How's that?" called out Jimmy Silver.

"Out! Oh, Toddy!"

"Here, you try that again!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"As often as you like," said Silver cheerfully.

Peter Todd was very watchful that time. He did not mean to be taken in a second time by that ball with its mysterious break to leg. But the next ball broke to the

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off, and it was the off stump that went. Peter Todd gazed at his wicket, and there was a cackle of laughter round the field.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Toddy!"

"I guess it's lucky Todd ain't in the eleven," said Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon my wicket wouldn't have gone like that, you galoot!"

Peter Todd came away without a word, and handed the bat to Squiff, who was one of the hardest hitters in the Remove. Sampson Quincy Iffley Field went on, looking quite serious. Squiff knew a good bowler when he saw one, and it did not need a second glance to tell him that Jimmy Silver of Rookwood was hot stuff.

Squiff held his own while three balls came down before he ventured to hit out. Then he let himself go.

Whiz went the ball.

Smack!

Jimmy Silver held up his hand. Hot from the bat, the ball reposed in his palm.

"Caught and bowled Silver!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Well done!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Squiff. "You try him, Wharton."

Harry Wharton went to the wicket.

His face was very grave. At any other time he would have rejoiced to know that Rookwood had a good eleven, and could put up a good game. He would rather have been licked by a good team than have won a ridiculous victory over a set of duffers like Adolphus Smythe & Co. But now—now he had allowed the match to pass out of his hands, and it was Mauleverer's eleven that was to meet Rookwood. If Jimmy Silver was a fair sample of the rest, what sort of a show would Mauleverer's eleven put up against them?

Harry Wharton had plenty of food for thought now. But he gave all his attention to the bowler.

Jimmy Silver was evidently a bowler of unusual powers for a junior schoolboy. But Wharton was a splendid bat, and he held his own. But he had to admit that he only just held his own. And when the sixth ball came down it caught even the captain of the Remove napping. His bails were down, and there was a buzz round the field.

"How's that?" cooed Jimmy Silver.

"Out, by Jove!" said Wharton.

"I guess you'd better let me try him," said Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "Lot of good you galoots are!"

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry.

Jimmy Silver came off the bowler's crease, smiling. He was inwardly pleased at having given the Greyfriars fellows that demonstration, and convinced them that Smythe & Co., who played them before, were not genuine representatives of Rookwood cricket.

The crowd that had gathered round to laugh did not laugh. They looked surprised and serious.

"You're in the Rookwood team?" Peter Todd asked, eyeing Jimmy Silver in a very peculiar manner.

Silver nodded.

"And are the rest up to sample?" asked Vernon-Smith.

The Rookwood junior grinned.

"We're all much of a muchness," he said. "Tommy Cook is a good bowler, and we've got some topping bats—Dodd and Lovell and Doyle."

"But—but that lot we played before," said Todd.

"Smythe—"

"Smythe's not in our team now."

"But the others—"

"They're all out of it, every man jack."

"Oh!"

"Let's see what you can do with the bat," remarked Tom Brown.

Silver nodded, and picked out a bat to suit him, and went to the wicket. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the champion bowler of the Remove, went down to the other end. The Greyfriars fellows looked on in silence.

Jimmy Silver was a good batsman, and he stood up to Inky's bowling for some time. But it was evident that bowling was his forte. Hurree Singh knocked his wicket over with the seventh ball. Then Silver gave up the bat, and looked at his watch again.

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Harry Wharton & Co walked down to the gates with him.

At batting Silver was above the average. At bowling he was as good as Hurree Janset Ram Singh, who was a marvel. It was only too painfully clear that the present team put in the field by Rookwood juniors was quite different from the team Greyfriars had played before, both at footer and cricket.

"I suppose you're the best bat in your lot," Squiff remarked carelessly.

"No fear," said Silver. "Tommy Dodd could bat my head off, so could Lovell. They're real corkers. I'm the bowler."

He wheeled out his bicycle.

"Well, ta-ta! See you again to-morrow."

"Much obliged for your tip," said Wharton, rather dismally.

"Oh, don't mench!"

The Rookwood junior went skimming away down the road at a pace which showed that a ride of over twenty miles already had not told on him. He was evidently made of very different stuff from the hopeless slackers who had hitherto represented Rookwood.

When he was gone Harry Wharton & Co. stood in the gateway, looking at one another. There was a grim silence for some time.

"Well," said Vernon-Smith at last, "this is a go!"

"We—we couldn't foresee anything of the kind," said Wharton. "Rookwood have always been such duffers. Last season they brought a fool team here, with that chap Smythe—you remember the time they brought an Old Boy to play for them at footer, and Mr. Percy helped us out, and when they came over to play cricket last time they were too funny for words. We—we couldn't guess that it was going to be any different this time, could we?"

"Nunno!"

"But it is going to be different," said Nugent; "jolly different. If that chap Silver is a sample, they're hot stuff."

"The hotfulness is terrific."

"Oh, dear!" said Squiff. "And we've made up a team of hopeless idiots to go over and play them! And—and it was my idea to make Mauly captain. You can kick me if you like."

"It won't do," said Wharton decidedly. "As it's turned out, we can't let that team of wrecks go over to Rookwood."

"Why, four or five fellows like Silver would make hay of them!" said Johnny Bull.

"It can't be did!" said Peter Todd.

"We must see Mauly, and tell him."

"But—" began Bob.

"No buts about it—"

"But—"

"Oh, blow your buts!"

"But," roared Bob, "we've promised Mauly, honour bright!"

"Oh!" said Wharton. He had forgotten that little circumstance.

"Mauly will excuse us," said Nugent uneasily. "After all, he didn't want to captain the eleven. He was driven into it. He—he'll be glad to get out of it, I should think."

"He can release us from the promise, if he chooses," said Wharton slowly. "Let's go and see him."

"He said he wouldn't give it up, if he once took it on," said Bob.

"We'll see."

It was with decidedly uneasy and anxious feelings that the chums of the Remove made their way to Lord Mauleverer's study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

His Lordship Means Business!

LORD MAULEVERER was reclining elegantly in an armchair.

He looked tired. But there was an unusually healthy flush in his cheeks, and his eyes were bright. Cricket evidently agreed with him, unwilling as he had been to take it up.

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"Come in, dear boys!" he said cordially. "This is quite an honour! Sit down, if you can find enough chairs. Excuse my rising—I'm tired."

"Tired, are you?" said Bob Cherry.

"Yaas!"

"Feel you'd like to chuck up the cricket?"

"Oh, no!"

"No?" murmured Bob. "Why not?"

"I find it's doin' me good," said Lord Mauleverer. "Bucks a chap up, you know. I shouldn't wonder if I stick to cricket, if I ain't too exhausted after the match to-morrow. Besides, I told you fellows that if you made me cricket captain, I should stick to it. I'm a slave to my word!"

"Oh, we'd release you from that promise!" said Wharton at once.

"It wasn't a promise—it was a deadly swear," said Lord Mauleverer coolly. "I'm stickin' to it."

The Removites looked at him rather dubiously. It dawned upon them that Lord Mauleverer had an inkling of the reason of their visit to him, and that he did not intend to give up his new position.

"As the poet remarks," went on Lord Mauleverer calmly, "'Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.' Now, I wasn't born great, and it's too much of a fag to achieve greatness, but when a chap has greatness thrust upon him, he would be a duffer to part with it—what?"

"Ye-es."

"You'll see me playin' up like anythin' to-morrow," said Mauleverer.

"Ahem!"

"The fact is," said Harry Wharton, coming to the point, "we—we want you to resign, Mauly, old man."

"Begad!"

"It turns out that Rookwood aren't going to play that set of idiots they sent over here last time, and they've got a good team. We don't want to chuck the match away; we've got to think of our record, you know."

"Yaas. You wanted me to play a team of idiots, but as they turn out not to be idiots, you think I'm not good enough, begad!"

"Ahem! Not exactly. But—but—"

"You'd like me to resign, and sack my team—"

"That's it."

"And leave the match in your hands?"

"Exactly!"

"And you want me to give you an answer?"

"Just so!"

"Right!" said Lord Mauleverer tranquilly. "You can go and eat coke!"

"What?"

"Coke!"

"Look here, Mauly—" began half a dozen voices hotly.

"Rats!" said Mauly.

"Why, you—you ass—you fathead—"

"Bow-wow!" said his lordship.

The juniors gazed at Lord Mauleverer in silence. His lordship smiled serenely. There was evidently a vein of obstinacy in his lordship's easy-going nature, which the Removites had never suspected before.

"Look here, Mauly—" began Wharton at last.

"No good talkin'," said his lordship. "When I swear a swear, I keep that swear. I didn't shove myself into this job, did I?"

"Nunno!"

"I didn't worry and bother to get it—what?"

"Oh, no!"

"You shoved it on me, didn't you, and bumped me till I agreed?"

"Yes, but—"

"That settles it. It's fixed now, as fixed as the laws of the giddy Medes and Persians. Shut the door after you," added his lordship, chuckling.

"Look here, you funny idiot!" roared Bob Cherry. "We're not going to let you chuck a match away for Greyfriars."

"Begad, it's not I who am the funny idiot!" said Lord Mauleverer. "The funny idiot is the fellow who thought of making me cricket captain. Ha, ha, ha!"



Our artist here portrays a terrible scene on Hill 60. A large portion of ground had previously been mined by a party of Germans, and a few days later some of their comrades, unaware of what had been done, took up their sleeping quarters over the spot, with fatal results.

"Oh, Squiff, you ass!"

"Kick me!" groaned Squiff.

"Well, a promise is a promise," said Harry Wharton, after a long, long pause. "We can't go back on our word, unless you release us from that promise, Mauly."

"Just so!" smiled his lordship.

"Well, you will, won't you?"

"No fear!"

Wharton drew a deep breath. Bumping his lordship was out of the question; a promise was a promise. Deeply did the Removites repent them of the misguided sense of humour which had led them to make Mauly cricket captain for the Rookwood match. But repentance came too late, as repentance generally does.

They were in for it now. If Lord Mauleverer remained firm, they had to let him lead the Remove team over to Rookwood. There was no help for it. "Honour bright" was binding; a promise was a promise, and they were

not Prussians. But there was another resource, and Wharton caught at it.

"Well, Mauly, you're skipper, if you stick to it," he said. "But—but you'll make some changes in the team."

The juniors brightened up. After all, even with Mauly as captain, they would win with ten good men in the team.

But the reply of his lordship dashed those newly-risen hopes to the ground.

"Can't!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"You can, and must!" howled Johnny Bull.

"Impossible!"

"Why?" demanded Wharton.

"I've given them my word," explained Lord Mauleverer. "Every blessed chap that's in my team made me promise to keep him in. They suspected that you might change your mind or something, and I've promised the lot of them."

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"Oh, dear!"
 "They—they can release you from the promise," said Nugent.

"You can ask 'em to," said Lord Mauleverer. "My impression is that they won't. But you can ask 'em."

"We're fairly dished," said Bob Cherry. "Greyfriars will be beaten to the wide, and it's all our own fault. Squiff, old man, why were you born so humorous?"

Squiff grunted dismally.

"'Tain't Squiff's fault," said Wharton. "We all backed up the idea. I must admit that I refused to captain the team against Rookwood. I'd have let Bunter take it on if he'd offered. None of us thought of this, and it's our fault all round. We ought not to have taken any chances in cricket."

"But who'd have thought it?" groaned Squiff.

"Well, we oughtn't to have concluded that Rookwood would always play a team of bally idiots," said Johnny Bull. "We were all to blame."

"You see," remarked Lord Mauleverer, "it wouldn't help you much if I did resign, for you'd have to promise solemnly to play my team. The places have been promised to them, and they've got to have them."

"We couldn't promise you that, of course."

"Besides, I'm not resignin'," grinned his lordship.

"Look here, you'll have to make changes in the team," growled Johnny Bull.

"Can't! And don't you begin dictatin' to your skipper," said Lord Mauleverer loftily. "Just you remember that I'm captain, and that you're not even in the eleven."

"Oh!" said Johnny Bull.

There was a long silence. Lord Mauleverer closed his eyes, and appeared to be going to sleep. Harry Wharton spoke at last.

"Mauly, old man——"

Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes, and blinked at the dismayed Removites.

"Begad! You fellows still there?"

"You've got no objection to changes in the team, if—we can persuade the members of the eleven to resign?"

"Not at all—on condition that you only persuade 'em," said his lordship. "None of your blessed ragging. If a fellow tells me you've bumped him, or ragged him, I shall play him all the same, and shall refuse to accept his resignation."

"Oh, you rotter!"

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

There was evidently nothing more to be got out of the new cricket captain, and the juniors quitted the study in very low spirits. Lord Mauleverer stretched himself comfortably in the armchair, and winked at the ceiling. The slacker of the Remove had a feeling that this was the last time, as well as the first, that he would be disturbed from his repose for the purpose of captaining a cricket team.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung Does Not Savvy!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. held a consultation in No. 1 Study. It was a dismal meeting. To lose the Rookwood match was not a pleasant prospect, at least, without putting up a fight for it. They were accustomed to walking over Rookwood, and to be walked over in their turn was not agreeable. Besides, a defeat was a defeat, and it counted against them in the season's record. With Symthe & Co. playing for Rookwood, there had not been the slightest risk. The "Babes" of the First Form at Greyfriars could have beaten them, with probably an innings to spare.

But a change had come o'er the spirit of their dream. It was not Smythe's eleven they had to meet, and that made all the difference. Even if they had heard that extensive changes had been made in the Rookwood team, they would not have recked of it—for they had had the unfortunately mistaken impression that all Rookwood cricket was much of a muchness. Jimmy Silver had come as a surprise to them—he had opened their eyes, and opened them wide.

It had been a good-natured act on the part of Jimmy
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Silver to come over and tell them what they had to expect. But the warning had come too late!

"It's all our own fault," said Harry Wharton glumly. "Cricket is a serious matter, and we oughtn't to have been so jolly funny about this match. The whole Form will be down on the committee for this—and I must say it will serve us right."

"We've got to pull it out of the fire somehow," said Nugent uneasily.

"There's only one thing—to persuade the chaps to resign, and get decent players in their places," said Squiff.

The juniors looked hopeless. Of all the fumlbers who were included in Lord Mauleverer's eleven, only Alonzo Todd was likely to be good-natured enough to yield up his place on demand. The others were certain to stick to their places in the team—indeed, fellows like Skinner and Stott and Snoop, who were on bad terms with the Famous Five, would rejoice when they found out what was wanted, and would take an unholy delight in exasperating the Co. by sticking to the eleven. And conceited asses like Fish and Bunter would not listen to reason for a moment—and there would certainly be no moving Bolsover major.

"Let's go round and see what we can do," said Bob Cherry at last. "Then we shall know how we stand, anyway."

"Begin with Alonzo," said Peter Todd. "Lonzy will do as I ask him."

"Yes, that's one comfort."

With abnormally serious faces, the Famous Five and Squiff and Todd walked along to No. 7 Study. They found Alonzo there, with his mild face beaming with pleasure over a huge volume of entomology, a gift from his celebrated Uncle Benjamin. He blinked up at the worried juniors in his mild way.

"My dear fellows, is there anything wrong?" asked Alonzo. "I sincerely hope not."

"We want to ask you a favour, Lonzy," said Peter.

"Anything you like, my dear Peter."

"Will you give me your place in the team for to-morrow?"

"Certainly, my dear Peter."

The juniors could not help grinning. Alonzo handed over that valuable place in the Remove eleven as if it were of no value at all.

"Well, that'll be one good player," said Peter brightly.

"Ahem!" murmured Squiff. "Are you quite sure—ahem!—that you're the best chap to take the vacant place, Toddy?"

"Quite sure!" said Peter, with emphasis.

"Ahem!" said Wharton. "Perhaps——"

"No perhaps about it," said Peter decidedly. "Lonzy, you cherub, will you go along and tell Mauleverer I'm playing instead of you? Tell him I'll put my name on the list, to save him the awful fag of going downstairs."

"Certainly," said Alonzo. "As a matter of fact, my dear Peter, I shall not be sorry to stay in and study entomology. Entomology is a most entrancing subject. Besides, I do not think I am a really good cricketer."

"I wish the other fellows in the eleven were like you, Alonzo," said Wharton.

"You flatter me, my dear Wharton."

Alonzo Todd obligingly departed to tell Lord Mauleverer of the change that had been effected in his team, and Peter Todd went down to put his name on the list in the hall. Harry Wharton & Co. regarded one another rather uncertainly.

"Well, Peter's a good man," said Squiff, after a pause. "He's one of the best, and he will put in a good innings for Greyfriars. But if we get another man to stand out, the place had better be given to——"

"Yours truly!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"I was going to say——"

"Squiff was going to suggest me," remarked Wharton.

"Not at all," said Squiff. "I was going to suggest——"

"Me!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific! The esteemed Squiff was going to suggest my honourable self," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Catch me!" said Squiff. "I meant myself, of course!"
 "Now look here, Squiff——"
 "Oh, rats!" said Wharton. "No good dividing the bear's skin before the blessed bear is caught. Let's go and see Wun Lung—he's a good little chap, and will see reason if we put it to him nicely. We'll toss up for the place."

"Done!"

The six juniors called on the little Chinese. They found Wun Lung curled up in the armchair in No. 13 Study, fast asleep. Bob Cherry awoke him with a jerk at his pigtail, and Wun Lung opened his eyes with a yell.

"Yow! Me hurtee! Ow!"

"Sorry, kid," said Bob Cherry. "It's all right! What are you always asleep like a blessed dormouse for? Wun Lung, you're—ahem!—you've got your name down for the match to-morrow."

"Allee light."

"We want you to give us the place."

"No savvy!"

"You see," explained Wharton, taking up the tale, "it turns out that Rookwood are playing a strong team after all, and we want to beat them, of course. You won't mind standing out of the eleven?"

"No savvy!" said Wun Lung calmly.

"Some other time, we'll fix it to put you in the Form team when we're playing the Third," said Harry.

"Handsome Hally Wharton vellee good."

"You'll stand out for to-morrow, then?"

"Me playee to-morrow all lightee."

"That isn't what I mean. Will you stand out of the team, and give up your place to one of us?"

"No savvy!"

"Look here, you little yellow bounder, you savvy all right," exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We want a plain answer."

The little Chinese blinked at him, with a smile that was child-like and bland.

"Me no speakee English language vellee good," he murmured. "Me no savvy!"

"We want your place in the team to-morrow!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Allee lightee. My playee up like old bootee."

"We don't want you to play. We want you to resign, and let another chap take your place," said Wharton patiently.

"No savvy!"

The juniors glared at him. When it did not suit him to understand English, the little Chinese had a way of losing all knowledge of that language. It was perfectly evident that Wun Lung was adamant, and that he would not understand English so long as he was asked to give up his place in the eleven.

"You little pigtailed heathen!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Handsome Bob Chelly angly with little Chinese," said Wun Lung sorrowfully. "Me so solly me no savvy."

"I'll 'Handsome Bob Cherry' you!" growled Bob. "Will you stand out of the eleven to-morrow, or won't you?"

"No savvy!"

"We're after your place in the team," shrieked Squiff.

"Allee light. Me keepee placee in team all lightee, and me playee up like old bootee," said Wun Lung innocently.

"It's no good," growled Wharton. "Come on, and let's try some other beast."

The juniors quitted the study. Wun Lung put his little pigtailed head out of the doorway, and called after them:

"Handsome Bob Chelly——"

Bob turned back hopefully.

"Well, young 'un?"

"Me so solly me no savvy," said Wun Lung sadly, and he drew back into the study and closed the door.

Bob Cherry breathed hard through his nose. He knew that the little rascal was chuckling in the study, and he was greatly inclined to go back and give him something to chuckle for, with the aid of a cricket stump.

But he restrained his feelings, and the party of cricketers who had been too humorous proceeded in search of other worlds to conquer, so to speak.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Desperate Measures!

"HERE they come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What luck?"

It was a regular roar that greeted Harry Wharton & Co. as they came into the junior common-room. Nearly all the Remove were there, and they seemed to see something funny in the circumstances, especially the members of Lord Mauleverer's eleven. Evidently the hopeless quest of the Famous Five had become known to all the Remove by this time, and the other fellows were enjoying it. Harry Wharton & Co. looked a little sheepish. They had come to the common-room in search of the new eleven, not finding them in their studies. Only Bolsover major had been found in his study, and he, as soon as he heard their request, called them by a series of uncomplimentary names and requested them to lose no time in getting out of his study. There was nothing to be hoped for from Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner, "behold the humorists! Walk up, gentlemen, and see the funny merchants, who were too funny by half!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anybody got a cricket cap to give away?" chuckled Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was not a flattering reception for the Famous Five. It showed them only too clearly what they had to expect from Mauleverer's eleven. But they did not give up hope. Somehow or other, they had to get out of the fix.

"I want to speak to you chaps seriously," began Harry Wharton.

"Gentlemen," said Skinner, "I beg you to be serious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows know how we've been dished over Rookwood," said Harry. "Instead of a team of tame lunatics, it turns out that we've got to play a team as good as our own—or nearly as good. We don't want to score a defeat for the Remove—especially against Rookwood. It's up to you fellows to resign your places and give them up to fellows who can keep the Remove flag flying."

"I guess you can leave that flag to me," said Fisher T. Fish, "I calculate I'll keep it flying!"

"Now, Fishy," urged Bob Cherry. "You set the other chaps an example. Mauly is willing to play a good man if you'll stand out. Will you?"

"Nope," said Fisher T. Fish promptly.

"Will you, Skinner?"

"Catch me!"

"Snoop——"

"Go and eat coke!" said Snoop.

"Wibley, old man, you're a sensible chap. You'll do the right thing?"

Wibley sniffed.

"Can't I play cricket?" he demanded.

"Well, yes," said Harry Wharton diplomatically; "you can play, but not quite up to the form of that chap Silver. You're better than any of these grinning chumps, but—but——"

"Well, I'm conceited enough to think that I can play a good game," said Wibley. "I'm going to try, anyway. Why don't you get Mauleverer to resign?"

"He won't," said Wharton dismally.

"Well, I won't, either!"

"Nothing doing!" grinned Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, it will be all right," said Bunter.

"I shall be there, you know."

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"I'll tell you what, Wibley," said Wharton, struck by a sudden inspiration. "You're jolly good at acting,

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though you're not much good at cricket. Get out of the eleven, and you shall play the title-role when we do 'Hamlet' next week!"

"You'd have to give me Hamlet, anyway," said Wibley warmly. "I'm the only fellow in the Remove who can play Hamlet!"

"Well, we jolly well won't!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Either you stand out of the Remove eleven, or we'll make you grave-digger."

"Or second murderer," said Johnny Bull.

"Fathead!" said Wibley. "There isn't any second murderer in 'Hamlet.' And I'm jolly well going to do the Prince of Denmark, or I'll know the reason why!"

"You'll know the reason why," said Wharton. "The reason is that you stick in the Remove eleven when you know you ought to be outside it!"

"I don't see that," said Wibley. "I can play cricket. Still, if it's agreed that I play Hamlet—honour bright—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Bribery and corruption!" howled Skinner. "Wharton, this isn't cricket!"

"It won't be cricket if you play in the team, you ass!" said Wharton. "Is it a go, Wib?"

"It's a go!" said Wibley. "Mind, I'm Hamlet, and you can have my place—anybody who likes. I'd rather play Hamlet than play Rookwood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who takes the place?" murmured Nugent.

"Oh, let Wharton have it," said Squiff generously. "Wharton ought to be captain, by rights, if that idiot Mauly could be got rid of!"

"No," said Wharton. "What we want more than anything else is a bowler. Peter Todd's a good bat, and Bolsover can keep a wicket up, but there isn't a bowler in the eleven. Inky's the man for the place!"

"The flatterfulness of my esteemed chum is terrific," murmured the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

The rest of the Co. agreed with Wharton. With a wonderful bowler like Inky in the team even a team of fumlbers like Mauly's eleven could not be utterly and disgracefully licked. Matters were looking up, after all!

But Wibley was the only member of the team who listened to reason. Bunter and Bunter minor hadn't the slightest intention of getting out of the eleven. Skinner and Snoop and Stott chuckled and chortled, only too evidently enjoying the situation. Wild horses wouldn't have dragged Fisher T. Fish out of the team. The Yankee junior had an opportunity at last of showing Greyfriars what cricket was like, and he wasn't going to lose it. Not if Fisher T. Fish knew it!

But necessity is the parent of invention, and desperate situations require desperate expedients. The grim need of getting out of the fix they had got themselves into sharpened the faculties of the Famous Five wonderfully. There was not a stone they would leave unturned.

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"We're having supper in the study," Wharton remarked to Bunter, as he turned to go, in a casual sort of way. "Like to come?"

"What-ho!" grinned Bunter.

"Bring Sammy."

"You bet!"

The Famous Five repaired to No. 1 Study, and a general collection of tuck was made along the Remove passage. Tom Brown, and Vernon-Smith, and Bulstrode and Squiff and Mark Linley, all anxious to get back into the eleven, helped the Famous Five to collect up a supper that would fill the hearts of the two Bunters with joy.

When Billy Bunter came into No. 1 Study with his minor his little round eyes danced behind his spectacles. Sammy Bunter drew a deep, ecstatic breath.

"Prime!" said Sammy.

"I say, you fellows, this is really ripping," said Bunter.

"Pile in!" said the Famous Five hospitably.

The two Bunters piled in. They piled, and piled, with wonderful energy and speed, and the good things were cleared off the table in record time.

Ecstatic happiness glowed in their fat faces as they travelled through ham and tongue, sardines and pickles, cakes and biscuits, and jams and preserves and jellies. It was a feed for the gods.

"Now, I suppose you're going to oblige us," remarked Wharton, when the two fat juniors were fairly under way. "You'll do the right thing, Billy?"

"Rely on that," said Bunter. "Pass the jam."

"You'll give up the place in the eleven?"

"I can't talk while I'm eating," said Bunter. "We'll have a jaw afterwards!"

"Sammy, old chap—"

"C-c-can't t-t-talk with my mum-mum-mouth full," said Sammy. "Give us a rest. Any more cake going?"

Accustomed as they were to the gastronomic performances of the Bunters, Harry Wharton & Co. watched them in wonder. How anybody could eat so much and live was very nearly a miracle. But the time came at last when even Billy Bunter and Sammy could eat no more.

They were looking shiny, and perspiring, and breathing very hard—or rather snorting. They had fairly overdone it, and it looked as if they would have to be carried away—or rolled away, like barrels.

"Nothing more?" asked Bob Cherry.

"N-n-n o t h i n g, thanks," mumbled Bunter. "Ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"N - n - nothing! I—I think, perhaps, I was a bit too strong on the pickles. Or it may have been the pie. Or the cake. Or the tarts. Or the jam. Or the jelly. I—I feel rather queer! Perhaps it was the prawns."

"Or the lot together," grinned Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter.

"Have some more, Sammy?"

"Nunno."

"Now we'll have a little friendly





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talk," remarked Nugent, "about the match to-morrow, Bunter, old chap—"

"Oh, blow the match!" said Bunter irritably. "I can't talk now. If you fellows have got me here to try and bag my place in the team, you'll jolly well be disappointed. I regard that as playing it rather low down—almost dishonest, in fact. I know you fellows ain't quite so particular as I am in these things. But I really think you ought to draw a line somewhere."

The Removites glared at Billy Bunter. They were speechless for a moment.

"Why, you fat rotter!" roared Bob Cherry. "You know jolly well what we were feeding you for!"

"Nothing of the sort," said Bunter loftily. "If I had suspected that you had ulterior motives, I should have declined your hospitality, of course. Come on, Sammy! You're excuse us going, you fellows, but, really, I'm responsible for my minor, in a way, and I really don't care about him associating with such chaps."

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The Bunters departed before the chums of the Remove could recover their breath. The Owl had quite taken it away.

"Well!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What do you think of that?"

"Let's go and slaughter the fat oysters!" yelled Johnny Bull.

Wharton made a hopeless gesture.

"It's N.G." he said. "The fat beast knew what he was being fed for, and he meant to spoof us after the feed. It's no go! The team stands as it is—there'll be two good players, one passable, and eight silly duffers, and Rookwood will wipe up the ground with them. Can't be helped."

And with that disconsolate conclusion, the chums of the Remove went to bed. They had done their best—but it was decidedly N.G. A faint hope lingered of better luck on the morrow; and that was all they had to comfort them.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bribery and Corruption!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. wore very thoughtful looks the next morning. Even in the Form-room they were thinking about the Rookwood match.

Fortunately, Mr. Quelch was not aware of that fact. If there was an unusual amount of inattention on the part of the Co., and if lines fell a little more thickly than usual, Mr. Quelch remained in blissful ignorance of the cause. The Remove-master was far from seeing that a cricket-match, in importance, came before lessons. Indeed, if he had guessed how much thought the juniors were giving to the Rookwood match that morning, it is quite possible that the heroes of the Remove would have been detained for the afternoon, and would not have gone to Rookwood at all.

Fortunately, that ultimate catastrophe did not occur. Morning lessons were over at last, and the Remove were dismissed. Never had the chums of the Remove been so glad to get out of the Form-room.

They were looking forward to the afternoon in a grim humour. Immediately after dinner the motor-bus hired by Lord Mauleverer was coming over to take them to Rookwood. The die was cast—Mauleverer's eleven was going to distinguish itself, or, rather, extinguish itself, at Rookwood—and Harry Wharton & Co. had to face the inevitable defeat, and the unpleasant knowledge that it was their fault.

Squiff, sauntering in the Close, with his hands in his pockets, thinking over the problem with wrinkled brows, spotted Sammy Bunter casting longing glances into the window of the school shop. He bore down on the fat fag, and slapped him on the shoulder. Sammy blinked at him through his spectacles.

"Famished, as usual?" asked Squiff affably.

"It's a jolly long time to dinner," growled Sammy, "and I've had nothing since brekker except a bun and some toffee and some bullseyes! I say, Mrs. Mimble has got fresh tarts in to-day."

"Like some?"

"What-ho!" said Sammy, his very spectacles sparkling.

"What about the match this afternoon?" said Squiff.

"Let's go in, and we'll talk it over," said Sammy diplomatically.

Sampson Quincy Ifley Field chuckled.

"Once bitten, twice shy," he remarked. "You played that little game on us last night. We'll talk it over first. Look here, you fat young oyster, you don't want to play Rookwood; you'd rather have a feed."

"That depends," said Sammy coolly. "There'll be a feed at Rookwood—Billy says so, and Mauly would look after his team jolly well, anyway. But I'll tell you what, Field—I've been going to stand a feed in the Second for a long time, and the fellows say it's time it came off. If I could fix that up for this afternoon, I might not go to Rookwood."

Squiff sniffed. The fat fag was evidently "out" to make a bargain. But the Australian junior was well supplied with cash, and if Bunter minor insisted upon bribery and corruption, Squiff did not object.

"Can't trust you!" he said.

"Then you can go and eat coke!" retorted Sammy.

"We might make a bargain," said Squiff reflectively.

"I'll tell you what—we'll order the feed——"

Sammy's eyes glistened.

"Up to ten bob," said Squiff.

"Oh, good!"

"And I'll pay for it——"

"Right!"

"With orders for it to be delivered to you, personally, at four o'clock——"

"Oh!"

"And you give me your place in the eleven," said Squiff.

Sammy Bunter reflected. He was not particularly keen on going to Rookwood, excepting for what was to be obtained in the line of catables. He was evidently inclined to accept Squiff's tempting offer.

"Well, what do you say?" demanded Squiff.

"I couldn't stand the Second a feed on ten bob," said Sammy, shaking his head, and blinking keenly at Squiff.

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calculating exactly how much he could screw out of the Cornstalk. "Make it a quid. You've got lots of money."

"I'll see you blowed first!" said Squiff indignantly.

"Well, if you want the school to win, you know——" hinted Sammy.

Squiff made up his mind. After all, it was for the sake of the Form, as well as for his own sake; and it had been his own disastrous idea to make Mauleverer captain on that occasion. It was up to him.

"A quid it is!" he said at last. "But mind, you don't get so much as a smell of a currant bun till four o'clock this afternoon. You're a slippery customer, and you're not going to have a chance of spoofing me."

"But I'm hungry now," said Sammy indignantly.

"Oh, rats!"

"I'll have some tarts now as a—a sort of makeweight," suggested Sammy. "Another tanner won't hurt you."

"You fat Shylock! Come on, then!"

Sammy Bunter joyfully followed the Australian junior into the tuckshop. Squiff laid a sovereign on the counter.

"Take that, Mrs. Mimble. You're to supply Sammy with anything he orders, up to that amount," he explained. "But the goods are to be called for personally by this fat owl at four o'clock. If he doesn't call for them personally at exactly four o'clock, you're to keep them for me, and he's not to have them at all."

"Yes, Master Field," said Mrs. Mimble, somewhat astonished.

"I say, Field, you can trust me, you know," said Sammy.

"Yes, as far as I can see you," agreed Squiff. "No further than that. Give the fat boulder half a dozen penny tarts, ma'am—here's a tanner."

"I say, Field, I'll have——"

"You'll have what we've agreed on, and no more," said Squiff coolly. "You can give your orders now, and if you're not here at four o'clock to claim the goods, you won't get a bite of them. Ta-ta!"

"Oh, really, you know——"

But Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was gone. He walked away cheerfully to the School House, and pencilled his name over that of Sammy Bunter on the cricket list on the notice-board. The Famous Five spotted him thus engaged.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore this thusness?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I'm in the team," grinned Squiff.

"Oh, good!" said Wharton. "But how?"

"Bribery and corruption."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's cost me a solid quid and a tanner," said Squiff. "Bunter minor will be expiring of indigestion about half-past four this afternoon. I hope he will suffer awful pangs. It leaves me nearly stony, but it can't be helped. If you fellows are rolling in tin, you might try the same game with his major."

"That's a wheeze," said Bob Cherry. "Let's pool the cash, and try."

They found Bunter major, and tried. But Billy Bunter proved less amenable to reason than his minor; he steadily declined to listen to the voice of the charmer. He was fortified by the knowledge of that well-filled hamper that was going in the motor-bus, and of which he fully intended to have the lion's share. As it was not worth his while to be bribed, the Owl of the Remove assumed a lofty attitude.

"I'm really surprised at you fellows," he said severely. "Shocked, I might say. I know you're not so particular as I am, not so delicate, and all that; but really, really, you know——"

So the Famous Five bumped him on the ground and left him.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER:

Bunter Enjoys Himself!

PROMPTLY after dinner there was the hoot of a motor-horn in the road, and a tremendous vehicle drew up outside the school gates. It was Lord Mauleverer's motor-bus, all ready to take the party over to Rookwood.

Lord Mauleverer came out with his team, smiling and cheery.

If he noticed the imploring glances that were turned upon him by the Famous Five he did not appear to be affected by them.

"You fellows ready?" he asked cheerily. "Where's my blessed eleven? Got your bats and things—what? Any fellow who likes to come is welcome; the motor-bus will hold about sixty, I believe."

"Oh, we're all coming!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Lemme see, who's in my eleven and who isn't?" asked his lordship.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There had been changes in Lord Mauleverer's eleven, and he was not well posted as to who was playing for him and who wasn't. He had to separate the sheep from the goats, as it were.

The eleven came together; there were Mauleverer himself, Bolsover major, Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Fish, Billy Bunter, and Wun Lung left of Mauly's original team. Alonzo, Wibley, and Sammy Bunter had been replaced by Peter Todd, Hurree Singh, and Squiff. Lord Mauleverer blinked at Todd and Inky and Squiff.

"You three chaps playing for me?" he asked.

"Yes, fathead!" said Squiff.

"The playfulness is terrific, my esteemed idiotic Mauleverer," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"And we'll try to keep the Rookwooders from quite wiping up the ground with you," said Peter Todd, with a snort.

"Begad! Much obliged, dear boys. I shouldn't wonder if we beat them, you know," said Lord Mauleverer amiably. "I'm goin' to do my best."

"Bow-wow!"

"You're comin' along, Wharton, old chap? I specially want you to see what I'm goin' to do at Rookwood," said his lordship.

"Oh, I'll come!" said Harry.

"Good!"

"Look here, Mauly, it isn't too late to——"

"Time we were off," remarked Lord Mauleverer, ruthlessly interrupting the captain of the Remove. "Fall in and follow me, dear boys!"

The party followed his lordship down to the gates. Harry Wharton & Co. had not given up hope yet. There was a long drive to Rookwood, and en route they had a faint hope of bringing some members of the team to reason. So, in order to be prepared for all eventualities, they took their bats and their flannels with them—a proceeding that made the eleven grin.

Skinner tapped the Bounder on the arm as they went down to the gates. Vernon-Smith looked at him rather blackly. Skinner was Smithy's study-mate, and under no end of obligations to the Bounder, and Smithy's opinion was that if Skinner had a grain of decency he would stand out of the team and make room for him. So far Skinner had not shown any sign whatever of possessing the necessary grain of decency.

"You're looking rather down in the mouth, Smithy," Skinner remarked, in his most friendly manner.

"Oh, rats!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Why can't you stop playing the giddy ox, and let me have a chance of saving the match?"

"That's just what I was thinking of," said Skinner amicably.

Vernon-Smith brightened up.

"If you mean that, Skinny——"

"The fact is," said Skinner, "Ponsonby of Highcliffe has asked me over there for the afternoon, and I'd like to go."

"Go by all means," said the Bounder.

"They've got a little game on," said Skinner.

The Bounder grunted.

"I'd like to go like anything, Smithy."

"Well, why don't you go?"

"Stony!" said Skinner calmly. "No good going to see a chap like Ponsonby to play a little game without a shot in the locker. If I had a quid in my pocket it would be a different matter."

The Bounder laughed. He saw Skinner's object now, and a "quid" was nothing to him. He slipped his hand into his pocket.

"You ass, why couldn't you say so before?" he said. "I'll lend you a quid, and you can settle when you like, or never."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 382.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

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

"Oh, I'll settle—some day," said Skinner vaguely.

"Here you are!"

Skinner crumpled a currency note in his hand out of sight of the rest of the party, and with a nod to the Bounder, walked away. With the amiable object of causing Wharton as much worry as possible, Skinner had remained in the eleven till the last moment before leaving Greyfriars. But as a matter of fact, the black sheep of the Remove greatly preferred a game of cards at Highcliffe to a game of cricket at Rookwood.

The numerous party of the eleven and their followers climbed into the motor-bus outside the school gates. Lord Mauleverer looked over his flock.

"All here?" he asked. "Begad, where's Skinner? I thought Skinner was in my team."

"He's not coming," said Vernon-Smith. "He's given his place to me. No objection?"

"None in the world, dear boy," said Lord Mauleverer. "I congratulate you, begad! Chauffeur, you can get going."

The chauffeur got going, and the big vehicle rolled away down the road.

"So you're in the team, Smithy?" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder nodded.

"Yes; I fixed it up with Skinner."

"Not so bad," remarked Squiff. "There'll be four good players, one so-so, and six silly idiots!"

"Look hyer!" began Fisher T. Fish warmly. "I guess if you call my cricket so-so——"

"Oh, I meant Bolsover," said Squiff cheerily. "You're one of the silly idiots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Squiff!" said Bunter. "You know jolly well how I shall play. Wharton won't be able to keep me in the shade this time."

"Me playee goodee wellee," remarked Wun Lung. "Playee uppee like old bootee!"

"You disreputable young heathen, why can't you give up your place?"

"No savvy."

"It's not too late, you pigtailed son of a stone image!" said Bob Cherry.

"No savvy."

"Hang him over the side by his pigtail!" growled Johnny Bull.

"No touchee pigtail!" yelled Wun Lung, in alarm.

"Order, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "No ragging my team. I dare say Wun Lung will play up all right—as good as the rest, anyway."

"Oh, that's likely enough!" snapped Nugent.

"My dear chap, you'll see that I shall do very well," said his lordship. "I fancy you'll be surprised at Rookwood."

"Yes, if you take a run."

"I say, you fellows, shove that lunch-basket this way," said Billy Bunter. "I'm getting peckish."

"You must be," snorted Bob Cherry. "It's nearly half an hour since dinner."

"I always play better after a good feed," said Bunter. "I'll begin on the cold chicken. You don't mind Mauly?"

"Not at all, dear boy."

Billy Bunter began on the cold chicken. He proceeded on a rabbit-pie. He continued on a big gooseberry-tart. The Famous Five watched him with great interest. How Bunter expected to be able to play cricket after that was a mystery. He ought to have been reader for the hospital than for the cricket-field.

Bob Cherry closed one eye at his chums, and proceeded to take a deep interest in Billy Bunter's feed. He selected good things from the lunch-basket, and pressed them upon Bunter. The basket was a large one, and crammed with tuck; Bunter had seen to that. Nobody else could eat anything, so the Owl had it all to himself. He revelled in it. The Co., catching Bob Cherry's idea, helped him in the good work.

As fast as Billy Bunter showed a sign of slackening down, one of them produced a very tempting item, and urged him to continue.

Bunter never refused offers of that kind. So long as

he had stowage capacity he was content to go on stowing. And his capacity in that line was enormous.

While the motor-bus rolled rapidly along roads and lanes, Billy Bunter kept up a steady munching.

When even his wonderful powers failed him in disposing of more solid articles he was still able to manage tarts, and cream puffs, and meringues.

He unfastened several buttons of his waistcoat, and went on valiantly. Even Bunter had to slack down at last.

"Do try this cream puff," urged Bob. "Look at it—lovely Devonshire cream! Do try it, Bunter, old man!"

"Begad, you'll kill him, you know!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"No such luck," said Bob. "Bunter can stand a lot of this. Go it, Billy!"

"I—I can't!" said Bunter faintly. "I—I feel a little queer now. I won't have any more!"

"Not a nice cream-puff, old chap?"

"N-n-n-no!"

"What he wants is some nice underdone fat bacon!" said Squiff.

Bunter turned green at the thought.

"Groooh! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or a dose of cod-liver oil!" said Johnny Bull.

"Wooooooh!" moaned Bunter. "Shut up! You—you're making me feel ill! Oh, dear!"

Bunter sat very silent and still after that, with that deadly stillness sometimes seen in a Channel passenger who fears disaster with the next roll of the vessel. His complexion was changing to various colours—yellow and green and pasty and white and pink—in pale art shades. The strife that was going on inside Bunter, among the many and assorted things he had bolted, must have been deadly.

The juniors watched him, grinning and hopeful. Long before Rookwood was reached, Bunter was leaning back in his seat, silent, still, breathing faintly. He dared not move; he knew what would happen if he moved. He had not only overdone it, but he had overdone it to an alarming extent. It was likely to be many hours before he recovered from that boa-constrictor-like feed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry, as the motor-bus rolled through the old High Street of Coombe.

A little later the gates of Rookwood were sighted.

The motor-bus came to a halt outside the gates, and the Greyfriars party—more than thirty strong—crowded down. Lord Mauleverer tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"Come on, Bunter!"

"D-d-d-don't!"

"What?"

"D-d-d-don't touch me!"

"But we're here," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Groo! Lemme alone!" moaned Bunter.

"But you're here to play cricket," said his captain.

"You don't want to stay in the 'bus all the afternoon, do you?"

"Groo!"

"Come on, old chap!"

"I—I c-c-can't move! Lemme alone, you beast! Grooooooh!"

"Begad," said Lord Mauleverer, descending from the motor-bus, "Bunter don't look much like playin' cricket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He wants to stay in the 'bus, begad! I suppose he can if he likes. They'll put it somewhere, I suppose, till we want it to go back."

"Come on, Bunter!" called out Snoop, who had an inkling of the secret scheme the Famous Five had tacitly arranged in helping Bunter to make that gigantic feed en route. "Bunter, old man, come down!"

Groan!

"Ain't you going to play cricket, Bunter?"

Groan!

"Mauly will have to play a substitute if you don't come, Bunter!"

Groan!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, leave him in the 'bus!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I

shall have to play a substitute, begad! Let me see!" His lordship looked over the eager juniors. They hung upon his words, but he did not catch Wharton's eye. He tapped Bob Cherry on the shoulder. "You feel up to playin', Cherry, dear boy?"

"Do I?" said Bob. "Yes, ass! But it ought to be Wharton. Make it Wharton!"

"I want you, Bob, dear boy," said Lord Mauleverer, unheeding. "Come on! You're in the team now. Begad, you'll want some things!"

"I've brought 'em, fathead!"

"Oh, good! Come on!" yawned his lordship. "This way to stagger humanity on the giddy cricket field!"

The Greyfriars party marched in. Harry Wharton's face was clouded. There were now five good men in the eleven, and Greyfriars would be able to put up some sort of a match. But Wharton's last chance was gone.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mauly's Little Joke!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. greeted the Greyfriars party warmly.

The Rookwood eleven were waiting for them.

As they looked over the Rookwood junior players, it was easy enough for the famous Five to see that they were of a very different calibre from the ineffable Smythe & Co.

Adolphus Smythe and his friends were on the cricket ground, but this time they were only "lookers-on in Vienna," so to speak.

The great Adolphus had an eyeglass in his eye and a disdainful smile upon his face, and he was clad with great elegance, and looked thoroughly nutty. But he was simply a spectator.

The eleven did not look very nutty, but they looked very businesslike. Tommy Dodd, the Rookwood junior captain, was a sturdy youth, and looked like a cricketer. Cook and Doyle, and Towle and Lovell, and Raby and Newcome, and Flynn and the rest were all evidently fit, and in great form. If Lord Mauleverer's original team had played them they would have stood up just long enough for all their wickets to be taken for duck's eggs. That was abundantly clear.

Now, however, the Greyfriars team had a fighting chance. The Remove eleven now included Peter Todd, Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, Squiff, and Vernon-Smith—five of the very best. Bolsover, too, was worth a place in the team. There were only five players who were actually hopeless—Snoop and Stott, and Wun Lung and Fisher T. Fish, and Mauleverer himself.

"You find a few changes in the team here—what?" remarked Tommy Dodd, after he had greeted the Greyfriars juniors.

"A good many," said Bob Cherry. "Every blessed man changed since you played us last time, in fact."

"Every one," assented Tommy Dodd. "The game will be a bit different, too. You've been making some changes, too, Wharton?"

Wharton laughed ruefully.

"Yes, rather!" he assented.

"Yaas, begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "They've made me skipper, you know. They insisted upon it."

"By Jove!" said Tommy Dodd, looking his lordship up and down. Unless appearances were very deceptive, there seemed to be no reason why the Greyfriars juniors should have insisted upon making Mauleverer skipper.

"They fairly ragged me into it," said his lordship amiably. "Didn't you, you chaps?"

"Yes," growled Wharton.

"You see, I'm not much of a cricketer," explained Mauleverer, "but, having taken it on, I'm goin' to do my best."

"Well, nobody can do more than that," said Tommy Dodd, a little puzzled.

"Yes, begad! I got two runs once," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Eh?"

"Two runs!"

"Did you, really?" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "Not all in the same innings, I suppose?"

"Yaas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose you're not a professional—what?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Begad, no!" said his lordship innocently. "But I'm very keen—very keen. You fellows ready to begin?"

"Quite."

"We toss up or something, don't we?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha! Yes."

The Rookwood juniors were looking very naturally surprised. The new Greyfriars captain seemed to bear a resemblance, in some respects, to their own Adolphus.

Harry Wharton & Co. were blushing.

If they had come over to play Smythe & Co., Lord Mauleverer's rank idiocy would not have been out of place. But, under the circumstances, they would have been pleased to see his lordship sink into the earth and disappear.

"Well, well, let's get to business," said Lord Mauleverer briskly. "Are all you fellows ready?"

"Yes, ass!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Good! I'll be ready in a minute." Lord Mauleverer drew Harry Wharton aside, smiling serenely. "You're lookin' rather glum, dear boy."

"Oh, get on!" said Wharton, with a grunt. "You know what I'm looking glum about, you frabjous ass!"

Lord Mauleverer chuckled.

"Yaas, I think I do. But I warned you, didn't I, that if you made me cricket captain I should stick to it—what? You can't blame me."

"Well, I don't blame you," said Harry. "Get on with the washing! You're keeping Rookwood waiting!"

"I told you that I was goin' to do my best for Greyfriars," said his lordship, unheeding.

"Well, do it, then, and don't jaw so much!"

"Begad, you're not polite!" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "But I can't do my best for Greyfriars without speaking a word to you."

"Eh—why not?"

"You see, it occurs to me that the best thing I can do for Greyfriars is to get out of the eleven," said his lordship calmly.

Wharton jumped.

"Mauly, you ass——"

"The fact is, I don't really care so much for the blessed fag of a cricket-match," explained his lordship, yawning portentously. "I'm willin' to look on and cheer; that's quite enough exertion for me. You see, I've been punishin' you for shovin' this on me; keepin' you on tenterhooks, begad, so that you won't ever do it again. See?"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"And if you'd care to captain the team, dear boy——"

"Mauly!"

"I'll resign and give you the job," said Lord Mauleverer lazily. "I shall resign, anyway. Too much fag, you know. It would bore me! Hallo! Wharrer you at?"

Wharton gave the schoolboy earl a tremendous thump on the shoulder, which made his lordship stagger. He uttered a howl of anguish, and Wharton hurried back to the cricketers, his face lighted up.

"It's all serene, you chaps!" he exclaimed. "Mauly was only playing the giddy ox. He's standing out, and I'm captaining the team."

"Hurrah!"

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

"Only four silly idiots left in the team!" exclaimed Bob Cherry joyfully. "Won't the rest of you follow Mauly's noble example, and wedge out?"

"I guess I'm playing in this hyer game."

"Go and eat coke!" said Snoop.

"Rats!" said Stott.

"Me playee like old bootec."

"There's six of us—seven with Bolsover," said Harry Wharton. "Those four silly chumps mean four wickets lost, but it can't be helped. We'll put up a good fight now, anyway."

"Yes, rather! Hurrah!"

And Wharton, greatly relieved in his mind, spun the coin with Tommy Dodd.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Cricket Under Difficulties!

HARRY WHARTON won the toss, and elected to bat first. He intended to open the innings with Squiff; but Fisher T. Fish put on his gloves at once.

"This is up to me, I guess," he remarked.

"Buzz off, fathead!" said Wharton.

"I guess I'm opening the innings!"

"Silly ass!"

"Mauly promised me!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "If you're captain in Mauly's place, you've got to carry out Mauly's arrangements, that's understood."

Wharton compressed his lips. That was, of course, understood. As cricket captain, he would have kicked Fisher T. Fish out of the eleven; but he was bound by the agreement with Lord Mauleverer. It was relief enough to get the slacker of Greyfriars out of the team, but he was bound to keep Mauly's arrangements with the players. He looked inquiringly at the schoolboy earl.

"Is that so, Mauly?" he demanded.

Lord Mauleverer nodded.

"Yaas, dear boy!"

"What did you promise to open the innings with that idiot for?"

"He asked me, you know."

"Oh, you chump!"

"I guess I asked him, because it will encourage the others to see some really good cricket to start with," snapped Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, get on!" growled Wharton. "You take the other end, Squiff. I'll wait till the howling ass is bowled—it will be in the first over, anyway."

"Squiffec no goec," remarked Wun Lung, in his sweet and gentle tones. "Me goec on firstec!"

"You!" howled Squiff.

"Mauly plomise!"

"Oh, you idiot, Mauly! Did you promise that dotty heathen to open the innings?"

"Yaas."

"Oh, you ought to be scragged and boiled in oil!"

"He asked me," explained Lord Mauleverer.

"Look here, Wun-Lung, you wait a bit," said Wharton persuasively. "I can't open the innings with two blithering jabberwocks like you and Fishy, you know!"

"No savvy!"

It was evident that Wun-Lung was determined not to savvy. Wharton gave it up. The field were already in their places, and waiting. The Greyfriars skipper made a sign to the batsmen to go on.

Fisher T. Fish and Wun Lung ambled out to the wickets. The Greyfriars fellows watched them grimly. They did not like to see the innings opened by the two very worst players in the eleven. Fish and Wun Lung would not have attracted so much attention coming in at the tail of the innings. Harry Wharton could understand better, now, the feelings with which Jimmy Silver had watched Smythe & Co. playing his team on an earlier occasion.

The appearance of the little Chinnee at the wicket made the Rookwood crowd grin. Wun Lung did not look much like a cricketer. But it was the Yankee junior who received the first ball of the over. Jimmy Silver went on to bowl.

Fisher T. Fish had a decidedly swanking manner as he went to the wicket. He took up his position there with the look of a fellow who felt that he was monarch of all he surveyed. At last his opportunity had come! He was going to show Greyfriars, and the world generally, what good batting was really like.

Unfortunately for Fisher's programme, what followed was an exhibition not of batting, but of bowling. The ball came down from Jimmy Silver like a bullet from a rifle, and Fisher T. Fish did not even know it was coming till it had knocked his middle stump out of the ground.

"How's that?" sang Jimmy Silver softly.

"Out!" chortled the umpire.

Fisher T. Fish gazed down at his wicket. He was in a

state of great surprise. He did not offer to go out, however.

"Man in!" said Wharton.

"Get off the grass, Fishy!" shouted Bob Cherry, as the Yankee junior did not move from the wicket.

"I guess that doesn't count!" said Fish.

"What?"

"I calculate that was a trial ball."

"Oh, my hat!" said the umpire.

"I guess we'll have that over again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff came to the wicket, and as Fisher T. Fish did not budge, the Australian junior brought his bat into play. It was the simplest method of arguing with Fishy.

"Are you going off?" he demanded.

"Nope!"

"Then I'll help you!"

"Come on, Fishy, you fathead!" shouted Wharton angrily.

The Rookwood fellows were all grinning, which was not surprising under the circumstances.

"I guess—Yaroo! Keep that bat away, you fathead! I tell you—yoop—oh, Jerusalem crickets!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, and he fled for the pavilion, amid howls of laughter from the onlookers.

Squiff took his place.

"I guess I don't call this cricket!" howled Fisher T. Fish, as he came up to the grinning batsmen outside the pavilion. "I guess I call you a set of jays! I guess I haven't had my innings yet! You hear me?"

Bob Cherry let the heavy end of his bat fall on Fishy's toe, and Fishy gave a wild whoop, and staggered away. For the next quarter of an hour or so he was too busy caressing his toe to think of anything else.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver was bowling to Sampson Quincy Ifley Field. Fishy at the wicket had made the Rookwooders grin; but they quickly discovered that Squiff was made of different stuff. The Australian junior stopped ball after ball, but did not go out for runs. He was afraid of what would happen if he started running with Wun Lung at the other end. He did not want to be run out in his first over. But he showed that he could deal with the bowling.

So the score was still blank when the field crossed over. Greyfriars were one down for nil, so far.

Cook bowled the next over. Wun Lung blinked along the pitch with his almond eyes, and made a swipe at the ball. He hit it—which surprised the Greyfriars juniors—and the leather sailed through the air.

Smack!

Jimmy Silver tossed the ball into the air, grinning, and caught it again as it came down straight as a rod.

"How's that?"

"Ha, ha! Out!"

"Man in!" said Wharton, with a nod to Bob Cherry.

Bob Cherry took his bat to the wicket. Wun Lung was still there. He appeared to share Fishy's uncertainty as to when an innings was at an end.

"You comee hele, handsome Bob Chelly?" asked Wun Lung.

"Yes, ass!"

"No loom for two?"

"Oh, you fathead! Get off the grass! You're out!"

"Me wantee play."

"My sainted aunt!" murmured Tommy Dodd, who overheard Wun Lung's innocent remark. "What sort of a giddy team have they brought over? We might as well have let Smythe play this lot."

"You wantee play, do you, you fatheaded heathen?" said Bob Cherry. "If you don't clear off at once, I'll yank you off by your pigtail!"

"Bob Chelly gleat beaste. Me wantee play cicket."

"You're out!" shrieked Bob.

"No wantee goey out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dear," said Bob. "I shall be sorry to have to brain you with my bat, kid, but I shall have to do it if you don't clear off!"

"No wantee cleal off!"

"Then here goes!"

Bob swung up his bat with both hands, and Wun Lung

gave a squeal, and dodged, and fled. He got back to the pavilion in record time, followed by a howl of laughter. There he gave Harry Wharton a reproachful look.

"No playee gamee," he said. "Me wantee play cicket. Me come hele playee cicket. Playee one ballee, goey out. Not good nuff."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You shall go in again presently," chuckled Wharton. "In second innings, you know."

Wun Lung brightened up.

"Me playee oncee mole? Allee light. Me lettee Bob Chelly playee now," he said amicably.

Bob Cherry—who had not waited for Wun Lung's kind permission—was already playing. And loudly as the Rookwood fellows had laughed over the performances of Wung Lung and Fisher T. Fish, they looked serious enough when Bob Cherry and Sampson Quincy Ifley Field began to deal with the bowling in earnest.

The batsmen understood that, if the deficiencies in the team were to be made up for, and an overwhelming defeat avoided, it behoved every fellow to play the game of his life. And Bob and Squiff put their "beef" into it.

The Rookwood bowling was very good. Jimmy Silver and Doyle and Cook shared most of it, Jimmy Silver being the best of the bunch. But the Greyfriars wickets were not easy to take. Runs were beginning to mount up now, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked on with growing satisfaction.

If Lord Mauleverer's weird eleven was beaten, it would not be a walk-over, at any rate. The score stood at forty when Bob Cherry was bowled by Silver, and Peter Todd went in next. Todd was in great form, and he kept the field very busy for a long time.

"Blessed if I catch on to this!" grunted Tommy Dodd, as he came back after fagging in a far corner of the field for the ball. "Some of 'em are hitting like Grace, and some of 'em are blithering idiots! They're a mixed lot."

Squiff fell to a catch by Lovell of Rookwood, and Harry Wharton came in to replace him. Wharton had bad luck, being stumped in a gallant attempt at four. His face was a little clouded as he carried out his bat. Every possible run was wanted now, considering the "passengers" the team had to carry, and Wharton at his best was a tower of strength to his side. But cricket is an uncertain game, and it was no good grumbling.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh joined Todd at the wickets. The score was at seventy when Hurree Singh was caught out. Six down for seventy. Peter Todd was saving the game. Wharton shivered at the bare idea that it might have been Alonzo there instead of Peter. After all, the Removites had much to be thankful for.

Vernon-Smith went on next, and the Bounder of Greyfriars played a great game. Smithy and Todd between them piled up the runs, and it was Todd who was the first to fall. But the score had jumped to eighty-five. Then came Bolsover major's turn.

Harry Wharton watched him anxiously. Bolsover was an average player, but hardly up to such bowling as Jimmy Silver was sending down. He added four runs, and was clean bowled. Snoop came in next. The Bounder had the bowling, and added six for the over.

"All down for ninety-five!" said Bob Cherry.

"We're not all down yet!" growled Stott. "I haven't been on, you silly fathead!"

"Oh, are you going on?" yawned Bob.

"Of course I am, you chump! And Snoop's not down yet!" growled Stott.

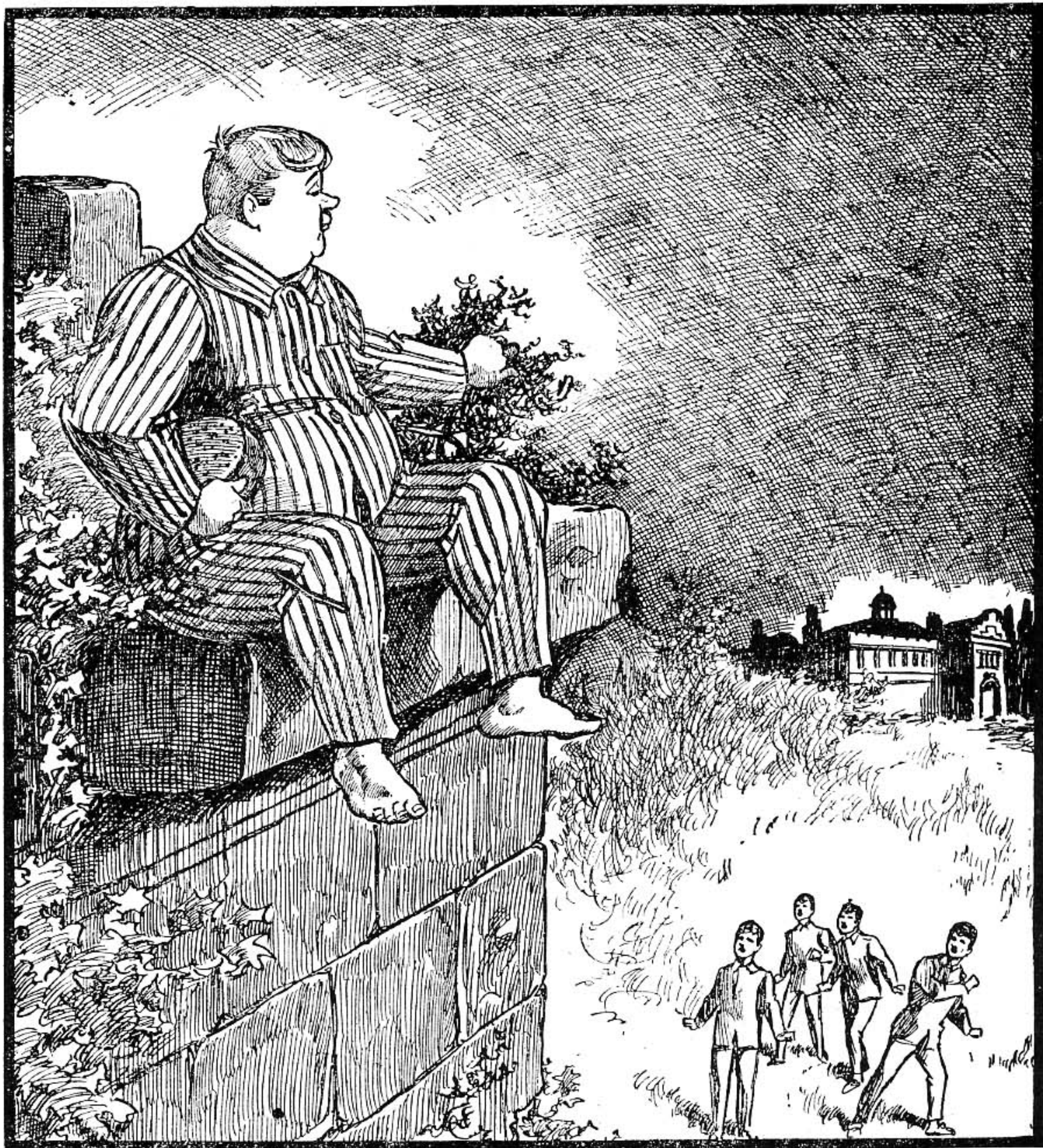
"All down for ninety-five, all the same," said Bob.

Bob Cherry was right, for the first ball knocked Snoop's stumps to the wide, and Stott, who replaced him, was disposed of with another ball. They had scored a duck's egg apiece. Vernon-Smith was not out.

"Begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer, as the innings closed. "Begad, you know, it's just as well come changes were made in my team—what?"

Of the five original members of Mauleverer's eleven, Bolsover had taken four runs, and Fishy, Snoop, Stott, and Wun Lung a duck's egg apiece. It could not be considered a glorious result for them.

But ninety-five for the innings filled Harry Wharton & Co. with satisfaction. It was more than they could



The sleepwalker's position was one of awful peril. He sat on the parapet, with his legs dangling in the ivy, and a sheer drop of fifty feet below him. Harry Wharton set his teeth. "We must help him!" he said quietly. (For this dramatic incident see the Splendid, Long, Complete Story, "BILLY BUNTER'S PERIL!" in "THE DREADNOUGHT." Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

reasonably have expected, and their hopes were high now of pulling the game out of the fire, in spite of the passengers in the team.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Close Finish!

JIMMY SILVER and Tommy Dodd opened the innings for Rookwood. Harry Wharton tossed the ball to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Your level best, Inky," he said.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

"The levelfulness shall be terrific," promised the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I guess you'd better let me bowl," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Bow-wow!"

"Waal, where am I going to field?" growled Fish.

"Anywhere you like so long as you keep out of the way," was his captain's polite reply.

"Look hyer, I guess——"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Where me fieldee?" asked Wun Lung.

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

"Go and stand on your head in the furthest corner you can get into."

"Allee lightee."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, as Wun Lung proceeded to carry out his captain's direction. "Wun Lung, you ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wharton tellee me—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton. "Go into the long field and stay there!"

"Me goey. Wheree longee fieldee?"

"Take him by his pigtail and lead him away, Bob, for goodness' sake!"

Wun Lung and Fisher T. Fish were made to field deep—very deep. Where they fielded did not matter much, so long as they kept out of the way. They were not likely to be much use.

Tommy Dodd received the first over from the dusky Removite of Greyfriars. Tommy Dodd let himself go at the first ball, and it shot back along the pitch like a stone from a catapult. Hurree Singh saw his chance, and he fairly flew.

Smack!

"Oh, well caught!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Caught and bowled Inky! Bravo, Inky!"

"Good old imp of darkness! Hurrah!"

"How is that, my esteemed umpire?" purred the dusky nabob.

Tommy Dodd did not wait to be told that he was out. He walked off rather glumly, and told Lovell to come on.

"Good old Inky!" said Wharton, clapping his dusky chum on the shoulder as they waited for the batsman to come in. "That was ripping! Keep it up!"

"The keepupfulness will not be easy," said the nabob ruefully. "It was a goodful catch, but I have twistfully knocked my esteemed finger! It was like catchfully stopping an esteemed bullet. My hand is hurtfully damaged."

"Oh, what rotten luck!"

"It will be all right presentfully."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. It was cruel luck, for the best bowler in the team to be put off his form like this, when they had so many difficulties to contend against already. But it could not be helped.

Hurree Singh was certainly off his form. The rest of the over was child's play to the batsman, and Lovell knocked it far and wide. And Inky was not put on to bowl again—it was clear that he was not up to bowling. After the first over, the bowling was "whacked out" among Peter Todd, Squiff, and the Bounder.

They did very well, especially the Australian junior, but Inky was missed sorely. The wickets went down to a good allowance of runs—there were no duck's eggs among the Rookwood players. Play was fast—very fast—and the runs piled up. The contrast between Tommy Dodd's team and that of the egregious Smythe was striking.

The Greyfriars team were short-handed in the field, for Fish and Wun Lung were quite useless, and Snoop and Stott almost so. That, of course, made things very much easier for the batsmen. Tommy Dodd & Co. had expected to get a good score, but they had not ventured to expect the hundred and thirty for which the innings closed.

But that was the figure, when Rookwood were all down. It was a figure to make them smile, and to make the visitors look decidedly grim.

After the innings closed there was an adjournment for refreshments, but the interval was not long. Both sides were anxious to finish the match before the light failed, though Rookwood, of course, were quite safe on the result of their first innings.

As the cricketers discussed cake and ginger-pop, Billy Bunter joined them. Bunter had been spending his time in anguish in the motor-bus; but he had recovered at last, and he was hungry. The Owl of the Remove proceeded to do full justice to the Rookwood refreshments, and his indignation knew no bounds at finding that the match was proceeding without him.

"I say, you fellows, I think this is simply rotten!" he told them. "I regard this as sneaking my place in the team—simply sneaking it! I don't call this playing the game, Mauly!"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"You could have waited for me, and made it a single-innings match," said Bunter wrathfully.

The Removites yelled at the idea of making it a single-innings match for the purpose of waiting for William George Bunter. The Owl of the Remove blinked at them angrily.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" he growled. "I suppose you're getting jolly well licked! What's the score—ninety-five against a hundred and thirty? Just what I expected! You might have expected it, too, leaving me out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

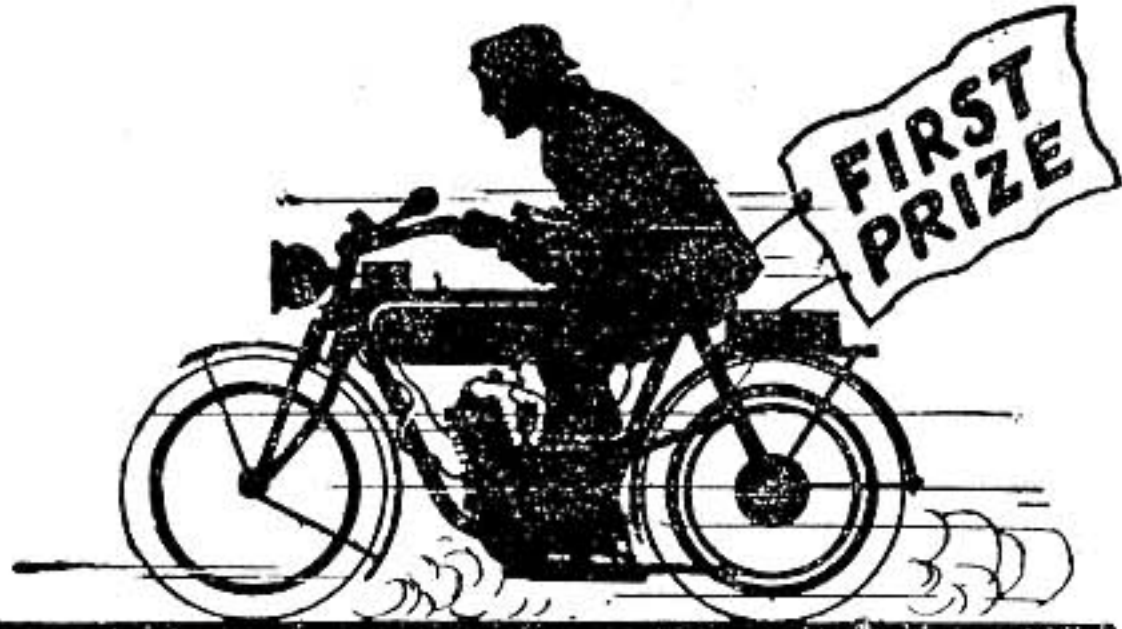
"Oh, pass that cake, and don't cackle!" said Bunter. "The best thing you can do is to arrange for me to play in the second innings. I dare say Dodd won't mind."

"I dare say he wouldn't," grinned Bob Cherry. "I dare say he would jump at it, in fact. But we're not giving him the chance."

And Billy Bunter was left to console himself as best he could with ginger-beer and cake when the Greyfriars side went to bat again.

This time Harry Wharton opened the innings with Squiff. Fisher T. Fish claimed to go in first, but they were fed-up with Fisher T. Fish. The business-end of a bat, jammed forcibly in his ribs, brought Fishy's arguments to a sudden end; and Wun Lung, who had been about to make the same request, decided not to make it.

Wharton was in great form this time. His bad luck in the previous innings had made him more careful. He took no chances, but his hitting was fast and hard. The partnership lasted long, and brought in forty runs before Squiff fell. Bob Cherry and Vernon-Smith and Todd all joined Wharton at the wickets in turn. The captain of the Remove was well set, and even Jimmy Silver could not move him. It began to look as if he would be not



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Squiff had taken a wicket, too, and Rookwood were seven down for 10. It was a sudden collapse that the Rookwooders had not been looking for in the slightest degree. There would be plenty of light to finish the match now! Hurree Singh's comrades almost hugged him. The Indian junior's bowling was saving them, after all, in spite of their many disadvantages.

Then came another turn of fortune's wheel, Jimmy Silver and Lovell being at the wickets, and showing every intention of staying there. Once more the runs were piling up, and Rookwood gave a cheer as the board announced 50. Another wicket fell, and another. Sixty runs! Last man in!

Jimmy Silver was still batting. Raby was at the other end. Jimmy Silver had a wonderful eye for weaknesses in the field, and the Greyfriars field was very weak in places. Like the egg in the story, it was "good in parts." Jimmy Silver did not give those parts a chance. He was hitting out like a Hayward, and the runs were going up—and up. Sixty-nine!

"One more wanted to tie," groaned Bob Cherry, "and that boulder as fresh as a daisy! We nearly did it!"

Down went the ball again to Raby this time, and Raby calmly stopped every ball till the over finished. The field crossed over, and Jimmy Silver had the batting again. Rookwood faces were confident now. Jimmy Silver would do it. Only one run wanted to tie, two to win, and Jimmy Silver not showing a sign of fatigue.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sent the ball down—his very best ball—and there was a smack of the willow and the leather, and the batsmen ran.

But Harry Wharton's eye was on the ball. He took a run, then he backed away, his eye on the ball as it floated down to his upstretched hand. Smack! Every eye was on Wharton, and there was a roar.

"Oh, well caught!"

Wharton held the ball.

"How's that?"

There was no need to ask "how" it was. It was out! Greyfriars Remove, after all their difficulties, their worries, and their troubles, had beaten Rookwood by a single run!

The motor-bus bore a joyous crowd home to Greyfriars in the dusky summer evening. Jimmy Silver & Co. saw them off very cordially. They had hoped to beat Greyfriars with their new team; but it had been a very near thing, after all, though Adolphus Smythe was heard to declare that, if he had been in the team as of old, it would have been a win.

In the motor-bus, as it rolled homeward along the dusky roads under the summer stars, voices were raised in cheery chorus.

Harry Wharton & Co. were rejoicing with an exceeding joy. In spite of Mauly's eleven, they had won the match.

"We really owe it to that chap Silver," said Bob Cherry. "If he hadn't come over and given us the tip we should have sent eleven silly idiots to play them, and—What would have happened then?"

"The whatfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's a jolly good win for us, considering that we had four silly idiots in the team," said Harry.

"I guess—"

"Me tinkee—"

"Hooray for us!" said Bob Cherry.

"Hip-hip-hooray!"

And the loud cheer of the victorious cricketers drowned the voices of the scorers of duck's eggs of The Slacker's Eleven.

THE END.

(Next Monday's "MAGNET" Library will contain another splendid tale of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!" Don't miss this fine yarn on any account; it is one of Frank Richards' best. Order YOUR copy without delay!)

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out, but, with the score at a hundred, he was caught at last.

"That's better!" said Bob, slapping him on the shoulder as he came off, a little breathless. "Looking up for us a bit—what?"

"There's a chance left," said Harry.

"I guess there's a dead cert," snorted Fisher T. Fish. "You wait till I go on!"

"Go on now, and get your duck's egg!" growled Harry. Which Fisher T. Fish promptly proceeded to do.

"I guess I ain't used to this Rookwood bowling," he remarked, as he came off, having completed his "pair of spectacles" for the match. "This ain't at all how I intended it to go."

"Me playee now?" asked Wung Lung.

"Yes, go on! Duck's eggs are cheap to-day!"

The little Chinese repeated his previous handsome score—a big, round nought. Bolsover major made an unexpected stand, however, and he looked very pleased when he came off, after adding ten. Then the innings tailed off, leaving Greyfriars with a hundred and five. Rookwood wanted seventy to equal their score, and they had a whole innings to do it in if the light lasted.

"How's your paw, Inky?" asked Wharton anxiously.

The nabob grinned.

"Right as the esteemed rainfulness," he replied. "The painfulness has completely disappeared, and the esteemed paw is all sereno."

"Oh, good! If you could manage the hat-trick, you black tulip, we might beat them yet," said Harry.

"The tryfulness will be great."

Once more the Greyfriars team went into the field. The match had been so well contested so far, in spite of the "passengers" in the Greyfriars team, that it had taken up time, and it was doubtful if even the long summer day would leave them light enough to finish. Not that Tommy Dodd & Co. considered that it would be necessary to finish. They fully expected to beat Greyfriars now with two or three wickets in hand, at least.

But the uncertainties of the great game of cricket are many.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky bowler, was in his most dangerous mood. And fortune smiled upon him in a way that made the Greyfriars fellows yell with delight. The batting was good, that was certain, but the bowling was better; and Hurree Singh performed the hat-trick in the third over, sending three hapless batsmen out. And in the very next over he caught Tommy Dodd out, to Squiff's bowling. Once more things were looking up for the visitors. But that was not the end. Encouraged by cheers from his comrades, Inky went on to bowl again, and two wickets fell at once to his mighty arm.

It was the turn of the Rookwooders to look serious. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 382.

NEXT MONDAY—

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

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

THE CONCLUDING CHAPTERS OF OUR GRAND SERIAL.



"THE STAR

OF

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THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Sir Richard Battingley, a much-travelled scoundrel, has some mysterious reason for wishing the death of Clive Clare, a handsome and daring circus performer, also known as the King of Equestrians. He therefore engages another villain, named Paul Murdway, to compass Clive Clare's death for the sum of ten thousand pounds.

Paul Murdway follows the circus in its wanderings, and, under the name of Adrian Deering, leagues himself with a member of Cyrano's Circus, named Senor Miguel Gurez, a Mexican dead shot, to bring about Clive's death.

Several plots which the two villains make, however, fail, but they do not give up their intention of injuring Clive when an opportunity occurs.

Clive Clare goes to London, where he is followed by Adrian Deering, and taken prisoner by ruffians in his employ. Deering arranges that he shall be murdered, but luckily Clive escapes, and returns to Cyrano's Circus.

Adrian Deering, being short of money, and anxious to obtain the reward that Sir Richard Battingley has offered him when he shall have removed Clive Clare, goes to the baronet, and says that his wish has been carried out, and that Clive is dead.

But Sir Richard, who happens to know that Clive is still alive, retorts:

"Murdway, what a liar you are!"

(Now go on with the story.)

Set a Thief to catch a Thief.

Ordinarily, Murdway had the utmost control over himself in the presence of the baronet. But at those words he sprang up from his chair as if stung by a thousand scorpions. Every vestige of colour flew from his face, and his mouth went dry as he gasped:

"What do you mean?"

"My meaning is simple," returned Battingley. "You say Clive Clare was killed the night before last. I say—and I know this to be true—that he returned to Cyrano's circus last night, and appeared in public. Therefore, Murdway, I repeat, what a liar you are!"

The deliberate words, the calm manner of absolute conviction with which they were spoken, roused Murdway into fury. His hand flew out and clutched one of the heavy cut-glass decanters which stood on the table. He raised his arm and hurled it with all his force at the head of the baronet.

Battingley ducked, the decanter merely grazing the top of his head, and burying itself among the thick, trailing folds of the heavy curtains, which muffled the sound of its fall.

It all happened in a second, but in that second the baronet had realised that he had to deal with a desperate man. Without a moment's hesitation he leapt forward and closed with his assailant. He bore Murdway to the floor with his rush, and fell uppermost with him.

Then, for a minute, a terrible struggle ensued. Locked

in one another's arms, the two men writhed and rolled, each vainly trying to clutch the other's throat. Suddenly, by an adroit movement, the baronet managed to free his right hand from the desperate clutch of his adversary. He threw himself forward; his fingers flew at Murdway's throat, and his knee planted itself on his chest.

"Now," he hissed, "I have you, you——"

But the words died away in his throat, for at the moment when it seemed as if he had at length obtained the mastery, Sir Richard Battingley fell forward in a huddled heap with a groan.

Quickly Murdway tottered to his feet, poured out a glass of neat spirit, and gulped it down. Then, with a glance at the huddled body on the floor, he stooped, and from near by picked up something which, in the light of the lamp, glittered cruelly. He wiped the blade between the folds of the heavy red curtains. What he wiped from it was of the same colour—something wet and clammy.

He replaced the dagger in its sheath, which he wore beneath his coat; then, with steps like a cat, he moved across the room to a desk.

"There will be money here," he murmured to himself; and forthwith began to pull and wrench at the drawers.

As he did so a step outside reached his ears. He stopped at his task. A knock came at the door.

"The servants! Hang my luck! They mustn't see me."

With a spring he leapt forward, and then, even as the knock was repeated, blew out the lamp. For a moment he stood in the darkness, uncertain what to do.

A movement of the door-handle prompted him. Whatever else happened he must save himself.

The door opened slowly. A footman, visible by the light outside, uttered an exclamation of surprise at finding the room in darkness. Murdway, hidden in the shadows, trembled violently. The footman was advancing into the room, intent on relighting the lamp. Murdway, not three yards from him, heard the soft rub of a match on a box. Without hesitation, he stepped behind the curtains, unlatched the long French windows, softly pushed them open, and leapt down the four steps into the grounds.

The footman had lit the lamp by now, and evidently at once discovered the ghastly body on the floor, which its light revealed, for a terrible shriek from the servant struck on Murdway's ears as he gained the grounds.

In another moment the whole household would be roused. Like a hunted stag Murdway tore away from the place for his life.

Gurez, the Spaniard, Tries to Get His Revenge.

At almost the same hour as Sir Richard Battingley and Paul Murdway had been discussing the fate of Clive Clare, another person had his mind concentrated on the same subject. Life sometimes has such coincidences. The hour was, indeed, the one in which Clive had to give his performance.

On this night, once more with May Ellis, he went through his various feats of equestrianism, to the delight of the vast audience, and to the bitter chagrin of one man.

That man was Miguel Gurez. From his position in the canvas alley-way, leading from the arena to the dressing-tent, the dead shot watched the graceful pair, with hate blazing in his sinister eyes.

As to his own performance, which came on a little later,

he made but a poor show. Never had he muddled his business so badly before; never had he appeared to be so uncertain of aim.

But the worst-performed programme, as well as the best, comes to an end at length, and Gurez duly retired from the ring, with only a faint sound of applause here and there to reward him for his efforts. Of late his popularity as an artiste had been on the wane. The fact had galled him terribly at first, and had added fuel to the fire of his hatred for Clive Clare, whose reception by the public each night seemed to grow warmer and warmer.

But now on this night the absence of applause troubled Gurez but little. He was past it now; his frame of mind was one out of which it would take more than a clapping of hands to shake him. His mind was in a state of bitter moodiness, of violent despair. This Spaniard, this man of Southern blood, evil though he was, yet, in his own way, loved May Ellis. A brutal love, maybe, and he such a man as May Ellis should not think of for a moment; yet he had loved her, and he had lost her. Gurez knew—knew it but too well—that she would never be his, but Clive Clare's. That he read plainly in her eyes each day, each hour, each minute; and the full realisation of it had driven him to madness. Each glance of one for the other hurt Gurez like a sharp sword. He longed to turn his eyes away from them, but they were drawn irresistibly to them, like steel to the magnet. He longed to wipe out the memory of them from his brain.

So the heart of Miguel Gurez was hardened. His blood seemed turned to gall; his brain burned with a fire that his will could not cool.

Miguel Gurez was mad—mad with a strange mixture of love and hate!

Yes, the Spaniard was mad. Heedless now of the public's non-appreciation of his skill—heedless of everything save one grim, all-absorbing purpose.

To-night he did not proceed to change his clothes, on finishing his turn. Instead, he took from out their case a brace of revolvers. Almost affectionately he handled the weapons; then he loaded them in every chamber.

"They'll be coming presently," he murmured—"he and she! They'll come out together, as they have done many a time. They'll start to walk home together, as they have walked many a time. But they'll never walk home together again—never!"

Once more, as he sat upon the rough bench, he fondled the revolvers almost lovingly. Presently he rose from his seat, a stony glare coming into his eyes.

A few yards away, with his back turned to him, stood Clive Clare, waiting for May Ellis to emerge.

"The time draws near!" muttered Gurez to himself.

"Ha, here she is!" May, in her ordinary walking attire, was slowly approaching, buttoning her glove as she came.

"At last!" Miguel Gurez uttered those two words aloud, and, with the deadly revolvers clutched one in each hand, he leapt forward.

At the suddenness of his appearance May Ellis gave a little scream. Clive wheeled round, flushing red with indignation.

"What do you mean by jumping out like that?" he demanded. "Don't you see you have frightened this lady? What are you doing here?"

"I have been waiting for you—and this lady!"

"What do you want of us?" demanded Clive.

"Your lives!" answered the Spaniard hoarsely. "I am going to kill the pair of you!"

As Gurez spoke the words he raised both hands; in each hand was a revolver. The muzzle of one covered Clive Clare; the muzzle of the other covered May Ellis!

Covered by revolvers, and those revolvers in the hands of Miguel Gurez, the Mexican dead shot! Surely death was now inevitable?

Such, at any rate, was the thought that instantly flashed through the minds of Clive Clare and May Ellis. Not the smallest chance did there seem of the Spaniard missing his aim.

To the girl's affrighted senses everything seemed suddenly to go round and round in a mad, terrible whirl. She reeled where she stood, and seemed about to fall.

But in that moment Clive, heedless of his own great peril, sprang forward to support her. Instantly Gurez swung both his hands together, still covering the two. Into his eyes there came a look of demoniacal fury; his teeth ground together savagely. Slowly his forefingers pressed closer upon the triggers. Another moment, and all would be over.

Another moment! But things happen in a moment which almost seem to change the course of Fate. So it was now. For, without the slightest warning, somebody dashed forward from behind, and the outstretched arms of the Spaniard were struck violently down.

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NEXT
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"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

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Two shots rang out almost simultaneously; but the bullets passed harmlessly into the well-worn turf, burying themselves in the earth.

At the double report there rushed to the scene those of Cyrano's artistes who had not gone home. Then it was seen what had happened. For upon the ground, with purple face and writhing body, lay Gurez, helpless as a child in the grasp of Sando, who, with one mighty hand at the Spaniard's throat, was shaking him as a mastiff might shake a rat.

Clive Clare leapt forward.

"Sando," he said, in an agitated voice, "loosen your grip, for Heaven's sake! You will kill him!"

Sando looked up with knitted brows.

"Would he not have killed you," he retorted—"you and Miss May, there? He deserves to die! Let me deal with him!"

"No, Sando. Whatever he may deserve, let it be meted out to him by justice."

"Pah, justice! He may escape that. I tell you, let me deal with the cur!"

He gave the Spaniard another shake as he uttered these words.

But another factor, more potent than Clive, interposed. May Ellis, sufficiently recovered now from her fright, stepped quickly forward.

"Sando," she said gently, "you will release him?—He is mad—he must be mad! He did not know what he was doing! You will release him, won't you, for my sake?"

Such pleading and such a look as accompanied the pleading were more than Sando could resist. With a sigh of reluctance he removed his hand from the throat of the Spaniard.

For a minute the latter lay on the ground, rolling his head from side to side. His eyes seemed bulging from his head, and were filled with a look of frenzied excitement. Slowly he recovered his breath, and raised himself upon his hands to a sitting posture. From side to side he still turned his head, gazing wildly around him.

All of a sudden he caught sight of May Ellis. In an instant he had sprung to his feet, and, with a maniacal cry, rushed towards her with arms uplifted.

Clive, who was by her side, saw him coming, thrust May out of the way, and stood awaiting the fierce onslaught.

But once more Sando was ready. With a couple of bounds he was up with the Spaniard, and, with an iron grip upon his collar, had swung him to the ground.

"There, what did I tell you?" cried the strong man, pinning Gurez down once more. "You see what he would do—he would murder Miss Ellis!"

"Blood!" shrieked out the Spaniard. "Revenge—I will have revenge! Kill, kill—I must kill!"

His eyes rolled about in his head till only the whites of them could be seen, and from the corners of his mouth there trickled a white foam. At the moment his whole frame began to quiver convulsively; his hands clenched, the nails driving themselves into his palms; while his face worked in hideous contortions.

Sando looked on in amazement.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "There's something wrong with him now!"

"Good heavens!" cried Clive, dashing forward. "He's in a fit! We must get water and send for a doctor!"

There was no doubt about it. The medical man, who quickly arrived on the spot, confirmed Clive's words. The Mexican dead-shot was indeed in a fit—a very serious one.

"He must be put to bed at once," the doctor ordered, "and he must be watched very carefully. From my examination, I should say this man has undergone some great mental trouble, of which this attack is the culminating point."

"Will he recover, think you, doctor?" asked Mr. Cyrano.

The doctor looked grave.

"He will recover," he said slowly. "His vitality will ensure his recovery, undoubtedly—that is, his physical recovery. But"—the doctor tapped his forehead solemnly—"it is trouble in another direction one has to fear in these cases."

"You think, then, his mind may be unhinged?" inquired Clive.

The doctor nodded.

"That is one of the great things to fear," he said. "I have seen cases of this sort before, and in the case of a man so physically strong as Senor Gurez it is the mind that invariably goes first. However, careful nursing and unremitting watchfulness may pull him through."

Clive Hears Startling News.

Clive's life had been latterly very eventful, and it was to be even more so yet. For on the very morning after the occurrence just recorded, even while he sat at breakfast, a tele-

gram was brought into his lodgings—sent up from the circus, where it had been addressed.

Filled with wonderment as to whom the telegram could be from, Clive tore open the orange envelope with feverish haste. And if he had wondered before, he was amazed now, for this is what he read:

"Sir Richard Battingley lies very ill at Battingley Hall. Wishes to see you on most urgent and important business. Will you please come immediately?—ANDREW ROWLANDS, Solicitor to Sir Richard."

As he read the strange message, Clive's eyes opened wide. Sir Richard Battingley very ill and wanting to see him! What could it possibly mean? Urgent and important business with him! What business could it possibly be?

In absolute astonishment, Clive sat still for quite a minute. Then he recalled his wandering senses, and sprang up from his chair.

"I must go!" he exclaimed to himself. "But, first of all, I must tell Mr. Cyrano."

The circus proprietor was equally astounded at the message.

"Yes, my boy," he said, "you must go at once, undoubtedly. It must indeed be urgent and important business that makes him send for you like this. You are strangely agitated, my boy," he went on, looking at Clive, who was pale and trembling a little. "If you like, Clive, I'll go to Battingley Hall with you. I may be of some use."

"Thank you, Mr. Cyrano," Clive answered, a strange tremor in his voice. "I shall be very glad if you will come with me. I don't know why, but this telegram has quite unnerved me. I seem to have a presentiment of I don't know what, but of something! Yes; I shall be very glad if you will come with me."

So it was arranged; and as expeditiously as train and carriage could take them, Clive Clare and Mr. Cyrano arrived at Battingley Hall.

They were at once ushered by a servant into the library.

"If you will kindly wait here," said the footman, "I will tell Mr. Rowlands that you have arrived."

A few moments later the solicitor entered and introduced himself.

"I am Mr. Rowlands," he said, "solicitor to the estate. I have to thank you for coming so promptly in reply to my telegram. I had hoped" he went on, with a sigh, "that you would have been here before, but it was, of course, impossible."

"Why, sir," asked Clive, "are we late?"

The solicitor nodded his head gravely.

"Yes," he said—"too late!"

"Sir Richard Battingley is—"

"Dead! He died an hour ago—died peacefully, I am happy to say."

Mr. Rowlands shook his head.

"Had he been suffering for any length of time?" asked Clive.

"No," he answered, "not long. But I see you know nothing of the circumstances. Last night Sir Richard was the victim of a murderous attack."

"Murderous attack?"

"Yes; in this very house, at the hands of a man who for years he had treated as a friend."

"Good heavens!"

And in a few words the solicitor recounted all he knew of the affray in which Paul Murdway, alias Adrian Deering, had been the principal.

"And the murderer—what of him?" Clive queried.

"It is some consolation," Mr. Rowlands said sternly, "to know that Paul Murdway is in custody. He managed to escape from the house, but he was caught and held by one of the park-keepers. He was this morning brought before the local magistrates, and formally remanded, and at present he is safely lodged in the county gaol."

"However," the solicitor went on, "I will not harrow your feelings with details of this dastardly and awful crime. I sent for you on business. I had hoped, as I said, that you would have arrived to hear the dying words of Sir Richard Battingley. Fortunately, the fact that you were not here in time does not very much matter, for I have the dying depositions in writing, signed by the deceased, and duly witnessed. In spite of these sad surroundings, you will, I am sure, permit me to congratulate you, Sir Clive Battingley!"

Clive looked up in surprise. He did not know quite what it meant. Yet there was no doubt that he had heard aright, and that Mr. Rowlands was looking at him and addressing him. What could it—what did it mean?

So dumbfounded was Clive that he could not say a word.

"Ha, of course," the solicitor went on, "you know nothing of your own story. But what I say is perfectly true. You are Sir Clive Battingley!"

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"But," exclaimed Clive, "what does it all mean? How can it be? I—I—my name is Clive Clare."

"Yes, yes!" said Mr. Rowlands. "So you have always been called. But in these papers, are the dying confessions—that is to say, the dying depositions of your late uncle, Sir Richard Battingley."

"Richard Battingley! Sir Richard my uncle!"

"Precisely."

"But I do not understand. Surely there must be some mistake?"

"There is no mistake. It is all so strange to you. That is why you think there is a mistake. But sit down, take these papers, and read them carefully. Then you will understand all."

His brain in a whirl, Clive took the documents which the solicitor handed him. Then, going over towards the window, he sat down on a chair and read.

As he read, his astonishment grew greater and greater. For it was a strange tale that the papers before him revealed—the strangest tale, indeed, that anyone can read—that of their own past, hitherto hidden from their knowledge.

In full detail, the last words of the dead man told Clive of his real parentage and early upbringing. Clive's father—Philip Battingley—the papers clearly showed, had been the eldest son of old Sir Ralph Battingley, the fourth baronet. Sir Ralph's wife had died while yet Philip Battingley was a lad. A year or two after that, Sir Ralph married again, and this second marriage had proved a determining point in the career of Philip.

Always of a somewhat restless, roving disposition, he had, on the morning of his father's second marriage, disappeared no one knew whither. For years nothing was heard of him, and, as far as Sir Ralph ever knew, his eldest son and heir was dead.

Meanwhile another son—Richard Battingley—had been born of the second marriage. In the absence of Philip, young Richard Battingley had been looked upon as the heir of old Sir Ralph. And Richard as he grew up, and learned the story of his half-brother's disappearance, inwardly resolved that, should that half-brother ever turn up again, he would strive might and main to combat his claim to the baronetcy.

From which it will be gathered that Richard had no particular love for the brother whom he had never seen. As a matter of fact, Richard Battingley had no particular love for anybody except himself. Utterly selfish he was, and utterly unscrupulous.

In the course of time, Sir Ralph Battingley died, and Richard Battingley succeeded to the title and estates. But before he so succeeded, and even while Sir Ralph lay upon his death-bed, it had come to the knowledge of Richard that the legal heir—Philip, his half-brother—was still living. For years Philip had been in Australia, eking out a scanty livelihood as a strolling player. Two months after Sir Ralph died—so strangely do these things come about—Philip Battingley returned to England. His first visit was to Battingley Hall, where for the first time he learned of the death of his father, and heard of the existence of a half-brother. Philip's interview with Richard was a strange one. He revealed his identity, only to be scoffed at as an impostor. He was even threatened with the police if he persisted in what Richard Battingley called his preposterous story.

It needed no such threat to send Philip Battingley away again. He was of a peculiar type of mind—absolutely regardless of his social position. He had roved the Colonies, and he was equally satisfied now to rove about England. So for years he had toured the kingdom with all sorts of mountebank shows, under the name of—Clive gasped as he read it—"Philip Maclise."

Philip, during those years of roving, had married—the sole offspring of the marriage being Clive himself. In the course of time, Philip Battingley died, and a few months afterwards his wife had also died. Clive, while still an infant, was thrown on the mercy of the world. As a child, fortune threw him in the way of Adolph Cyrano, who, kindly of heart, had promised the woman in whose charge Clive had been left, to look after the boy, and later on to employ him, should he display any aptitude for the circus business.

Thus had it all come about. Never for long at a time had Sir Richard Battingley lost sight of "Philip Maclise" and his wife; and, when they died, he still—through the agency of paid spies—kept a sharp watch on the lad Clive, who now bore the surname of "Clare."

All these particulars were duly set forth in the dying depositions—or, rather, confession—of Richard Battingley. Furthermore, it stated in full the reasons for his inveterate desire to remove from his path the person of his nephew Clive. That he held his present position—that of fifth baronet—quite illegally, Sir Richard had never for one moment forgotten. That he had been able to bluff easy-going, roving

Philip Battingley out of his claim to the title and estates was ever present in his mind; and, having done so, he was never at peace for an instant, lest, when in due course the son of Philip should have grown up, he should hear of his true position, and put forward a claim to the title. So in Richard Battingley's heart there had grown and grown a desire to clear his path from such a possibility, and hence his perpetual desire had at length found expression in his utterance to Paul Murdway—that he would give ten thousand pounds to anyone who should put Clive Clare out of the way for ever. How Paul Murdway attempted to earn that reward has been told; how the attempt failed, how the villainous act deputed to Murdway had recoiled upon Sir Richard Battingley's own head, is known.

Dying, when the footman who hastily entered the room after the attack had discovered his prostrate body, Sir Richard Battingley had been carried to his bed-room. A night of physical pain and fierce mental torture had followed, and when the morning had come only one thing was present in the dying man's mind—to make what little reparation he could for his past wickedness. A hasty messenger to his solicitor, and the subsequent dispatch of a telegram to Clive had followed. Failing the arrival of Clive, the last dying confession had been signed and witnessed. The rest is known.

A week had passed. The remains of Richard Battingley had been duly interred. At the further end of a green meadow, in which Cyrano's circus was pitched, strolled two people—a lad and a lass. They were Clive Clare and May Ellis.

In the eyes of the lad there was a glad light; in the eyes of the lass something of sadness—a dewiness akin to tears.

"Why do you look so unhappy?" the lad asks.

The lass shakes her head gently and looks away. Clive repeats his question, insisting in unmistakable manner on an answer. At length she gives it.

"I will tell you, Clive," she says. "I ought to be glad, I know—glad at your great good-fortune; but when I remember what we have been to one another in the past, somehow I cannot be other than—no, not sorry, but unhappy."

"But why?"

"Because—because you are now a great and grand gentleman. In the past we have been very happy. But what is to happen now?"

"Why, good heavens, what do you mean? What difference can it make?"

She shakes her head again.

"Every difference," she murmurs—"every difference! You are now a titled gentleman—Sir Clive Battingley. It is as if a great gulf had been fixed between us, for you can never, never again look upon me as an equal."

"May!"

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ONE
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"But, remember, I am only a poor circus girl."

"Better and more to me than the grandest lady in the land!"

Quite a long time has passed now—three or four years. In a house, old-fashioned and comfortable, in Battingley village, less than a mile from Battingley Hall, everything is brightness and gladness. It is the house of Mr. Benjamin Ellis, retired circus artiste, better known in previous years as Professor Durnette, of Cyrano's circus.

His house at the moment is full of people. Most extraordinary and good-natured people they are. For there has been a wedding in Battingley Church to-day, and the bride and bridegroom and all the guests have returned to Mr. Ellis's house to partake of breakfast.

What a sight they are, to be sure, as they sit down at the sumptuous table! There is Roly-Poly, with his great round face simply shining with happiness, and his little twinkling eyes simply brimming over with merriment. Next to him is the lean and lank Bononi, his countenance actually relaxing into a smile to-day as he listens to the jests of his friend Roly and the quaint ventriloquial tricks of Lieutenant Tremaine, who persists in making the viands utter all sorts of complimentary remarks.

And close to the clowns are two big, silent, happy men, with massive chests and limbs, who, in their way, are as happy as anybody. They are Sando and Dando, the herculean twins.

All the rest are there, not forgetting Mr. Adolph Cyrano himself, resplendent in a brand-new silk-faced dress-suit and magnificent diamonds.

Lastly, but of course, not least, the handsome couple who have on this day been made one—Sir Clive and Lady Battingley, erstwhile our old friends Clive Clare and May Ellis.

All is happiness to-day. Every trouble is forgotten; no dark memory mars the sunshine of this day of days. No memory of Paul Murdway—convicted of manslaughter, and now languishing in a penal prison for the rest of his days—comes to their minds; nor any thought of Miguel Gurez, who is confined in an asylum.

There is no room for such gloomy thoughts to-day. The clouds have rolled away. Before them lies the future, tinged with the gold of youthful hopes.

THE END.

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YOUR EDITOR.

MY READERS' PAGE

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.



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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In the grand, long complete story of school life, entitled as above, which Frank Richards sets before my chums next Monday, Fisher T. Fish, the astute Yankee junior, is again to the fore with a scheme for raising capital—not from his schoolfellows this time, but from a ginger-beer manufacturing company of good repute. Billy Bunter being "in the know," it is essential that he should be taken into partnership, though Fish does not relish the prospect of "whacking out" the proceeds with the Owl of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co., realising that the precious partners will probably lay themselves open to a grave charge, frustrate them in their designs by planning an ingenious "jape," which is carried out with singular success. Fish and Bunter actually receive the

"FIFTY POUNDS REWARD"

to which they made claim, with results which the rascals of the Remove had never for a moment anticipated.

SOMETHING BRIGHT!

A pleasing feature of the phenomenal success attained by our halfpenny companion paper, "Chuckles," is the large number of letters I have had from my MAGNET chums in praise of our bright little Saturday journal.

It is evident from this that my readers appreciate a coloured comic so long as it is printed in the best style and boasts only the highest class of contents. The front page, for instance, which is printed by an expensive four-colour process, has been the subject of universal remark, and the excellence of Mr. Tom Wilkinson's funny drawings of Breezy Ben and Dismal Dutchy is generally appreciated. Mr. Wilkinson, of course, is the famous artist with whose work the public has become familiar in the pages of "Punch," "Golf Illustrated," and other high-class journals.

Some good things are fated to go unappreciated, but I am happy to say that "Chuckles" is not one of them. Its enormous and ever-increasing circulation gives ample proof of that.

A SCHOOL TEACHER'S INTERESTING COMMENTS.

It is my pleasure this week to publish a nice letter recently to hand from a Colonial school teacher. I am glad to be able to do this, for those who impart instruction in our schools, both at home and abroad, wield a very large measure of influence with regard to the welfare of "The Magnet" Library and its companion papers.

"32, Gladstone Street,
 "Port Elizabeth,
 "Cape Province.

"Dear Editor,—I have been a reader of the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' for many years, and although I am grown up now—

past twenty, in fact—I still enjoy them as much as ever. They are the finest boys' stories in existence.

"I read with great interest your remarks on the fact that many people object to these papers without having read them.

I spoke to a gentleman the other day, and he remarked that he wanted some nice papers for his boy to read. I promptly recommended the 'Magnet' and 'Gem' as being, beyond reproach, and he said he would get them.

"As regards the grumblers who have recently caused a storm in a teacup in the pages of the 'Gem,' don't heed them. The stories are A 1, and do not need improving. I wish you every success in your work, and shall always think highly of the papers under your control. I am a teacher, and distribute spare copies to my boys sometimes, much to their enjoyment.

"I was pleased to note your photograph in the 'Magnet.' It quite came up to my expectations.

"Again wishing you every success, and assuring you always of my support and loyalty, even when I shall be considered 'much too old' to read your papers.—Believe me,

"Your sincere reader,
 (Miss) **PATTIE D. RAWNSLEY.**"

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Walworth" (London).—I am afraid I cannot do as you suggest, as most of my readers would not favour such a proceeding.

L. W. (Aldershot).—Wharton is a more scientific boxer than Bolsover.

Brian H. Tinker (Liverpool).—There is a good deal in what you say, and I will bear the matter in mind.

"Sunflower" (Goole).—Wharton and Bunter are fifteen years of age.

R. Lyons (Forest Gate).—I can assure you that this paper has never been used as a medium for sneering at those of the Jewish nationality. As a matter of fact, I had a story specially written a year or two ago, featuring a Jewish boy—Monty Newland—as the hero; and this story swept away a good deal of the absurd prejudice which exists against the Jew.

J. Staveley (Bridlington).—Whilst always willing to accommodate my readers as far as possible, I am sorry I have not time to reply to your formidable array of questions. You have asked me fifty-eight, which is certainly the largest number I have ever been confronted with at one sitting. By reading our stories carefully, you will soon become intimate with the boys and masters you name.

C. H. Gates (London, W.).—I was very pleased to hear from you, and hope you will write to me again.

"A Well-Wisher" (Plymouth).—Your suggestion has already been put into effect.

G. G. Wood (Marden).—Much obliged to you for your excellent letter. You will find few tales in modern fiction free from exaggeration, I fancy. Best wishes to yourself and brother.

M. McHugh (Richmond).—Yours is a splendid idea, and shall be duly considered.

"A Schoolboy" (Surrey).—If you will send me your full name and address I shall be pleased to advise you on the two subjects referred to.

R. H. Bocker (Birmingham).—I am afraid you will find it rather difficult to obtain the halfpenny numbers of "The Magnet Library" just now.

The Editor

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