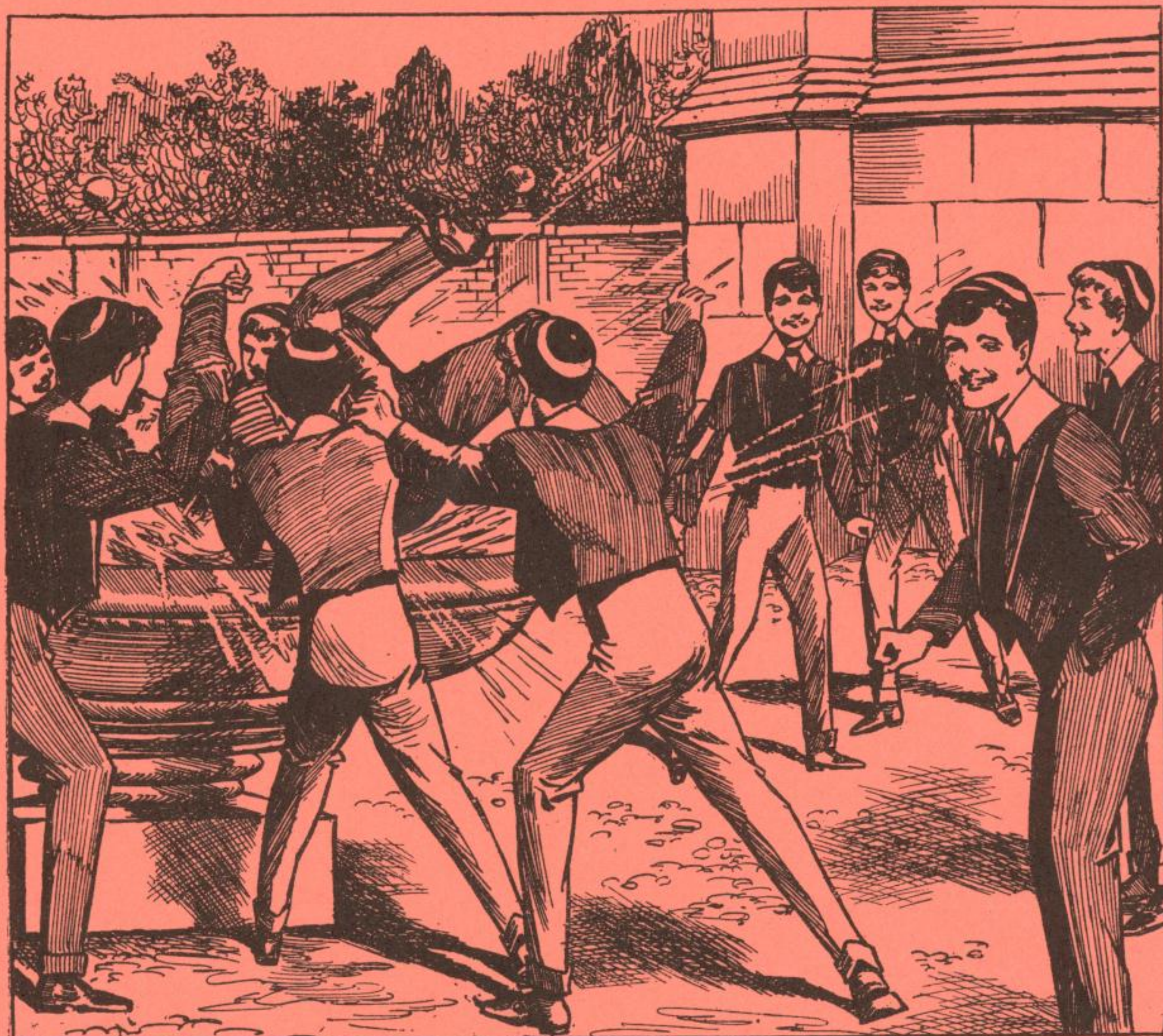


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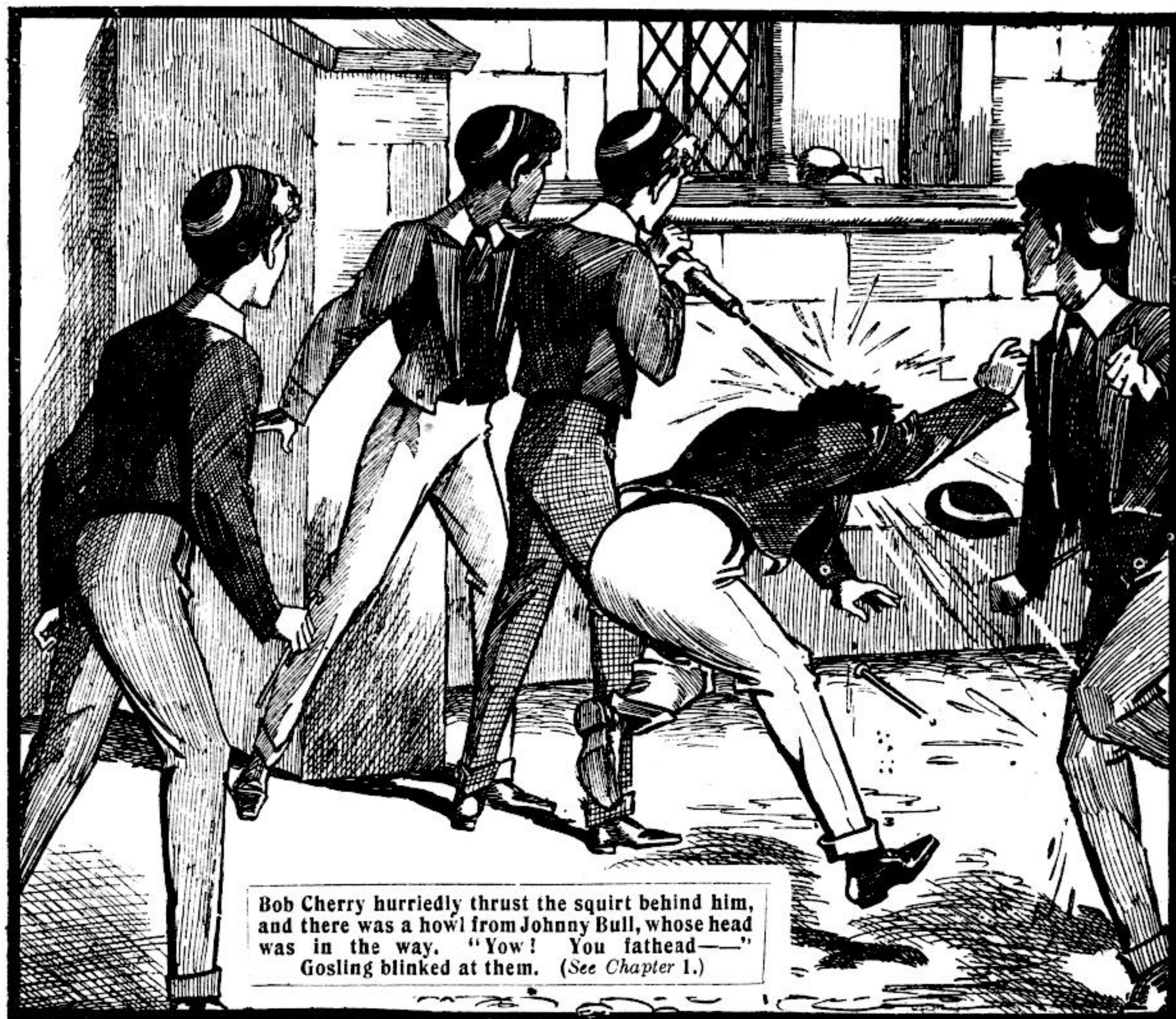


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AT WAR WITH GREYFRIARS!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Bob Cherry hurriedly thrust the squirt behind him,
and there was a howl from Johnny Bull, whose head
was in the way. "Yow! You fathead—"
Gosling blinked at them. (See Chapter 1.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Rotten Idea!

"**S** HUSH!" Bob Cherry spoke in a thrilling whisper. Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull were shushing. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh whispered that the shushfulness was terrific. The five juniors were walking on tiptoe. They might have been Red Indians on the warpath, to judge by their looks at that moment. On tiptoe, and scarcely breathing, they were advancing

towards the open window of the porter's lodge, close to the gates of Greyfriars.

Bob Cherry, who was in the lead, held a large garden-squirt in his hands. The state of his hands showed that the squirt contained red ink. Quite a little sum must have been expended on the contents of that large squirt—unless, indeed, the ink had been borrowed from the cupboard in the Remove Form-room. That was possible.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh, were armed with pea-shooters. They followed Bob in Indian file.

Other fellows, in the Close, spotted their cautious and warlike advance upon the lodge, and grinned.

Within the lodge was Gosling, the porter.

It was after midday—a warm afternoon. It was Gosling's custom to take a nap at such times. Indeed, Gosling's deep snore could often be heard proceeding from the open window of his little sitting-room, as he took his nap in his armchair. Gosling could stand a great deal of sleep.

The snore was silent now, as it happened; but the Famous Five were well acquainted with Gosling's manners and customs. They had no doubt that the porter was in the armchair, inside the window—a splendid target once they got within easy range.

Gosling had offended many times. His doom, as Bob Cherry dramatically put it, had been pronounced. The sentence was about to be executed.

First of all, the contents of the squirt, which would probably awaken Gosling, however deep in slumber. Then a volley of peas. Then a strategic retreat on the part of the Famous Five, before the porter could recognise them.

They did not want the matter reported to the Head. Gosling was over-fond of reporting juniors. They did not wish to give him another opportunity. It was because of that unfortunate predilection for reporting innocent and harmless juniors that sentence had been passed on the crusty old gentleman. A merry junior could not drop a brick down Gosling's chimney, or tip off his hat, or squeeze an orange down his back without being reported. Gosling was conspicuously lacking in a sense of humour.

Hence that warlike and awfully cautious expedition. The chopper was about to come down on Gosling and teach him the error of his ways.

Closer and closer to the open window the five juniors tiptoed.

The "shushfulness," as Hurree Singh described it in his marvellous English, was terrific.

They hardly made a sound.

Bob Cherry reached the window.

"Shush!" he whispered again.

"Don't jaw, old chap," whispered back Johnny Bull.

"You'll wake him."

"Shush, I say!"

"And, I say, don't jaw!"

"Look here——"

"Shut up!" murmured Wharton. "Cut it short, you asses! Is the old bounder there, Bob?"

"Shush!"

Bob Cherry had the last word. Johnny Bull grunted and relapsed into silence. Bob peered through the window into the dusky room.

Gosling was there—in the armchair. His back was turned to the window, as it happened. The bald spot on top of his head, however, was in full view over the top of the chair back.

"Couldn't be better!" murmured Bob. "This is going to surprise him!"

"Shush!" said Johnny Bull, in his turn.

Bob Cherry raised the squirt, and introduced the nozzle cautiously in at the window. His four followers prepared their pea-shooters for the volley, which was to smite Gosling as he jumped up under the sudden infliction of the ink. Really, the scheme showed that the strategic abilities of the Famous Five were highly developed.

Bob Cherry was on the point of letting fly, when he suddenly paused.

A queer sound had come from Gosling. It was not a snore, such as might have been expected, but a peculiar grunt, which sounded something like a sob. Then Gosling's voice was heard—talking to himself apparently. "Poor Jim! Poor little Jim! Them rotten Huns! Oh, dear!"

Bob Cherry lowered the squirt.

"Go ahead!" whispered Johnny Bull. "Suppose he wakes——"

"He isn't asleep."

"Let fly all the same, and chance it!"

"Hold on!" said Bob.

"What the dooce——"

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"There's something wrong with Gosling," muttered Bob. "Listen to him!"

"Too much gin and water, perhaps," murmured Nugent.

"No, it isn't that. Listen!"

The five juniors, puzzled and curious, crowded round the window. Gosling turned his head at the same moment, and saw them! They stared at him, and he blinked at them. There were tears in his eyes!

Bob Cherry hurriedly thrust the squirt behind him. There was a howl from Johnny Bull, whose head was in the way.

"Yow! You fathead——"

Gosling blinked at them. On any other occasion Gosling would certainly have guessed that the juniors were there for a "jape," and he would have been wrathful. But he was not wrathful now. A strange change had come over the crusty old school-porter.

"Anything the matter, Gossy?" asked Bob.

"Poor old Jim!" mumbled Gosling.

"We—we were just looking in to see you," said Harry Wharton, feeling that their presence there required some explanation. "N-n-nice afternoon, Gosling!"

"You—you haven't had your usual nap, old chap," said Nugent.

"The napfulness is usually terrific, likewise the snorefulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Keep that blessed ink off my trousers, you silly fat-head!" came Johnny Bull's voice, in infuriated tones. "Ain't you satisfied with nearly braining me, you howling jabberwock?"

"Blow your trousers!" said Bob Cherry. "Gosling, old man, what's the matter?"

All hostile intent was banished now. The pea-shooters had vanished into pockets, peas were ejected from mouths with great haste, and as surreptitiously as possible. Bob Cherry could not pocket the garden-squirt, and it was leaking red ink over everything within reach—including Johnny Bull's trousers.

"It's my nevvvy," mumbled Gosling.

"Your nephew?" asked Wharton.

"My Nevvvy Jim, in the East Kents," said Gosling. "They've sent 'im 'ome to 'orspital, and they reckon 'is leg will be a goner. This is the fust I've 'eard of it—this 'ere letter." Gosling held up a letter, which he had evidently been reading instead of taking his usual afternoon nap. "And wot I says is this 'ere, I wish I wasn't too old to 'ave a go at them Huns."

Bob Cherry pitched the squirt as far as his powerful arm would pitch it. He had been about to ink Gosling—and Gosling's nephew had just come home wounded from fighting the Germans! Bob's tender heart was full of remorse.

"I say, Gossy, old chap, I'm sorry!" he stammered. "That's rotten news. But—but he isn't in danger, I hope?"

"Only his leg," said Gosling. "Jim's tough. But fancy young Jim 'oppin' about on one leg the rest of 'is life. Jest because Kaiser Bill is cracked! I've got to go and see 'im. I better go and ask the 'Ead."

Gosling stumbled out of the lodge, the letter crumpled in his hand, and started for the School House. Bob Cherry blinked at his chums.

"Well, you fatheads?" he said sternly.

"Well?" said Wharton.

"I hope you're jolly well ashamed of yourselves!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Gosling isn't a bad sort at all," said Bob virtuously. "He's got a lot of good qualities. And if he reports us, that's what he's for, isn't it? As for inking him, and pea-shooting him, I really think you ought to blush for yourselves."

"Why, you cheeky ass!" roared Johnny Bull wrathfully. "It was your idea."

"The esteemed fat-headed Bob proposed the whole thing," said Hurree Singh indignantly.

"Ahem! So I did!" admitted Bob. "But it was a rotten idea, and I think——"

"Agreed that it was a rotten idea," said Harry Wharton. "Of course, we couldn't know about Gossy's



"Look out for your nappers!" muttered Johnny Bull. Whiz! "Yaroooh!" roared Bob Cherry, as the whizzing turf caught him on the back of the head. (See Chapter 2.)

nephew, but it was a rotten idea all the same, and under the circumstances we can't do less than bump the silly idiot who proposed inking Gossy."

"Hear, hear!"

"Here, hold on!" roared Bob Cherry. "Look here—Yah! Leggo! Yah! Yooop!"

Bump!

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, scissors!"

Bump!

"Yaroooop!"

Four juniors walked away, and Bob Cherry was left sitting on the ground, trying to get his second wind.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Ponsonby Chips In!

THE news spread quickly. Ere long all Greyfriars knew that Gosling, the porter, had received news of his nephew at the front, and that Nephew Jim was seriously hurt. The sympathy that was shown towards Gosling was surprising, considering the way the juniors had generally regarded the crusty old gentleman. Gosling had an uncertain temper, and an inveterate habit of reporting anybody for anything, and naturally those qualities did not make him popular. But bygones were bygones now. Everybody discovered all at once that

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Gossy wasn't such a bad old stick after all, and indeed that he was, considered carefully and judiciously, quite a good sort. The fact that his nephew had been wounded at the front, and that Gosling was cut up about it, covered a multitude of sins.

Gosling had been seen to go into the Head's study, with his letter in his hand. There was no doubt, of course, that he would get leave away from the school to visit the hospital where Nephew Jim was lying, and that he would be allowed to stay away as long as he liked. The prospect of his absence for a week or two did not add to the general concern. The juniors were likely to bear his absence with great equanimity.

"I say, you fellows, this is rotten, you know," Billy Bunter informed the Famous Five. "I suppose you've heard—"

"We've heard," said Nugent, "before you this time, Bunter."

"It's rough on old Gossy," said Bunter. "He's cut up. I've been thinking, you fellows, that if we could do anything to console him a bit—"

"You've been thinking of that?" said Harry Wharton. "What's come over you?"

"Oh, really, Wharton"—Bunter blinked reproachfully at the captain of the Remove through his big glasses—"I can think of others; you know! I'm not like some

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"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

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Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

chaps. Look here, I think a handsome tip might make Gossy feel a bit better—say a quid."

"I don't suppose he's thinking much about tips just now," said Wharton gruffly.

"Well, he's going to have an expensive journey," said Bunter. "Suppose we raise a handsome little gratuity, and present it to him before he goes. That's my idea. I'm willing to take charge of the money."

"You fat spoofer!"

Bunter held out his cap.

"Now, shove in your bobs and tanners, and I'll go round and make up the quid," he said. "If you fellows set the example, the other chaps will shell out."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Oh, really, Bull, you might put something in the hat!" urged Bunter. "Don't be mean, you know. Look here—Leggo, you beast! Yow!"

Bunter's cap was seized, and Bunter was seized, and the cap was stuffed down his back. The Famous Five left him making wild efforts to extract it. Bunter's idea had not caught on in the least, and the tuckshop had lost a good customer.

Gosling came out of the house, and walked away towards his lodge. His crusty old face was pale and troubled.

"When are you going, Gossy?" asked Wharton.

"Immejit, Master Wharton. The 'Ead has hordered the trap for me to the station," said Gosling. "Which I've got leave as long as I like. Dr. Locke is a werry kind gent. I may be away a week or two. I'm goin' to the station now."

"Let us know about Jim," said Nugent.

"Thank you, Master Nugent, I will."

"We'll see you off, Gossy," said Wharton. "Come and run out the bikes, you chaps."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five rushed to the bicycle shed, and they wheeled out their machines as Gosling mounted into the trap, with a bag beside him, and a worried look on his face. Seeing Gosling off was a remarkably good idea, the juniors thought, and certainly it was a remarkable change in their attitude towards him, and not at all in keeping with their late hostile intentions. But the chums of the Remove had repented of those intentions, as the bumping of Bob Cherry had testified. Bob was still feeling the effects of his chums' repentance.

The trap bowled away down the lane, and the five cyclists kept it company. At the school gates a crowd of fellows waved good-bye to Gosling, and shouted out good wishes. The many reports to the Head and the Form-master had been forgotten; there was nothing but kindness now for old Gossy as he started off to visit his soldier nephew in hospital. Gosling seemed surprised himself at his sudden popularity, and he gave the Famous Five several puzzled glances. Indeed, his look hinted that he half suspected that that escort to the station portended a "jape." But nothing was further from the thoughts of the chums of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, as the trap and its escort turned the bend in the lane. "Highcliffe cads!"

Four juniors in Etons and shining toppers were sauntering along the lane; they were Ponsonby & Co., of Highcliffe School. They stopped, and stared at the trap, and at the five cyclists. Ponsonby stooped as the riders swept by, and caught up a thick turf from the grassy bank beside the road.

The cyclists ducked involuntarily; they had no time to stop, if they were to see Gosling off, and they could not deal with the Highcliffians just then.

"Look out for your nappers!" muttered Johnny Bull.

Whiz!

"Yaroooh!" roared Bob Cherry, as the whizzing turf caught him on the back of the head.

Bob pitched forward over his handle-bars, and his machine curled up. The Remove bumped into the road, and the other riders swerved just in time to avoid piling on him.

Bob Cherry staggered to his feet, red with wrath.

He was bruised and badly shaken, and he might have been badly hurt. Ponsonby never stopped to consider

whether a trick was dangerous to play when it was against his old foes of Greyfriars.

"You cad!" yelled Bob, shaking his fist at the Highcliffe fellows. "I'll—"

He rushed along the lane at the four Highcliffians. Ponsonby & Co. started off at a run. They were not looking for a "scrap."

Wharton jumped down.

"Hold on, Bob!" he shouted.

"I'm going to smash him!" roared Bob.

"Hold on; we shall be late!"

Bob paused. The Highcliffians were in full flight, and they had taken to a footpath across the fields, where the bikes could not follow. Bob Cherry walked back to his bicycle.

"All serene!" he said. "I'll smash him another time! The cowardly cad; he might have broken my neck. All serene; get on!"

Bob picked up his machine, and straightened a bent pedal, and mounted. The trap had almost disappeared towards the village, but the cyclists put on a spurt, and overtook it as it drove into Friardale. Bob Cherry grunted as he rode; he was bruised, and had several aches and pains from his fall.

The trap stopped outside the little station, and Gosling dismounted. He shook hands with the coachman, and carried his bag in. But Harry Wharton took the bag out of his hands.

"I'm carrying this, Gossy," he said cheerily.

"Oh, Master Wharton!" said Gosling, almost overcome.

"What's the train?" asked Nugent.

"One-fifty."

"Five minutes," said Johnny Bull. "Lots of time. Gimme your umbrella, old chap."

"Oh, Master Bull!"

"Put this toffee in your pocket, Gossy!"

"Oh, Master Nugent!"

Surrounded by his five kind friends, Gosling walked on the platform. He had put the toffee in his pocket, though whether an elderly gentleman like Gosling was likely to eat toffee on his journey was doubtful.

The train came in, and Gosling stepped into a carriage, and Wharton handed in his bag, and Johnny Bull his umbrella. Gosling blinked at them.

"Don't forget to let us know how Jim gets on," said Harry. "Give us your flipper, old scout!"

The Famous Five shook hands all round with Gosling, and then the porter slammed the door. Gosling, greatly astonished, and somewhat moved, waved his hand to the juniors on the platform, and they waved their caps as the train ran out of the station.

"Jolly good sort, old Gossy!" said Wharton, as they walked away towards the exit.

"The goodness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh heartily.

"And only an hour ago that fathead was going to ink him!" said Johnny Bull indignantly.

"You were going to pea-shoot him, you mean," said Bob Cherry warmly.

"Peace, my infants!" said Nugent. "We've seen Gossy off, and now we've got time to look after Ponsonby & Co. Did Pon hurt you, Bob?"

Bob rubbed the back of his head.

"Do you think he could bung a chunk of the earth on the back of my head, and pitch me off my bike, without hurting me?" he demanded.

"It was a dirty trick," said Wharton. "Look here, we've got time to catch them. They're walking, and we've got bikes—"

"They've taken to the fields, the rotters!"

"They'll have to come out into the road to get to Highcliffe. They've got to get in for afternoon lessons. We can go by the road and head them off. Ride like thunder!"

"Good!"

A minute more, and the Famous Five were astride their machines, and riding away at a rate that would certainly have caused their names to be taken, if Police-Constable Tozer had been outside the Red Cow instead of inside.

PONSONBY & Co. sauntered towards the gates of Highcliffe, in a cheery mood.

They felt that they had got a little of their "own" back on the Removites of Greyfriars, and they had escaped scot-free, so they had cause for satisfaction.

"By gad, I think we did them that time!" Ponsonby remarked. "It's one to the account we owe them, for that rotten jape on us, when they sent Wibley over got up as our Form-master. We've never settled with them for that; and those cads Courtenay and De Courcy have been cacklin' about it ever since."

"We never do get our own back on them," grunted Gadsby. "The fact is, Pon, you ought to think of somethin'. We're always gettin' it in the neck; and you can't think of anythin' but slingin' a chunk of turf at a fellow when he's not lookin'!"

"Look here, Gaddy——"

"Well, it gave that beast Cherry a tumble, anyway," said Monson. "Hallo! My only hat! Here come the cads!"

There was a whirring of bicycles on the road. Five cyclists came into view, riding as if for a wager. The Highcliffians stared at them for a moment, and then broke into a run.

But they had a couple of hundred yards to cover, to get to the gates of Highcliffe. And the cyclists were coming on at a whizzing speed.

"Run for it!" panted Vavasour.

"Put it on, by gad!"

The four Highcliffians ran their hardest. But the cyclists gained hand-over-fist. It was only too plain that the fugitives would not reach the gates without being overtaken.

Two juniors were standing in the gateway, looking out—Courtenay and De Courcy, of the Fourth Form. They watched the chase with great interest.

"Pon's been up to something, Caterpillar," Courtenay remarked. "They're Greyfriars chaps after them."

"Pon's always lookin' for trouble, and findin' it," yawned the Caterpillar. "I suppose we're not called upon to chip in, are we? Those Greyfriars chaps are friends of yours."

Courtenay shook his head.

"Pon can look after himself," he said. "I suppose he's been playing some dirty trick as usual."

"Yaas," assented the Caterpillar; "and it's an awful fag to scrap on a warm afternoon. We'll look on and see fair play. I'm a regular dab at lookin' on at anythin'."

A dozen yards separated Ponsonby & Co. from the gates, when the cyclists swept past them and got ahead. Harry Wharton & Co. jumped off their machines, letting them spin into the hedge, and lined up across the road, cutting off the escape of the heroes of Highcliffe. Ponsonby and Monson and Gadsby and Vavasour came to a breathless halt.

"Let us pass, you rotters!" shouted Ponsonby.

"Not just yet," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "There's time to give you a licking before afternoon lessons. You pitched me off my bike, you cad, and you might have broken my leg——"

"I wish I had!" growled Ponsonby.

"Absolutely!" murmured Vavasour.

"Well, now you're going to answer for it. Put up your hands!"

Ponsonby backed away.

"Look here, I'm not goin' to scrap with you——" he began.

"Your mistake—you are!" said Bob Cheerily. "I'm going to wipe up the road with you, my infant!"

"Rush them!" said Ponsonby desperately.

The Highcliffians made a rush. But it was not easy to pass the Famous Five. They collared the Highcliffe juniors at once, and in a few seconds, Ponsonby & Co. were on their backs in the dust, and four Greyfriars fellows were sitting on them.

"Rescue!" yelled Ponsonby, as the Caterpillar and Courtenay came out into the road. "Lend us a hand, you rotters!"

"Back up your own school, you cads!" hooted Gadsby.

"Rescue!" mumbled Vavasour. "Oh, dear! Rescue, dear boys!"

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MONDAY—

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

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The Caterpillar shook his head seriously.

"That depends," he replied. "If this is a Greyfriars versus Highcliffe row, we're prepared to chip in, and dust up the road with these chaps in the best style."

"Oh, are you?" bellowed Bob Cherry. "Just try it, you duffer!"

The Caterpillar waved his hand.

"Calm yourself, my infant. Allow me to finish. I was goin' on to say, that if Pon has been playin' a dirty trick—as usual—we don't feel called upon to chip in. So, you see, it depends. Gentlemen, you can regard me as president of the court, and state your case. Is this a school rag?"

"Not exactly," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Ponsonby knocked Bob off his bike with a chunk of turf. It was a cowardly trick."

"Yaas, I thought it was something of the sort," said the Caterpillar. "Under the cires, Pon, we cannot interfere. But I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll stand by and see fair play. We'll watch you while you mop up the county with Bob Cherry. I can see that the fightin' blood of the Ponsonbys is boilin' in your veins; I can tell that by the giddy gleam in your eye. Go for him, and make mincemeat of him, and we'll stand by and cheer!"

"Let me gerrup, you rotter!" yelled Ponsonby.

Bob Cherry got off Ponsonby's chest, grasped his collar, and dragged him to his feet.

"There you are!" he said. "I'm ready!"

"I—I——"

"Go it, Pon," encouraged the Caterpillar. "The bell will be goin' for lessons soon, and you haven't much time to mop up the county with him."

"You silly ass——"

"I'll hold your jacket, Pon. Courtenay will mind your eyeglass. Both of us will cheer. Go it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby had not the slightest desire to "go it"; but he had no choice about the matter; for Bob Cherry was already "going it." His big fists were hitting out, and Ponsonby put up his hands in defence. They were soon going it hammer and tongs, and the other fellows looked on in a ring.

"Go it, Pon!" chirruped the Caterpillar. "That's one for his nose—and, by gad, that's one for yours! Mind your eye! There, I warned you! You'll get knocked out in next to no time at this rate. Man down, by gad!"

Bump!

Ponsonby descended into the road with a heavy concussion. He did not get up again. He lay and gasped, and blinked at Bob Cherry.

"Want any more?" asked Bob politely.

"Yow-ow-ow!" was Ponsonby's reply.

"The gentleman doesn't want any more," said the Caterpillar. "He is satisfied. Ponsonby isn't a hog or a Hun, and he knows when he's had enough. But here's Gaddy, thirstin' for battle. Go it, Gaddy!"

"Mind your own business, you silly idiot!" snarled Gadsby.

"Well, here's Monson, ragin' for gore——"

"Shut up, you cacklin' ass!"

"And here's Vavasour, with the fightin' blood of his ancestors at boilin' point. Go it, Vav! Think of your ancestors who came over with Rothschild—I mean with the Conqueror. Go in and win!"

Vavasour edged away. Not one of the nuts of Highcliffe showed any desire to take the place of their fallen leader. Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"Let's get back," he said; "we're late for lessons, anyway. Ta-ta, Ponsonby! Always at your service when you're looking for a scrap!"

Harry Wharton & Co. mounted their bicycles and rode away towards Greyfriars. Then Ponsonby picked himself up. He scowled furiously at the Caterpillar and Courtenay, and tramped away to the school gates, followed by his friends. The Caterpillar sighed.

"Nothin' doin'," he remarked. "The noble nuts seem to be in a sad and moultin' state, Franky. Highcliffe is goin' to the giddy bow-wows. The glory has departed from the House of Israel, as the poet remarks."

"There's the bell," said Courtenay, laughing.

The Caterpillar groaned.

"Lessons again! What a life!"

And the Caterpillar lounged in at the gates. Meanwhile, the Famous Five were riding hard back to Greyfriars. They were satisfied with the punishment inflicted upon Penonby; but now they had to deal with Mr. Quelch. They arrived at the school a quarter of an hour late for lessons, and found themselves the richer by two hundred lines each.

"Never mind; it was worth it," said Bob Cherry.

And his chums agreed, somewhat doubtfully, that it was.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Too Generous!

GOSLING was gone, and the heroes of the Lower School at Greyfriars missed him.

But it was, as Bob Cherry put it, a good miss.

It was quite a relief not to be reported for a while.

On the following day there was news from Gosling. His nephew Jim was progressing as well as could be expected, in hospital, and Gosling was staying away for a week at least, perhaps longer. The juniors were glad to hear that Jim was going on well, and they were not sorry to hear that Gosling was staying away for a week, perhaps longer. They sympathised with him, but they were not in a hurry for his return to the school.

But it was evident that somebody would be required to fill Gosling's place while he was away, especially as the date of his return was uncertain. Mr. Mumble, the gardener, and John, the coachman, were "whacking out" his duties for the nonce, but a temporary porter was required. The juniors did not give much thought to the matter—as Bob Cherry declared, they would deal with the beast when he came. Billy Bunter, however, was soon in possession of information on the subject—Bunter had marvellous gifts for acquiring information.

"I say, you fellows, the Head's advertising for a new porter," Bunter announced in the common-room.

"Well, let him rip," said Bob Cherry. "Have you seen the advertisement, tubby?"

"How could I see it when it isn't in yet?" said Bunter. "It comes out in the 'Friardale Gazette' to-morrow."

"How do you know?" demanded Peter Todd.

"I happened to hear——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I keep my ears open," said Bunter. "I happened to hear the Head ask Wingate to call in at the 'Gazette' office with the advertisement. I wonder what kind of beast we shall get next? It's a good deal better without a porter. Old Mumble never takes your name if you're in late. As for that brute Gosling——"

"Shut up!" said Squiff. "Nobody's allowed to call Gossy names now."

"Oh, really, Field! Of course, I feel very much for Gosling," said Bunter. "I had an idea of giving him a handsome honorarium when he left, but the other fellows were too mean to back me up. I was going to contribute the whole of my postal-order."

"Has it come?" grinned Wibley.

"It hasn't actually arrived yet," admitted Bunter. "There's some delay in the post, owing to the war, I suppose. But it's coming. Now, I've got a jolly good idea, if you fellows will listen to me."

"Thanks! We won't!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy! It's a ripping idea!" said Bunter impressively. "I suppose you fellows are patriotic. Now, think of Gossy's nephew in hospital, and poor old Gossy watching over him, you know, and being hustled by the nurses, and all that. It's awfully sad!"

"The sadfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But what is the esteemed little game, Bunter?"

"There isn't any little game, you inky duffer!" said Bunter indignantly. "I'm thinking of them, you know, and my—my heart bleeds for them."

"Great Scott!"

"Some fellows have feelings—tender feelings! Now, you chaps have got some tin you're going to spend on your silly amateur theatricals," said Bunter. "I know you've handed Wibley a quid to spend in wigs and things. I suggest that that quid should be handed over to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me finish, you cackling chumps! Handed over to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Handed over to me," roared Bunter, "and I will lay it out——"

"No doubt about that!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But you're not laying out the funds of the Dramatic Society, my fat tulip!"

"Lay it out in ripping tuck, and send it to Gossy's nephew!" yelled Bunter. "That's the idea!"

"It wouldn't get much further than an idea, I think," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Wait till your postal-order comes, Billy."

"Well, there may be some delay about that," said Bunter.

"The delayfulness may be terrific," agreed Hurree Singh. "But perhapsfully it will come in time to swell the esteemed old-age pension for Gossy's august nephew."

"If you fellows won't back me up, I shall have to handle it by myself," said Bunter. "I shall sell some of my valuable things, and raise the cash that way. And I hope you will all be properly ashamed of yourselves."

"So we will—when we see you send the parcel off," said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter snorted, and rolled away discontentedly. If Bunter had raised a subscription for Gossy's nephew, there was no doubt that it would have been expended in ripping tuck—but there was a very great doubt whether the tuck would ever have reached Nephew Jim. Billy Bunter's ideas on the subject of "meum and tuum" were decidedly vague.

By this time the Owl of the Remove seemed to be in earnest. Perhaps the fact that funds were short in the study spurred him on. There was no tea in No. 7 that day unless the wind was raised—Peter Todd and Alonzo and Tom Dutton all being short of tin, and William George Bunter in his usual impecunious state. Hence Bunter's deep concern for Gossy's nephew.

Bunter bore down on the Famous Five as they came away from cricket practice. He held a pocket-knife in his hand. It was quite a handsome knife, with three blades and a corkscrew and a tin-opener and a screw-driver. Bunter held it up for inspection.

"What offers?" he asked.

"Selling the knife?" asked Bob Cherry, puzzled.

"Yes," said Bunter sadly. "It's a birthday present, but I felt bound to part with it—for the sake of Gossy's nephew, you know. I feel that we ought to send him something. Will you give me half-a-quid for this knife, Wharton?"

"No jolly fear!"

"You can have it for seven-and-six, Bob."

"Well, that's a generous offer for you," said Bob Cherry. "It must really be worth five or six shillings."

"Ahem! I'll take six shillings."

"Not from me, my son. I'm not rolling in shillings."

"If you like to give me five bob for it, Bull——"

Johnny Bull grunted.

"I'll give you six, if you want to sell it—it's worth six. But don't yarn at me about Gossy's nephew—I know you."

"Gimme the six!" said Bunter immediately. "I say, Bull, you're getting a big bargain in that knife—a birthday present, too! Sure you wouldn't like to make it seven-and-six?"

"Quite sure."

"I say, Inky——"

"The surefulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!"

Bunter slipped the six shillings into his pocket. Johnny Bull took the knife.

"Don't tell Toddy I've sold it," said Bunter.

"Eh? Why not?"

"Well, it was a birthday present, you know, and

Toddy wouldn't approve of my parting with it, you see."

Billy Bunter rolled away to the tuck-shop. The six shillings passed over the counter in a lump, and Bunter's jaws were soon busy.

Harry Wharton & Co. went into No. 1 Study to tea. They were at tea when Peter Todd looked in.

"Come and have a sardine," said Nugent hospitably.

"I've had tea in Hall," said Peter. "We're all stony to-day. I looked in to ask you if you'd seen a knife."

"A—a which?"

"A pocket-knife."

"A—a—a pocket-knife?" repeated Johnny Bull.

"Yes. I've lost mine, somehow," said Peter. "I could swear that I left it on the study mantelpiece, but it's disappeared. I want to find it, as it was a present from Uncle Benjamin—a birthday present."

"A birthday present?" howled Johnny Bull.

"Yes! What's the matter?"

Johnny Bull drew his new purchase from his pocket.

"Anything like that?" he asked.

"Yes; that's the knife," said Peter, in astonishment.

"Where did you find it?"

"I didn't find it—I bought it from Bunter."

"Bought it?" yelled Peter Todd.

"From Bunter!" howled Johnny Bull. "Take the blessed thing—I'm going to have my six bob, or else Bunter's scalp!"

"Where is he?" roared Peter.

"Tuck-shop!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Must be there—he's in funds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd rushed away, and Johnny Bull and the rest followed him fast. They came into the school-shop with a rush. Billy Bunter was seated on a high stool at the counter. His face was shiny, and had a smear of jam on it. His efforts were slackening down as he disposed of the last few tarts. Six shillings' worth of tuck took the edge off even Bunter's appetite.

"Where's my six bob?" roared Johnny Bull, seizing the Owl of the Remove by the collar.

"Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"Where's my six—"

"Leggo! You've got the knife, haven't you?" gasped Bunter. "If you've altered your mind about buying it, that's your look-out! You needn't mention it to Toddy—"

"You fat villain!" roared Peter Todd.

"Oh, I—I didn't see you, Toddy. I—I meanersay—"

"You told us it was your knife!" shouted Johnny Bull, shaking the fat Removite like a jelly.

"Groogh! I didn't! I said it was a birthday present!" hooted Bunter. "I never said it was mine! I'm too truthful! Yow-ow! Leggo! If you make my glasses fall off, and they get broken—yow—"

"You—you—"

"You'll have to pay for them! Yow-coop!"

"Where's my six bob?"

"If you're going to make a silly fuss over six shillings, Johnny Bull, I'll return it, every penny—"

"Well, hand it over!"

"Out of my postal-order, I mean!"

That was too much for Johnny Bull. He gripped the back of Bunter's collar with his left hand, and seized the remaining tarts with his right. He proceeded to plaster the tarts over Bunter's fat face with a heavy hand.

"Gurrrrrggg!" came from Bunter. "Yooooogh! Oh, groogh! Chuckit! Yowp! You rotter, you're—groogh!—wasting the tarts I was gug—gug—going to send to Gossy's nephew—yooop! Now I can't send them—gug—gug! Oh, crumbs! Help!"

Johnny Bull had finished the tarts, and he wound up with a tumbler of ginger-beer, pouring it over Bunter's unhappy head. Then he strode away, followed by his grinning chums. Billy Bunter sat on the floor of the tuckshop and roared. Johnny Bull had not recovered.

ANSWERS

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

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ONE
PENNY.

his six shillings, but he felt that he had had his six shillings' worth. But to the unhappy Bunter it seemed as if Johnny Bull had had about six pounds' worth.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby's Little Game!

"THINKIN'?"

The Caterpillar asked the question.

De Courcy was lounging idly under the trees in the quad at Highcliffe, when he came upon Cecil Ponsonby.

Ponsonby was leaning against an oak, with a newspaper crumpled in his hand, and a deep wrinkle in his brow. The Caterpillar regarded him with an amused smile for some moments, and then propounded his question, as Ponsonby did not look up.

"Go and eat coke!" was Ponsonby's polite reply.

"Thinkin' deeply?" yawned the Caterpillar. "Ponderin' on how to wipe out the defeat in gore, Pon? Take my tip, old scout, and let Greyfriars alone. They're too hefty for you, Pon."

Ponsonby did not reply. He turned his back on the Caterpillar, and walked away towards the house. The Caterpillar glanced after him, somewhat puzzled.

"What's on?" he murmured. "Ponderin' deeply over a copy of the 'Friardale Gazette?' Pon ain't interested in the advertisements, I suppose. He don't take any interest in Sandiman's Up-to-Date Grocery Stores and Snook's Estate Office. But he was thinkin'. Luckily, it's not my bizney."

And the Caterpillar ambled lazily on, dismissing Ponsonby and all his works from his lazy mind.

Ponsonby of the Fourth was indeed thinking. And there was a grin on his face as he made his way to No. 3 Study. Lessons were over for the day, and Courtenay was on the cricket-ground with Smithson and other members of the new junior eleven, which Courtenay had formed, by sheer hard work, out of very unpromising material. The Caterpillar was dodging him, in mortal terror of being dragged off to cricket-practice by his energetic chum. But the nuts of Highcliffe were not thinking of cricket-practice. Vavasour and Monson and Gadsby were in the study, and there was a haze of cigarette smoke in the air as Ponsonby came in, with the newspaper in his hand.

"Anythin' on?" asked Monson, catching the expression on Ponsonby's face.

Ponsonby carefully closed the door.

"Yes," he said.

"Lock it, and let's have a hand at bridge," said Gadsby. "Turn the key. We don't want Mobby to drop in. Even Mobby would jib at bridge."

"Mobby's awfully tactful," grinned Monson. "He always gives his little cough when he's comin' along, as a warnin'."

The nuts chuckled. It was Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, whom they were alluding to. Mr. Mobbs took a great deal of trouble not to discover the peculiar manners and customs of the nuts in his Form.

"Never mind bridge now," said Ponsonby, "and never mind Mobby. I've got it at last!"

"What have you got, dear boy?" yawned Vavasour. "A remittance from nunky?"

"No, ass! I've got the idea—the wheeze we've been waiting for a long time. We are going to dish these Greyfriars cads at last."

Ponsonby made that statement impressively. But he did not succeed in impressing the Study. Vavasour and Monson and Gadsby looked very doubtful. Gadsby rubbed his nose reminiscently.

"Hum!" said Monson.

"Ahem!" said Vavasour.

Ponsonby sneered.

"You don't seem wildly enthusiastic," he said sarcastically.

"Well, no," admitted Gadsby. "Your ideas always work out in a thumping lickin' in the long run, Pon."

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old man. And those Greyfriars beasts are such awf'ly tough rotters in a scrap. You've still got a blossomin' nose yourself."

"Let the cads alone," murmured Monson. "Treat 'em with contempt."

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"No wonder they lick us, if that's all the pluck there is in this study!" sneered Ponsonby. "I tell you I've got a thumpin' wheeze this time, you moultin' slackers, that will make them look simply sick. It wants a chap with some nerve to carry it out, that's all."

"Oh, dear!" said the nuts in chorus. Apparently nerve was at a discount in Ponsonby's study.

"And I'm going to do it!" said Ponsonby.

The nuts brightened up a little. If Ponsonby was going to do it, they were prepared to give him their whole-hearted sympathy and best wishes.

"Oh, you're goin' to do it," said Vavasour. "Well, what's the game? We're with you, heart an' soul, dear boy."

"You remember how one of the cads came here, a rotter, named Wibley?" said Ponsonby. "He's jolly clever at theatricals, and things like that, and he made himself up as Mobby, and put us through it. And you silly duffers never spotted him—"

"And you didn't, either," said Gadsby.

"Well, I didn't," admitted Ponsonby. "It was a thumping clever wheeze, and it wanted a lot of nerve. But why shouldn't we play a game like that on them? That's my idea. I'm as good at theatricals as that chap Wibley is. I don't say I could pass myself off as a Form-master, as he did, but give me an easy part to play and I'd play it all right. Look at this!"

He held up the local paper.

Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour, greatly puzzled, looked at the paragraph he indicated with his forefinger. It was in the advertisement columns.

"WANTED, a temporary Porter. Must have first-class references. Apply personally, between 5 and 6 p.m., to Mr. Quelch, School House, Greyfriars."

"What the giddy thunder are you gettin' at, Pon?" demanded the astonished Gadsby. "They want a new porter, it seems. Not thinkin' of applyin' for the job, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Wha-a-at?"

The nuts blinked at Ponsonby. His answer had taken their breath away.

"I s'pose you're pullin' our leg," murmured Vavasour.

"The school porter over there has mizzled," said Ponsonby. "You remember he was drivin' to the station the other day, when we came on those cads bikin'? I've heard about it from Skinner of the Remove. That old duffer, Gosling, has a nephew in the Army, and he's been sent home wounded. Gosling's gone to see him, and stay with him for a week or two. Those rotters were seein' him off when we dropped on them. While he's gone, they want a temporary porter at the school."

"I dare say they do," said Monson. "But—"

"Don't you see the game?"

"Blessed if I do!"

"Man's got to apply to Quelch between five and six in the afternoon," said Ponsonby. "Dr. Locke leaves these things to Quelchy, you know, he's his right-hand man. Well, I don't suppose there'll be a rush for a temporary job like that. Labour's scarce in these parts. Of course, there'll be some applicants. I'm going to be one of them."

"You?"

"Little me!" said Ponsonby.

"B-b-but," burred Vavasour, "they want a man, not a boy! They won't take a kid for the job!"

"And Quelchy knows you, too," said Monson.

"Fathead! I'm not going as Cecil Ponsonby of Highcliffe. I'm going as a porter—a middle-aged porter, with two sons in the Army."

"By gad!"

"I can make myself up, if Wibley can," said Ponsonby. "We've done lots of theatricals. And it's an easy part. Plenty of whiskers, and a pair of spectacles, and padded clothes. Anybody could do it!"

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"I couldn't," said Vavasour, with a shake of the head — "I couldn't, absolutely."

"I mean anybody with an ounce of brains," explained Ponsonby.

"Oh, really, Pon, you know—"

"You fellows can help me make up," said Pon. "We can get the things we want at old Lazarus's, in Court-field. It will be as easy as fallin' off a form. Then all I've got to do is to march in at Greyfriars, as bold as brass, and ask for the job."

"B-b-b-but you can't get away from Highcliffe," stammered Monson. "What about turnin' up at lessons to-morrow?"

"I'm goin' to get leave, of course. My brother's on leave from the front now—he gets lots of leave, you know!" grinned Ponsonby. "Well, I shall ask the Head for permission to go home and stay a few days while he's there. Dr. Voysey will let me go. Mobby will work that, if necessary."

"Only—only you won't go home?"

"No fear! I shall go to Greyfriars."

"But the advertisement says first-class references," said Gadsby. "You can't ask Mobby for references."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Your brother's going to give me references, Gaddy."

"My brother!" ejaculated Gaddy.

"Yes, Captain Gadsby. You're going to ask him. He'll do anythin' for you; you've told me so. You can explain to him that it's a jape, and get him to give me a first-class reference as an experienced porter."

"My only hat!" said Gadsby.

"Would he do it?" asked Monson.

"Oh, he'd do it if I asked him!" said Gadsby. "He's seen the Greyfriars rotters, and don't like 'em. When he was down here he boxed Bull's ears, and Bull hit him in the ribs. Cheeky cad, you know. He'd do it if I explained to him and asked him. But—"

"It's a jolly serious matter, giving a written character," said Vavasour. "You can be had up for it."

"That's all right," said Ponsonby. "Captain Gadsby has a porter at his place. His name's Gunn or Bunn, or somethin'."

"Bunn," said Gadsby.

"Well, I'll take that name—John Bunn. Captain Gadsby can write the reference for John Bunn, and if there's any trouble afterwards, and it comes out that the man at Greyfriars was an impostor, it can't hurt him. The paper belonged to the real John Bunn, you see, and had been lost or stolen."

"Oh, by gad!" said Vavasour.

"A whacking good character from an Army captain will satisfy Mr. Quelch, that's certain. I shall be Captain Gadsby's porter lookin' for a new job, havin' been sacked on account of war economies!" grinned Ponsonby.

The nuts chuckled.

"I can afford to go easy on the subject of wages and so on," said Ponsonby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd better write to my brother," said Gaddy.

"Better still, go and see him," said Ponsonby. "We'll have a car out, and run down to his place and catch him. He likes to see us."

"Yaas; he'd like you to get your noble pater there some day," murmured Monson—a remark that Gadsby affected not to hear.

"I'm standin' the car," added Ponsonby. "We can get an exeat from Mobby. Mobby'll be delighted, and he'll give us loving messages for the captain. Captain Gadsby shook hands with him last time he was here, and I don't believe Mobby has washed his hand since."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

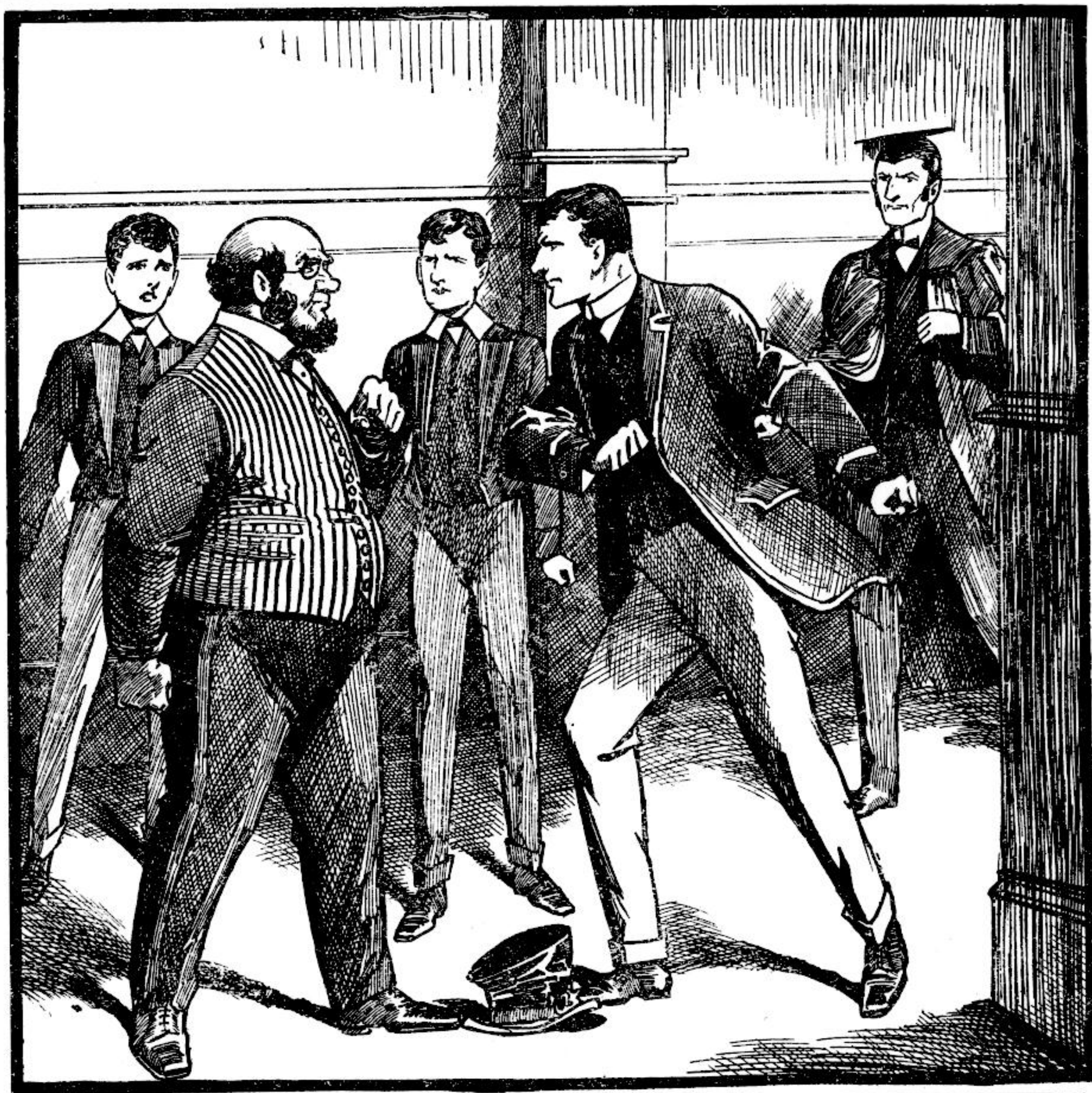
"But—but—but would you have the nerve, Pon?" said Vavasour.

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"Anythin' the matter with my nerve?" he demanded.

"It's easy enough if I bag the place. And once I'm fixed inside the walls of Greyfriars, I'll guarantee to give those Remove rotters a high old time—a more excitin' time than Wibley gave us."

The nuts chuckled at the prospect. Ponsonby having planned to take all the risk, and their own elegant persons not being in any danger, they entered into the



Mr. Quelch rustled down the passage. "Bolsover!" he cried. "You young ruffian! How dare you? This is unheard of! You have actually assaulted the porter for reporting you! Is it possible?" (See Chapter 9.)

scheme with great heartiness. In a gleeful party they visited Mr. Mobbs's study, and easily obtained the required exeat for the visit to Gadsby Lodge. Ponsonby telephoned for a car from the garage—Ponsonby always did things in style—and when the car came round the little party came out joyously. Courtenay was coming in from the cricket, with his bat under his arm, and the Caterpillar—safe now from cricket practice—joined him at the door just as Ponsonby & Co. came out.

"The noble nuts look in high feather," remarked the Caterpillar. "What's on—eh? Where are you off to, Pon? The races are all over at this time of day."

Ponsonby did not deign to reply, and the car drove off with the nuts. The Caterpillar shook his head. For all his sleepy ways, the Caterpillar was very keen.

"Somethin's on," he remarked. "I spotted Pon thinkin'. Unusual thing for Pon to do. Somethin's on. Lucky it's no bizney of ours. How did the cricket go, Franky? Leg before wicket—what?"

"No, ass!" said Courtenay, laughing. "Come in to tea."

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

"I was really goin' to join you at the nets," said the Caterpillar. "I was thinkin' it over. I was still thinkin' it over when you finished. I'm goin' to think it over again to-morrow."

And they went in to tea.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. The New Porter!

"THIS 'ere Greyfriars, sir?"

Bob Cherry detached himself from the stone pillar beside the gateway of Greyfriars and glanced at the speaker.

Bob looked at him rather curiously. He could guess that it was an applicant for the vacant post of school-porter.

He saw a somewhat stout man, apparently about fifty years' of age. He was very respectably dressed, and wore mutton-chop side-whiskers and a grizzled beard and a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles.

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"Yes; this is Greyfriars," said Bob. "If you're a giddy visitor, you come in here. If you're looking for the porter's job, you go to the side-gate. Take your choice."

"Name of Bunn, sir," said the man. "I'm 'ere in answer to the advertisement in the 'Friardale Gazette,' sir."

"That's your way, then."

Bob Cherry good-naturedly indicated the side-gate, and Mr. Bunn repaired thither and disappeared.

"We've got him at last," said Bob, as he joined his chums in the Close. "Chap after the job. Name of Bunn. If he doesn't behave himself he will be a toasted Bunn! I ought to have warned him of that."

"I say, you fellows, there's been two chaps after the job already," said Billy Bunter. "Quelchy wasn't satisfied with them. One of them was a young chap, and Quelchy directed him to the recruiting-office. I heard him."

"Of course you heard him!" said Bob. "Is there anything you don't hear?"

"It's a jolly good deal better without a porter," said Bunter. "I've thought of a wheeze, you chaps."

"Go and boil it!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! My idea is to collar every chap who comes after the job and rag him, and make him clear off without seeing Quelchy. See? Then we shouldn't be bothered till Gosling comes back."

"Good egg!" said Nugent. "You do the collaring, Bunter, and you do the ragging, and the explaining to Quelchy afterwards!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem! I should leave that part to you, of course," said Bunter. "If you're too funky, of course——"

Bob Cherry lifted his boot, and Bunter promptly retired. He retired in the direction of Mr. Quelch's study. He was curious to see the new applicant for the porter's post. It was no business of Bunter's, but Bunter was specially interested in anything that was not his business.

He was in time to see the man shown into Mr. Quelch's study by Trotter, the page. Bunter blinked at him scrutinisingly. His conclusion was that Mr. Bunn did not look quite such a beast as Gosling.

Mr. Quelch laid down his pen, and turned his keen eyes upon the applicant as the latter stood before him, fumbling with his hat.

"Which I 'ave called in answer to the advertisement, sir," said Mr. Bunn. "Being a respectable man, with two sons in the Army——"

"You have two sons in the Army?" said Mr. Quelch. That was naturally a recommendation, in the Form-master's eyes.

"Yes, sir. George, he's in the East Kents, and William, he's in the West Kents, my old master's regiment, sir," said Mr. Bunn, "both of 'em fighting now for his Majesty King George, bless him! The West Kent was my old regiment, sir, but I left it when Captain Gadsby took the lodge. I was porter at Gadsby Lodge, sir, for ten years."

"Then Captain Gadsby will answer for you?" said Mr. Quelch.

"I 'ave here a letter from him, sir, and he will be glad to answer any inquiries," said Mr. Bunn, producing a letter. "I was his lodgekeeper for ten years, sir, and, I believe, gave satisfaction. I am out of a place, sir, because my master is cuttin' down expenses during the war, as he will tell you, sir."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

He read the letter Mr. Bunn presented to him, and seemed satisfied.

"You are aware that the post is of a temporary character?" he asked. "You may be required for a fortnight, perhaps a little longer."

"Yes, sir. Every little helps in these hard times, sir, and I never was a man for idling, as Captain Gadsby will testify."

"Very good," said Mr. Quelch. "I will communicate with Captain Gadsby at once, and, if his reply is satisfactory, I will let you know without delay. Your address?"

"No. 5, River Street, Friardale, at present, sir."

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"Thank you!"

Mr. Bunn took his leave.

Three juniors were waiting for him in the passage. They were Bunter, Skinner, and Bolsover major of the Remove. They stopped Mr. Bunn at the end of the passage.

"New porter—what?" asked Skinner amicably.

"Which I 'ope so, sir," said Mr. Bunn, showing some slight uneasiness for a moment.

"Then you're the chap we want to see," said Bolsover major. "Don't be alarmed. We only want to give you a friendly warning."

"That's it," said Bunter—"a word in season, you know, Bunn. It's only fair."

"Thank you, young gentlemen, but I don't quite catch on," said Mr. Bunn, fumbling with his hat.

Skinner drew the new porter into the window alcove.

"The fact is," he said, "we feel we ought to give you a tip about the place you're going to take. You look a good sort, Mr. Bunn, and we want to warn you. I suppose you know why the last porter left?"

"No, sir."

"He was jolly nearly brained by Mr. Quelch—the gentleman you've just seen," said Skinner. "Quelchy has a fearful temper. When he's annoyed, he thinks nothing of picking up the tongs to a chap. The last porter has gone to a hospital."

"Good heavens!"

"It was because he asked for his wages," said Bolsover major. "That annoyed Quelchy. He manages that for the Head, you know, and he never pays the wages to time."

"I shouldn't like that, sir."

"Of course you wouldn't. That's why we're warning you. Gosling used to complain, too, of insufficient food. He used to have what was left over from the boys' meals, you know, and he said it wasn't enough."

"Oh, lor'!"

"So if you want a good place I'd advise you not to come to Greyfriars," said Skinner. "We thought we'd give you a friendly tip, as you look a really decent sort."

"I'm sure you're very kind, sir."

"We mean to be kind," said Bolsover major pleasantly. "The best thing you can do is to give Greyfriars a wide berth. I don't want to see a decent chap like you put into such a post."

Mr. Bunn blinked at them through his spectacles. That friendly warning might have alarmed any other applicant for Gosling's post. But perhaps Mr. Bunn had inside information which enabled him to discount that friendly warning.

"Come on," said Skinner; "we'll see you out. And you can thank your lucky stars, Mr. Bunn, that we met you and warned you in time."

"Thank you kindly, young gents. Skuse me a minute."

Mr. Bunn stepped out of the alcove, and walked back to Mr. Quelch's door, and tapped on it. Skinner winked at his comrades.

"He's going to tell Quelchy the place won't suit," he grinned. "My hat, we'll play the same game on all of them as they come, and we won't have a blessed porter again till Gossy comes back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come in!" called out Mr. Quelch's voice, in response to Mr. Bunn's tap. The new porter stepped into the study.

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows. He had supposed that he was finished with Mr. Bunn for the present.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"It's my dooty to tell you, sir, that three young gentlemen 'ave spoke to me, and told me hawful stories about this place," said Mr. Bunn deliberately. "'Course, I don't take any notice of it, but it's my dooty to tell you. I ain't likely to believe that you, sir, hit the last porter with the poker——"

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Or that you didn't pay 'im his wages, sir——"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Or that you starved him, sir——"

Mr. Quelch jumped up.

"Show me those boys at once, Mr. Bunn."

"Suttingly, sir!"

The Form-master, with a brow like thunder, swept into the passage after Mr. Bunn. Bolsover and Skinner and Bunter were chuckling in the alcove, over the supposed success of their little plot. They ceased chuckling suddenly as the figure of Mr. Quelch loomed up before their eyes.

"So you have been tampering with this man!" shouted Mr. Quelch. "You have been telling him ridiculous and false stories."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bolsover major.

Mr. Bunn silently departed. He was finished there. He left his three kind friends to deal with the Form-master.

"I—I no, sir!" stuttered Bunter. "Certainly not, sir. It was Skinner, sir. Bolsover helped him, sir. I disapproved of the whole thing."

"Follow me to my study!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

The three hapless jokers followed him. In the study there was heard the sound of a swishing cane, and ejaculations of deep anguish.

Bolsover and Skinner and Bunter simply crawled away from the study when Mr. Quelch had finished with them. They crawled away to the common-room groaning.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore this woe?" asked Bob Cherry, as they came in.

"Ow! ow! ow! ow!"

"Wow-wow-wow!"

"Oh, dear! My hands! Yah! Oh!"

It was some minutes before Skinner & Co. could explain. Their explanation was greeted with a shout of laughter.

"What a ripping wheeze!" said Harry Wharton. "And what a ripping ending!"

"But the fellow was a rotter to give them away," said Mark Linley. "He might have kept his head shut."

"Ow, the rotter!" groaned Bolsover major. "I hope he gets the job now. I want to see him again! Ow! I'll make him sit up! Wow!"

"Yow-yow-yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the juniors agreed that it was extremely mean of Mr. Bunn, and that, if he obtained Gosling's post, the change would be for the worse. And they were prepared to scalp Mr. Bunn if he did become installed at Greyfriars.

And the next day he was installed.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Late!

"BUNNY, by Jove!"

The Famous Five had been down to Friardale, and they were strolling home at a leisurely pace. It wanted but five minutes to locking-up, but they were within sight of Greyfriars, and five minutes was more than enough. Therefore they did not hasten their leisurely footsteps.

As they came towards the gates they spotted a stout man looking out, and Bob Cherry recognised Mr. Bunn.

"So that's Bunn?" remarked Nugent.

"That's the identical bird," said Bob. "He's got the job, it seems. Shall we knock his hat off as we go in? May as well show him that the Remove isn't taking any of his old buck."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Give him a chance," he said. "It was rather mean, his telling of Skinner, but he may mean well. He can't report us much more than old Gossy did, anyway."

"It is a wheezy good idea to treat the esteemed Bunny with the great politeness," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let us all give him the high salaam, and greet him friendly."

"Wheezy good idea, and no mistake," agreed Bob. "We'll butter him up, and show him what nice boys we are."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "What's he up to?"

Clang!

The new porter had seen them coming up the road. He had stepped back into the gateway, and the heavy iron gates came shut, with a loud, metallic clang. There was a grind of the big key in the lock.

"Locked out!" shouted Johnny Bull.

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"A little too previous," remarked Harry. "Locking up is at seven now, and it still wants three minutes."

"We'll jolly well talk to him," growled Bob.

The three juniors arrived at the gates. Bunn had disappeared into his lodge. Bob rang a heavy peal upon the bell.

"That'll fetch the rotter out," he remarked.

The bell rang and jangled with a thundering noise. But Bob was mistaken. It did not fetch the rotter out. There was no sign of Mr. Bunn having heard the bell. He did not appear from his lodge.

"Bunn!" roared Bob Cherry, in his stentorian tones, through the bars of the gate. "Bunn! Bunny! BUNN!"

"Bunn!" yelled all the juniors together.

"The Bunnfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Singh.

"But he does not mean to appear."

Johnny Bull shook the gates, and Bob rang another peal on the bell. The chums of the Remove were furious.

It wanted now but a minute to seven, and in another minute they would be late, and justly locked out.

The porter did not appear. From the clock-tower of Greyfriars the hour began to strike.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven!

Seven o'clock!

"Late now!" said Nugent.

"And locked out, by gum!" said Johnny Bull.

"The rotter saw us coming, and locked us out on purpose!" exclaimed Harry Wharton angrily.

"Bunn! Bunny! BUNN!" yelled Bob Cherry, jingling at the bell.

"Come and open the gate, you rotter!"

"Let us in, you spoofing cad!"

Still Bunn did not appear. The exasperated juniors shook the gate and shouted, and the bell jingled and jangled incessantly. But it was turned five minutes past seven when the short, stout form of the new porter appeared in the doorway of the lodge, and he blinked towards the gates through his spectacles.

"Come and open the gate, you rotter!" shouted Johnny Bull.

Bunn came down to the gate in a leisurely manner, with a pencil and a notebook in his hand. He stared at the juniors through the bars.

"You're late, young gentlemen."

"We were early," said Wharton indignantly; "we were here at three minutes to seven!"

"You saw us coming, and locked us out on purpose!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Open the gate!"

"Let us in, you rotter!"

Mr. Bunn did not open the gate. He opened his notebook.

"Names, please!" he said.

"What?"

"I am sorry, young gentlemen, but I 'ave to take your names. Such is Mr. Quelch's instructions. Many boys out after howers has to give their names, which is reported to the 'Ead."

"But we're not late—you've kept us waiting!"

"P'r'aps you wouldn't mind hexplaining that to your Form-master or the 'Ead, sir. I must do my dooty."

"You know we've been waiting here ten minutes," explained Wharton.

"I don't know nothin' of the kind, sir!"

"Didn't you hear the bell?" roared Johnny Bull. "Are you as deaf as a post?"

"Please don't get excited, sir; I 'ave to do my dooty," said Mr. Bunn, "which it's my dooty to report you, gentlemen. Will you oblige me with your names?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I can't let you in till you gives your names, sirs. You see, if I was to hopen the gate, you'd dodge me," explained Mr. Bunn. "You gives your names afore I lets you in. Such is my instructions. Bein' a noo porter, I'm anxious to carry out my instructions."

"Rats!"

Mr. Bunn sighed, and waited. He did not open the gate.

The Famous Five glared at him through the bars, a

good deal like five tigers at their keeper. It seemed that the new porter had deliberately shut them out, in order to take their names for being late. He was evidently a beast of a much more pronounced variety than Gosling.

Gosling was a little sharp, certainly; but old Gossy played the game. He had never been guilty of a mean trick like this. To do Gosling justice, he generally had good reason for making his reports, numerous and vexatious as they were.

The new porter and the Removites regarded one another through the bars of the gate. There was a pause.

"Are you going to let us in?" demanded Wharton, at last.

"Not till you gives your names, sir."

"You know we were early."

"You can explain that to Mr. Quelch, sir."

"I believe you watched us, and shut us out on purpose, and caught us!" said Harry angrily.

"Oh, sir!"

"Don't give him the names!" said Johnny Bull.

"I can't let you in till you do, sir," said Mr. Bunn, quite respectfully, but very firmly; "and I shall 'ave to report jest 'ow late you was. It's already a quarter-past seven."

"Well, we've got to get in, or we shall miss call-over," said Frank Nugent. "We'll explain to Mr. Quelch if this rotter reports us."

"Names, please!"

The juniors, savage and exasperated, gave their names. Mr. Bunn entered them in his book, with slow deliberation.

"Buck up!" rapped out Wharton angrily. "Call-over's at seven-fifteen, you know that!"

"Call-over ain't among my dooties, sir, and I don't know nothin' about it," said Mr. Bunn. "I've got to take your names. Did you say Sherry, sir?" This was addressed to Bob Cherry.

"I said Cherry!" roared Bob. "You heard what I said!"

"Cherry," said Mr. Bunn calmly. "Werry well, sir. It won't do to make no mistake; I shouldn't like to report the wrong young gentleman by mistake. Now I got 'em—Masters Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, 'Urree Singh, and Cow."

"Bull!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Did you say Bull, sir?"

"You know I said Bull."

"I didn't quite catch it, sir; I knowed it was some animal," said Mr. Bunn, making an entry into his book. "Bull—that's right. Thank you, young gentlemen! I am sure you don't object to a man doin' his dooty."

"The rotter's keeping us here to make us miss call-over, I verily believe," said Bob, between his teeth. "Will you let us in, Bunn, or won't you?"

"Suttingly, sir!"

The key grated in the lock, and the gate opened at last. The Famous Five tramped wrathfully in. They manfully resisted the temptation to seize Mr. Bunn, and hurl him neck and crop into his lodge. There was no time to waste, and they hurried towards the School House, hoping to be in time for calling-over.

They were just in time to meet the school swarming out of Hall.

"You're late," remarked Vernon-Smith. "Quelchy snorted when he called your names. I'd have answered 'adsum' for you, only he had his eye wide open."

"Oh, that cad Bunn!" said Bob Cherry. "Oh, the rotter! We'll make him wriggle for this, somehow."

And the Famous Five went to Mr. Quelch's study to report themselves.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Ananias II.!

MR. QUELCH eyed the five delinquents sternly. The Remove-master was as punctual as a clock himself, and he was very severe upon such faults as unpunctuality. It was a kind of slackness he greatly disapproved of.

"Ha! You are here!" he exclaimed. "You were not present at calling-over."

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"No, sir," said Harry.

"You will take——"

"Excuse me, sir. It wasn't our fault," said Harry.

"Indeed! I am willing to listen to any excuse you have to offer," said the Remove-master drily.

"We couldn't get in, sir."

"Do you mean that the gates were locked?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is no excuse. You would not have been locked out, I presume, unless you had overstayed your permitted time."

"Not as a rule, sir," said Harry. "But this evening the porter closed the gates three minutes early."

"The gates are closed at seven this week," said Mr. Quelch.

"They were closed at three minutes to seven this evening, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Otherwise, we should not have missed call-over, sir," said Wharton, firmly. "We think you ought to know that."

"If it is the case, certainly; but probably you were mistaken as to the time," said the Form-master tartly. "I see no reason why the porter should close the gates early, after my very precise instructions to him."

"He did it to catch us on the hop," broke out Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch gave him a freezing look.

"What may that very peculiar expression imply, Cherry?"

Bob coloured.

"I—I mean he was trying to catch us, just to report us, sir."

"That is an utterly ridiculous statement, Cherry. Why should the new porter—a stranger to you—do anything of the sort?"

"I—I don't know, sir, unless it's pure ill-nature. But he did it."

"I decline to believe anything of the kind. However, I will certainly send for Bunn and question him."

Mr. Quelch rang, and sent Trotter for the porter. In a few minutes Bunn entered the room, looking very grave and respectful. He had his notebook in his hand.

"Which I've got the names 'ere, sir," he said. "These are the young gentlemen, sir."

"These boys were late, Bunn?"

"Yes, sir."

"At what time did you close the gates?"

"Seven o'clock, sir, accordin' to instructions."

"You are sure it was not before seven o'clock, Bunn?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Did you hear the hour striking?"

"Striking jest as I was turnin' the key in the lock, sir. I was werry careful, as I 'ad need to be in my last place, sir, to please the captain."

"The matter is settled," said Mr. Quelch. "You see that you were mistaken as to the time, Wharton. If the porter heard the hour strike as he was closing the gates, there can be no error."

Wharton had crimsoned with anger.

"He is not telling you the truth, sir!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"Wharton!"

"We heard seven strike, sir, and it was three minutes or more after Bunn had locked the gates and gone back to his lodge. It was after we had rung and shouted to him."

"Nonsense!"

"It is so, sir," said Bob Cherry. "I don't know what his reason is, but Bunn is telling you lies, sir."

"The liefulness is terrific, honoured sahib!"

Mr. Quelch glanced at the porter, who was quiet and very grave and respectful. He seemed puzzled.

"I know that you boys would not knowingly tell me a falsehood to escape punishment," he said. "I presume that you must be mistaken. Bunn's statement is positive, and he could have had no conceivable motive for acting as you say. Please say no more."

The juniors gave Bunn furious looks. Bunn kept his eyes respectfully on the floor. His manner was deprecating.

"I'm sorry, sir, as the young gentlemen think this 'ere, sir," he said. "I only want to do my dooty, sir, accordin' to instructions."

"Quite so, Bunn. You may go."

The porter quitted the study.

"If you please, sir—" began Johnny Bull.

Mr. Quelch made a gesture.

"You have said enough. I am willing to believe that you supposed yourselves to be in time, and I accept your assurance on that point. I shall therefore make your punishment very light. You will take twenty-five lines of Virgil each. You may go."

"But—"

"You may go!" repeated Mr. Quelch, in raised tones.

The Famous Five went. There was evidently nothing more to be said.

In the passage, however, they looked at one another with eloquent looks. The twenty-five lines each did not worry them much; it was a light punishment. But the trick the new porter had played them exasperated them almost beyond words.

"The awful rotter!" said Bob Cherry, drawing a deep breath. "He stood up to Quelch and lied like a Prussian. He knew jolly well that he didn't hear the clock strike as he was locking the gates."

"It was a deliberate catch," said Wharton. "The beast seems to have got his knife into us, though I'm blessed if I know why, as he's never even seen us before. He must be an awful rotter to tell lies like that."

The juniors went into the common-room. The looks upon their faces drew glances upon them, and they had to explain. There was a buzz of indignant comment when the story of the new porter's delinquency was told.

"What an awful rotter!" said Peter Todd. "I—I suppose you're quite sure about the time?"

"Of course we are, fathead!"

"But why should he lie like that, then?" asked Bulstrode.

"Blessed if I know, unless he's a born Ananias!" said Wharton. "He was trying to get us into a row with Quelch, goodness knows why!"

"I say, it sounds a bit thick, you know," remarked Skinner. "More likely you made a mistake in the time."

"Oh, rats!"

"I guess that's more likely," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I tell you he was lying, and he knew he was lying!" said Wharton angrily. "It was a trick to get us a wiggling."

"I say, you fellows, draw it mild, you know," said Billy Bunter. "We know the man's a cad, but why should he do that? It's too thick, you know. You duffers made a mistake!"

"Oh, shut up, you fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"That's my idea, too," said Bulstrode obstinately. "I don't see why the fellow should lie like that. It's too thick."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Bulstrode's opinion was shared by a good many of the fellows. Indeed, to the Famous Five themselves it seemed certainly "thick" that the new porter, a stranger to them, should tell deliberate falsehoods in order to get them punished. They could not see what motive the man could have.

Yet there was no doubt about the fact. They knew that the hour had not struck till several minutes, at least, after they had applied for admission.

"Worse than Gosling, by long chalks," said Bob Cherry. "But if we have any more of it we'll make him sit up!"

"We'll make him sit up, anyway, the first chance we get!" growled Johnny Bull.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the sit-upfulness should be terrific.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bribery and Corruption!

"BLESSED if the gate isn't locked!"

"Oh, my hat!"

It was the following evening, and Bolsover major and Bulstrode had arrived at the school gates, after a cycle ride. Seven had struck as they

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came whizzing up to the school; the last stroke died away as they jumped off their machines.

Through the gate they could see Bunn, the porter, retiring to his lodge, with the big key in his hand.

"Jolly sharp on time!" growled Bulstrode. "Gosling wasn't so mighty sharp as that. He would allow a chap an extra minute."

"Must have started shutting the gates before seven, the beast!" said Bolsover major. "Hallo, Bunn!"

The porter looked round, and blinked stolidly through his big glasses.

"Late, young gentlemen!"

"Two seconds late!" hooted Bulstrode.

"Which my instructions is, sir, to close the gates at seven o'clock this week," said Bunn. "Next week it will be hearlier."

"Well, let us in."

"Names, please."

"Look here, Bunn," said Bulstrode persuasively, "we're only a second or two late. Let us in, and say nothing about it."

"Dooty is dooty, sir."

Bolsover major gritted his teeth.

"The cad's glad to catch us out," he said. "The rotter seems to have a down on the Remove. Open this gate, Bunn, you pig!"

"Names, please."

"Better give him our names sharp," said Bulstrode. "He'll make us miss call-over if he can. Those fellows last night were right—the utter beast is trying to catch us!"

"Hold on!" said Bolsover. "Look here, Bunny—"

"Names, please," said the porter stolidly.

"Bolsover major, hang you, Remove Form!"

"Bulstrode, Remove."

"Thank you, young gentlemen! Which this will be reported to your Form-master. I've my dooty to do!"

Bunn opened the gate. The two Removites wheeled their machines in, and paused. Bolsover major did not want lines, and he had an idea in his head.

"Hold on, Bunny!" he said, quite amicably. "I say, it's dry weather, isn't it?"

"Werry dry, sir!"

"Makes a chap thirsty," hinted Bolsover.

"Werry, sir!"

"Well, here's a bob for you, Bunn!"

Bunn blinked at the shilling Bolsover major slipped into his palm.

"You're werry kind, Master Bolsover!"

"You can forget about our being late, you know," said Bolsover major. "You savvy? Come on, Bulstrode!"

The two juniors ran across the Close with their machines, leaving Bunn staring after them with a very peculiar expression upon his face. They shoved their bicycles into the shed, and cut into Hall in time for call-over.

Ten minutes later Trotter came into the common-room, looking about him.

"Masters Bolsover and Bulstrode!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're wanted, Bolsover!" said Bob Cherry.

"What's wanted, Trotter?" growled Bolsover.

"You and Master Bulstrode in Mr. Quelch's study, sir."

"The rotter has reported us after all!" growled Bulstrode.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Your turn now," he remarked.

Bulstrode snorted, and followed Bolsover from the common-room. They made their way to Mr. Quelch's study. They found the Remove master with a very stern expression upon his face. Bunn was there, and on the table, glistening in the light, lay a shilling. Bolsover major gave a start as he saw it.

"Bolsover," said Mr. Quelch, frowning, "Bunn makes a very serious report to me."

"We were only a second or so late, sir," said Bulstrode.

"Not more than a couple of seconds."

"That is beside the point, Bulstrode. You know the hour at which the gates are closed, and it is your business

to be within at that time. You, Bulstrode, will take a hundred lines. Bolsover, your offence is more serious."

"I wasn't any later than Bulstrode, sir!" grunted Bolsover.

"That shilling is yours, Bolsover."

"M-m-mine, sir!"

"Yes. Take it up."

Bolsover major mechanically took up the shilling.

"Bunn has very properly reported to me your attempt to bribe him, Bolsover, and has brought the money here."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Don't utter ridiculous exclamations, Bolsover. Are you not aware that it is a very serious matter to attempt to bribe a servant of the school to neglect his duty?"

"I only gave him a tip, sir."

"You paid him a shilling, with a request that he would not report you," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Well, I—I mentioned it."

"That was bribery, Bolsover. Bunn very properly reported the whole matter to me."

"Sneaking cad!" said Bolsover fiercely.

"Silence!"

"Which it was my dooty, sir," said Mr. Bunn. "I'm sorry if it's took amiss by the young gentlemen. But I always tries to do my dooty, sir."

"I am quite satisfied with you, Bunn. You acted quite rightly. Bolsover, what you have done is very serious."

Bolsover set his teeth. Mr. Quelch took a very serious view of the matter, regarding it as an attempt to bribe the porter to neglect his duty. Bolsover regarded it as tipping the beast to keep his head shut. All depended on the point of view.

Bunn might have reported the occurrence to Mr. Quelch from a strict and zealous sense of duty. But the juniors did not believe anything of the kind. They were quite assured that he had done it out of ill-nature and general sneakishness.

"I shall cane you for this, Bolsover," said Mr. Quelch, taking up his cane. "You do not appear to realise the seriousness of your action. I shall endeavour to impress it upon your mind, through the medium of punishment. Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

"Now the other hand!"

Swish!

"Ow-wow-w-wow!" mumbled Bolsover.

"Now you may go, and remember if you should offend again in like manner, your punishment will be much more severe."

Bunn had left the study quietly. Bolsover major followed him, his eyes burning. His hands were tingling with pain; but Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, was not subdued. He hurried down the passage after the porter.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bulstrode, catching at his arm. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to hammer Bunn!"

"You fathead! Quelch will—"

"Blow Quelch!"

Bolsover major tore his arm away, and rushed after the porter, who was a few yards away.

Bunn was swung round suddenly with a powerful grasp on his shoulder. He blinked up at Bolsover. The short, stout porter was not so tall as the burly Remove.

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"Ow!" ejaculated Bunn. "Lemme go! Oh, Master Bolsover!"

"You rotten hound!" hissed Bolsover. "You sneaking cad! You've got me licked with your dirty tricks!"

"Which I only did my dooty, Master Bolsover, and if you 'andle me like that, I shall report the matter to Mr. Quelch. Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunn, as Bolsover major grasped him with both hands, and knocked his head against the wall.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

"Yaroooh! Help! Help!" yelled Bunn.

"Chuck it, you ass!" shouted Wharton, coming on the scene, with a swarm of excited fellows. "Bolsover, are you off your dot?"

"I'm going to make him squirm, the sneaking cad!" said Bolsover. "He took my bob, and then told Quelch. If he's so jolly honest, why couldn't he refuse to take it, what?"

Biff! Biff!

"Yow-ow-ow! Help!" roared the hapless Bunn.

"Cave!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Here comes Quelch!"

Mr. Quelch rustled down the passage, his eyes gleaming. He had heard Bunn's yells for help. He seized Bolsover by the collar and wrenched him away from the porter.

"Bolsover, you young ruffian, how dare you? This is unheard-of! You have actually assaulted the porter for reporting you! Is it possible?"

"Ow, ow, ow!" moaned Mr. Bunn. "I'm 'urt, sir! Which my 'ead is 'urt suthing crool!"

"I am sorry for this, Bunn. You may depend upon it that Bolsover will be severely punished. Come with me, Bolsover!"

Bolsover major spent five minutes in Mr. Quelch's study. During that five minutes the swishing of the cane did not cease, and the juniors in the passage listened in awe.

Never had any member of the Remove received so severe a thrashing before at the hands of Mr. Quelch. Bolsover was hard as nails; but after a minute or two he was yelling. When he was finally ejected from the study, he was red and flustered and wriggling. Even the truculent bully of the Remove was not likely to lay violent hands on the porter again after that experience.

"Hard cheese, old chap!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "Hard cheese! But you did go it rather strong, you know."

Bolsover major did not reply, save with a groan. He limped away to his study; and for some time afterwards groans were heard to proceed from that apartment. Bolsover major was still wriggling painfully when the Remove went up to their dormitory.

THE TENTH CHAPTER A Perfect Beast!

"Beast!"

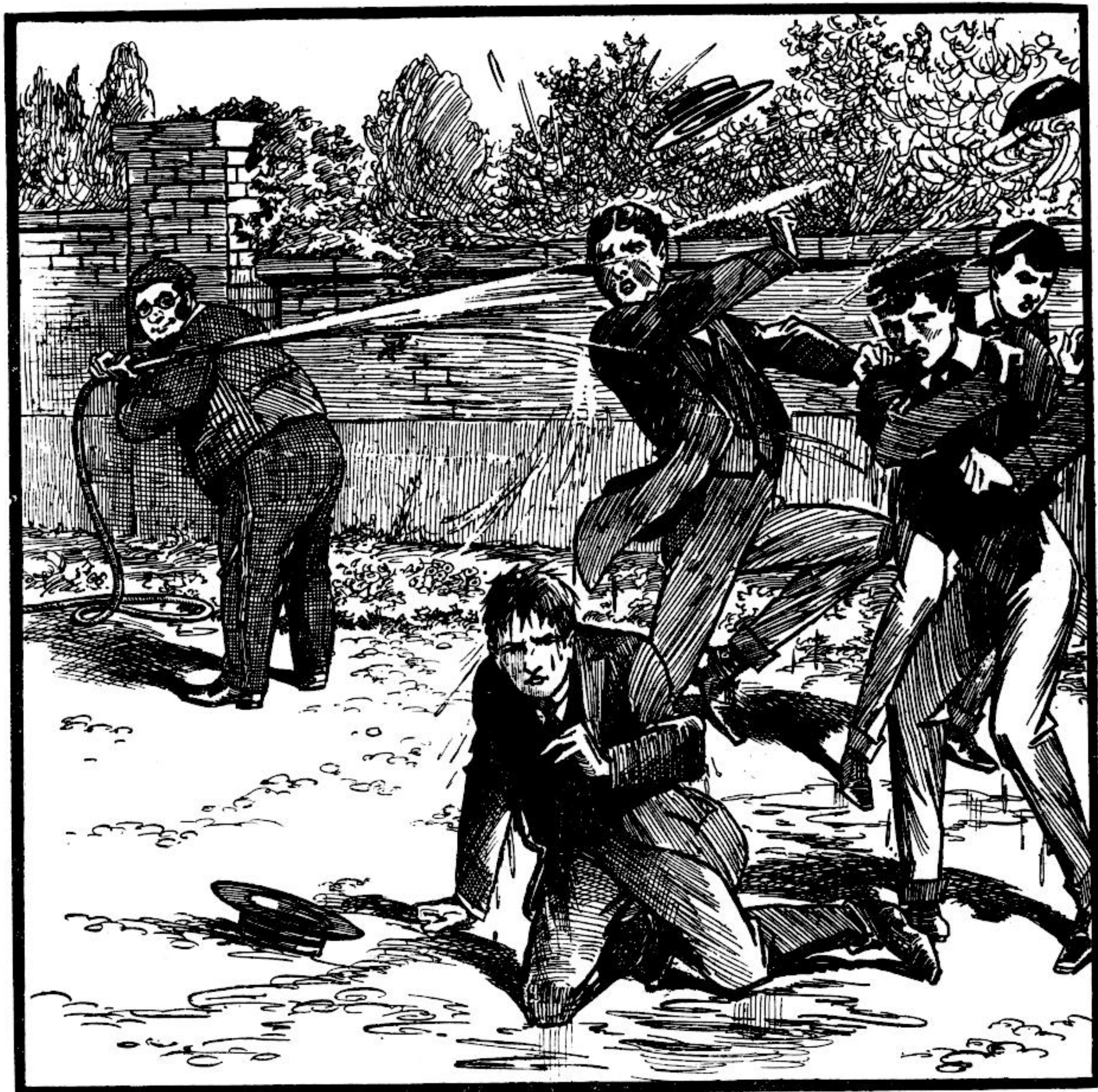
That was the general verdict by the time the new porter had been three or four days at Greyfriars.

Fellows who had complained of old Gosling wondered now what they had found to complain of in that crusty old gentleman. For in comparison with the new man, old Gosling had been simply seraphic.

Bunn was every kind of a beast.

Old Gosling, certainly, had got into a confirmed habit of reporting





The stream of water caught the Caterpillar fairly under the chin, and bowled him over. He sat down on the ground in a pool. The next instant the water was smiting Courtenay full in the face. "Groooogh!" he roared. "Oh, my hat! Stop it, you villain!" (See Chapter 11.)

the juniors. But although his reporting was irritating and inconvenient, there was this much to be said for it, that it was always founded on fact.

But with Bunn it was quite different.

Bunn seemed to take a fiendish delight in catching the juniors out, and he was not above the meanest of tricks to get them into trouble. Unless he was a born boy-hater, there was no accounting for it. Certainly the Removites disliked him intensely. But that could not be the reason, for Bunn had started the very hour he came to Greyfriars.

He would lock the gates a minute or so early, when he saw a fellow coming up the road. Since Bolsover's attempt and its unfortunate result, nobody had tried the effect of bribery and corruption. Neither had they ventured to knock Mr. Bunn's head against the wall, much as they would have liked to do so. The juniors fell into the habit of being very punctual at gates. But that did not save them from Mr. Bunn and his knavish tricks.

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Amazing and unaccountable as it seemed, the man was laying himself out to get the Removites into hot water. He let the other Forms alone. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth had nothing to complain of. The Shell fellows were not troubled. Neither were the fags of the Third and the Second. To the seniors Bunn was civility itself; Coker of the Fifth had been heard to remark that he was a civil chap, and Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, had a good opinion of him. For some mysterious reason, the new porter had constituted himself the special enemy of the Remove—and, above all, of Harry Wharton & Co.

Bob Cherry, illustrating a certain break in the quad, accidentally delivered a cricket-ball into the open doorway of the lodge. A terrific crash followed, and the dismayed juniors, looking in, saw Gosling's clock in fragments on the floor. They were quite certain that the ball had gone nowhere near the mantelpiece, and they were quite certain that Bunn had deliberately knocked

that clock down, in order to attribute the breakage to Bob Cherry's cricket-ball. But it was useless to say so to Mr. Quelch when the report was made. They had to acknowledge that it sounded too tall a story—for why should Bunn do it?

The report was made, and Bob received two hundred lines, and the further intimation that the bill for Gosling's clock would be stopped out of his pocket-money. Bob's allowance was not very large, and he had the happy prospect of being "stony" for several weeks.

Bunter was another victim. Billy Bunter had conceived the brilliant idea of palming off his postal-order story on the new porter. Bunter had a special eye for new boys, who often lent him money on that postal-order—before they knew him. A new porter, Bunter considered, might answer his purpose as well as a new junior, and Bunter tried. To his surprise and delight, Bunn cheerfully lent him half-a-crown on the solemn promise of its being repaid out of a postal-order which was absolutely certain to come the following morning.

The postal-order did not come—owing to some delay caused by the war, according to Billy Bunter. That evening Bunn reported the matter to Mr. Quelch. Mr. Quelch reprimanded him severely for lending money to juniors; but Bunn did not mind that. Billy Bunter received more than a reprimand. Mr. Quelch gave him a long lecture, and a swish, and stopped his pocket-money for the week to repay the half-crown.

Then came Fisher T. Fish's turn.

The Yankee junior, who was always "on the make," never so sincerely repented being on the make as he did after trying to "make" something out of Mr. Bunn. It was one of Fishy's agreeable customs to buy articles cheap at second-hand shops, and wait for an opportunity of re-selling them among his schoolfellows—naturally at an enhanced price.

How Mr. Bunn knew of Fisher T. Fish's peculiar customs was a mystery, but somehow he seemed to know all about the Removites. Mr. Bunn, referring to the fact that he was a stranger in the district, asked Master Fish, very respectfully, if he could recommend a shop where a new clock could be purchased. Fish could almost have hugged him. That, as he would have expressed it in the American language, was just where he lived! He undertook to purchase a new clock for the lodge at a bargain, and to get it from Courtfield himself, taking all the trouble in the matter out of pure, good nature. Mr. Bunn entrusted a sovereign to Fishy, who duly brought the new clock, which ticked away merrily for twenty-four hours, and then stopped, and could not be induced by any method of persuasion to go on again.

Whereupon Mr. Bunn made the discovery—which, apparently, he had not suspected before—that the clock was a cheap American one, and could not have cost Fisher T. Fish more than six or seven shillings. The Yankee junior had made quite a handsome profit on the transaction.

But his profit was short-lived. Fisher T. Fish often "slipped up" on his financial "deals," but never had he slipped up so badly as on this occasion. For the iniquitous Bunn reported the whole transaction to Mr. Quelch, producing the clock in the Form-master's study. Mr. Quelch chided the porter for having allowed a junior to undertake his duties for him in the matter of purchasing the clock.

But there was something more than a chiding for Fisher T. Fish. Mr. Quelch sent for him, and the way he spoke to him might have made a tortoise wriggle in its shell. Fish declared that Bunn must have done something to the clock to make it stop like that, for even American clocks generally went for more than twenty-four hours. But Mr. Quelch insisted upon knowing all the details. The bill had to be produced, and it revealed the fact that F. T. Fish had paid only seven shillings for the clock, for which he had charged Bunn a sovereign.

Mr. Quelch's wrath was terrific. The Remove fellows knew all about Fisher T. Fish's ways in business matters; but it was a new and shocking discovery to the Form-master. He hinted at expulsion, and Fisher T. Fish turned quite yellow; but the matter was settled with a thrashing that was quite a record in its way, and the

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refunding of Fishy's illicit profits. The unhappy Fish had to return the whole sovereign, and was left in possession of the precious clock, which had cost him seven shillings of his own money, as it turned out.

Whether it was the thrashing, or the loss of seven shillings, or both, certain it was that for days afterwards Fisher T. Fish looked quite sick. For once he had dealt with an individual who was sharper than himself, and he had been badly "left."

Fish maintained that Bunn must have deliberately damaged the clock. He declared that American clocks had been known to last for weeks. The juniors were quite prepared to believe that Bunn had damaged the clock; it was just one of his tricks. But they did not waste any sympathy on the business man of the Remove. Fishy had got what he deserved at last. And Fisher T. Fish did not try to sell any more articles to Mr. Bunn.

But it was No. 1 Study that suffered most from Mr. Bunn and his knavish tricks. It was not only in the matter of reporting, though Mr. Bunn never let an opportunity pass. But there were other ways and means. A hamper that arrived from home for Harry Wharton, containing all sorts of delicacies from his aunt, arrived in the study in a ruinous condition. It had passed through the porter's lodge, of course. Somewhere or other, in the course of transit, it had become drenched with water, and the beautiful pastries were a sticky mass when Wharton unpacked them. To accuse the porter of having deliberately mucked up that hamper was impossible. Yet the Famous Five had no doubt that it was in Bunn's lodge that the damage had been done.

A day or two later Johnny Bull's white rabbits were found dead. Somebody had opened their cage, and also taken the chain off Ogilvy's ferocious terrier. Who had done it? Johnny Bull almost wept over his rabbits, and vowed vengeance. But the culprit could not be discovered. But the finger of suspicion pointed to Bunn. It was in keeping with his inexplicable "down" on the Famous Five.

"Blessed if I don't wish Gosling was back," Bob Cherry remarked, in the study. "This fellow Bunn is simply a Hun. What on earth is he down on us specially for?"

"Nice boys like us, too!" said Nugent.

"The downfulness is terrific, but the mysteryfulness is great!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Gosling was a seraphic cherub in comparefulness. But what is the whyfulness?"

The "whyfulness" could not be discovered. But the Famous Five, having found that Bunn was determined to make matters warm for them, determined, in their turn, to make matters warm for Bunn. And, having ascertained that Mr. Bunn was not in his lodge one afternoon, they visited it, and proceeded to fill his arm-chair with tacks, and his slippers with treacle, and his bed with carbide of calcium.

And the unspeakable Bunn appeared in the doorway while they were busily engaged, and he brought Mr. Quelch with him.

It dawned upon the juniors, when they reflected on it, that Bunn must have been watching them, and that he had chosen his moment for bringing their Form-master on the scene.

What followed was painful in the extreme.

Probably Mr. Quelch's arm ached by the time he had finished with the chums of the Remove. Certainly, the Famous Five ached.

And they did not visit Bunn's lodge any more.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Very Wet!

"TIME our giddy visitors were here!" remarked Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton & Co. came off the cricket-ground and strolled down to the gates. They were expecting their friends from Highcliffe that afternoon—Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar. In spite of the war that reigned between Ponsonby & Co. and the

Famous Five, the Greyfriars chums continued on the best of terms with Courtenay and his friends. They had many interests in common, especially cricket—interests which did not interest the nuts of Highcliffe in the least.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come!" said Bob Cherry.

Mr. Bunn looked out of his lodge. In the little garden of the lodge the hose was lying, and Mr. Bunn walked towards it thoughtfully. He had been watering the little garden that afternoon, and Billy Bunter, who had come too near, had received a spraying from the hose. By accident, Mr. Bunn declared, and by deep and felonious design, as Bunter asseverated.

Mr. Bunn's eyes were glimmering behind his spectacles as he picked up the hose. The water sizzled over Gosling's geraniums.

But the juniors did not regard Mr. Bunn. They made it a point to ignore the unpopular and disagreeable porter.

Courtenay and De Courcy arrived at the gates, the latter arrayed in light-grey clothes that were things of beauty and joys for ever. The Caterpillar, in spite of his slacking, found energy enough to dress remarkably well, though sometimes he was seen in a slovenly state. It depended on his mood. On the rare occasions when he was seen with the nuts he liked to dress shabbily, apparently for no other reason than to irritate the elegants of Highcliffe.

"Walked all the way," said the Caterpillar, as he stopped. "Franky wouldn't let me swank in a car. I'm hardly ever allowed to swank since Franky came to Highcliffe."

"Fathead!" said Courtenay. "Hallo, you've got your new porter, have you?"

"Yes, a change for the worse," said Wharton. "A beast named Bunn!"

"Bunn!" said the Caterpillar. "I've heard that name before. P'r'aps I'm thinkin' of hot-cross buns, though," he added thoughtfully.

"The brute's been here nearly a week now!" said Bob. "And he has a down on us. We're reported for something or other every day, and he's as treacherous as a Prussian. A regular out-and-out cad!"

"What a delightful character, by gad!" said the Caterpillar. "Why don't you scrag him?"

"Too deep for us," said Nugent. "We started scragging his lodge for him yesterday, and the utter rotter brought Quelchy in on us."

"And the resultfulness was painful," remarked Hurrec Singh.

"Bunn!" repeated the Caterpillar. "I've heard that name. It was a lodge-keeper somewhere. Bunn, or Gunn, or Dunn, you know. I never forget names. Is that the man with the hose?"

"That's the rotter!"

"Collar him and turn his own hose on him!" suggested the Caterpillar. "Franky and I will do it. We can't be licked by your Headmaster."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You might be licked by your own, though. Bunny would raise Cain about it. He is a rank sneak and rotter—a real scoundrel! He tells lies!"

"Awful!" said the Caterpillar.

"And the queer thing is, that he came here with a special dislike for us," said Johnny Bull. "He started war at once, before we even knew him. It's jolly odd, and we can't account for it, unless he's cracked. Smithy thinks that somebody must have put him up to it—bribed him, you know—but who would?"

"Oh, Pon might," said the Caterpillar. "That would be a little game just after Pon's own heart. Only Pon's away now. He's been away a week, visiting home because his brother's got leave from the front. When did your man Bunn arrive?"

"Last Wednesday."

"Pon went on Tuesday, so he can't have seen him. 'Tain't Pon this time, then. Bunn! Bunn! I know that name." The Caterpillar started. "By gad! Do you know where the man comes from?"

"I don't," said Harry.

"I mean, who recommended him here? I suppose he had some sort of a recommendation?"

"Oh, yes, we know that. Bunter heard it," said Wharton, laughing. "He used to be employed by a

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Captain Gadsby, who sacked him because he was cutting down expenses owing to the war."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What's the joke?"

"Oh, by gad!" chuckled the Caterpillar. "I knew I knew the name; never forget names, you know. My strong point. There's Gadsby in the Fourth at Highcliffe, you may remember, and his elder brother is a captain. And Captain Gadsby had a lodgekeeper named Bunn, I remember, when I was at the place with Gaddy and the rest last term. They dragged me there. I told 'em I couldn't stand Gaddy's brother, but they made me go. I told Gaddy quite plain that I couldn't stand his major, any more than I could stand Gaddy himself, but Gaddy insisted that I was jokin', and took me. I remember old Bunny; very keen after tips, old Bunny was. So you've got Gaddy major's old lodgekeeper here."

"Oh, by Jove!" said Wharton.

"And Pon knows him well, of course; he often goes to Gaddy's place," chuckled the Caterpillar. "The noble nuts all went home with Gaddy last week or the week before, or some time or other. They've planted Gaddy major's old lodgekeeper on you—with instructions."

"Great Scott!"

The Famous Five thought they understood. The discovery that the Captain Gadsby who had recommended Mr. Bunn was the elder brother of Gadsby of Highcliffe let some light in upon the mystery.

"By Jove!" said Wharton. "It looks as if Pon had tipped the brute to make things warm for us."

"Just like Pon!" growled Johnny Bull.

"And that's the man?" said the Caterpillar, eyeing the porter across the garden fence. "So far as I remember Bunn, he was taller than this chap—a foot taller, I should say. It can't be the same Bunn."

"Must be, if Captain Gadsby's lodgekeeper was named Bunn, the one you saw," said Wharton. "This man is named Bunn, and he was lodgekeeper to Captain Gadsby. The captain can't have had two lodgekeepers of the same name, I suppose?"

De Courcy looked puzzled.

"Not very well," he agreed. "But now I look at the man he's much shorter than the Bunn I saw last term. It's very odd. Hallo! Look out!" yelled the Caterpillar suddenly.

Swoosh! Sizzzzz!

The porter, apparently unconscious of the group of juniors, had turned with the hose in his hand.

The nozzle bore directly upon the juniors, and the water was on at full force.

Whoosh! Splash!

The stream of water caught the Caterpillar fairly under the chin, and bowled him over. He sat down on the ground in a pool. The next instant the water was smiting Courtenay full in the face.

"Groooooogh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Stop it, you villain!"

"Great pip!"

Swish! Swoosh! Splash!

The Famous Five danced and hopped in wild efforts to escape the swishing stream of water.

In a few seconds they were thoroughly drenched.

Then Bunn shut off the water.

"Good 'evings, young gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "I'm werry sorry! The blooming thing wouldn't shut off! I'm sure I beg your pardon!"

"Groooooogh!"

"Ow! Ow! Ugh!"

"You silly fathead!"

Mr. Bunn looked distressed.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry, gentlemen. I didn't see you when I turned round. It was a haccident, I assure you, sirs!"

"I don't believe it!" howled Johnny Bull furiously. "You rotter! You've drenched us on purpose!"

"Oh, Master Bull!"

"By gad!" murmured the Caterpillar. "By the giddy dickens! Look at my clobber! Look at me! Oh, gad!"

The Removites and their guests were drenched, and

streaming with water. They cast furious looks at the apologetic Mr. Bunn.

"Scrag the cad!" exclaimed Wharton. "We know it wasn't an accident. Get hold of the rotter!"

The juniors scrambled furiously over the low fence. Mr. Bunn bolted for his lodge, and reached it in time. The door slammed, and the key turned.

Bob Cherry bestowed a thundering kick upon the door.

"Bunn, you beastly cad——"

"Oh, Master Cherry!"

"We'll scrag you! We'll smash you! Get the hose here and wash him out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Good egg!"

Wharton seized the hose, and rushed it towards the lodge. The door was locked, but the window was open. Mr. Bunn, within, slammed the window shut just as the captain of the Remove reached it.

But Wharton was too angry to stop. He crashed the nozzle of the hose through the glass, and there was a smash of fragments on the floor.

Swoooooosh!

The stream of water poured into the room.

Mr. Bunn made a wild break for the stairs, and the water caught him in the back of the neck as he fled. He roared and disappeared.

Wharton dropped the hose, panting.

"Well, I've drenched that beast, too!" he exclaimed.

"And there will be the dickens to pay for this!" said Nugent. "Another report to Quelch! Oh, my hat!"

"You fellows had better come in and dry yourselves," said Wharton to the two Highcliffe juniors.

"Yaas, I feel rather wet!" agreed the Caterpillar.

And the juniors, squelching out water at every step, made their way to the School House.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Muck-Up!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. and their two visitors dried themselves in the Remove dormitory. They had to change down to the skin, and clothes had to be lent to Courtenay and De Courcy. The Caterpillar surveyed his light grey "clobber" with comical dismay. Certainly those nobby clothes would never look the same again.

The juniors had finished changing, when Trotter looked in.

"Mr. Quelch wants to see you," he announced; and he added confidentially: "Bunn's in the study, Master Wharton. He's wet."

"Now for it!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Well, it was only tit for tat," said Nugent. "We can explain that to Quelch."

"The rotter will make out it was an accident, and we can't make out the same!" growled Wharton. "Come on! Will you chaps wait for us in the study. We sha'n't be long."

"Righto!" said Courtenay.

The Famous Five proceeded to Mr. Quelch's study. They proceeded there with many misgivings.

Bunn was in the room. He was standing in a pool of water on Mr. Quelch's carpet. That did not improve the carpet, naturally, and it probably added to the Remove master's ire. Bunn's trousers were dripping with water, which was remarkable, for the stream from the hose had caught him on the back of the neck, as Wharton knew well. It was another sample of the rascal's duplicity. He had evidently "mopped" water over his other garments in order to make out a better case against the juniors. He looked now as if he had been standing up to the neck in the river.

Mr. Quelch's brow was like a thundercloud as he eyed the Removites.

"What have you to say?" he exclaimed harshly. "Wharton, this is outrageous. Bunn tells me that you seized his garden hose, chased him into his lodge, smashed the window, and drenched him with water."

"He drenched us first, sir."

"A haccident, sir," said Mr. Bunn. "The young gents was standing close to my fence while I was a-waterin' the flowers, and the 'ose turned on them for a moment. I

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didn't see them, sir; they was creeping close to the fence, and I s'pose they was going to play some trick."

"We were not creeping, and we were not going to play any trick, sir," said Harry. "Bunn saw us quite plainly, and turned the hose on us deliberately."

"A ridiculous statement, Wharton. Why should Bunn do anything of the kind?"

"I don't know, sir, excepting that he has made himself as disagreeable as possible ever since he came here."

"That is absurd."

"It is true, sir. And I suspect that he has been put up to doing it, too."

"What utter nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Kindly be more careful in your statements, Wharton, and do not make wild accusations. Bunn wetted you by accident, and then you drenched him after breaking his window. I can understand that you were annoyed, but that is no excuse for your outrageous conduct. Look at the state the man is in!"

"We didn't do that, sir. I caught him in the neck with the hose as he scooted upstairs. He has drenched himself all over since then to make it look black against us!"

"Oh, dear!" said Mr. Bunn. "I'm a-catchin' my death of cold! I ain't likely to catch my death of cold a-purpose, I s'pose, sir!"

"Your statement is utterly absurd, Wharton, and I forbid you to repeat it!" said Mr. Quelch angrily. "You make matters worse, not better, by these wild accusations. I shall punish you severely. Your pocket-money will be stopped until Bunn's clothes are paid for; they are quite spoiled. You will remain within gates for the next two half-holidays, and I shall cane you severely!"

"Oh!"

"You may go, Bunn. You had better change your clothes at once; you should have done so before coming here. Now, Wharton!"

The Famous Five said no more; it was evidently useless. They went through the swishing with heroic fortitude.

But their feelings were homicidal as they left the study, squeezing and rubbing their aching hands.

"Oh, that villain, Bunn!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hands! Yow!"

"The yowfulness is terrific!" mumbled Hurree Singh dolorously.

It was an unhappy band that marched into No. 1 Study, where Courtenay and the Caterpillar were waiting for them. The Highcliffe fellows gave them sympathetic looks.

"Had it bad?" asked Courtenay.

"Ow! Yow! Yes, rather!"

"Wow—wow!"

"The painfulness is terrific!"

"Gated for two half-holidays, too!" groaned Wharton. "That knocks on the head the cricket match we were fixing up with your team, Courtenay. We shall have to scratch it, unless you can find another date."

"We'll find another date," said Courtenay at once. "The Highcliffe eleven isn't full up with fixtures, by any means. That's all right!"

The chums of the Remove, realising that this was not a very merry entertainment for their visitors, suppressed their groans, and bore their sufferings as well as they could; but it was some little time before they could find energy enough to get tea. Mr. Quelch had exerted himself in administering that licking, and the chums, hardy as they were, were fairly knocked out for once.

"You fellows will be ready for tea," said Wharton at last. "Excuse us—we didn't mean to entertain you in this way."

"Don't mench!" said the Caterpillar. "We're all sympathy. Tell you what," he added, with a brilliant inspiration; "we'll get tea. Franky is a regular corker at it; and I can make the tea——"

"You jolly well won't!" said Courtenay. "I know how you make tea. Leave it to me, you chaps."

"Yaas, go on groanin' a bit; it will relieve your feelin's," said the Caterpillar considerably; "we'll do the bizney. I suppose the grub's in the cupboard—what?"

"Yow-ow! Yes."

De Courcy opened the cupboard. Then he stared.

"By gad!"

"The things are there," said Wharton; "there's rather a good spread. It would have been better if my hamper hadn't been mucked up, but——"

"Looks to me as if the spread's been mucked up, too!" remarked the Caterpillar. "Your friend, Temple, seems to have been lookin' in."

"What?"

The chums of the Remove rushed to the cupboard, and there was a yell of wrath. The cupboard was in an almost indescribable state. A handsome spread had been laid in by the Famous Five, in honour of their visitors, but the spread did not look very handsome now.

Cakes and biscuits had been soaked with ink and gum. The jam jars had been opened, and the jam was smeared over the sardines, which had been turned out of the tins, and over everything else in the cupboard. Even the loaf was reeking with ink. Glass jars and bottles were all broken, and the fragments of glass mixed up with jelly, and jam, and preserved fruits. In the midst of the heap of mixed eatables, carbide of calcium had been spread, giving the whole mass a fearful smell.

The cupboard, evidently, would require some cleaning. As for the eatables, even Billy Bunter would not have been willing to tackle them!

"Great Julius Cæsar!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "The villains!"

"Temple, the rotter!" howled Johnny Bull.

That no doubt could exist in their minds as to the identity of the raider, a large card had been stuck on the heap. On the card was daubed, in large letters, with a brush:

"WITH C. R. TEMPLE'S COMPLIMENTS."

Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth, had raided the study on more than one occasion. But certainly he had never perpetrated such an outrage as this before. The chums of the Remove even forgot the smart in their hands. They breathed wrath and vengeance.

"Oh, the rotters!" said Nugent. "Temple and Dabney, of course! They knew we had visitors coming, too. A rotten trick!"

"Looks rather sticky, don't it?" said the Caterpillar thoughtfully. "I don't think I shall eat any of that, on second thoughts."

"The whole blessed lot mucked up!" said Wharton ruefully. "Oh, my hat! We'll simply scalp them for this!"

"Let's go and scalp 'em now," suggested the Caterpillar. "We'll lend you a hand—or, rather, Franky will lend you a hand, and I'll watch you."

The Removites were too wrathful to wish to delay their vengeance. They wanted to get to close quarters with Cecil Reginald Temple, and they wanted it at once.

"Come on!" said Wharton.

And the whole party rushed for the Fourth-Form passage in search of Cecil Reginald Temple.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Straw!

CECIL REGINALD was in the passage, chatting with Dabney and Fry and Scott. If Cecil Reginald had perpetrated that outrage in No. 1 Study he might have expected a visit from the indignant Removites. But apparently he wasn't expecting one. Cecil Reginald was leaning gracefully on the door of his study, chatting, in his drawling tones, laying down the law on the subject of cricket.

The sudden rush of the Removites came like a thunderbolt.

Cecil Temple glanced up lazily at the rush of footsteps along the passage. He had no time for more than that.

For, in the twinkling of an eye, the indignant Removites were upon him.

Three or four pairs of hands were laid upon Cecil Reginald at the same moment, and he was whirled off his feet.

"Great Scott!" yelled Temple. "What the thunder——"

"Bump him!"

"Rag him!"

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"Snatch him bald-headed!"

Bump! went Temple on his own study door, and the door burst open, and the Removites staggered into the study with Temple in their grasp.

They rushed him to the grate, where there was, fortunately, no fire. His head was shoved into the grate. Then Johnny Bull raked in the chimney with the shovel. The result, for the Temple, was dreadful.

"By gad!" chirruped the Caterpillar, in great glee. "What a ripplin' wheeze! I'll serve Pon like that, some day, by gad! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groooooch!"

"Soot him!"

"Rub his nose in it!"

"Groooooch! Help! Rescue! Yooooop!"

Dabney and Fry and Scott were rushing valiantly to the rescue of their chief; but they were knocked right and left. Courtenay and the Caterpillar cheerfully joined in the scrapping. Dabney and Fry and Scott were piled in a corner, and the study table overturned upon them.

Temple rolled on the hearthrug, reeking with soot; but the avengers were not satisfied yet.

Bob Cherry locked the door, to keep out any possible interference from the rest of the Fourth. Wharton rushed to the study cupboard.

"Here's jam! Here's treacle!" he shouted. "We'll give him some of his own handiwork!"

"Good egg! Go it!"

"Yaroooh!" shrieked Temple. "Leave off! Wharrer you at? Are you gone dotty? What have I done, you silly idiots?"

"Mucked up our feed, you sweep! Give him the jam!"

"I haven't!" yelled Temple.

"Rats!"

"I haven't been near your silly study!" raved Temple. "You thundering idiots! You crass chumps! You blithering jabberwocks!"

Wharton held back the jam and paused.

"You didn't muck up the grub in our study cupboard?" he demanded.

"No!" yelled Temple furiously. "I wish I had, you beast, but I didn't!"

"Then who did?"

"How should I know, you fatheaded duffer? Oh, I'll smash you for this! Grooh!"

"Your name was written up, with your compliments," exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"It was somebody else who wrote it, then. Yow-ow!"

"Great Scott!"

The Removites paused. Not a single doubt had entered their minds that the raid on No. 1 had been the work of their old rival of the Fourth. To their innocent minds it was hard to suspect any fellow of writing up another chap's name over his own handiwork.

"It—it wasn't you?" stammered Wharton, quite taken aback.

Temple raved.

"Don't I keep on telling you it wasn't, you shrieking idiot?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"There has been a slight errorfulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the esteemed Temple has been sooted for another esteemed idiot."

"Grooooooch!"

"But—but who could have done it?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Even Skinner wouldn't have put up Temple's name if he'd done it. Who could be mean enough?"

"Well, my hat!" said Johnny Bull. "Sorry, Temple."

"Groooch! Ooooch!"

"We—we found your name there, and concluded it was you," said Wharton. "You've played the giddy ox like that before, you know, only not quite so bad. But we're sorry—we'll say that."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, my esteemed sooty Temple."

Temple staggered up. He was breathing fury and vengeance and soot. He blinked through the soot at the Removites, his eyes rolling.

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

"Oh, you crass, silly idiots! Oh, you rotters! Look at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites did look at him, and they roared. Cecil Reginald Temple did not feel funny, but he looked funny, at that moment.

"By gad," said the Caterpillar, "what an unfortunate mistake! Temple, you are at liberty to consider yourself unsooted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly well soot you, you burlin' idiot!" yelled Temple.

"Here, hold on!" gasped the Caterpillar, dodging, as the captain of the Fourth rushed at him. "Keep off! You're sooty! Help!"

Nugent unlocked the door, and the raiders rushed out. Temple was not nice at close quarters in his present state.

The Caterpillar dodged him wildly round the study, and Temple, fortunately, stumbled over a chair. By the time he had gained his feet, the Caterpillar was in the passage, fleeing for his life. Temple of the Fourth followed the raiders to the end of the passage, scattering soot wherever he trod; but he did not follow further. He was not in a state to appear in public.

Harry Wharton & Co. returned breathlessly to No. 1 Study.

"By gad, what a narrow escape!" ejaculated the Caterpillar, sinking into the armchair. "The sooty brute nearly had me, by gad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So it wasn't Temple," said Courtenay, laughing. "Still, the mistake was natural enough, as you found his name and accomplishments here. He shouldn't let the other fellows borrow his name."

"It's jolly queer," said Wharton. "We've got to find out who did it, and scrag him. We'll let Temple have a hand in the scragging, as compensation. I'll ask the fellows along the passage."

For the next ten minutes the Famous Five were asking questions up and down the Remove-passage. It was from Peter Todd that they received information. Peter Todd had been swotting in his study while the other fellows were at cricket-practice.

"Seen any cad hanging about while we were down at the cricket?" Wharton asked him. "Our study's been raided."

Peter reflected.

"No; only the porter."

Wharton gave a whoop.

"Bunn?"

"I noticed Bunn in the passage," said Peter; "I didn't see him go into your study. But I suppose a porter wouldn't raid a study."

"Wouldn't he, the cad?" shouted Bob Cherry. "It was Bunn! He's taken to ragging our study now. We—we'll scalp the beast!"

"Hold on!" said Peter. "You'll have to prove it, you know."

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"We can't prove it," he said. "He sneaked in when we were at cricket-practice, of course."

"And Quelchy would snort at the idea," said Johnny Bull. "He wouldn't be likely to believe that Bunn would rag a study like a cheeky fag."

"Not likely."

"It was Bunn all the same," said Wharton. "Only that worm would be mean enough to put up another fellow's name. A man of his age playing such tricks; it stands to reason he's been bribed to do it."

"Good old Pon!" grinned the Caterpillar. "This is rather deep of Pon, if it's Pon's work, isn't it? I rather admire Pon. He is astute."

But Harry Wharton & Co. did not share the Caterpillar's admiration for Pon's astuteness. If he had bribed the new porter to worry and harass the chums of the Remove, it might be astute, but they did not regard it as playing the game.

The Famous Five had no doubt whatever that the raid in No. 1 was the work of Bunn, their self-constituted

enemy. But they realised that it was useless to say so, when all proof was lacking.

"We'll jolly well rag him for it!" said Wharton. "But we'll be jolly careful about it, and keep Quelchy off the grass. Now, let's see about tea."

New supplies were brought in, and the Famous Five and their guests had tea at last. Cheerfulness was restored—especially by discussion of the punishment that was to fall upon the iniquitous Bunn.

Something lingering, with boiling oil in it, was what they regarded as an appropriate punishment. But that was not feasible. But they were not long in deciding upon the nature of the retribution.

"We won't give the brute a chance of reporting us," said Wharton. "We'll collar him after dark in the quad, and pitch him into the fountain. Then we'll scoot without letting him recognise us. To-morrow—"

"To-night, dear boys," urged the Caterpillar. "Don't leave us out. Let us have the pleasure of takin' a hand. Your Bunn-bird has drenched us, and spoiled my clothes. I'm yearnin' for revenge."

"Yes, let us be on in the scene," said Courtenay, laughing.

"There'll be a row, you know," said Wharton. "We may get bowled out—"

"We thrive on rows, deah boy," said the Caterpillar. "Besides, we ain't in any danger. A report to our Form-master at Highcliffe won't hurt us. I'll make it all right with Mobby. I'll hint that my noble uncle has sent him a kind message. That'll make Mobby all smiles."

"Then it's a go!" said Wharton. "Only, if you stay till after dark, you'll be late back."

"That's all serene—Mobby will excuse us. I'll tell him my uncle wished to be remembered to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

So it was settled. And when dusk descended upon the old Close of Greyfriars, seven juniors were on the war-path, and their quarry was Bunn, the porter. Vengeance was to fall upon him at last for his many iniquities.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

An Astounding Discovery!

BUNN had locked the gates. Micky Desmond of the Remove had been caught out, being one second late, and his name had been taken. Mr. Bunn had several other names to report, for various delinquencies, and, a little later, he quitted his lodge to make his way to Mr. Quelch's study. He was grinning as he crossed the quadrangle in the dusk, and his eyes glimmered behind his spectacles.

Mr. Bunn was finding his sojourn at Greyfriars quite agreeable, and quite to his taste. Certainly the heroes of the Remove had had a high old time since the arrival of Mr. Bunn.

But vengeance, as the novelists say, was at hand.

As the new porter passed under the trees, there was a sudden rush of feet.

Mr. Bunn, taken by surprise, was bowled over in a twinkling.

He went down heavily to the ground, and a cloth was whipped over his face, blindfolding him.

"Got him!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Shush!"

The porter struggled furiously. His voice, in muffled accents, came from under the enveloping cloth.

"Grooh! I know you! Lemme go! I'll report yer! Ow!"

Bob Cherry planted his knee in the small of Mr. Bunn's back, pinning him face downwards on the ground.

"Got the bounder!" chuckled the Caterpillar. "Now for the fountain."

"Tie it over his eyes first," whispered Courtenay. "You don't want the beast to spot your chivvies."

"Gerrooogh! Leggo! Help!"

"Hold him!"

"Help!"

The porter was struggling fiercely. Johnny Bull gripped his ears, and Frank Nugent took a hefty grasp upon his hair.

"He won't get away, unless he leaves me his scalp!" murmured Nugent, with a chuckle.

Then Nugent gave a yell of consternation. That Mr. Bunn should leave him his scalp was the very last thing that Nugent really expected to happen. But, as a matter of fact, that was precisely what Mr. Bunn did!

As he struggled to free himself, his head parted with his hair, and Nugent, dazed with amazement, found himself holding a head of hair in his hands, a foot from the porter's crown.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent. "Look! I—I—I've pulled his hair off! Oh, dear!"

"It's a wig!" yelled Bob.

"A wig? Oh!"

It was evidently a wig—a false scalp with thick, grizzled hair attached. In the dusk, the juniors stared at it in amazement. So surprised were they that Mr. Bunn succeeded in struggling loose, and jumping up.

"Collar him!" roared Bob.

He made a clutch at the porter, and caught his leg, and Mr. Bunn, as he bounded away, came heavily to the ground again. His spectacles had fallen off, and they were ground to fragments under a heavy boot. The juniors piled on Mr. Bunn with one accord. The discovery that Mr. Bunn wore a wig astounded them, and they meant to see whether he was further disguised.

"Lemme go!" implored Mr. Bunn. "I—I won't report yer, honour bright! Lemme go, young gents—oh, lemme go!"

"No hurry," said Wharton coolly. "It strikes me that you're an impostor, Bunny—a spoofer of some sort. We're going to know. My hat!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Sixth strode upon the scene. Wingate had a frown on his brow, and his ash-plant in his hand.

But, as it happened, his ash-plant was not wanted.

"What's this row about?" demanded Wingate, peering at the shadowy group under the elms. "What are you up to?"

"We've collared Bunn——"

"What!"

"And he's in disguise—padded all over, and false beard and whiskers and a wig!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Cherry!"

"It's a fact!" yelled Bob. "Look at him!"

"Bring him into the light!" said the startled Wingate.

"Yank him out!"

"Hurray! This way with Bunny!"

The triumphant juniors dragged Bunn out from under the trees. They grasped him by the arms and legs and ears, and rushed him along, bumping him over the ground. He was bundled into the light from the School House doorway.

"Now let's have a look at him," said Wharton.

There was a roar as Bunn was dragged to his feet, and the streaming light from the doorway fell full upon his face.

For the face, though devoid of hair, was not clean-

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

concerning

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

appears in

YOUR EDITOR'S CHAT ON PAGE 28

READ IT! THINK IT OVER! WRITE A POSTCARD!

Mr. Bunn's mutton-chop whiskers came off in Harry Wharton's fingers, as he grasped at them.

Johnny Bull grabbed at his beard, and it came off too. "By gad!" said the Caterpillar. "He's in disguise all over! By thunder, he must be some giddy criminal."

"A disguised burglar, or something," chuckled Wharton. "By Jove! We've found him out. He can see us now if he likes. We're going to do the reporting this time. We'll take him to Mr. Quelch."

"Yank him along!"

"Leggo!" screamed Mr. Bunn.

"Hold on!" said the Caterpillar. "Don't you notice that his dulcet voice is changin', as well as his good looks? Seems to me I've heard that voice before."

"He's clean-shaven," said Courtenay, feeling over the face of the porter, in the dark under the trees. The face could only be dimly seen. "Quite clean-shaven."

"Ow! Leggo!"

"He's padded!" roared Bob Cherry, making another discovery. "He ain't really fat at all. He's in disguise all over."

"Great Scott!"

"Must be a criminal! Yank him along to the house. He ain't a real porter at all!" panted Johnny Bull.

"Hold on!" repeated the Caterpillar. "I tell you——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Wingate."

The struggle under the trees had attracted attention. A dozen fellows were coming up, and Wingate of the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 395.

shaven—it was a smooth, youthful face which had never needed shaving. There was grease-paint upon it; but without the false beard and whiskers and spectacles it was easily recognised. And the chums of the Remove yelled, with one voice:

"PONSONBY!"

"Ponsonby!" stuttered Wingate.

"Good old Pon!" grinned the Caterpillar. "I knew his voice—I was sure I knew his voice! Oh, Pon, what a stunnin' jape!"

Ponsonby of Highcliffe panted for breath. For it was Ponsonby—Ponsonby revealed at last. The Greyfriars fellows stared at him blankly, hardly believing their eyes. Mr. Bunn the porter was Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

"Well, this beats the band!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Ponsonby! My only summer hat! Ponsonby! Oh, dear!"

"The esteemed Ponsonby! My dear chums, you could knock me downfully with a coke-hammer!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ponsonby," roared Wingate, "what are you doing here, you young rascal, in those clothes? Those are the porter's clothes!"

"He's the porter!" yelled Wharton. "Don't you understand? He's Bunn!"

"Bunn! Ponsonby! Ponsonby! Bunn!" stuttered the captain of Greyfriars.

"Yes, rather! It's a jape!"

NEXT
MONDAY—

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

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

"A stunnin' jape!" chuckled the Caterpillar. "This beats Wibley's little joke on us, dear boys. I never thought Pon had it in him, by gad!"

"It—it's not possible!" gasped Wingate, in utter amazement. "Ponsonby, do you mean to say that you've been here, calling yourself Bunn—a porter?"

Ponsonby burst into a reckless laugh.

"Yes; and I took you all in! And I've given these rotters a high old time! That's what I came for. Old Quelch was a silly ass, and you are another, Wingate! As for these cads——"

"Duck him!" roared Bolsover major furiously.

"Duck him!" yelled the juniors.

"Bring him in to Mr. Quelch!" exclaimed Wingate. "He will have to answer for this."

But Wingate's voice was unheeded for once. The Famous Five did not intend to take Mr. Bunn before the Form-master now that they knew he was Ponsonby. Neither did they intend to allow him to escape scot-free. They rushed him away towards the big fountain in the Close.

Ponsonby struggled wildly

But his struggles did not avail him. He was swung into the air in the grasp of many hands.

The Removites had many wrongs to avenge, and the hour of vengeance had struck. Up went Ponsonby of Highcliffe high in the air.

"One," shouted Wharton—"two—three! Go!"

And Ponsonby went.

Splash!

"Hurrah!"

Ponsonby disappeared into the fountain. He came up spluttering.

"Gerrroooooch!"

"Better hook it, Pon," gasped the Caterpillar, almost overcome with laughter. "You don't want to see Mr. Quelch, do you? Hook it over the wall!"

"Grooh!"

Ponsonby bolted.

It was an inglorious ending to his great jape at Greyfriars; but at that moment Ponsonby was only thinking of escape.

He dashed towards the school wall, and the juniors, whooping, sped on his track. But fear lent wings unto Cecil Ponsonby, and he reached the wall, leaving a trail of water behind him, and leaped up and scrambled over.

He dropped in the road and rolled in the dust.

Then, panting, he picked himself up and fled. With a speed that he had never equalled on the cinder-path, Ponsonby dashed away for Highcliffe.

Greyfriars had seen the last of Mr. Bunn.

Courtenay and the Caterpillar walked home a little later chuckling. At Highcliffe they found Ponsonby—furious. The great jape, which had started so well, had ended in disaster; and Ponsonby was uneasy as to the possible results, now that his imposition had been so completely exposed.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not bear malice; and, besides, the finish had been a triumph for them. But Mr. Quelch was naturally greatly exasperated, and a very warm message was sent over to Highcliffe; and it needed all the influence of the obsequious Mr. Mobbs to save his favourite from condign punishment. But Mr. Mobbs succeeded, and Harry Wharton & Co. were glad of it when they learned from Courtenay that Pon had escaped with "lines."

Greyfriars was once more without a porter; but a few days later Gosling returned, his nephew being on the high road to recovery.

Gosling was surprised by the hearty reception the juniors gave him. After their experience with Mr. Bunn they were glad to have Gosling again. Gosling was quite a shining paragon of a porter by comparison. And the final downfall of the iniquitous Bunn quite consoled the heroes of the Remove for their painful experiences with Ponsonby the porter.

THE END

(Another magnificent long complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled, "Backing Up Bunter!" by Frank Richards. Order your copy of "The Magnet Library" in advance. Price One Penny.

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FAVOURITE FRIENDS IN FICTION.

No. 4.



The one-time "Boy Without a Name"

Each youthful soul entrances,
As one who always plays the game
In any circumstances.
He kicks the ball and wields the bat
With wondrous vim and vigour;
And many schoolmates marvel at
His slim and graceful figure.

The precious Pon's ignoble host,
So dandified and silly,
Who think it right to swank and boast
Like "blades" of Piccadilly,
Would welcome Frank with keen delight
To join their ranks so "horsey,"
But Franky stands for what is right,
Well championed by De Courcy.

When Courtenay came to Highcliffe first,
Calm, confident, and clever,
The "nuts" rose up and did their worst
To ruin him for ever.
The crafty Mr. Mobbs agreed
To have the lad ejected;
But Franky, in his hour of need,
Found friends when least expected.

Since then he's striven might and main
And founded many a movement
Within the walls of his domain
To bring about improvement.
The task was awkward in a way,
And found but few staunch backers;
But gallant Franky won the day,
And rounded up the slackers.

De Courcy, once a "roarin' blade,"
With qualities at zero,
Through Courtenay's efforts has been made
A really ripping hero.
While Smithson, who, with several more,
Was once a rank outsider,
Is now a white man to the core,
With nobler views and wider.

Three cheers for Courtenay, who has worked
In such a splendid manner!
May many who at one time shirked
Enlist beneath his banner.
Let groans arise for caddish Pon,
And all his imperfections;
But Frank we'll always look upon
As first in our affections!

Next Monday:

BREEZY BEN & DISMAL DUTCHY.

No. 5 of this grand new series.

STARTS TO-DAY!



The Prince of Altenburg!

The FIRST INSTALMENT
of a Great New Serial Story
dealing with the Thrilling
Adventures of Two British
Schoolboys.

By ANTHONY THOMAS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Teddy Burke Asks for Trouble!

"Lecture?" asked Teddy Burke. "That was the worst part of it! After laying it into me like he did, he kept me there for nearly half an hour! It's the sack for me if I get legged up before him again this term!"

Jack Darrell nodded. There was no one in the whole of St. Dunstan's school who had the knack of getting into trouble so easily as his chum. And this last row had been more serious than usual, for the Head had warned Burke that if he had any more complaints about him he would expel him.

As the two walked along, they came to the boundary fence dividing the school fields from those of Mr. Roger Stone, a farmer, whose chief trouble in life was that he lived near St. Dunstan's. This field in particular was one which had caused more letters to pass between the Head and the farmer than any other.

It was asking for trouble almost to look at it. Yet Teddy Burke had scrambled over the high fence which divided the two fields before Darrell knew what he was doing.

"I say," Jack called out to him, "don't be an ass, Teddy! If you get nabbed—"

"Don't be a funk!" retorted Burke. "Come on!"

Darrell came. Had he known to what strange adventures and terrible experiences this first step would lead him, he would surely have argued with his chum.

In the field Burke pulled out a copy of the "Daily Comet," and showed Darrell a photograph.

"Blowed if I didn't think it was you at first!" he said. "It's a jolly good photo of you!"

"Rats!" retorted Darrell, but he looked at the photo with considerable interest. It was a fairly big one of a boy of fifteen or so. Underneath it was an explanation:

"The Prince of Altenburg, the little state which the Germans want to steal. At present Altenburg is ruled by a regent, as the young prince does not attain his sixteenth year until a few months hence, when he will become the ruler of one of the smallest, and yet most important, independent states in Europe. German influence with the regent has been useless, and they have attempted to sway the prince, but by his own wish he is now at an English public school, where he will be quite safe from the Huns."

"I wouldn't like to be in his shoes, anyway," Darrell said, handing back the paper. "Let's sit down here. I don't want to fag right across the beastly field— Oh, my hat! Look!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

Teddy Burke was startled by the sudden change in his chum's voice. A moment later, and he realised the cause. Coming towards them was Mr. Roger Stone, and running joyfully in front of him were two Great Danes. The farmer was feared, but his dogs had become another name for terror at St. Dunstan's.

"We're done!" Burke said hopelessly, realising that to bolt was simply asking for more trouble than standing still. "What an ass! Why on earth—"

He broke off helplessly as he realised what all this meant. There was no help for it. To-morrow he would be expelled. For Darrell it would not be so serious, since his record this term was comparatively clean.

"Say you came to warn me," Darrell said, trying hard to think of some way out for Burke. "He'll take us himself to the Head, I'll bet! We'll have to own up, anyway."

Burke's mind was working at double pressure, and, as his Form-master frequently pointed out, Burke had brains, if only he would apply them in the right direction. At present they were concentrated on the farmer and his dogs, who were already within hailing distance. And it was then that the inspiration came to Burke.

"Don't you say a word, Jack," he said quickly. "Leave it to me. We'll get out of this all right. You'll play up to me, won't you, Jack?"

"Anything. I'll do what you want. Shut up, or he'll hear us! The fun begins!"

The dogs were already jumping up at them, but both were too fond of dogs to mind that. Then, as the farmer came nearer, Teddy Burke went to meet him.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Stone!" he said cheerfully. "I was just coming to see you and ask permission to go all over your farm."

"What!" Mr. Stone was amazed.

"I want to take my friend the Prince—I mean, Jack Darrell over a real British farm."

"What's your game?" demanded the farmer. "Don't you come trying any tricks on me!"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Stone!" Burke suddenly became dignified. "I was asking you a very civil question, and one that is rather important. If you can't trust me, I'd better explain more fully. Would you mind looking at that?"

He pulled the illustrated paper from his pocket, and, pointing to the photo of the prince, handed it to Mr. Stone.

"Well?" said the farmer, when he had read it.

"Sh!" Burke gave a prodigious wink, and indicated his chum, who still stood some yards away playing with the two dogs. "You recognise the photo?"

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

Mr. Stone looked at the paper, and then at Darrell. His eyes came back at last to Burke, and they were full of suspicion as they rested on him.

"D'you mean to say that lad there is the Prince——" he began.

"No, I don't!" retorted Burke. "It's not my place to give away secrets of state. But we're very anxious to give this chap a good impression of England, Mr. Stone, and I meant to call on you. I'm sure you won't mind giving us permission to go all over your farm?"

For a minute the farmer stared at him, but Teddy Burke met his gaze without flinching. Then Mr. Stone's eyes wandered to Darrell, who was still in the background.

"He looks a nice sort of lad," said the farmer slowly. "The dogs seem to have taken a fancy to him."

"He's a ripping chap," answered Burke, "and as British as you or I. We all call him Jack. He'll never join the Germans!"

And there again Teddy Burke, though he had no notion of it at the time, was a hopelessly false prophet.

"Good!" The farmer did not want even yet to commit himself. "Well, perhaps you'll bring him down to the farm, and I'll take you round myself one day. Only I don't like you lads trespassing in my fields."

"Of course not!" Teddy Burke was indignant at the idea. "Then, if it is all right for the Head, we can come along in a day or two?"

"Yes," the farmer nodded. "I'll show the youngster what a British farmer can do. Hi, Bess! Silver!"

The dogs bounded away from Darrell, and came to Mr. Stone, who nodded to Burke, but his hand went towards his cap as he called "Good-day!" to Darrell. The next moment both the farmer and the dogs were going back across the field again.

Burke joined Darrell.

"What yarn have you pitched him, Teddy? Hope you haven't landed us into any worse mess?"

Teddy Burke laughed cheerily.

"You wait! I won't tell you the joke till we get back. But I hope your Highness won't be displeased."

Darrell looked at him for a second, and then the idea began to dawn on him.

"Teddy Burke, you're an ass!" he said. "There's trouble ahead for both of us over this game!"

Mr. Roger Stone was not a talkative man, but the secret he had learned that day was an item worth telling. In the evening he called to see the proprietor of the Royal Hotel, and told him the news.

In this way it came to the ears of a visitor at the Royal, Mr. Lewis Mackay by name. He was a Scotsman, so he said, and was on a business tour in his motor-car. The news of the honour which had been conferred upon the school interested him greatly, as he had a boy of his own, and was wondering where to send him.

Early the following morning Mr. Mackay called on Mr. Stone, and had a quite a long talk with the farmer. The rest of the day he was exceedingly busy. Amongst other things he did was to address a note to "Mr. Jack Darrell, St. Dunstan's School," and he took considerable pains to ensure that it should be delivered to the right person.

So far, neither Teddy Burke nor Jack Darrell had worried much over their escape from the farmer. After expressing his belief that there would be trouble, Darrell had dropped the matter, and it was not in Burke's nature to worry about anything.

It was just before tea on the day following their adventure when, as Jack Darrell came in from the playing-fields, Bostock, the school porter, came and handed him a note. Darrell, in surprise, opened it.

There was no detailed address. Simply Dunstanbury and the date, and at the top the letter was marked "Private and Confidential."

Dear Mr. Darrell,—I am very anxious to see you alone for a few minutes on a purely personal matter. If you could manage to meet me at Rook's Corner at eight-thirty to-night, I am sure you will not regret it.

"Yours respectfully,

"L. MACKAY."

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Jack, and as soon as Burke came along he showed the note to him.

Teddy Burke was uneasy.

"I don't like it," he said slowly. "Jolly lonely place for a meeting is Rook's Corner."

"Well, I'm going," Darrell asserted. "It might be important. I guess you'd better not come, because if I get spotted, there'll be a row."

Burke agreed. But when his chum came about a quarter to eight to tell him he was going to slip off, Teddy Burke was

nowhere to be found. Eluding the vigilant eyes of all those whose duty it was to prevent him from leaving the school grounds, Jack Darrell went off to keep the mysterious appointment.

It was almost dark when he arrived there, but he had not to wait long. A tall, heavily-built man stepped from behind a little clump of trees.

"Mr. Darrell?" he asked.

"Yes, I came to meet Mr. Mackay," Jack answered.

"That's right," the stranger said. "I have a message——"

He spoke the last words slowly, and as he did so a handkerchief seemed to come from nowhere, and was pressed tightly on Jack's face. A sickly scent filled his nostrils, and in an instant the trees and the man before him merged together into strange, twisting shapes.

Then, from far away, it seemed, came a cry:

"Keep up, Jack! I'm with you!"

Jack's last conscious vision was of Teddy Burke, huge and big, jumping before him, and aiming a terrific blow at the man. After that everything was confused and uncertain. And suddenly it went very, very dark.

But Teddy Burke was fighting. He was no match for the big man, yet, inspired by the fury which possessed him, he was struggling and shouting for help with all his strength. Just for an instant his call seemed to have found an answer, for a big car swung round the corner, and came to a standstill.

Someone jumped out of the car, and Teddy yelled again:

"Collar this chap! Collar him, quick!"

But the big man also called out:

"Hit him over the head—young idiot!"

The next instant the whole world was blotted out from Teddy Burke. A crashing blow on the top of his head sent him reeling backwards, to fall across the unconscious body of his chum, Jack Darrell.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

On a Perilous Path!

Once during the night Teddy Burke remembers that he wakened, but almost before he could move, something was forced to his lips, and he swallowed a quite pleasant-tasting dose. After that he slept on.

The next thing in his recollection was of someone shaking him violently, and crying:

"Waken up, you beggar! Waken up!"

Opening his eyes, he found Jack Darrell standing over him. Teddy's head was aching violently, and his mouth was as dry as a desert.

"My aunt!" he murmured, and raised himself to a sitting position. "Where on earth—— What place is this, Jack?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," Darrell answered. "I wakened you up specially to hear all about everything. How did we get here? Why? What's the general idea of it all, anyway?"

Burke had no more idea than his chum. He could only tell him how he had decided to take the risk, and get down to Rook's Corner yesterday, and he had actually been in hiding there when the man who called himself Mackay turned up. He was there a full ten minutes before Jack arrived.

"Then you know what happened," Burke added. "The chap went for you, and I came out and rushed at him. I think I'd have got him, too, if the beastly motor hadn't turned up. The fellow who got out simply gave me one over the head, and here I am!"

"And where is this?"

Jack looked round the apartment as though hoping to discover something. But the room was like many hundreds of rooms, large and comfortably-furnished, but with nothing of special interest. The bed had evidently been brought in quite recently, and was pushed against the wall. The only curious thing in the whole place was the window, the lower half of which was blocked out while the upper half was too high for anyone of normal height to see through.

Jack brought one of the chairs, and, standing on it, looked out of the window.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "Get up Teddy and look!"

It was a wonderful scene on which they gazed. The house was apparently built right on the edge of a high cliff, and beneath them stretched the sea, with waves running joyously high, and the foam on the top of the breakers sparkling and dancing in the bright sunlight. To their right they could see the high rocky coast, and the huge breakers flinging themselves against the barriers of the land.

"A seaside holiday for us, my lad!" Teddy Burke, despite his head, was still cheerful.

"But what's it all for?" Darrell asked again. "D'you know what I think? It's that yarn you told old Stone, and now they've collared us for spies or something."



Someone jumped out of the car, and Teddy Burke yelled again. "Collar this chap! Collar him quick!" But the big man also called out: "Hit him over the head—young idiot!" The next instant a crashing blow over the head sent Burke reeling backwards, to fall across the unconscious body of his chum. (See page 24.)

He got down from the chair, and as he did so, the door opened and a man who was dressed as a typical waiter entered, bearing a tray.

"Will the shentlemen please take breakfast?" he asked, and proceeded with the deftness of long practice to lay a small table. Jack at once began to question him. It was all to no purpose, however, for all the answer they got was, "I do not know, I am only the servant. The master will come presently."

As he went out they heard the lock of the door carefully turned. But both of them being very thirsty and quite hungry, they set to work on the substantial breakfast which had been brought in.

They had finished this and were discussing their position afresh when another visitor came. He was a short, broad-shouldered man, who carried himself with what Burke would have called a swagger. Behind him was the man whom they both recognised as "Mackay," their captor of last night.

"These are the two, baron," Mackay was saying. "This boy interfered," and he pointed to Burke, "so we thought it better to bring him."

"Yes," the baron barely looked at Burke, but had fixed his eyes on Jack Darrell, who returned the stare.

"You are right," the baron said at last, and turned for a moment to Mackay. "You did well. Come, sir!" as he

faced Jack again. "Have you no greeting for me? Have you forgotten me so easily?"

"I don't think we've ever met," answered Darrell, wondering just exactly what course he ought to take. "I fancy there's been rather an unfortunate mistake."

"Quite so!" Baron Zelling laughed. "And on your part, I fear."

"No," Jack shook his head. "I think I'd better tell you the whole story."

"Certainly. It would give me pleasure to hear it. Let us sit down."

Jack plunged right into the story of how they met the farmer, and of the plan they had worked so successfully on him; he mentioned the note, and how he had answered it.

Baron Zelling listened calmly to it all. Even when Jack wound up and said: "So, you see, it's been a mistake altogether, and I guess we'll get into a row when we get back," the baron still smiled.

"You are a credit to your uncle's training," he said, lighting a cigarette. "A brilliant imagination and a lack of understanding what truth means were ever his most valuable assets."

"But—don't you believe it?" Teddy Burke broke in. "It was my idea entirely. I told the whole yarn, and—"

"Silence!" the baron turned almost fiercely on Burke. "I wish to hear nothing from you."

There was something so objectionably superior in his manner that both Darrell and Burke felt the blood rush to their heads, and a fierce desire to hit the baron came to them.

"It's the truth!" Darrell asserted hotly. "If you doubt my word write to the Head, and he will tell you."

Again the baron smiled in that irritating manner of his.

"I am sure he would," he answered pleasantly. "But I would rather trust my own judgment than take the word of a Britisher."

"Then you're an idiot!" Burke broke in.

He was not allowed to say anything more, for Mackay seized him and forced him back on the bed.

"You keep quite," his captor advised him, then while he still held Burke down he turned to the baron. "What are we going to do with this boy?"

"I don't know yet," the baron answered. "We will get rid of him easily enough, but we can decide that later. Leave him for the present. Come!"

Mackay released his hold on Jack, and joined his superior. As they were leaving the room the baron spoke to Jack Darrell for a moment.

"You will be well looked after to-day," he said. "If you want anything you need only ring the bell. And to-night we shall go on a journey, you and I—a more adventurous journey than you have ever had before, I think. Good-bye!"

When they were left alone again Jack Darrell tried to sum up the situation. "They're going to take me somewhere to-night, but I'm hanged if I can guess where it will be," he said. "And as far as I can see they mean to leave you behind. It looks a pretty rotten sort of business altogether."

For the rest of the day they saw nothing of the baron and Mackay, but the waiter came twice, bringing food. There was always more than enough, and it was first-rate, too.

Their attempts to get out of the place met with utter failure, and in the end they gave up all hope of escape, unless chance aided them that night.

It was practically dark in their room when Baron Zelling and Mackay came at last. Both Darrell and Burke jumped to their feet wondering what the next move was going to be.

"Are you ready to come?" the baron asked Darrell. "I hope you will not give us any trouble. You see, it will be quite useless to try and escape, and I would much prefer that you walked quietly with me. It will be so much better. I am your friend."

"And what about my friend, Burke?" asked Darrell.

The baron shrugged his shoulders.

"Pooh! Don't worry; he will be all right. Perhaps you wish to say good-bye?"

"He must come with me," Jack answered.

Not for a moment did he imagine that his request would be granted, but he felt that it was up to him to fight against every wish of his captors. Yet his answer seemed to puzzle the baron, and for some minutes he walked about the room.

"So be it!" he said at last. "He will be your personal attendant, I suppose? Very good. I have no power to object. You will come with me."

Jack nudged Teddy Burke and the two went out with the baron, Mackay bringing up the rear. In the great hall to which they presently came three men servants stood, each of them holding a thin waterproof overall.

"You will need it," the baron said, turning to Darrell; and then to Mackay: "You had better find another for yourself."

Neither Darrell nor Burke made any protest, but slipped into the waterproofs. Both of them were thinking furiously, however, and as they passed out of the house and into the darkness Burke managed to whisper to Darrell.

"Do you think we'll have a chance to bolt soon?" he asked.

"Yes. Keep close to me," Jack whispered back. "We'll watch our chance."

Since leaving their room the dusk had turned to blackness, and, added to this, a "sea-wraith" had come—a thin, watery mist, that made the waterproofs a blessing. Neither Darrell nor Burke could see a yard in front of him, and for a few moments felt hopelessly lost. From somewhere near came the boom-boom of the breakers as they flung themselves against the rocks, but beyond that there was nothing but the deadly silence and the blackness.

"A night for adventure, I think, prince." And Darrell started as he realised that the baron was speaking to him. "Take my arm, and I will lead you!"

"Now, Teddy!" Darrell cried, and gave the baron a push.

In the same moment he heard Burke struggling with someone, heard his cry, "All clear!" and found himself gripping his chum's hands.

"Which way, Jack?" Burke gasped. "We don't want to land over the cliffs."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 395.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS:

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"Back to the house first; we'll get inland from there. Hallo!"

Darrell held Burke's hands tighter as a sudden light blazed on them. It was only for an instant, but its effect was paralyzing. They stood there blinded, and afraid to move.

"We're in a mess, I think," Burke said cheerily. "Anyway, they can't chase us——"

He was interrupted in his sentence, for both of them were suddenly seized and pulled apart from each other. A small electric torch was flashed into Darrell's face, and then the oily-pleasant voice of Baron Zelling spoke to him:

"Please don't. You can't get away a night like this. Come!"

Darrell felt himself held tightly by either arm. The baron, he imagined, was on one side, and it was probably Mackay on the other. However reluctant he may have been, there was no choice for him now but to go ahead wherever his captors might choose to lead him. Beyond the first sudden cry he had heard nothing of Teddy Burke.

For half a mile or more he was forced along, now down a rocky pathway, then along what seemed to be a smooth gravel walk, until presently a faint red light showed.

"O-ho! O-ho!" Baron Zelling called, not over-loudly, but sufficient to carry to the one who guarded that red light.

And an answer came quickly, in the shape of a brilliant beam of light, which illuminated what appeared to be a ship's gangway.

"You must go carefully," the baron said. "Don't struggle or do anything foolish, but follow me. Otherwise you will lose your life. We are in danger here."

Darrell could well believe it. Whatever had happened to Teddy Burke, the present moment was not the one in which to make an attempt to escape. All around him he could hear the sound of the sea, grown quieter and calmer, it seemed, and there was nothing but the narrow gangway on which to step. He felt himself pushed gently forward, the baron going in front of him. Very carefully and as steadily as he could he followed, the man behind him keeping one hand firmly gripped on his arm.

At the end of the gangway he stood for a moment on a narrow platform by the red light. Just for that space of time the baron spoke to a figure which Darrell could dimly discern in the reflected light from the broad beam still lighting the gangway. Then he was again pushed after the baron, and found himself stumbling uncertainly down a steep iron stairway, and again through a narrow, dimly-lighted passage, till they came to a little, curious-shaped room, not large enough, it seemed, for the baron to stand upright in.

"Good-night!" the baron called to the man who was behind Jack. "Auf wiedersehen!"

"Pleasant journey!"

It was Mackay who answered before he disappeared from sight.

A man in naval uniform came into the little room, and spoke for a short time with the baron. The latter was evidently worried over something, for he kept looking at his watch as he talked with the officer.

Suddenly there was a noise above the little room, then a crash as though someone had fallen. A few seconds later a dishevelled, wild-looking creature seemed to shoot through the narrow doorway, to fall headlong at Darrell's feet.

"Ah, here at last!"

The baron nodded to the officer, who went out at once. The figure on the floor slowly got up.

It was Teddy Burke!

"My aunt, Jack!" And Darrell saw that his face was covered with blood. "You're here, too!" he gasped. "I've been fighting. I thought you'd got away, and I've had the time of my life. But what on earth are we in for now?"

"I don't know."

Jack Darrell shook his head, and looked at the baron, who was sitting in the only chair in the room.

"If you two will now make yourselves as comfortable as possible on the locker," he said, "the night will pass more pleasantly. We shall doubtless have something to eat and drink later."

"Where are we?" asked Darrell; and as he spoke there came a curious, whirring sound, and a muffled clanking.

The little room in which the three sat had grown strangely close and warm even since they had been in it, and the smell of oil had become unpleasant.

The baron gave one of his most expansive smiles as Burke slipped, and was almost thrown from the locker by the sudden swaying of the room.

"We are now in the English Channel," he said to Darrell. "This, I think, will be quite a memorable experience for both of you—a trip through the English Channel and across the North Sea in the most wonderful submarine now sailing the seas. This is the V2, Germany's latest addition to the fleet which will very soon have conquered Britain!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Fighting Against Odds!

Baron Zelling had settled himself comfortably in the chair, and was apparently dozing. On the locker Jack Darrell and Teddy Burke sat as close to each other as possible, and began to whisper together. Sleep for them was out of the question, though they were both feeling tired and heavy, for the excitement of the night and the strange atmosphere which they were now breathing seemed to make them uncomfortably sleepy without allowing them to lose consciousness.

Their talk, however, was not of great service. It was useless trying to make plans or plotting against the man who was sleeping in the chair facing them. For the time being they were prisoners, without the faintest hope of escape.

Presently even thoughts of escape left them. The evil smell and the curious swaying motion brought a nausea which it was impossible to conquer, and they both lay down, one at either end of the locker. Hours and hours must have passed while they lay in this state. They did not even notice the fact that Baron Zelling had risen and left them alone in the cabin.

A man came in presently, and offered them a warm drink. It had a lemon flavour, and was not unpleasant, while its effect was certainly beneficial. Darrell managed to get up, but Burke still lay in his corner, awake, but very miserable.

"I'm sorry, old man!" he managed to say, when Darrell stood by him. "This is all my beastly fault, and goodness knows where it's going to end!"

"Oh, cheer up, Teddy!" Darrell urged him. "We'll get out of it somehow. Wonder where that old beast the baron has gone? He hasn't been here for hours!"

As if in answer to his question, the "beast" came in at that moment.

"Feeling better?" he asked. "Come with me and breathe the fresh air once again."

Darrell followed him out of the tiny cabin and up the narrow iron stairway till they stood together on the deck. It was bigger than Jack had imagined last night, though it was small enough in all conscience. At one end of the railed-in enclosure was an officer, gazing intently through the glasses he held. For a time, at all events, he took no notice whatever of the new-comers.

All about them was the sea, not very rough, it is true, but under a leaden sky it seemed ugly and repelling, or perhaps Jack Darrell had that feeling because he stood so near it, and apparently upon such an insecure platform. There was not a sign of any other living thing on all that vast expanse.

"And the British Navy boasts," said the baron, almost reading Jack's thoughts, it seemed. "Yet here we are, quite safe and unmolested. And I had until last night a house in England; I fear I have it no longer. We got away in the nick of time, Prince. I had warning, fortunately, that their police were suspicious of me, but I doubt whether my staff there will escape the attentions of the English police. Still — What was that?"

Two hundred yards in front of them the sea suddenly shot up into a great mountain of green water, and a muffled roar broke the silence.

The officer at the end of the platform swung round and shouted to the baron. It was simply one word, and it was in English:

"Down!"

Without waiting for any further explanation, the baron, pushing Darrell before him, made for the manhole, and they went down the stairway to the heart of the boat as quickly as possible.

In their own tiny cabin again, the baron almost tumbled to the locker on which Burke lay.

"Quick! Up!" he cried.

And Teddy, despite the general misery from which he was suffering just then, sprang off his couch.

The baron raised the seat, and from underneath took out a lifebelt, which he gave to Darrell. A second he handed to Burke, and was adjusting his own before they grasped exactly what they were for. He himself seemed to be in a state almost bordering on panic, yet making violent efforts to control himself.

"Get them on—quick!" he gasped. "We don't know—there may be a chance, if the worst happens. But they can't catch us. They can't, I tell you! Ah!"

He turned, as the little door opened, and the commander of the boat came in. The officer also appeared to be in a jumpy state, and rattled out his sentences at such amazing speed that Darrell, who had taken German at St. Dunstan's, could not grasp a single word. Whatever it was he had to say, it appeared to quieten the baron.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

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The officer, having said all he wished, returned again. When he had gone the baron attempted one of his old smiles, but it was barely an imitation.

"Now we shall see!" he said to Darrell. "You will observe what we can do. We shall not submerge, or perhaps they would overtake and find us. But we shall go ahead full speed. In an hour we shall be in our own waters, and the British ship dare not follow. That was a chance shot they sent; they cannot hit us so far away."

His courage had returned now, but he still kept the lifebelt, and Darrell and Burke stuck to theirs. The baron even began to chaff Burke about his appearance, for, in truth, Teddy was still looking very seedy, and the single electric light in the cabin made his appearance even worse than it was.

"But you will be in Germany soon," he added. "And then—What will they say to you? The prince will be welcomed, but you—We have better friends for him than you! Yet you would come."

"You are making a horrible mistake!" Darrell said slowly. "I don't know anything about your rotten little prince; and my name is, and always has been, Jack Darrell. I expect you'll get into a row over this."

It amused the baron. Burke again had that overwhelming desire to hit him, but managed to restrain himself. Darrell grasped the fact that he would have to wait until someone else came who was not quite so certain of his own judgment as Baron Zelling.

"You will see," the baron went on. "You are very clever, but yet so foolish. You cannot deceive a German. And why should you try? I can promise that Germany will give you —"

He did not finish that sentence. Even as he spoke there came a mighty roar; for the smallest fraction of time they felt the boat quiver, then everything was let loose. The cabin itself disappeared, and the water poured in upon them, and yet it seemed to Jack Darrell that he was being flung upwards.

He felt himself rising, shooting upwards in the centre of a great water-spout. His mind became confused as he felt himself crashing downwards through the water again; down, down he went until a sudden crash took all consciousness from him.

What happened after that he did not know, but there came a time when consciousness returned. He was lying backwards almost on the surface of the sea, and the lifebelt he wore kept his head and even his shoulders above water. There was no sense of discomfort; indeed, for a time he lay there, rising and falling with the waves, lulled into a curious apathy by his own lack of feeling and the gentle movement of his body in the water.

Presently he struggled into a more upright position, and then tried to swim forward. At first he could see no sign of anything on the water; the waves carried him up and down, but it seemed that he was the only being or thing on all the sea.

Jack Darrell was no coward, but the hopelessness of his position was enough to take the courage from any man. He tried to swim, but had no idea of direction. And while he struggled something floated past him. He stopped in his efforts for a moment to discover what it could be.

A white face, with eyes tight shut, came before him, and then was swept away on the crest of the wave which bore it. But Jack Darrell knew the face. It was his chum, Teddy Burke.

That seemed to take from him all hope. If Teddy had only been with him they would have fought on. But now —

He wondered what had become of Baron Zelling and the commander of the V2 and of others on that most wonderful submarine.

As though in answer to his question, a figure appeared high above him; then, as he himself was lifted above, he saw the face of the other as he descended. Baron Zelling was still alive, and at this moment was struggling to get nearer Jack.

"Let us keep together!" he called to Jack. "Someone will come to us surely. I have seen a boat, and they will find us presently."

"I hope it's British!" Jack tried to call; but Baron Zelling had been carried away from him again, and was now only a black spot on the waves.

Jack turned and twisted, hoping to see some sign of the ship that might rescue them. But there was no sign, nor could he see anything of Zelling now; he was alone on the face of the waters again.

(Another fine, long instalment of this thrilling new serial story next Monday. Order your copy early.)

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

MY READERS' PAGE

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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.

For Next Monday:

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

By Frank Richards.

Our next grand long, complete story of school life concerns the fortunes of William George Bunter, the insufferable porpoise of the Remove. Bunter's father, like most City sharks, comes a cropper in Stock Exchange matters, and is unable to bestow upon his hopeful son the crisp banknotes which had won for Bunter so many friends—of a sort! To add to Billy Bunter's cup of chagrin, the local tradesmen to whom he owes money make a decided stand for their rights, and it is only the good-hearted manner in which Harry Wharton & Co. set about

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

that prevents the latter from making an untimely exit from Greyfriars in disgrace.

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD."

Shall It Become a Regular Feature?

Every Magnetite has heard of the champion little paper edited by Harry Wharton, and, to judge by the number of complimentary letters received, the "Herald" has been thoroughly enjoyed by hosts of readers—in fact, many have urged me to make it a monthly feature, and this is the proposition which I am putting to my chums of both sexes.

I have gone carefully into the pros and cons of the matter, and find that to publish "The Greyfriars Herald" every month would incur very considerable expense, and the scheme would be a dead loss unless

AT LEAST 100,000 READERS

purchased the magazine when it came out. I shall therefore take no steps in the matter until I have the unanimous assurance of all my chums that the affair will prove successful, and that they will back it up with might and main.

If it is decided to produce "The Greyfriars Herald," it will appear monthly at the very modest charge of

ONE HALFPENNY ONLY,

so that the pocket-money of its readers will not be infringed upon to any great extent. It will also be much larger than the numbers which have appeared in the past, and humour and entertainment will be the keynote of its features.

Will every reader of the "Magnet" Library who favours this important innovation kindly send his Editor a postcard TO-DAY?

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING YOUR FAVOURITE PAPER!

An important step is shortly to be taken in connection with this journal. The golden-coloured cover which has for years been a distinctive feature of the "Magnet" Library will be temporarily discarded, and a

WHITE COVER, PRINTED IN BRONZE-BLUE INK,

will take its place.

The reason for this somewhat drastic change is contained in the fact that there is a shortage of aniline dye in this country at the present time owing to the war.

Your Editor trusts that when this change comes into operation it will in no way interfere with the extensive circulation

of the "Magnet" Library. My readers will, I feel sure, readily realise that such a step is quite unavoidable, and that the tone and quality of the contents of this journal will maintain their high standard of all-round excellence.



GRAND PICTURES GIVEN AWAY!

Special Offer to "Magnet" Readers!

If any Magnetite would like to receive a copy of A. C. Michael's great war picture,

"THE BATTLE ON THE LAND!"

I shall have pleasure in posting one to him (or her) on receipt of a penny stamp for postage.

The picture is eminently suitable for framing, and is executed by a master-hand, for Michael's work in the illustrated weekly papers is world-renowned.

I have only a limited number of these superb pictures for distribution, and applications will be dealt with strictly in rotation.

BUCK UP, BROMLEY!

One of my enthusiastic "Magnet" chums, living at Bromley, in Kent, is anxious that his popular little town should not be behind the times in the matter of having a readers' league. He therefore wishes me to insert an announcement to the effect that all readers wishing to join should write, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for full particulars, to:

Master F. J. Bedson, The Lodge, Southwood, South Hill, Bromley, Kent.

I have no doubt that this notice will give the necessary fillip to Master Bedson's league.

WHO WILL DO A "GOOD TURN"?

If any generously-inclined Magnetite will forward his spare copies of this and other journals to Driver Fletcher 65879, 109th Brigade, R.F.A., Minden Barracks North, Deepcut, Farnborough, Hants, they will be greatly appreciated by him.

STEP FORWARD, JIMMY!

Will James Cranham, who went to Gravesend from Chatham about eighteen months ago, kindly correspond with his old chum Archie Luck, 10, Glencoe Road, Chatham, giving his present address?

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Two Fathers of Magnetites" (Northwich).—To judge by your ill-written communication, you are no more "fathers of Magnetites" than the man in the moon. Most Editors make it a practice to disregard anonymous letters, and I think it would be wiser on my part if I did the same. However, if you care to write me a decent and less offensive letter, together with your names and addresses, you shall have a frank reply by return of post.

W. W. (Balham).—The boys mentioned in your letter are constant readers of the companion papers.

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)

REPLIES IN BRIEF (*continued*).

"A Loyal Reader" (Mansfield).—"The Making of Harry Wharton" is long since out of print. The Greyfriars juniors spend Sunday by church-going and long walks.

"Disgusted Reader" (Chesterfield).—It's a curious fact, "Disgusted Reader," but most fellows of your stamp always refrain from giving their names and addresses. There is very little credit attached to the writing of offensive letters, well knowing that their recipient is unable to reply.

W. M. Inglis (Leicester).—Thank you very much for your letter. I am glad you appreciate my action in the matter you mention. With regard to the word quoted in your letter, Mr. Frank Richards—or any other author, for that matter—is quite at liberty to use it.

R. Brunton (Bradford).—Many thanks for suggestion, which shall be borne in mind.

F. W. (London).—Your surmise is correct. Glad to hear you brought a little gentle persuasion to bear upon the boy who spoke in sneering tones of the companion papers.

John H. Harvis (Fulham).—Your idea is a very good one, but I cannot act upon it just yet.

Ernest Prior (Tring).—The best junior boxer at Greyfriars is Bob Cherry. The age of the youngest fag is ten, and he belongs to the First Form.

Bob Cherry (Fulham).—You may well be proud to possess the same name as the popular "Magnet" hero. I have heard from two or three Harry Whartons, several Nugents, and a Johnny Bull; but you are the first Bob Cherry correspondent I've had. Good luck to you!

J. C. (London, E.).—I am afraid you won't be able to obtain "The Making of Harry Wharton" from your newsagent. It is very much a back number!

E. Standeven (London, N.).—Thanks for your nice letter and suggestions. It is not necessary to send a penny stamp when submitting storyettes to the "Gem" Library.

Leslie W. (Yatton).—I am glad you have won your mother over to the opinion that the "Magnet" Library is all that is claimed for it. You ask me who is the best batsman out of Wharton, Squiff, and the Bounder. They are all very good, but I think I should place them in this order: 1, Wharton; 2, Vernon-Smith; 3, Field. Very best wishes.

T. B. (Montrose).—Scholarships admitting boys to public schools are usually won by candidates between the ages of twelve and sixteen. In most schools, no Latin is taught in the First Form.

A. D. C. (London).—Monty Newland, the Jewish junior, is still at Greyfriars, and more will be heard of him in due course. "When will Harry Wharton & Co. pass into a higher form?" you ask. Never! We want to keep them as youthful as we can. No, Gerald Loder has not reformed.

John Bennett (Warrington).—Your joke should have been sent to the "Gem" Library, at Gough House. Sorry I have no more bumper numbers for distribution.

Maurice W. Briar (Holborn).—Very many thanks for your splendid loyalty to the journals under my control.

William Anderson (Glasgow).—Your friend is undoubtedly of Scottish birth. I hope to publish particulars of another threepenny book story by Frank Richards in the near future.

B. P. (Johannesburg).—I am much obliged to you for your letter.

H. W. (Bristol).—I will comply with your wishes on receipt of your full name and address.

"A Loyal Supporter" (Uphall).—Many thanks for your letter denouncing the grumblers. Such staunch chums as yourself wield a great power for good in connection with the welfare of the "Magnet" Library.

W. B. (Monmouth).—Write to Messrs. Glaisher & Co., Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.

J. W. (Poplar).—I am already making arrangements for a new serial story by the author you mention.

George West (Manor Park).—Many thanks for your letter. There are no such places as those you name.

"A Staunch Girl Gemite" (Portsmouth).—Billy Bunter turns the scale at twelve stone.

"Dreadnought" (Wombwell).—Bob Cherry and Wun Lung share Mark Linley's study. The Remove's wicket-keeper, as a rule, is Bulstrode.

"Vernon-Smith" (Eastwood).—Thank you for your kind letter and suggestion. I will see what can be done in the matter.

J. Davis (Sunderland).—You will get what you require from any fancy dealer's. The matter of forming Leagues is always left to my readers' own initiative.

A. Z. (London, E.).—Thank you for pointing out the unfortunate printers' error.

G. Allchin (Leicester).—I should say that the average amount of pocket-money, per month, for a Removee, would be about a sovereign.

E. P. Grieve (Cheshire).—The book you mention is now unobtainable, which is a pity, so far as you are concerned, for it was one of the finest stories ever written.

H. Wyatt (High Holborn).—Glad to hear you enjoyed the serial in question.

Robert W. Harrison (Yorks).—Very many thanks for the yeoman service you have rendered to the companion papers.

W. E. Daniels (Wimbledon Park).—I shall be happy to do as you suggest. Best wishes to you and your chums.

R. Steel (Fulham).—I am not at liberty to give you any personal information concerning the author you name. Sorry!

Rimmie Hunter (Herne Bay).—I will mention your idea to Mr. Richards. Bob Cherry's special chum is Mark Linley.

"Two Irish Girls" (Dublin).—Many thanks for your cheery epistle and for so kindly getting new readers. Your suggestion is one which I will keep by me.

M. W. (Belfast).—I will try and do as you suggest later on.

Wilfrid Way (Devon).—I do not publish announcements concerning back numbers.

"The Famous Five" (Glasgow).—Yes, the Levison mentioned in the "Gem" stories was formerly at Greyfriars. Bunter's father is on the London Stock Exchange. Hurree Singh is fifteen years of age.

"Two Girl Readers" (London, E.C.).—Thank you very much for obtaining new readers. Wun Lung is still at Greyfriars. Talbot, of St. Jim's, spent his last vacation with D'Arcy and Tom Merry.

B. B. (Toronto).—The character you mention is still at Greyfriars. I will bear your suggestion in mind. Best wishes.

"A Loyal Reader" (Kidderminster).—The mistakes which you are at such pains to bring to my notice are very trivial, and in many cases unavoidable. I am sure they do not militate a bit against the excellence of the stories.

"Solitude" (Leeds).—I am sorry I know of no readers' club in your town.

"Private 1890" (Cornwall).—Sorry, but the stories you mention are out of print.

Jack B. (Johannesburg).—There are numerous disadvantages to a competition for Colonial readers. The postal delay is the main drawback, and another is that there would not be a sufficiently good response.

Stanley Hill (Africa).—Thanks very much for a most interesting letter.

"Primrose" (Warley).—That's right; never be ashamed to stick up for the companion papers when opportunity arises. I was much interested in your nice letter.

G. Norris (Kennington).—The character you mention will take a prominent part shortly. With regard to your other query, you should read the St. Jim's stories which appear every Friday in "The Penny Popular."

Joseph Connolly (Pinner).—Thank you very much for your letter. I shall be delighted to receive a photograph of yourself. Best wishes.

R. S. M. McF. (Australia).—You may be a very nice chap, R. S. M. McF., but you are not a poet. "Prince" is hardly a suitable rhyme for "finch," and the same remark applies to "Fifth" and "shift." The metre of the poem you send me is also very rocky. If I were you, I should give up trying to emulate the great Coker.

"Southwickian" and Chums.—So you intend to drop the "Magnet" because Bunter doesn't happen to be a hero? Well, it's a funny world, and there seems to be no pleasing some people. I suppose your next bone of contention will be that Bob Cherry isn't a cracksman!

"Too Old at Forty."—I note your remarks, and must humbly apologise, on the author's behalf, for the error you are kind enough to point out.

"A True Reader" (Hyde).—A story of Greyfriars, embracing all kinds of sport, and introducing the rival schools, appeared in the "Magnet" Library a short time ago. It was entitled "Sportsmen All!"

"A Reader" (Donegal).—Wingate of the Sixth is seventeen years of age, and Bunter weighs twelve stone.

E. W. G. M.—Thanks for your kind suggestions. Those which are practicable shall be used.

"Typist" (Clacton).—The typewriter used by Mr. Quelch is an American machine, called the "Viney-Studback," and is little used in this country. I note your remarks about Nugent, and will see what can be done.

R. P. (Cardiff).—The name of the "Magnet" special artist is C. H. Chapman, and that of the "Gem" R. J. Macdonald. No, I certainly do not consider you too old to join the Scouts.

Coll. A. Lennie (Argyllshire).—1. There are forty-four boys in the Greyfriars Remove. 2. Wingate is seventeen years of age.

C. H. L. (Lyminge, Kent).—Candidly, I don't think you will ever become a great poet; but there's no knowing what will happen nowadays. There are two cricket-grounds at Greyfriars—Big and Little Side. The population of Friar-dale, at the last census, was 527.

The Editor

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