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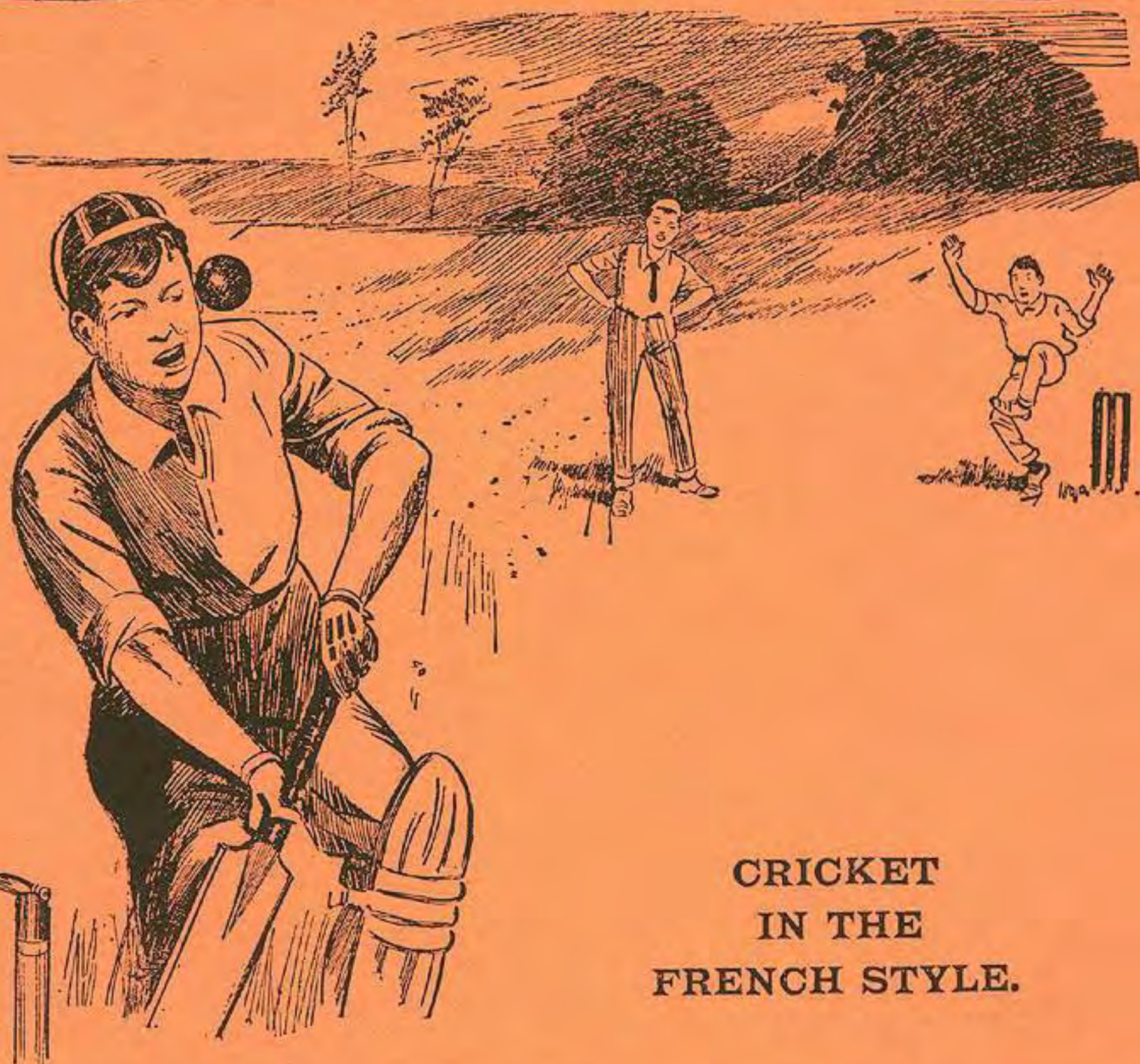
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Vol. 1.

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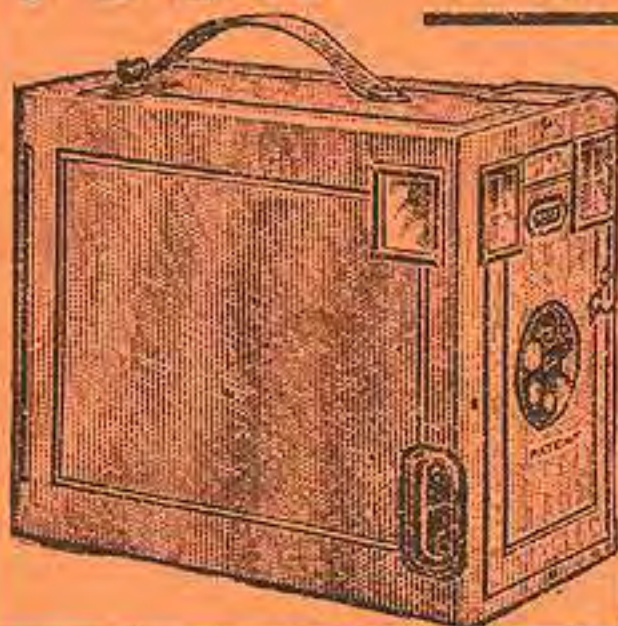
By
FRANK
RICHARDS



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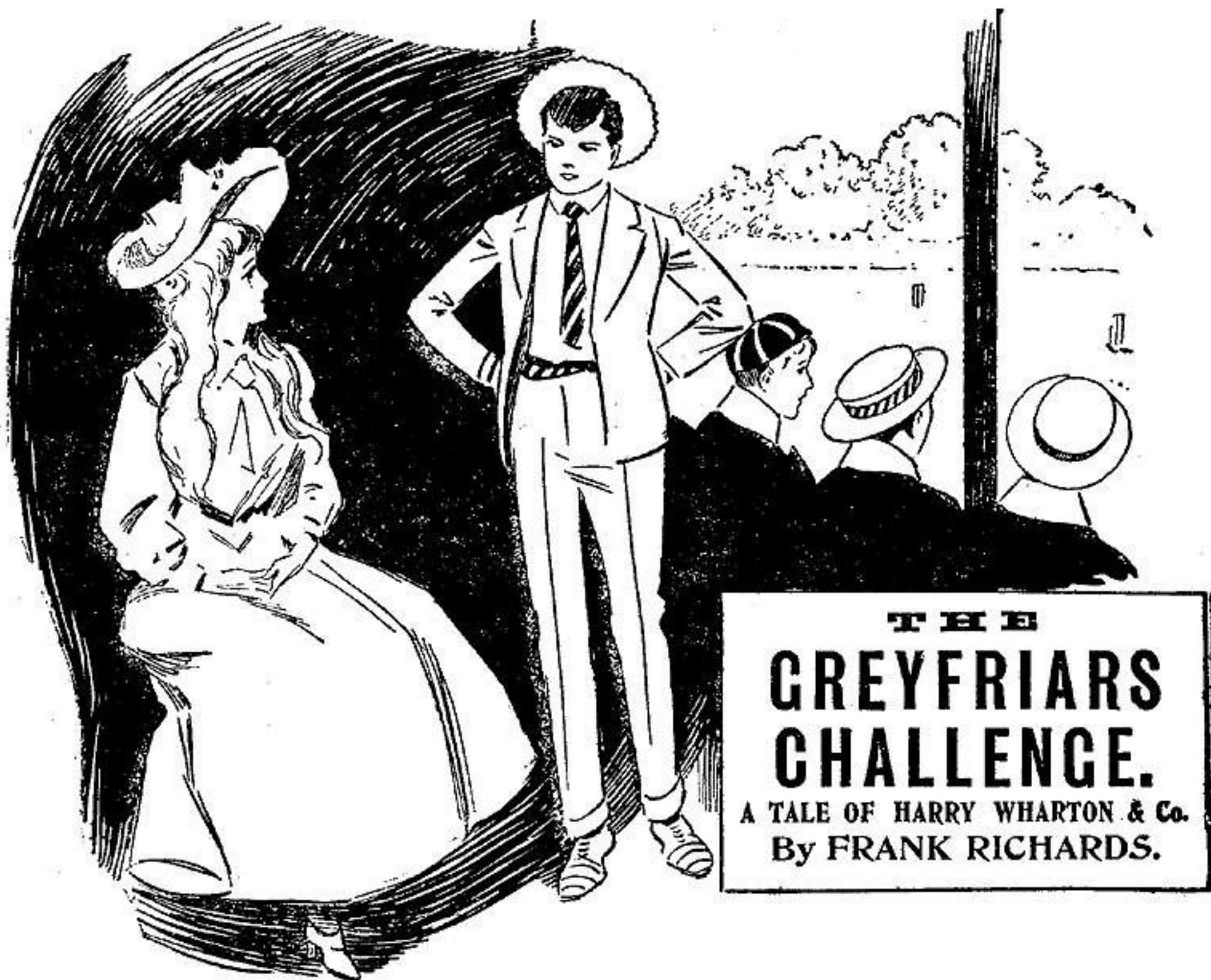
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ONE HALFPENNY



THE GREYFRIARS CHALLENGE.

A TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Teatime in Study No. 1.

BOB CHERRY came into Study No. 1 at Greyfriars with an expansive grin upon his rugged, good-humoured face.

"I say, you chaps, there's news!" he exclaimed.

There was no reply. A scent of frying eggs pervaded the study, and there was a sound of crackling wood. It was teatime on a warm June day, and Billy Bunter was cooking for tea over a fire of sticks in the grate. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were playing chess under the window.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, was standing by Nugent's chair, directing his moves. Nugent was a novice at the great game of chess, while Hurree Singh, the Hindoo, was a past-master of it. The juniors were

playing with a wonderfully carved set of Oriental chessmen belonging to Hurree Singh.

"News, you chaps!" said Bob Cherry.

There was a grunt from the chess-table, but no other acknowledgment of his remark. Billy Bunter, however, looked up for a moment from the frying-pan.

"Have you brought in anything for tea, Cherry?"

"Myself," said Bob cheerfully, "and I'm jolly hungry."

He stepped over to the chess-table.

"Awfully busy here?" he asked. "Too busy to do anything but grunt when a fellow speaks to you?"

Harry Wharton looked up and nodded.

"I'm playing Nugent and Hurree Singh," he said. "Don't interrupt!"

"I've got news—awfully interesting news, too!"

"We'll have it over tea," said Wharton.

"Rats! I—"

"Cheese it," said Nugent, "you're putting me off my stroke—I mean off my game! Shall I move the rook up one, Inky?"

The Nabob of Bhanipur grinned.

"No, my worthy chum!" he exclaimed, in the English for which he was famous at Greyfriars. "If you move the rookful piece forward, you place it en prise with the white pawn, and the esteemed Wharton will take it pawnfully."

"Suppose I shove it this way, then?"

"Not at all, my respectable friend; you will then place it on the same diagonal as Wharton's king's bishop, and our respected opponent will capture it bishopfully."

"Oh, I see!"

"You can leave the rookful piece where it is, and move the knight to cover it protectfully. Now Wharton will not capture the rook with his queenful piece."

"Good!"

"I say, there's news—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Nugent. "I'm getting on at this game. How long will it be before tea's ready, Billy?"

"Only a few minutes now," said Billy Bunter, turning a face of a crimson hue from the fire. "Just about time for Cherry to cut down to the tuck-shop and get some jam and cake."

"There you are, Bob! Off you go!"

"Cash!" said Bob Cherry laconically.

"Oh, I haven't any cash! Have you moved, Wharton?"

"Yes; pawn to knight's fourth."

"What shall I do now, Inky? Better get on to him with the queen, hadn't I?"

The dusky finger of the nabob stayed Nugent's too eager hand.

"No, my worthy chum. If you move the queen forward our respectable friend will take it rookfully."

"My hat, so he will!"

"Better move the bishopful piece and discover an esteemed check," said the nabob, directing Nugent's hand.

"Good! Check, Wharton!" said Nugent triumphantly.

"By Jove, I'm getting on at this game, and no mistake!"

"I say, you fellows, hadn't Cherry better cut down to the school shop and get some jam and pickles—"

"Hand over the tin, then," said Bob Cherry. "I don't mind going, though I've been playing cricket while you've all been lazing in the study."

"I'm sincerely sorry, Cherry, that I haven't any tin," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order to-day, but it hasn't arrived yet. If one of the fellows will advance the necessary amount, I will make it good when my postal-order comes, and it will be my treat."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Yes; I'm getting to know your postal-order, Billy," he remarked. "Money talks. If there's no tin there's no jam and pickles."

"Really, Cherry—"

Harry Wharton extracted a two-shilling piece from his waistcoat-pocket, and threw it to Bob Cherry.

"Catch, Bob!"

Bob Cherry turned towards him, and caught the florin—on his nose. He gave a yelp.

"You ass! What are you chucking things at me for?"

"Jolly good cricketer you are, if that's how you catch," said Harry. "Butter-fingers!"

Bob Cherry picked up the two-shilling-piece and rubbed his nose.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," he said, "and then if you haven't finished that game of chess, I shall checkmate the lot of you by turning the table over!"

"Oh, get off!" grunted Nugent. "I'm in a tight corner now, ain't I, Inky?"

The Nabob of Bhanipur nodded.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was a good chess player, but Harry Wharton was a strong opponent. The nabob was playing Nugent's game, and he found that he had his hands full. Bob Cherry picked up a bag and left the study.

"Your move, Nugent."

"Yes, I know it is. Shall I shove the bishop on his rook, Inky?"

"You would leave the black rook uncovered, my esteemed friend, and the queen would come down and mate."

"My hat, so I should! I can see that all right. I'm really getting on wonderfully well at this game! It's not half so hard as it looks at first sight."

The Nabob of Bhanipur grinned.

"Suppose we move the pawn up?" he suggested.

"Just what I was thinking. There you are, Wharton, you bounder, get out of that if you can!" exclaimed Nugent, pushing the pawn forward.

Harry Wharton did not seem to be in a hurry to make the

return move. He rested his chin on his hand and regarded the chess-table thoughtfully, evidently weighing the pros and cons very carefully in his mind.

"Your move, Wharton," grinned Nugent.

"Tea's pretty nearly ready," said Billy Bunter. "The eggs are done, and the tea's ready to be made. Can I have the table?"

"Wait a minute, Bunt. I've nearly mated Wharton now; he's only got a kick or two left."

"Couldn't you take the chess-board on a chair, and let me lay the table? The eggs ought to be eaten at once, and the kettle's boiling."

"Cheese it!"

"But the eggs—"

"Shut up! It's not fair to bother Wharton when he's in a fearful fix like this. I don't see how he can get out of it; but give him a chance."

Harry Wharton smiled.

He stretched out his hand and moved his knight, and the whole aspect of the board changed at once. Nugent looked anxious for a moment.

"We've got him all the same, haven't we, Inky?" he asked.

The nabob shook his head.

"Oh, come, don't give in!" said Nugent encouragingly. "I don't see that his knight being there makes much difference."

"It is on the rookful piece."

"We can move the rook."

"Yes, my worthy chum, but now the knight is moved the esteemed Wharton's bishop is on our queen."

"Well, move the queen."

"I wish you'd move the board."

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"That's all very well, Nugent. I'm sincerely sorry to interrupt, but you can play chess at any time, and these eggs are cooked jolly well, and ought to be eaten at once. Is it necessary to finish that game?"

"Ring off, you young ass!"

"Can't you remember where the pieces were, and finish it after tea?"

"Shut up!"

"Then take the board on your knees—"

"Another word, and you're brained!" yelled Nugent, picking up a cricket-stump. Billy Bunter started back in alarm.

"Oh, I say, Nugent!"

"Keep your head shut, then!"

"Oh, certainly! I don't want to interrupt—I should be sincerely sorry to do so—but the eggs will be spoiled."

Nugent brandished the stump, and Billy Bunter ceased at last. Then Nugent fixed his eyes anxiously on the board.

"What are we going to do, Inky?"

"Move the pawn up one more."

"That a good move?" asked Nugent anxiously.

"As good as can be done, my worthy friend," said the nabob.

"Oh, good! There you are, Wharton," said Nugent, pushing up the pawn. "I'm really getting into the hang of the thing now. You're making a good wriggle, Harry, but I think I've got you!"

Wharton laughed, and carelessly stretched out his hand and made his move.

"Chess isn't half the difficult game it's made out to be," Nugent went on. "I'm picking it up wonderfully, and I can see everything now that goes on on the board. Shall we move the rook this time, Inky? Why, where are you going?"

"I'm going to have my tea."

"Aren't you going to help me finish the game?"

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The Nabob of Bhanipur laughed.

"The game is finished, my worthy chum."

Nugent looked amazed.

"Finished! What do you mean?"

"It's mate in three, as Inky saw at a glance," laughed Harry Wharton. "You're not quite so well up in chess as you fancied, Nugent."

Nugent stared at the board.

"Blessed if I can see how it's mate in three!" he grunted.

"We'll work that out, if you don't mind."

"Oh, look then! You move your rook, and then I—"

"But I'm jolly well not going to move my rook."

"You must, ass, or I discover a check at my next move. You've got to put the rook in, or it's mate in two instead of three."

"Well, shove it in, then!"

"There you are—and there! That's mate!"

"H'm, I suppose it is!" said Nugent, looking over the board. "Funny how these things turn out. You were wrong about not moving the rook, Inky."

"Eh?" said the nabob.

"You remember once I wanted to move the rook," said Nugent, rising from the table, "you moved the knight instead."

"The knightful move was the correct one."

"Well, you see what it's led to. I had a feeling all the time that the rook was the piece to move," said Nugent, shaking his head.

"My esteemed friend, if you had moved the rook, the worthy Wharton would have taken it either pawnfully or bishopfully."

"Better lose a rook than lose the game, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton.

Nugent looked at him.

"What's the matter with you, Harry?"

"Oh, nothing; but if you had lost the rook, you ass, the game would have been finished on the spot. That's all."

"Well, perhaps you're right. You know more about chess than I do. Still, I wish I had moved the rook," said Nugent, with all the obstinacy of a beginner. "I can't help having a feeling that if I had moved the rook when I wanted to, things would have turned out differently."

"Yes, they would," grinned Harry Wharton. "The game would have been over several moves sooner, and we could have had tea. You can have the table now, Bunter."

"About time, too!" said Bunter. "Lot of good it is my cooking eggs for tea if you fellows are going to play some silly game and let them get cold. Take that board off, Nugent, will you, and I'll lay the cloth."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry came into the study, and emptied his bag upon the tablecloth. Billy Bunter's eyes glistened at the sight of jam and pickles and condensed milk and cake.

"Well, that's ripping!" he exclaimed. "I owe you for these things, Wharton; it's my treat, you know."

"Oh, that's all right, Billy!"

"Not at all!" said Billy Bunter firmly. "I owe you two bob, Wharton. It was I who suggested getting these things, and it's my treat. I owe you for them, and I shall settle up as soon as my postal-order comes."

"Who won that blessed game?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, Wharton won!" said Nugent, in a tone that suggested that there was something very curious about that circumstance.

"Well, I'm glad it's over, anyway."

"It wouldn't have been over," said Nugent, "only I made a rotten move."

"Only one?" asked Bob.

"Oh, don't be funny! I moved up a pawn instead of my rook."

"It was the knightful piece you moved."

"I mean a knight. I moved a knight instead of a rook."

"If the rookful piece had been moved—"

"Oh, it's all right, Inky; don't think I'm ungrateful for the trouble you've taken," said Nugent. "That's not it. Only I have a feeling that if I had moved the rook—"

"Tea's made," said Billy Bunter.

"If I had moved the rook—"

"Will you open the condensed milk, Nugent?"

"Yes, if you like. Lend me your pocket-knife, Bob. If I had moved the rook—"

"Oh, blow the rook!" said Harry Wharton. "Let's have tea, and let's hear Bob's news. What's the news, Bob?"

And the chums of the Remove sat down to tea.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something Like News.

BOB CHERRY glanced at the door.

"I'm expecting Meunier to come in," he said; "I asked him to tea. I had the news from him, you know."

"But what's the news?"

"Ripping! I expect it will be immense fun. There's a cousin of Meunier's, named Henri Lerouge—"

"Is he coming here?"

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"Yes; and a dozen other chaps with him."

"All French?"

"Yes, the whole lot. They're a lot of French chaps on a holiday in England from a school in Normandy," Bob Cherry explained. "They're having a run in this country, and as one of them has a cousin at an English public school, they naturally want to come down and have a look at the place."

"Naturally."

"But that isn't all. Meunier has got up a wheeze to make us humble, home-grown articles sing small."

"In whatful way?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"The French lot rather pride themselves on their athletics. It seems that they're great terrors in the gym. They're going to challenge us to a game of cricket."

"Cricket!"

"Yes; Meunier has fixed that up with his cousin. There's to be a cricket match during their visit to Greyfriars, if a home eleven can be got up to meet them."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That will be easy enough."

"Yes, ratherfully!" said Hurree Singh. "The honourable school can get up an eleven of any agefulness or sizefulness on demand. What is the agefulness of the esteemed French rotters, Bob?"

"They're all much of a muchness with Meunier," said Bob. "Meunier was at the school in Normandy with them until he was sent to England. They will be just about on a par with the Greyfriars Remove, as far as size and age go. It's Meunier's idea to have a Remove eleven to meet them."

"Good!" said Harry Wharton. "The Remove eleven can easily fix that up. Meunier, I suppose, will play on the side of his countrymen?"

"That's it. He will captain the side, I expect. He's picked up something about cricket at Greyfriars, but my idea is that the French team otherwise will play like a lot of girls."

"It will be funniful," said the nabob. "We shall clean up the ground wipefully with them, my worthy chums."

"I like the idea," grinned Nugent. "I don't suppose they can play for toffee. We'll give them beans."

"Perhaps it would be more politeful to the honourable strangers to allow them to beat us lickfully," suggested the nabob, who was the pink of courtesy upon all occasions.

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "We're going to give them the licking of their lives. They can have a good game, if that's what they want, and if we're the better players, they can have a good licking."

"Exactly!" said Wharton. "Can't carry politeness too far, Inky. We shall have to wipe up the ground with the foreigners for the honour of the college."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, here's Meunier!" said Bob, as there was a tap at the door, and the French junior entered.

Meunier, a rather good-looking lad, with a Gallic cast of features, nodded to the juniors and accepted the chair Bob Cherry pushed towards him. It was Billy Bunter's chair, Bunter having just risen to refill the teapot with water.

"Welcome, kid!" said Bob Cherry. "Sit down, and wire in. I've been telling the chaps about the coming of the famous cricketers from St. Malo."

Meunier grinned expansively.

"Ze team arrive to-morrow," he said. "Zey be glad to meet ze home team on ze cricket field, and show ze English boys how ze French play ze cricket."

"We'll be glad to see them," said Wharton, who was captain of the Form cricket team. "We'll give them a good game, anyway. It's a half-holiday to-morrow, so it will be a good opportunity. We had only a practice match on."

"I say, where's my chair?"

"There's the coal-locker, Billy."

"But, I say—"

"Oh, sit down, Billy, and be quiet! Aren't you going to pour out a cup of tea for our honoured guest?"

"Really, Cherry, I think—"

"Pour out the tea, old fellow, and leave the thinking till afterwards."

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly through his big spectacles. He swung round the teapot and started pouring into Meunier's cup.

"Next, please!" said Nugent, pushing over his cup.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Certainly, Nugent!" he said, turning the teapot from Meunier's cup, and sending a stream of hot liquid over the legs of Bob Cherry. "I—"

"Ow!" roared Bob Cherry.

He jumped up with a terrific howl. The hot liquid had soaked through his trousers in a moment, and he felt it very much.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Is anything the matter, Cherry?"

"You—you dangerous villain! You're pouring your beastly tea over my legs!" yelled Bob Cherry, dancing with the pain.

"I'm sincerely sorry. You know I'm extremely short-sighted, and these accidents will occur," said Billy Bunter. "I'm sincerely sorry, Cherry."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "He's sincerely sorry, Bob. That makes it all right, doesn't it?"

"Ow!" gasped Cherry. "I'm scalded! That dangerous lunatic oughtn't to be trusted with a teapot. Ow!"

"Will you have some more tea, Wharton?"

"Yes; in my cup, please," said Harry, as the teapot swung round. "Not over my knees, please, Billy."

"I'm sincerely sorry I've scalded Cherry. There isn't enough tea left now to go round, so Cherry won't be able to have any more."

Bob Cherry mopped his trousers with his handkerchief.

Billy Bunter sat down in his chair, and recommenced his tea. Bunter very seldom finished a meal while anything eatable was left on the table.

"Here, get off my chair!" growled Bob Cherry. "I don't believe you're such a blind ass as you make out, you young villain."

"I'm very comfy here, thank you, Cherry."

"I dare say you are, but the coal-locker will do for you. You're safer further off."

"Oh, don't jolt my chair like that, Cherry!" said Bunter, helping himself to pickles. "You will make me spill this juice over Meunier."

"Ciel! It is zat you have spill him already," exclaimed Meunier. "You spoil my garments, you villain!"

"I'm sincerely sorry," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the great blotch that had appeared on the French boy's light trousers. "It was really Cherry's fault, for jolting the chair. Really, Cherry—Ow!"

Bob Cherry tilted the chair backwards, and the Owl of the Remove rolled to the floor, with the pickle-jar in his hands. The jar emptied itself on his chest, and he sat up on the carpet streaming with pickles.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Really, Cherry, I—Where are my glasses? They have fallen off. If you tread on them they will break, and then I shall expect you to pay for them. Where—"

"Zey are on your knees, zere."

"Dear me, so they are! Cherry, you have upset the pickles—"

"Serve you jolly well right, for pouring the tea over my trucks!" growled Bob Cherry. "You'll be more careful next time. Hallo! Who's that?"

A full round German face was put in at the door. It belonged to Fritz Hoffmann, the German junior at Greyfriars. He looked at Bunter in astonishment.

"Mein Himmel! Vat is te matter pefore? Is it te accident?"

"Oh, no!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter always eats his pickles on the floor like that. He likes it!"

"Mein gootness!"

"Really, Cherry—"

"I gomes to speak mit you," said Hoffmann, entering the study. "I hears tat tere is French team goming to te school to-morrow after to play gricket."

"That's so."

"Dore is Remove eleven got up to meet dem?"

"Exactly."

"Den I tinks—ach!" said Hoffmann, breaking off as he perceived Meunier. "You haf te French peast here, I see!"

"Sherman peeg!" said Meunier, looking up over his teacup.

"French pounder—"

"Sherman rottair—"

"Here, shut up!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You're not going to rag one another here! Shut up, or you'll get dropped on!"

"I regards the French peast mit gontempt—"

"I despise ze Sherman rottair—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob Cherry. "What have you got to say, Hoffmann? Why can't you keep to the subject?"

"To French team is playing gricket to-morrow mit you, I tinks pefore," said Hoffmann. "I tinks to meinselt tat I likes to play against dem."

"You can't play cricket."

"I plays him first-rate, ain't it. If you finds me place in te team, I shows you how I blays him, before!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

He anticipated a somewhat comic display of the great summer game in any case, and with Fritz Hoffmann in the English team the comic side of the match was likely to be more pronounced.

"You takes me in te team," said Hoffmann. "I plays up

rippingly! You can leave out vun of te oders to make room for me, ain't it?"

"Well, I'll see what I can do," said Harry Wharton. "I don't promise, but I'll see to-morrow, after I've had a look at the French team."

"Ferry goot! I hopes I play in to match, for I am glad to give te French peastly pounders vun licking, ain't it, after."

"Ze Sherman rottair nevair beat te French—"

"I not speak to you, you pounder! I regards you mit gontempt—"

"Sherman peeg—"

"French peast—"

"I zink zat—"

"I tink tat—"

"Rottair!"

"Pounder!"

No more time was wasted in words by the two aliens. They flew at one another, and rolled over on the study carpet in a deadly struggle. The juniors were on their feet in a moment, half laughing and half angry.

"Stop that, will you?" shouted Harry Wharton. "What do you mean by rowing in our study, you cheeky bounders?"

But the two excited aliens took no notice. Whenever Meunier and Hoffmann met, there was a revival of the Franco-German War on a small scale, and they were deaf to remonstrances. They rolled on the carpet grappling furiously. They rolled in the pickles upset from the jar, but they took no notice of that.

"Kick them out!" said Nugent. "Bump them into the passage! Cheek! Coming and rowing in other people's studies!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "We ought to make an example of them." And he proceeded to refill the teapot with hot water.

"The ratherfulness is terrific," said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "Shall we yank the esteemed rotters into the corridor and roll them down the honourable stairs?"

"We've done that before," said Bob Cherry, "and it hasn't done them any good. I'll give them some tea this time, and see if it has a soothing effect upon them."

And Bob Cherry calmly took up the teapot and commenced to pour the contents over the two struggling aliens as they rolled on the floor.

The tea was weak, and rather hot—not hot enough to scald, but quite hot enough to make the juniors feel as if they were scalded.

There was a roar of laughter from the Removites, and a roar of surprise and pain from the two aliens.

"Vat is tat? Ow!"

"Vat is zat? Ow!"

"Mein Himmel!"

"Parbleu!"

Bob Cherry continued to pour. The warm liquid splashed all over the two aliens. They separated and scrambled to their feet.

"Vat it it zat you do?" yelled Meunier. "You vas scald me—vat—"

"Mein gootness! I am vet all ofer pefore—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Have you had enough?"

"Ach! I have had too mooch!"

"Zat is also viz me. I have had of ze too moosh—"

"Then stop your rowing and travel!" grinned Bob.

"That's a lesson to you. Next time you start rowing in this study I'll have it really hot for you!"

"It is all ze fault of ze Sherman peeg—"

"It is te French peastly pounder tat is to plame—"

"My hat! They're starting again! Hand over that kettle, will you, Bunter?"

"Certainly, Cherry!"

But the two aliens skipped out of the study. They had had enough of Bob Cherry's drastic measures. They scuttled down the corridor, followed by a yell of laughter from the chums of the Remove.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Idea.

"GOOD!"

It was Bob Cherry who suddenly uttered that exclamation. The exclamation was an ordinary one enough, but at that moment it attracted general attention. For the Remove were in their class-room for morning lessons, and Bob Cherry's sudden ejaculation broke the silence of the room like the popping of a cork.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, looked across at Bob Cherry with an ominous frown. Harry Wharton had just been construing from Virgil. Bob Cherry turned red as the Form master's eyes fastened upon him.

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" said Bob.

"Did you make a remark?"

"I—er—no—yes—sir!" stammered Bob Cherry.

His face grew redder as the glances of the whole class turned upon him. He had evidently been thinking of something that was not Virgil, and had uttered the exclamation in answer to his own thoughts. Mr. Quelch knew that well enough, but he chose to misunderstand.

"Ah! You were referring, I suppose, to the lines Wharton has just been construing," said the Remove master. "You were pleased to remark that they were good?"

Bob Cherry was silent.

"I am very glad to see that Virgil has the honour of meeting with your approval, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch mercilessly, "but it is not permissible to pass audible comments of this nature in class——"

"I—I—I——"

"You will therefore take fifty lines, and keep your enthusiastic admiration within bounds on another occasion," said Mr. Quelch.

Bob Cherry's countenance was a beautiful crimson.

"If you please, sir, I wasn't referring to Virgil!" he said.

"Indeed! Surely you were not thinking of anything else, at a time when I am trying to make you understand something of the great Latin poet," said Mr. Quelch, in his smooth, sarcastic way. "And what is it, then, that is more important in your eyes than the lesson we are engaged upon, Cherry?"

"I—I was thinking——"

"Were you really? I should certainly do my best to encourage you in that direction," said Mr. Quelch; and the class dutifully sniggered at the Form master's little joke. "You certainly are not often guilty of it. But what were you thinking about?"

"It—it was nothing——"

"I asked you what you were thinking about, Cherry?"

"Well, sir; it was about the French chaps coming this afternoon. I was thinking that it would be a good idea to have a brake out in Friardale, and give them a sort of triumphal drive to Greyfriars, sir, and then——"

"I see. Well, under the circumstances, you need not take the fifty lines——"

"Thank you, sir!" said Bob Cherry, brightening up.

"You may take a hundred instead. We will now continue the lesson. You will construe, Nugent."

And Bob Cherry's face fell again.

"The roughfulness is great," murmured Hurree Singh sympathetically. "It is somewhat unfeeling of the instructor sahib——"

"Hurree Singh!"

"Yes, honoured sahib!"

"You were talking."

"Not exactly, sir," said the nabob. "I was merely expressing the hearty condolence with my worthy chum, Cherry, upon the disappointfulness——"

"You can do that after school hours, Hurree Singh. You will take fifty lines for talking in class."

"I shall have great pleasurefulness in obeying the august sahib, but may I respectfully and firmly point out——"

"You may not."

"Under the circumstantiality of the case——"

"Silence! Go on, Nugent!"

"But if I may presumptuously venture to explicate——"

"Take a hundred lines!"

"Better shut up, Inky," grinned Bulstrode. "He'll make it five hundred if you go on."

"The shutupfulness would be the wisest under the circumstantiality, I suppose," purred Hurree Singh. "But the angerfulness of the teacher sahib is——"

"Shut up—he's looking at you!"

"The angerfulness of the teacher sahib is reprehensible, and worthy only of the esteemed slumful hooligan——"

"Hurree Singh!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"You were talking to Bulstrode."

"I certainly made an addressful remark, sahib, to the esteemed Bulstrode, but——"

"What were you saying to him?"

"A fewful words of no important particularity——"

"Repeat them to me at once. I will keep order in this class, or I will know the reason why. Tell me at once what you were saying to Bulstrode?"

"With the august sahib's permitfulness, I will respectfully and firmly decline to do so," said the nabob.

"I order you to tell me at once."

"In that case, I have no choicefulness but to obey. I was remarking that the angerfulness of the honoured teacher sahib was worthy of the esteemed hooligan!"

"The—the what?"

"The esteemed slumful hooligan!"

Mr. Quelch turned crimson. An irrepressible giggle burst from the Remove. The Form master glared round, and soon stopped the giggle.

"Hurree Singh——"

"Sahib?"

"You will come to my study immediately after morning school!"

"Certainly, honoured sahib! The kind invitation is gratifying to my heart, and I shall contentfully accept the same!"

The class giggled again. Hurree Singh was not likely to be so contented with what he would receive in the Form master's study.

Morning school was over at last, and the Remove, glad to get out of the class-room into the bright June weather, crowded out into the passage.

"Don't forget your appointment with Quelchy, old son!" grinned Bulstrode, tapping the nabob on the shoulder as he passed him.

"I am obliged to you for the remindfulness, Bulstrode, but I had not forgotten," said Hurree Singh. "I am compelled to make the excusefulness for a time, my worthy chums, while I playfully make the visit to the esteemed rotten Form master!"

"Better rub something on your hands!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The esteemed Form master knows how to lay it on!"

"Do you mean that the Quelch sahib wishes me to go to his study so that he can lick me canefully?" asked the nabob.

"I don't suppose it's for the mere pleasure of gazing upon your inky features, anyway!" said Bob Cherry.

The nabob's face was more serious as he wended his way to the study of the Remove master. Mr. Quelch was ready for him there, and he had a stout, pliant cane lying on the table. He took it up as Hurree Singh entered, and the dusky junior kept a wary eye upon it.

"I have come, sir, as you so kindly invited me!"

"You may hold out your hand!"

Hurree Singh held out his hand, but not in the way Mr. Quelch intended. He held it out as if to shake hands. The Remove master stared at it.

"What do you mean by that, Hurree Singh?"

"You said I should hold out my hand, sir, and naturally I imagine that you wish to greet your guest shakehandfully!"

Mr. Quelch stared hard at the Indian youth. Hurree Singh's face was as grave as that of an image cast in bronze.

"Hurree Singh, if you do not understand me——"

"The understandfulness is great, sahib!" said Hurree Singh, still with his dusky hand extended. "I have accepted the honoured sahib's invitation to visit him in his esteemed study, and naturally he wishes to——"

"I did not ask you to visit me in my study——"

"Then I have laboured under the great misapprehendfulness!" said Hurree Singh. "I certainly imagined that I heard the august teacher-sahib invite me to visit him in his august quarters!"

"I told you to come here for pun——"

"If there has been any misunderstandfulness, I am willing to retirefully depart!" said the nabob, turning towards the door.

Mr. Quelch wondered dimly whether he had to do with the simplest or the deepest junior he had ever met. In case of a real misapprehension as to the meaning of the invitation to the study, it would be too cruel to cane the unsuspecting Oriental. The Remove master laid down the cane.

"Hurree Singh——"

"Yes, sahib?"

"I did not—— But no matter! You may go!"

"Thank you, gratefully, kind sahib!"

And the nabob left the room. Mr. Quelch shook his head in doubt. The nabob closed the door, still with the same grave face of bronze. But when it was closed, a smile broke out over his features. He walked softly away.

Bob Cherry tapped him on the shoulder. The chums of the Remove had been waiting for him to return.

"Was it a licking, Inky?"

The nabob grinned.

"I am afraid that the teacher-sahib intended the lickfulness," he replied; "but, as there was a misunderstanding on the pointfulness, he did not carry out his honourable and august intention."

"You are a deep rotter!" said Nugent admiringly. "Fancy being able to rot the Quelchbird! Not one of us has ever succeeded in pulling his leg before!"

"Every animal has his dogful day, as your English proverb says," the nabob remarked. "The pullfulness of the sahib's honoured and esteemed leg is great!"

"I wish I could get out of my lines as easily!" grunted Bob Cherry. "However, they will stand over till to-night. What do you chaps think of the idea of having a brake out; and giving the French cricketers a rattling good reception?"

"Good idea!" said Harry Wharton at once.

"The goodfulness of the wheezy idea is terrific! We can hirefully obtain the largest brakeful conveyance in Friar-dale. Fortunately, the cashfulness is plentiful at the present conjuncture!"

"That's so," said Harry. "We are all pretty well in funds, excepting Billy Bunter——"

"Oh, I'm all right this afternoon!" said Bunter, joining them as Harry spoke. "I say, you fellows, I've been thinking that we ought to give the French chaps a ripping reception, if only for the sake of the ongtong cordiale——"

"The what?"

"The ongtong cordiale!"

"What the dickens does he mean by the ongtong?" demanded Nugent. "Is it something to eat, Bunt?"

Bunter gave Nugent a withering glance through his big spectacles.

"Of course, it isn't, Nugent! The ongtong cordiale is——"

"He means the entente cordiale!" laughed Harry Wharton.

"Of course; but you haven't got the accent quite right, Wharton!" said Bunter. "You should put in plenty of ong!"

"The ongfulness of our esteemed friend Bunter's Frenchful language is terrific!" purred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Well, what about the idea?" said Bunter. "You fellows can get out the brake to bring the foreigners to the school, and I'll stand a feed!"

"You will? It will cost something to stand a feed to a dozen fellows, without counting ourselves!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, that's all right! You fellows have treated me often enough, and it's about time I did something for you!" said Billy Bunter.

"But have you got the tin?" asked Bob Cherry suspiciously. He knew the Owl of the Remove of old.

"I haven't exactly got the ready money," said Bunter; "but I have a postal-order coming this afternoon!"

"You young ass!"

"I wish you wouldn't call me names, Cherry; it's rude, and I don't like it! You can tell the French fellows when you meet them at the station that the feed will be ready for them. The post will be in before you get back, and I shall have my postal-order——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We won't depend on your postal-order, Bunter! But it's a good idea about the feed, all the same. We can look on these French chaps as the guests of the Remove, and we ought to entertain them in good style. I had a sovereign tip from my uncle yesterday, and I've got most of it left. We'll all pool all we have, and get up something in good style for the visitors."

"Good!" said Nugent.

"The cashfulness is great at the present moment!" said Hurree Singh, fishing out several golden coins from his pockets. "The feedful entertainment must be in rippingful style, and I think we can trust the arrangements into the hands of our worthy chum, Bunter."

"That you can!" said Bunter, blinking with satisfaction. "I'll spend the money to the last penny for you! You can rely on that!"

"How many of us are in it?" asked Wharton.

"Half the Remove, I expect," said Bob Cherry. "We'd better let the Form know about it, and they can contribute as they like."

"That's a good idea! We want the French chaps to take away a good impression of Greyfriars hospitality. We're going to lick them at cricket, so we're bound to give them a good feed!"

"Ratherfully!"

And that idea was carried out. The Remove at Greyfriars were generous enough when it came to exercising the virtue of hospitality. The contributions were liberal, and the sum raised was sufficient for Bunter to prepare a feast that would uphold the greatest traditions of Greyfriars.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Remove Does Things in Style.

"**T**IME to be off!" Harry Wharton remarked, as the Remove came out after the mid-day dinner into the sunny, leafy Close.

"Ze train come in at tree o'clock," said Meunier.

"Yes, but we shall be some time getting the brake out. Now, Bunt, you know what you've got to do?"

"Yes, rather, Wharton!" said Billy Bunter. "You may rely upon me! I've got over four pounds, and I'll lay it out to the last tuppence, like a Briton!"

"It's going to be a ripping afternoon!" said Bob Cherry, glancing at the sky, which was of deep blue, flecked with fleecy clouds. "Ripping for cricket! How many of us are going to the station?"

"The more the merrier!" said Nugent. "Hallo, Hazel-

dene! Are you coming along to meet the foreign team?"

Hazeldene, of the Remove, was wheeling his bicycle down to the gates. He looked round with a cheery smile.

"Can't! I'm going over home to fetch my sister to see the cricket match."

"Oh, are you?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, showing a sudden interest in Hazeldene's proceedings. "Going on your bike?"

"Yes."

"It's a rather lonely ride," said Bob. "A jolly long lane, isn't it, and precious few people in it?"

"It is a longful lane that has no turnfulness, as your English proverb says," the nabob remarked.

"I don't know," said Hazeldene, looking at Bob, with rather a puzzled expression. "I've ridden home most half-holidays since my people came to live near Greyfriars, and I've not noticed that the lane was particularly lonely."

"What I mean is, it's rather rotten riding alone," explained Bob Cherry. "If you'd wait for me a few minutes I'd get my jigger out and come for a spin with you."

"Certainly, if you like!"

"I say, Bob, you're coming down to the station, aren't you?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Nother engagement!" said Bob Cherry, dashing off in the direction of the cycle-shed.

Nugent gave a chuckle.

"It's a beautiful afternoon for cycling," Harry Wharton remarked. "After all, you don't want a crowd down at the station to meet the French chaps, you know. I think I might as well take a spin with Cherry and Hazeldene."

"Certainly!" said Nugent. "So will I!"

"Oh, somebody must go to the station, you know!"

"Inky will do that, and Meunier——"

"I have been thinkfully reflecting that I should like to take the spinful ride with our Cherryful chum!" said Hurree Singh.

Harry Wharton looked rather doubtful.

"Oh, come on, you bounders! I suppose we had better get down to the station!"

Bob Cherry came dashing up with his bicycle, running beside it with his hand on the saddle. He stopped, breathless, with a flush in his healthy cheeks.

"Ready, Hazeldene!"

"Right you are. Come along!"

"Aren't you going to change into cycling things, Bob?" asked Nugent mischievously. "They suit you better, you know."

Bob Cherry stopped, in doubt.

"Do you really think so, Nugent?"

"Not the slightest doubt on the subject," said Nugent. "A Norfolk jacket sets off your figure to the very best advantage."

Bob Cherry looked at him rather suspiciously.

"I say, Hazeldene, could you wait while I change——"

Hazeldene grinned.

"Not much! I shall be late if I don't get off. You look all right."

"Yes, but——"

"Well, put on a silk hat, then," said Nugent. "Inky will run into the House and get you a silk hat."

"You rotter!" said Bob wrathfully. "I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is one improvement you could undoubtedly make, my worthy chum," purred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"What is that, Inky?" asked Bob anxiously.

"You could get a newful face."

Bob Cherry turned red.

"That's so," agreed Nugent. "If you could get a set of features a different shape——"

"I'll make yours a different shape if you don't stop rotting!" growled Bob Cherry. "I'm ready, Hazeldene. Let's get off. These silly asses make me tired!"

"Come on, then!"

The two juniors wheeled their machines down to the gates. Nugent called after Bob Cherry before he had gone half a dozen paces.

"I say, Cherry——"

Bob Cherry looked round.

"Hallo!—hallo!—hallo! What's the matter?"

"You've got something on your face!"

"Oh, confound——" said Bob Cherry, taking out his handkerchief and rubbing his face. "Is it off now?"

Nugent shook his head.

"No, it's still there."

"Was I rubbing in the right place?"

"No, a bit more in the centre."

Bob Cherry rubbed away again with his handkerchief till his nose glowed like a freshly-boiled beetroot. Then he looked inquiringly at the chums of the Remove.

"Is it off now?"

"No."

"Isn't any of it off?"

"Not a bit."

"Hang it! What is it?" growled Bob.
 "Oh, only your nose!" said Nugent.
 Bob Cherry glared at his friend in speechless wrath, while the Removites burst into a roar of laughter.
 "You—you rotter!" gasped Bob at last. "I'll teach you to work off your rotten jokes on me!"
 And he slung his cycle against the gate and rushed at Nugent. Nugent, laughing hysterically, dodged round Wharton and Meunier.

"Ciel! Mind vat you do!" shrieked Meunier, as Bob Cherry landed on his chest a right-hander intended for the mirthful Nugent.

"Oh, get out of the way!" exclaimed Bob. "What the dickens do you mean by getting in my way and barking my knuckles?"

"Mon bleu—"
 "Here, I'm off!" exclaimed Hazeldene, mounting his machine. "You can follow me if you like, Cherry. Ta-ta!"

Bob Cherry ran back to his machine as Hazeldene disappeared through the gates. He shook his fist at Nugent, and mounted and pedalled away after Hazeldene. The chums of the Remove, laughing heartily, followed them out of the old greystone gateway.

The two cyclists were disappearing up the road in a cloud of dust, and Harry Wharton and his friends strode away in the opposite direction, towards the village of Friardale.

"Bob's in luck this afternoon," said Nugent. "I shouldn't mind taking that little spin myself. Never mind."

"The worthy Cherry's luckfulness is great. He will have the honourable pleasure of riding back to Greyfriars with the beautiful and esteemed miss."

Harry Wharton was looking thoughtful. He would gladly have been in Bob Cherry's place, but, as captain of the Remove Eleven, it was his duty to meet and greet the arriving team. A position of responsibility carries duties with it as well as privileges.

It did not take the chums of the Remove long to reach Friardale. It was still only half-past two by the clock of the village church, and the train bearing the French cricketers was not to arrive until three.

"Lots of time," said Nugent, glancing up at the grey church-tower. "Where are we going to get the brake, Wharton?"

"We can get one at the Green Man. The landlord knows that I can drive, so—"

"Good! So you will be able to drive away, and then you can give me the ribbons afterwards."

Harry laughed.
 "I think I can manage it very well all the time, Nugent."

"Well, we shall have to be careful, you know, with a lot of foreign chaps on board," said Nugent. "We don't want to have any upset, you know."

"Perhaps it would be better to entrust the ribbonful reins to my honourable hands," suggested the Nabob of Bhanipur. "It is true that I am no driver, but I am always eager to learn, and I should be happy to study the scientific artfulness of managing the pairful horses."

"I think we'll leave your first lesson till a more suitable occasion, if you don't mind," said Harry, laughing. "Some time when there will be fewer necks in danger if anything goes wrong. Here we are! I'll go in and see Mr. Harris."

The interview with Mr. Harris, of the Green Man, was short and satisfactory. A quarter of an hour later the horses were harnessed in the brake, and the chums of the Remove were driving away from the inn in fine style.

"Sure you're all right with those horses, Harry?" Nugent asked anxiously.

"Oh, quite, thanks!"

Meunier sat in the brake beaming with smiles. He felt very keenly the compliment to his fellow-countrymen implied in the really imposing reception planned by the Removites. The brake dashed up to the station amid a cheer from the village urchins, who gathered round in a curious crowd. A schoolboy driving a brake was not a common sight in the quiet village of Friardale. Meunier looked at his watch.

"Ze train he come in in tree minutes," he remarked.

"Good time to get on the platform," said Nugent. "That ancient cabby will mind the brake for a tanner, Harry."

"Right you are!"

Sixpence easily induced the cabby to take charge of the brake, and the Greyfriars juniors entered the station. They were well known, and there was no difficulty about getting on the platform to meet the incoming train. Nugent looked up the line, and a shrill scream of a whistle rang from the distance.

"There she comes!"

The train was in sight. The engine came dashing into the station, and doors flew open and boys tumbled out of the carriages before the train had fairly halted. The Greyfriars juniors looked at them curiously.

They were a jolly, good-tempered-looking set of fellows, less athletic in appearance than Harry Wharton and his chums, extremely excitable and somewhat shrill in voice, and indefatigable in gesticulation.

Adolphe Meunier rushed at a slim, sallow-cheeked lad, and embraced him in the true, effusive French fashion.

"Mon cousin!" he exclaimed. "It eez my cousin Henri!"
 "Adolphe!"
 "Henri!"

The cousins embraced and kissed one another, rather to the amusement of the English boys.

"My hat!" murmured Nugent. "I hope they're not going to treat us all alike! If anybody starts kissing me I shall cut up rough."

"The kissfulness seems to me to be carrying the politeness to extremes," said the nabob. "I sincerely trust that I shall not receive the kissful salute."

"Same here!" said Harry, with a grimace. "Don't forget they're our guests, though."

"Hang it! A guest hasn't the right to kiss you, I suppose?"

"Honour the strangerful visitor that is within thy gateful door," said the nabob, "even to the extent of submitting gracefully to the honourable and ludicrous kissfulness."

Meunier led his cousin by the hand towards the Greyfriars juniors, speaking rapidly to him in French.

"Mes amis!" he exclaimed, waving his hand towards the juniors. "Mes amis, mon cousin Henri! Zis is my cousin, Wharton—zis is Henri Lerouge. Zis is ze captain of ze eleven."

Harry Wharton held out his hand; but Lerouge was bubbling with enthusiasm. He threw his arms round Harry's neck and embraced him.

"Ze friend of my cousin is my friend!" he declared. "I embrace you viz all my heart. I kiss you viz ze true friendship."

"Oh!" murmured Harry, as the French lad kissed him on both cheeks.

"Zis is ze Nabob of Bhanipur."

"I embrace him as ze true friend!"

"Zis is my friend Nugent."

"I kees him, too!"

Meunier stood by beaming while the English lads underwent what was to them an ordeal, but what seemed to the French boys the most natural thing in the world. The rest of the party were introduced, but as most of them could speak no English, or only a very few words, the introductions did not go for much. However, everybody was in high spirits and in a good temper, and they sallied out of the station the best of friends.

"How ve get to Greyfriars?" asked Henri Lerouge, looking round with interest at the old English village.

"Zere is the brake!" said Meunier.

"Is zat for us?"

"Oui—oui!"

"Zat is ver' kind of ze Head of ze school to send—"

"It is not ze Head who send; it is ze kind friend Wharton."

"Zen I must embrace him vunce more!" exclaimed Lerouge, throwing his arms round the neck of the astonished Wharton. "I kees him of ze good heart, zat he show so much courtesy to ze foreign visitor."

Harry submitted with a good grace, and then climbed into his seat. The French boys, chattering like a crowd of monkeys, as Nugent remarked afterwards, clambered into the brake, and Harry Wharton shook out the reins.

"Have you chaps come down all on your lonesome?" asked Nugent, as the brake drove off from the station.

Lerouge looked puzzled. Meunier rapidly explained in French, and Lerouge gave an expansive grin.

"Oui, oui!" he exclaimed. "Ve pay zis visit to Greyfriars by ourselves. Ve find our vay about zis country easy, as I speak so good English. I am always treated viz ze great politeness, and I zink it is because I speak ze English so vell."

"Yes; I suppose it would be," said Nugent, with a nod.

"Ze English are so merry," said Lerouge. "I often see ze English people smile viz pleasure ven I talk to zem in zeir own tongue."

"No wonder," murmured Nugent.

"Ve leave our master in London," said Lerouge. "Ve are here for zis visit by our own selves. Ve are staying in England for tree week. Perhaps ve come down and see you again, mes amis."

"Oh, do, by all means!" said Nugent. "I suppose you play a lot of cricket?"

Lerouge shook his head.

"Ve not play a lot," he said. "Ve play some, and ve are ver' good cricketers, you understand; but in France ve not play so much as you English. Ve are better zan you in ze gymnasium—"

"Oh, are you?" said Nugent.

"Oui. Moosh bettair," said Lerouge. "Perhaps at ze game of cricket ve not so good; but ve shall see. Ve beat you if ve can."

Nugent grinned.

"You're welcome to try," he murmured. "It's jolly weather for cricket, anyway. Look, there's Greyfriars!"

The tall grey tower of the old school could be seen from the road, rising above the elms in the distance. Lerouge looked at it with great interest, and then at the river, shining through the trees on the left.

"It is ver' pretty country," he said; "almost so pretty as France."

The other French boys were chattering away at a great rate in their own tongue.

The brake came in sight of the gates of Greyfriars, and a crowd of juniors could be seen there, waiting to greet the French team.

"Hurrah!"

Lerouge stood up in the brake, and waved his cap in return.

"Zat is ver' polite!" he exclaimed. "It is vat you call ze hearty English vay. Vive l'Anglais!"

He waved his cap with such energy that he lost his footing, and rolled down among the crowded legs of the French cricketers.

Nugent fished him out, and set him upright again. He was looking flushed and breathless, but his enthusiasm was unabated.

"I zink I fall ofer——"

"Well, it looked like it," grinned Nugent. "Are you all right?"

"Oui, yes; razer! Ve are arrive."

"Yes, here we are."

Harry Wharton cracked his whip. The crowd of youngsters in the gateway drew back to the sides, and the brake went through the gates in fine style, and dashed into the old Close. The French boys were all standing up and waving their caps now, and the Greyfriars lads greeted them with a ringing cheer.

The brake halted, and the French boys tumbled out of it like so many cats or monkeys. Gosling, the porter, took the brake away. Billy Bunter came up beaming, and nudged Harry.

"It's all right, Wharton."

"What is?" said Harry, looking down at him.

"The feed."

"Oh, the feed! I had forgotten."

Bunter looked at him witheringly through his big spectacles.

"You'd forgotten? Forgotten the feed?"

"Yes," said Harry, laughing. "Never mind. Is it all right?"

"First rate!" said Billy Bunter, with much satisfaction.

"There's a cold collation ready in the pavilion——"

"A what?"

"A cold collation," repeated Billy, with emphasis. "That means a feed on cold grub, if you don't know. I prefer to call it a cold collation. Well, there's a cold collation ready, and there will be a ripping tea after the match. That's all right—eh?"

"Ripping, Billy! You're a credit to the Remove!"

"Well, you know, I rather think I am," said Bunter modestly. "I really don't know how you fellows would get on without me, and that's a fact. I've arranged it all in really ripping style. I was going to add a little bit to the feed if my postal-order had come, but there's been some delay in the post, and it hasn't turned up yet. But the thing will be really ripping, you know. You'd better bring the French chaps along now to the cold collation."

And Billy Bunter trotted off to the pavilion.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Match.

"HARTON, mein friend——"

Hoffmann tapped Harry Wharton on the arm outside the cricket pavilion. The captain of the Remove cricket eleven turned round with a smile.

"Hallo, Hoffy! What is it?"

"I wishes to know if I plays in te elefen?" said Fritz Hoffmann. "If I blays, I changes into mein flannels, ain't it?"

Harry Wharton considered a moment. He would never have thought of playing the German in a serious match, but against the French team, from what he had seen of it, there was no reason why the youth from the Vaterland should not distinguish himself.

As for being left out of the team in favour of the German, no one would mind that very much, considering the kind of match it was.

"I gomes into te elefen, ain't it?" said Hoffmann eagerly. "Vat you tink, Wharton? I plays up as mein vater played up at Sedan."

"I'll ask the others," said Wharton. "Stumps aren't pitched till half-past three, and I'll let you know."

"Goot! I fetches mein flannels."

"I suppose he may as well come in, Nugent?" Harry Wharton remarked. "He won't be much in the way, will he?"

Nugent grinned.

"No; that's all right. I've been jawing to Lerouge, and what he and his friends don't know about cricket would fill a Badminton volume on the subject. My idea is that this match is going to be funny."

"I suppose they can play?" said Bulstrode.

"Yes, I suppose so—after a kind of a sort of a fashion."

"Sure, and see the way they hold a bat!" grinned Micky Desmond, of the Remove. "They've got a brand-new set of cricketing things, but the way they handle them—— Faith, it's a marvel!"

"Meunier is about the only one who will keep his wicket up, I suppose?"

"The playfulness of the game will be humoursome," the Nabob of Bhanipur remarked. "If we do not get the good-ful game, we obtain the mirthy laughfulness."

"Where's Bob Cherry and Hazeldene?"

"They've not turned up yet."

Harry Wharton frowned. As cricket captain, he had to see that his men were on the ground in time, and he did not like the absence of two of them. Hazeldene was not usually a playing member of the Form eleven; but Harry was going to give him a trial in this match, where there was little to risk.

The French lads had come in hungry after the train journey, and they were enjoying Billy Bunter's cold collation. They seemed to be in no hurry to get ready for the field—apparently having the idea that any time would do.

"You captain the side, don't you?" Harry Wharton asked Meunier, for he was not very clear on the point.

Adolphe Meunier nodded his head.

"Oui, mon ami. It is agreed zat I sall be ze captain, as I have played more of ze cricket zan my cousin Lerouge."

"Well, it's getting near time to go on. Will you get your men ready?"

"Certainement! Is zere any hurry?"

"Well, no; only the sun sets at night, you know, and it's rather difficult to play cricket after dark!" said Wharton, rather sarcastically. "I don't want to hurry you fellows in any way, but it's nearly four already."

"I see. I vill speak to Lerouge."

Meunier spoke to Lerouge, and the French cricketers began to prepare in a leisurely way for the field. Harry Wharton looked out of the pavilion for Bob Cherry, and sighted him at last.

Bob Cherry and Hazeldene were coming up to the pavilion, and with them was a fair, slim girl whom Harry knew very well—Marjorie Hazeldene.

Harry lifted his cap as they came up.

"You're late, Bob. Get into your things. You, too, Hazeldene."

"Right-ho!" said Hazeldene, disappearing into the pavilion.

Bob Cherry followed him a little more slowly.

"Glad you have been able to come over, Miss Marjorie," said Harry brightly. "You will see a game that will be worth watching."

The girl smiled.

"I understood from my brother that you were playing a foreign team."

"That is correct."

"Will it be a very hard match, then?"

Harry laughed.

"No; very easy, I think. I imagine these chaps just about know a bat from a stump, and that's all! I rather think it will be funny."

"My brother is playing, isn't he?" asked Marjorie, smiling.

"Yes. We're giving him a trial in the eleven. If he turns out all right, I expect he will play for the Remove in the regular matches."

"I am so glad!"

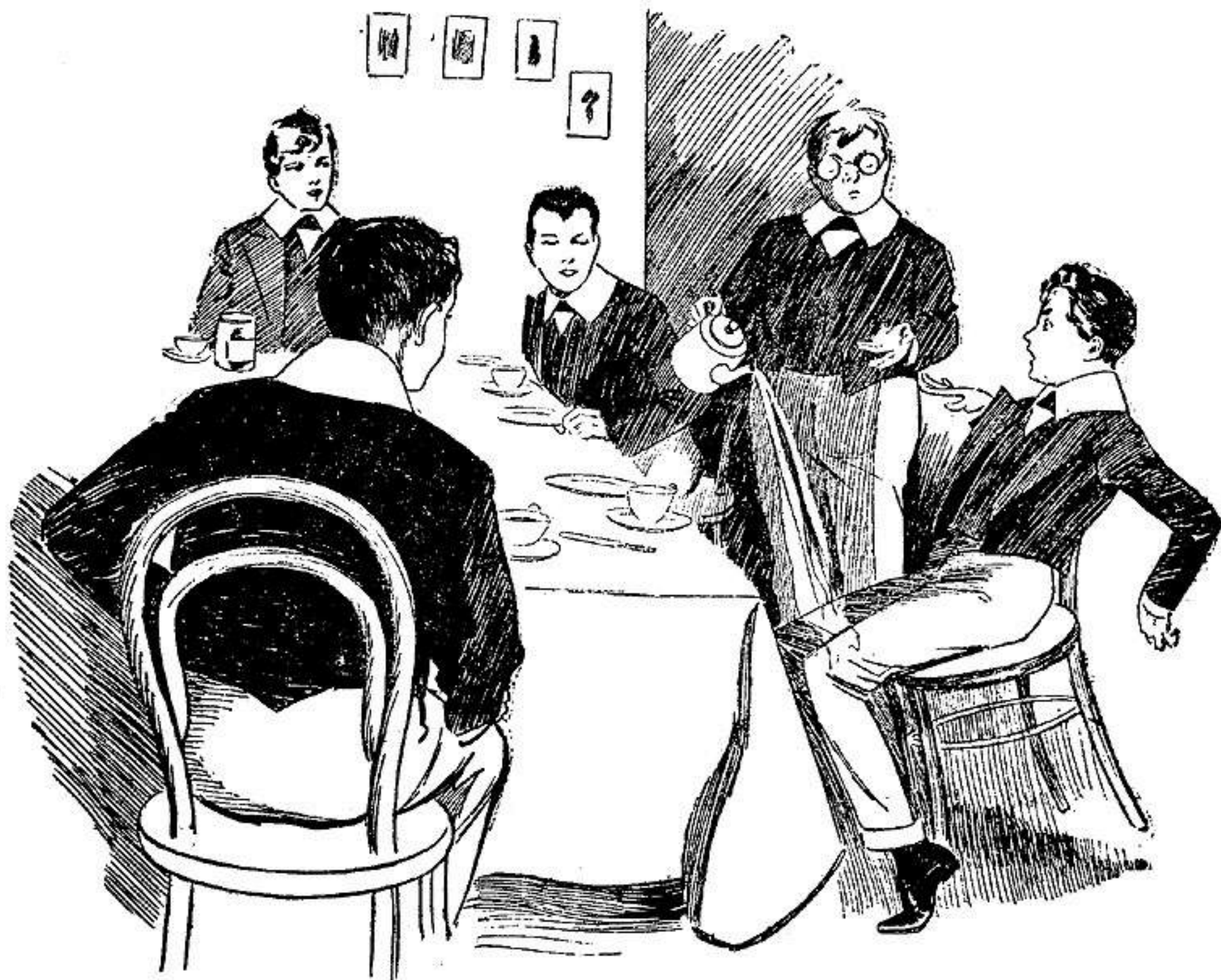
That was all Marjorie said, but her tone expressed much. She knew how Harry Wharton had helped Hazeldene into the right path. It was not so long since Hazeldene—or Vaseline, as the boys had contemptuously named him—had been known as the cad of the Remove. A helping hand from a strong, resolute character like Harry Wharton had done wonders for him. And Harry was keeping on the good work by trying to make a cricketer of Hazeldene.

Bob Cherry came out of the pavilion in spotless white. He had made the change in record time.

"You'll have a good view here, Miss Marjorie," said Harry, placing the girl in a seat. "I hope you will enjoy it. You will have a good laugh, anyway, I expect. There goes three o'clock."

Four chimed from the clock-tower of Greyfriars.

The Greyfriars fellows were crowding down to the junior cricket-field. Many of the seniors, as well as the Lower



"Ow!" gasped Bob Cherry, as Billy Bunter sent a stream of hot tea over his legs, "I'm scalded! That dangerous lunatic ought not to be trusted with a teapot! Ow!!"

Form fellows, came along. They were curious to see how the French team would shape at the English game.

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, came down to see the start of the match, out of compliment to the foreign visitors. Mrs. Locke was with him, and the Head's wife kissed Marjorie Hazeldene affectionately. They were old friends.

Fritz Hoffmann gave Harry Wharton a nudge. The cricket captain of the Remove had forgotten all about him. The fat German was arrayed in white, and looked fatter than ever.

"Is it tat I plays mit te game, Vharton?"

Harry nodded good-humouredly.

"Oh, yes, Hoffmann; you can come in!"

"I tanks you. I gifts te French pounders te good licking, ain't it?"

Hoffmann had a bat under his arm. Some irreverent juniors asked him what he was going to do with it, but Hoffmann loftily took no notice. He meant to perform wonders with that bat yet.

"I say, Meunier, are you ready?" asked Harry Wharton, with laboured patience, as the hand of the Greyfriars clock pointed to ten minutes past four.

"Oui; certainement! Ve are roazy."

"Then, let's toss for innings."

"Certainement!"

But Henri Lerouge came forward, his face wreathed in polite smiles, and bowing as though he had a spring in his back.

"Tousand pardons!" he exclaimed. "Mes amis—"

"What is it?"

"Vat is it zat you do viz penny?"

"Toss for choice of innings."

"Zat is not so. Ve not toss."

"What do you mean?"

Lerouge bowed again almost to the ground.

"Ve yield zo choice to our esteemed friends," he said.

"You vas make ze choice to please yourselves, mes amis."

Harry Wharton laughed rather impatiently.

"This isn't a case of politeness, Lerouge."

"Oui, oui, la politesse."

"We've got to toss for innings. It's the game!"

"Oh, if you insist, zen—"

"Yes, of course!"

"Oh, zen I leave it to you, mon ami, and you do zat vich you like!" said Lerouge.

Meunier won the toss, and elected to bat first. The French cricketers were chattering away at a great rate in the pavilion. They seemed to think that there was plenty of time, anyway, while the Greyfriars cricketers were watching the sun pass the elms, and wondering whether there would be time for a single innings at this rate.

"They're batting first," Harry Wharton remarked. "Good! I expect there will be only three innings in this match."

"And two of them won't take long," Bob Cherry said, with a laugh.

"Not likely."

"Let's get into the field. This game will last till midnight, I expect, if we don't get started."

The Greyfriars cricketers streamed out of the pavilion, eleven sturdily, youthful figures in white, and a cheer from the fellows round the ropes greeted them. They took up their positions, and Bob Cherry was given the ball for the first over, and then they waited for the batsmen to appear.

Meunier and Lerouge were to open the innings, but Meunier and Lerouge did not seem to be in a hurry to do so.

As a matter of fact, Lerouge had secured an introduction to the pretty English girl sitting beside the Head's wife in the pavilion, and was relating to her some tale of marvellous exploits in the realm of sport, while Meunier was exchanging affectionate reminiscences with an old school-fellow in the team.

"So zat is how ve played cricket in France, Mees 'Azeldene," said Lerouge. "Ve beat zem by two hundred runs."

"Did you really?" said Marjorie, with a charming smile, though she had not been able to understand ten words of the French youth's description of that wonderful game he had played in his native land. "That was splendid!"

"Oui, oui! I zink zat you vill see us victorious zis time, though the victory perhaps not so easy."

"Perhaps not."

"I zink— Did you call me, mon ami?"

Bob Cherry had come off the field, and was glaring at him.

"Yes, I did!" growled Bob. "Are you going to bat, any of you, or are you not? We're not particular; but if you're not going to bat, it's not much good our bowling, and we may as well change our duds."

"Is it zat I have kept you to wait?"

"Yes; I rather think it is!"

Lerouge swept off his cap with a low bow.

"A tousand apologies!"

"Never mind the apologies. Send your men in!"

"Mees 'Azeldene, I take my leave. I am desolate to leave you, but duty calls me to ze vicket. Mon ami, I am coming."

"Come, then, and buck up!"

"Adolphe, mon cousin, are you reazy?"

"I am quite reazy, Henri."

"Then let us go."

"Certainement! Let us go to ze vicket."

And the two French boys, with bats under their arms, sallied out of the pavilion, and bent their steps towards the wickets.

The Greyfriars fellows cheered them. They were nothing if not polite to guests. Meunier and Lerouge stopped before they reached the wickets, and raised their caps in acknowledgment of the cheer.

"My only pyjama hat," grunted Bob Cherry, "I wonder if this giddy game will ever get started! I say, I'm going to have a snooze in the grass, and you can wake me up when it's time to bowl."

"Here, they're at the wicket now!" laughed Harry Wharton.

"About time, too!" Nugent remarked.

And Bob Cherry went on to bowl against Lerouge's wicket.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Cricket.

BOB CHERRY gripped the round red ball hard. He meant to make rockets of Lerouge's wicket, if only to punish him for keeping the game waiting. But the batsman was not ready. He was suddenly seen to lean his bat against the wicket, and start off towards the pavilion.

"Here, where are you going?" shouted Harry Wharton, who was fielding at mid-on.

Lerouge looked back.

"Did you speak viz me, mon ami?" he asked, taking off his cap.

"Yes. Where are you going?"

"I go to ze pavilion."

"But what for?"

"I forget to put on ze batting-gloves."

"Oh, my hat! Buck up, will you?"

"Certainement!"

The French cricketer disappeared into the pavilion. The English boys looked at one another.

"My word," said Hazeldene, "this is getting too rich!"

"The richness is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "It would be a great jokefulness if the sun set before the first ball had been bowled in the esteemed match. I am afraid that this cricketful game will never be played."

"Looks like it!" growled Cherry. "Hallo, here's the image again!"

Lerouge was seen issuing from the pavilion. He did not go to his wicket, however, but came straight towards Harry Wharton.

"Well, what's the trouble?" asked the Remove captain.

"It is zat I have lose ze glove," said Lerouge. "Can one of you lend me ze glove to replace ze vun zat I have lost?"

"What's that sticking out of your pocket?" asked Nugent.

"Parbleu, it is ze glove zat I have lost! I remember now zat I place him zere ven I am talking to ze charming English miss."

"Are you ever going to the wicket?"

"I goes immediately. I zanks you for pointing out ze gant vich I have lost. I embraces you."

"Ow—don't!"

But the effusive Lerouge was not to be denied. He embraced Nugent, and the whole field yelled with laughter. Lerouge seemed to be rather surprised by the laughter, but he finally took it as a compliment, and swept off his cap in acknowledgment.

"Are you going to the wicket, Lerouge?"

"Oui, mon ami."

And Lerouge went to his wicket. The wicket-keeper handed him the bat. Lerouge had leaned it against the wicket and knocked the bails off, but he evidently did not understand what that meant in cricket.

He seized the bat and gave it a flourish, and Micky Desmond, who was keeping wicket, jumped back just in time to avoid being brained.

"Arrah, then—"

Lerouge looked round.

"Did I strike you viz ze bat?" asked Lerouge, with great solicitude.

"No!" growled Micky. "Why couldn't you let me get clear before you started those gymnastics, though? You nearly caught me on the cocoanut."

"A tousand apologies!"

"Sure, it's all right! Look out for the ball!"

Lerouge looked out for the ball.

"Are you ready?" asked the umpire.

"Oui, I am reazy, mon ami," said Lerouge, with a flourish of the bat.

"Guard your wicket, then. What have you got the bat up in the air for?"

"Zat is how ve play cricket."

"Is it? Oh, have your own way! Play!"

Bob Cherry gripped the ball again. He took a little run, and sent down the ball like a four-point-seven shell.

Lerouge's bat swept a circle in the air, and hit nothing but the yielding atmosphere, and there was the crash of a falling wicket.

Lerouge stared at the wreck in amazement.

"Vat is ze malfair?" he asked.

"Out!"

"Eh?"

"Out!"

"But I vas not looking for ze ball at zat moment. I zink zat is vat you call a trial ball, mon ami."

"Out!" rapped out the umpire.

"I appeal to ze captaia. Vas it not a trial ball?"

"Oh, I don't care!" said Harry Wharton, with a quiet wink at the umpire. "Make it a trial ball."

The ball was tossed back to Bob Cherry. Lerouge resumed his place at the wicket. He gripped his bat in a business-like way, and looked carefully for the ball. Bob sent down a slow this time, but Lerouge never saw it.

Crash!

Lerouge landed out wildly for the ball without seeing it. The ball whipped the off-stump out of the ground, and the other stumps fell at the same moment, knocked over by Lerouge's bat.

"How's that?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Out!"

"Sure, and was that a trial ball, darling?" grinned the wicket-keeper. "And was it a trial hit-wicket, too?"

Lerouge gazed at his wrecked wicket.

"Out!" repeated the umpire.

"Oui, I zink zat is out," said Lerouge. "Unless ze wicket fall by accident, I zink zat is out."

He seemed to have a lingering doubt as to whether the wicket had fallen by accident. But the umpire was uncompromising, and the French youth carried out his bat.

Ducrot was the next man in. He was a little dark fellow, and he brought in his bat with a considerable amount of swagger. He seemed to wish the eyes of the universe to be turned upon him, to behold his performances at the wicket.

"Better look out for that chap, Bob," grinned Nugent; "he looks dangerous."

Bob Cherry grunted.

"The dangerousness of the esteemed ass is only equalled by his conceitfulness," purred the Nabob of Bhanipur. "It will be a jokefulness to send him out with the duckful egg."

Ducrot swaggered to the wicket, and took his middle, and looked towards the bowler. Bob Cherry took hold of the ball. He did not take the trouble to run, or to calculate much. He simply bowled. But it was quite enough.

Ducrot's wicket went to pieces, and Ducrot stared at it in an astonishment that was absolutely ridiculous.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole crowd burst into an uncontrollable yell of laughter at the sight of the batsman's face.

The Head smiled in the pavilion, and Marjorie's face was wreathed in smiles, while the field rang with merriment.

"He can't understand it yet," murmured Nugent. "It will dawn on him presently that he is out."

"How's that?" sang out Harry Wharton.

"Out!"

Ducrot took another look at the wicket, as if still puzzled, and then put his bat under his arm and trotted off to the pavilion.

"The match is rather late," Wingate of the Sixth observed to a friend. "But they're making up for lost time now, and no mistake!"

And his companion grinned.

"It looks like duck's eggs for the French chaps all along the line."

"Yes; unless the Remove are merciful."

Nevers was next man in. He was a quiet fellow, and did not swagger. He stood at the wicket, however, with one leg in front of the stumps, and evidently knew as much about cricket as he did about flying.

"Stand aside there!" grunted the umpire.

Nevers looked at him innocently.

"I stand at ze vicket," he said.

"You can't stand in front of it."

"Ciel! If I stand in front of it I stops ze ball bettair zan if I stand at ze side!" said Nevers.

"Oh, my hat! You'll be out leg-before-wicket!"

"Zank you! Are you out if you stand wiz legs before ze vicket?"

"Well, rather!"

"Zen I stands away."

"That's better."

"Zank you ve' moosh! I have not played ze cricket ver' moosh," said the French boy, with unnecessary candour. The umpire did not need telling that.

"Play!"

Bob Cherry bowled. Nevers made a jump at the ball, hitting out with the bat, and in some mysterious way the willow met the leather, quite by chance. There was a clack, and the ball flew on its way—not far, though—as it lighted right into Harry Wharton's outstretched hand at mid-wicket.

Up went the leather from Harry's hand, to be caught again in his palm as it came down straight as a die.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

Nevers looked astonished.

"Did you say zat it vas out?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"But I did hit ze ball viz ze bat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I did hit ze ball viz ze bat," repeated Nevers indignantly. "Yet you say zat it is out. I did hit ze ball——"

"You're caught out!"

"I am not caught! No van has caught me!" said Nevers, in surprise. "I have not even run from ze vicket, and I am not caught."

"Oh, my only aunt! The ball's caught."

"Yes; I see zat garcon take him in ze hand. If he not interfere ze ball would have gone a great way, and I take ze runs."

"Ha, ha, ha! The ball was caught—and so you're out! Do you understand? When the ball's caught from the bat, you're out. Out!"

"Oh, is zat so?" said Nevers more cheerfully. "I have not played ze cricket ver' moosh. Zen I go away from ze vicket?"

"Yes, I rather think you do, and the sooner the quicker!"

"Certainement. I am quite reazy to go, if I am really out. But I have not really played ze cricket ver' moosh, and I did not know."

And Nevers walked away with his bat over his shoulder, carrying it a good deal as if it were a musket, and a shriek of laughter followed him.

Villefort was next man in. He seemed to have some tincture of knowledge of the game, for he stopped the rest of Bob Cherry's over without being bowled, caught, or knocking his wicket over with his bat. The conclusion of the over was greeted with cheers by the French boys in the pavilion. They seemed to think that Villefort had done wonderfully well, and in comparison with the rest of the team, he probably had.

No runs had been taken so far, and the French team were three down for a big round 0, a score that made the Greyfriars lads smile.

The field crossed over, and Hoffmann, who had been fielding at long-on, where Harry thought he would be most out the way, nudged the Remove captain in the ribs.

"Mein friend Wharton——"

"Hallo! Get into your place!"

"I tinks tat I should powl now——"

"Eh—you think what?"

"Tat I should powl."

"What on earth does he mean by pole?" asked Wharton. "Can anybody guess what he's driving at?"

"The meaningfulness of the esteemed idiot's remark is

not clearful," said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "Let him explicate."

"I means tat I powls mit te pall!" exclaimed Hoffmann rather excitedly. "I takes te pall and I powls!"

"He takes the pall and he poles," said Wharton dazedly. "Do you mean that you're tired, and want to go off the field?"

"I takes the pall and I powls!" shouted Hoffmann. "Tat is blain enoff. I takes te pall and I powls at te vicket mit meinself after."

Harry Wharton comprehended at last.

"Oh, I see! You mean you want to take the ball and bowl?"

"Ach, ja! I takes te pall and I powls!"

"Can't be did! You see, lives are valuable just at present, and I can't have any of the field brained till after the match."

"But I tinks——"

"You can tink as much as you like, or tinkle for all I care, but you can't bowl. You take the ball for the next over, Hazeldene!"

"Right-ho!" said Hazeldene gratefully.

Meunier was to receive the bowling now, and he was about the most dangerous of the French team, having picked up some cricket during his residence in an English school. But even Hazeldene, though his bowling was not likely to be of a high order, felt pretty certain that he was a match for Meunier.

Marjorie looked on with renewed interest as her brother went on to bowl. Harry's motives in putting Hazeldene on were mixed. He wanted to give Hazeldene a chance, but at the same time he thought he might as well give the French team a show by putting on a weak bowler. It would be only courtesy to the visitors to allow them a chance of knocking up a few runs.

Meunier shaped better at the wicket than Lerouge, Ducrot, or Nevers had done. He stopped Hazeldene's first ball, and his second, and hit out at his third. The ball whizzed away, and the fieldsmen lazily toddled after it, and Meunier started to run. He crossed Villefort, and one run was gained, and then they started again.

"Quick!" shouted Meunier.

The French boys ran well. They could not play cricket, but they seemed to have a good pace when it came to simple running. The second run was almost completed when a shout of warning came from the pavilion.

"Look out, Meunier!"

Meunier dashed out with his bat outstretched. The fieldsmen had not exerted themselves—with one exception. Fritz Hoffmann, inspired by national rivalry, was on his mettle. He had captured the ball, he was dashing in for a throw-in. Careless of the wicket-keeper, he meant to throw that ball in and take the wicket himself, if only to show what he could do in the fielding line, since he was not allowed to bowl.

Meunier's bat clumped on the crease, but a trifle like that made no difference to the excited German. He rushed on and crashed the ball into the stumps.

"Oudt!" he roared triumphantly.

Meunier glared at him.

"Vat is zat?"

"Oudt!"

"Bosh! Pah! Rats!"

"I say tat it is oudt!" roared Hoffmann. "I have knock down te vicket, and tat is oudt. I appeals te te umpire!"

"Not out!"

"Vat?"

"Not out!"

"I knocks down te vicket!" yelled Hoffmann excitedly. "I prings in te pall and I pumps it on te vicket, and I knocks it town. You say tat tat is not out!"

"The bat was on the crease——"

"I cares not. Te vicket goes town, and te patsman is out. I pumps te pall on te vicket, and I have taken tat vicket. I says——"

"Get out!"

"I says——"

"Clear off, you Sherman idiot——"

"You French peast!"

"Sherman peeg!"

"French pounder!"

"I zink zat I teach you ze lesson——"

"I tink tat I——"

"Cochon!"

"Peast!"

And without more ado, the old enemies rushed upon one another, and in another moment they were rolling on the cricket-pitch in deadly strife.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Fun on the Field.

"A, ha, ha!"

The fieldsmen were doubled up with laughter, and a shout of uncontrollable merriment rang round the cricket-field. Hoffmann and Meunier rolled on the grass, gasping and pommelling furiously.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Of all the funny cricket matches I ever heard of, this takes the cake!"

"Collar the asses and stop them!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, let them have it out!" said Nugent. "It will do them both good!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is great. The fightfulness of the worthy and esteemed lunatics is terrific," remarked the nabob. "Suppose we bestow the thrashfulness with a cricket-stump, and perhaps——"

"Good idea!" exclaimed Wharton. "The bat will do."

He picked up Meunier's bat and commenced to tap the struggling combatants, with no gentle hand, with the end of it.

Hoffmann and Meunier roared. But it was not easy to separate them. Dr. Locke was on his feet in the pavilion now, with a frowning brow. Marjorie was looking alarmed. But Harry's drastic measures had the desired result. Hoffmann and Meunier rolled apart and picked themselves up.

"Ach! I am hurt before!"

"Ciel! I am ferry hurt!"

"You pair of asses!" exclaimed the Remove captain wrathfully. "You ought to be kicked off the field. Hoffmann, you can take yourself off!"

"Vat you say?"

"Get off the field!"

"But I am blaying in te game——"

"You're not playing any longer. A fieldsman who attacks a batsman gets kicked out. You're not in the team now. Get off the ground."

Hoffmann's face fell. He rubbed a bruised nose and looked dismayed. But Meunier was a generous enemy.

"Permit zat he remain, mon ami," he exclaimed. "It was my fault as moosh as Hoffmann's, for I did lose my tempair."

"Well, if Meunier overlooks it——"

"I do zat, viz ze good heart."

"Then you can stay on the field, Hoffmann; but mind, nothing of the sort again," said Harry Wharton warningly.

"Tank you, Vharton. I vas a little hasty, berhaps. Meunier, I pegs your pardon, and I tanks you also. Ve vill be friends for te day."

"Ciel! I am quite reazy to be friends."

"Ten I embrace you."

"And I embraces you aussi"

And the old enemies embraced, careless of a hundred pairs of laughing eyes round the field. Meunier took his bat, and Hoffmann handed him his cap.

"I vas wrong," said Hoffmann; "you vas not out."

But Meunier's Parisian politeness was not to be outdone.

"I concede ze point," he said; "I am out."

"Nein, nein, you vas not out!"

"Oui, oui, I vas out!"

"I insist——"

"I insist——"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You're worse when you're polite than when you are rowing. Get back into your place, Hoffmann. Meunier, you're not out. Let's get on with the game."

Hoffmann went back into the long-field. Meunier gave in, and took his place at the wicket again. The fieldsmen, with aching sides, took their places, and the game was resumed.

Meunier knocked up 4 more for the over, and was caught out by Bob Cherry at the last ball, so that the French team were now four down for 6.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh took the next over, against a little dark French lad named Mercier. Mercier's wicket fell to the nabob's first ball, and the second ball sent La Roche out with a duck's egg to his credit. The third ball accounted for a third wicket, and there was a cheer and a laugh round the field.

The performance of the hat-trick usually elicited a storm of cheering on the cricket field at Greyfriars, but on the present occasion there was a great deal more laughing than cheering.

Against opponents like the French team, Hurree Singh could have performed the hat-trick all the afternoon without much effort.

Brissot, the next man in, stopped the other three balls of the over, and then the field crossed again. The French

team were seven down for the same 6 runs that Meunier had hit. As the field crossed, Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, made a sign to Harry Wharton, and the Remove captain went over to the ropes.

"You are knocking them to pieces pretty fast, Wharton," the captain of the school remarked, with a smile. "You might go easy a little now."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I was just thinking the same myself, Wingate."

"Suppose you were to put Hoffmann on to bowl? They might be able to knock up a few runs, and you could give them that satisfaction without exactly letting them do it."

"Good! Hoffmann shall have the next over."

"That's right!"

Harry Wharton walked back. Nugent had the ball in his hand, and was going to the bowler's wicket. Harry tapped him on the arm.

"Chuck it to Hoffmann!" he said.

Nugent stared.

"You're going to let that howling ass bowl?"

"Yes," said Harry, laughing, "because he's an ass."

"Oh, I see!" said Nugent, comprehending. "Well, I suppose we may as well give our friends the enemy a chance."

"That's the idea."

"Here, Hoffy, catch!" exclaimed Nugent, throwing the ball to the German junior. "Well, you ass, I didn't tell you to catch it with the side of your head!"

Hoffmann rubbed his ear ruefully, and picked the ball up out of the grass. He looked inquiringly at Harry Wharton.

"Is it tat I powls te pall?" he asked joyfully.

"That's it!" said Harry. "Go in an' win, Hoffy. You are going to bowl this over, and we expect great things of you. Remember that Germany expects every man to do his duty."

"I tinks tat I takes te vickets after, ain't it?"

And Hoffmann went on to bowl. Villefort prepared to receive it, and the crowd looked on with great interest. They knew that Hoffmann's cricket was a great deal like that of the French team, and so the developments were looked for with great curiosity by the grinning crowd round the cricket field.

"Now look out for fireworks!" murmured Nugent.

"The fireworkfulness will be terrific."

Hoffmann was evidently in deadly earnest. He took a long run, and turned himself into a kind of catherine-wheel, and the ball whizzed from his hand.

There was a fiendish yell from Bob Cherry, who was fielding at point.

"Ow! Ow-wow!"

Bob was seen to suddenly dance in the air, and then to hop on one leg and clasp the other with both hands.

"What's the matter with you?" yelled Harry Wharton.



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"BILLY'S TREAT."

Another Tale of Harry Wharton and his Chums,
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NEXT
TUESDAY.

"Ow! Ow-wow!"

"He's got the ball!" shrieked Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha! Hoffmann mistook him for the wicket! My only hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

Hoffmann was gazing at the hopping Bob Cherry in amazement. Villefort was still looking for the ball. Nugent grinned and picked the leather up from the grass at Bob's feet.

"Oh, that villain has nearly broken my leg!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Take him off, before I brain him with a cricket-stump!"

"Vere did tat pall go?" demanded Hoffmann.

"It went on my calf, you howling maniac!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Tat is impossible. I trew it at te vicket."

"You—you—you—"

"Give Hoffs the ball again," said Harry, tears of laughter streaming down his sunburnt cheeks. "Get on with the washing."

"I say, you're not going to let that demon bowl again, are you?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, aghast.

"Yes, certainly! Look out this time!"

"Well, if he's going to bowl I'm jolly well going to change places with cover-point," exclaimed Bob determinedly.

"That you're jolly well not!" said Hazeldene, who was at cover-point. "I'm not going to be brained to save you."

"Then we'll both field here—or, rather, a little further off. It doesn't matter much where we field in this giddy match."

"Ha, ha! You're right."

Hoffmann had the ball again, and the fieldsmen all crowded back out of danger.

Hoffmann was bowling from the pavilion end, and the tears of merriment were in Marjorie's eyes as she watched him. Even the severe face of the Head had relaxed into something very like a grin.

But Hoffmann's bowling, though not dangerous to the batsmen, was dangerous enough to everybody else within reach. His second ball flew wilder than the first, and there was a yell from Wingate. Wingate was standing by the ropes at almost right-angles from the pitch, but the ball had reached him, and landed fairly on his chest. He caught it in his hand.

Nugent approached the ropes for the ball.

"Here it is!" said Wingate, tossing him the ball with one hand, and rubbing a bruise on his chest with the other. "Take that villain off! Tell Wharton to kill him if he touches the ball again!"

"Ha, ha! Certainly."

Nugent returned with the ball, and gave the school captain's message to Wharton, who received it laughingly.

"I was thinking the same," he remarked; "he's too dangerous. I say, Hoffmann, you can get into the long-field."

"Vy I not powl te pall vunce more?"

"We can't spare you from the field. Anybody can bowl, but there's only one chap in the team who fields as you do—and that's yourself. Go down into the long-field, and stop there."

"I tinks tat I rador powl te pall."

"And I think I'd rather you fielded; and as I'm captain of this team, you'd better go, unless you are looking for a thick ear."

And Hoffmann went.

"You had better take the ball again, Hazeldene," said Wharton. "Go easy with them. They ought to be allowed to knock up a couple of dozen runs or so, to save their face, you know. We shall walk all over them, anyway."

"Right you are!" said Hazeldene.

The Greyfriars bowling and fielding were extremely slack for the rest of that innings. The French score went up to 20, and there it stopped. The last wicket fell, and the innings was over, for 20 runs, not one of which would have been taken if the home team had exerted themselves, as everybody but the French players knew very well.

"I zink zat ve do bettair in ze next innings," Lerouge remarked to Meunier. "Zere vill be plenty of time to play ze match out."

He was quite right there. The innings had not lasted half an hour, and the afternoon was yet young. And Harry Wharton did not keep them waiting for the commencement of the Greyfriars innings.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Side.

THE Greyfriars innings opened with Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh and Hazeldene. The latter was to receive the bowling. Hazeldene was the weakest link in the chain, so to speak, and if the French bowlers had a chance of taking a wicket, it was his. And Harry wanted to give them all the chances he could.

Hazeldene, however, meant to do his best. A fellow could not be expected to give his wicket away under a hundred pairs of eyes to please anybody. That was carrying politeness too far.

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"Vill you take ze first ovaire, mon cousin?" asked Adolphe Meunier, tendering the ball to Henri Lerouge with a polite bow. The French team had taken up their places in the field, many of them looking more like lost sheep than fieldsmen.

"Ah, non, I leave zat honair to you, mon ami," said Lerouge, with a return bow.

"Non, non! Ze honair is for you."

"Non, mon cousin, it is for you."

"I insist—"

"Zen if you insist I yield, mon cousin," said Lerouge, bowing again, and taking the leather. "I vill bowl against ze vicket."

"Go it!" yelled a score of impatient voices.

And Lerouge went on to bowl. The crowd were impatient. The French batting had been fearful and wonderful, and the Greyfriars' crowd were eager to see what kind of bowling they would put up.

Lerouge fixed his eyes on Hazeldene's wicket. He was bowling from the pavilion end, and he turned to take a little run, paused in the middle of it to take his hat off to the laughing Marjorie. Then he turned round again, grasped the ball with a businesslike air, took a little run and delivered the ball.

Then he stood gazing with wide-open eyes to see what became of it. Hazeldene was rather curious upon that point also; he saw nothing of it himself. Meunier picked it up with a grin and tossed it back to the bowler.

Lerouge tried to catch it, but it slipped through his fingers and fell into the grass. He stooped and picked it up, amid a general grin and a murmur of "Butter-fingers!"

The French bowler looked very determined now. He meant to show the English cricketers what he could really do. He sent down the ball with all his strength, about the easiest ball the batsman had ever had to deal with. Hazeldene grinned, and swiped it away towards the boundary, and the batsmen ran.

"Well hit!" shouted the Greyfriars lads.

The French fieldsmen were blundering after the ball. They all ran, and two or three of them ran into one another and rolled on the grass. Five runs had been taken before the ball came in, and then it came in with a whiz that took it right across the field, missing the wicket by half a dozen yards. The batsmen went on running, though they were laughing too much to put on much speed.

Again and again! The ball was fielded at last, and the breathless sprinters stopped. Nine runs had been taken in all, and now Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh was at the batting wicket, with a grin on his dusky face.

"How do you like the game, Miss Marjorie?" asked Harry, who was standing beside the girl in the pavilion.

Marjorie had laughed till she cried. Her eyes were dancing with mirth now.

"It is very interesting," she said. "I have never seen cricket like this before. I am glad I did not miss this game."

"There goes Lerouge again," grinned Bob Cherry. "He'll get one of the fieldsmen out this journey."

Lerouge was bowling again. The ball whizzed dangerously near Meunier's head, but he ducked in time. It was a wide—a very wide wide, as Bob Cherry remarked. But the bowler was getting into form now. When he handled the ball again there was a look upon his face that seemed to say that he meant to do something really effective this time.

And he did! He turned himself half over in the delivery of the ball, and his foot slipped, and he went down with a bump on the turf.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lerouge sat up, looking dazed.

"Vere is ze ball?" he murmured.

"There it is, in your hand!" grinned Hazeldene. "You didn't let go."

"Sacre bleu! I zink you are right!"

The bowler regained his feet and his place. He bowled again more carefully this time. There was a terrific yelp from Meunier.

The ball had grazed his head, carrying off his cap and depositing it in the grass. Meunier clapped his hand to his head, and Lerouge gazed at him in consternation.

"Helas! I have injured my beloved cousin!" he exclaimed. And he dashed away towards Meunier. "Adolphe, Adolphe, have I injured you ver' moosh?"

"Non, non," said Meunier, rubbing his head. "It is nozzing, my dear Henri."

"I am afraid you are hurt, my dear Adolphe."

"I assure you zat it is really nozzing, my dear Henri."

"You take ze heavy veight from my heart viz zat assurance, my dear Adolphe."

"Pray go on viz ze bowling, my dear Henri."

And Lerouge went on with the bowling. The fieldsmen

crowded back out of danger, considering it best, under the circumstances, to field very deep.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder where the next ball will go? This is getting really very interesting."

He soon knew. Lerouge doubled himself up and delivered the ball, but he let go of it at the wrong moment, and it flew away behind him, and shot right into the pavilion. Lerouge stood looking dazed, and wondering where the ball was. A yell from the pavilion enlightened him.

"Dear me!"

Dr. Locke started to his feet. His hat had been whipped off his head, and had disappeared, and the doctor was looking startled and shocked.

"Dear me! What has happened?"

"It was the ball, sir," said Bob Cherry, nearly choking.

"It must have flown in the wrong direction, sir."

"Dear me! It is positively dangerous to stay here. My dear, I think we had better miss the rest of the match."

Mrs. Locke thought so too. She rose hastily.

"And you, Miss Hazeldene—"

"Oh, I will see it out, please!" said Marjorie. "You know, sir, lightning never strikes twice in the same place."

The Head laughed, and quitted the pavilion hurriedly with his wife. Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton placed themselves so as to shield Marjorie from any possible danger from Lerouge's erratic bowling. The ball was tossed out, and the over was finished at last, and then Ducrot took the ball.

He had to bowl against Hazeldene, and he came on with the same swagger that he had shown in batting. He threw up the ball, to show how easily he could catch it, and there was a gust of laughter as it slid from his clumsy fingers and fell into the grass. Ducrot turned red.

"Play!"

"Ah! I fetches him out zis time!" exclaimed Ducrot.

And he threw in the ball, right at Hazeldene instead of at his wicket. The beaming expression upon Ducrot's face showed that he did not mean any harm. He evidently regarded this as the simplest means of getting the batsman out.

The ball caught the astonished batsman on the side of the head, and Hazeldene gave a yell worthy of a Red Indian on the warpath.

Ducrot gave a crow of delight, and danced beside the wicket.

"Ciel! I have got him!"

"You villain!" yelled Hazeldene. "Hang it! You did that on purpose!"

Ducrot beamed.

"Zere!" he exclaimed. "Zat is ze true chivalry of ze English charactair. Mine opponent is generous; he admit zat it vas not ze accident!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton.

"How is zat, umpire? Out?"

"Yes, rather!" growled Hazeldene. "I'm out, rather! Catch me batting against any of you dangerous lunatics any more."

And he walked off to the pavilion.

"Zat is out!" crowed Ducrot. "Come on, ze rest of you, and I soon get you out!"

"You're not allowed to throw the ball!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, choking with laughter, as he came out of the pavilion. "You mustn't throw it, especially at the batsman."

"Vat I do viz it, zen?"

"You bowl it at the wicket, of course."

"But it is easier to hit ze batsman zan to hit ze wicket."

"Oh, try to explain to him, Meunier!"

Meunier explained, and the delinquent bowler at once rushed off to apologise to Hazeldene. The game had to wait till he returned, but Hazeldene did not come back to the wicket. He preferred to be considered out.

Harry Wharton went on next. Between them Wharton and Hurree Singh knocked up the runs in fine style, the bowling being absolutely powerless against them, and the fielding quite as incompetent. The French fellows had no chance whatever, and when the total reached a hundred runs, Harry decided to declare.

Declare he accordingly did, and the innings closed, with a hundred up for the Greyfriars Remove, and only Hazeldene's wicket down; and that down only because he had not returned to it.

"Ze runs are more zan us so far," Lerouge remarked to Meunier. "But ve change all zat in ze second innings."

Meunier had his doubts. But he did not say so. The home innings had lasted just as long as was required to pile up the runs, and there was plenty of time ahead. The French cricketers went in a second time, and in this innings they certainly began to score. Perhaps it was kindness on the part of the bowlers, but whenever they succeeded in hitting the ball at all they took a run or two for it. But with every possible assistance from the bowling side, short

of giving the game away, the French team only succeeded in bringing their total up to forty-five.

The second Greyfriars innings was not wanted. Harry Wharton's eleven had won by an innings and fifty-five runs, and the famous match was over.

The crowd laughed and cheered as the heroes of that curious match came off the field. The French lads seemed to be very well satisfied with themselves, in spite of the defeat; and the home team were satisfied, and so there was general satisfaction all round.

But they all had reason to be satisfied, at all events, with the tea Billy Bunter had prepared, *al fresco*, for the distinguished guests.

The spread was large and attractive, and the cricketers were hungry enough to do it full justice.

They picnicked under the shady elms, and ate and drank and were merry, and Harry and Bob, and Lerouge and Meunier vied in looking after Marjorie, who had sweet smiles for everyone.

The *al fresco* tea was a great success, and the time for the return of the French juniors to town came all too soon. Even Hoffmann and Meunier were quite friendly for the rest of the day, and pledged each other in ginger-pop. And when the time came for departure, the brake was brought round, and as many of the Greyfriars lads as could crowd in accompanied the French cricketers to the station.

At the station Lerouge had something to say as he shook hands for good-bye with Harry Wharton.

"You beat us at ze cricket," he said. "It is ze English game, and perhaps you play him a leetle better zan ve do —"

"Oh, no! Not a bit of it!"

"Yes," said Lerouge, "I zink zat you play him perhaps a little better. But ve are staying some weeks in zis country, and ve like to meet you again—not at ze cricket, but at ze gymnastics. Ve zink ve give you a run for your money in zat line, mon ami. Vill you meet us like zat?"

"Will we? Rather!" said Harry Wharton heartily. "We'll meet you at anything you like, old son, and whenever you like. What do you say, chaps?"

And the chaps said "Rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific," added the nabob emphatically.

"Zen it is settled," said Lerouge, with a smile of satisfaction. "I not zink zat you find ze task so easy, but ve sall see. I will write to you about ze events, and ve vill make ze arrangements. Now I zank you for your hospitality, and I embrace you before I depart in ze train."

"Good-bye, old chap!" cried Harry hurriedly.

"Adieu, mon ami."

There was some more kissing, but at last the French lads were all aboard, and the guard waved his flag, and they were off.

"Good-bye!"

The windows were crammed with heads and waving handkerchiefs as the train steamed out of the station, and the boys of Greyfriars waved and shouted back. The train disappeared down the line.

"Some more fun for us over this new challenge, I expect," Nugent remarked, as they walked back to Greyfriars. "I dare say their gymnastics are on a level with their giddy cricket. Ha, ha, ha!"

"The probableness is great. It will be the easy walk-over for our esteemed selves," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "We shall dust up the ground wipefully with the honourable rotters!"

"Harry Wharton was very thoughtful. He was not so sure about it. But the rest of the Remove anticipated with easy confidence the next meeting with the contingent from la Belle France."

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of the Chums of Greyfriars next Tuesday, entitled: "Billy's Treat." Please order your MAGNET in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)

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NEXT
TUESDAY.



NEW STORY SHOWING HOW TWO BOYS SUCCEED AS DETECTIVES.

By LEWIS HOCKLEY.

GLANCE OVER THIS FIRST.

Frank Dennis and Bob Lomax, two City clerks, are thrown out of employment. Having no prospects, they decide to make the detective business their profession, and assume the name of "Maxenniss."

Grip, their dog, in a strange manner is instrumental in getting their first client—a Mrs. Brewer—who is continually receiving threatening picture postcards from a man evidently aware that his victim is coming into a legacy. Having strong suspicions of one of Mrs. Brewer's lodgers—"Sleeping" McDonald, a pugilist—Dennis visits a Mr. Abrams, a dealer in post-cards, who is known to be friendly with McDonald. Dennis shows the dealer an incriminating card that McDonald had dropped in the street, and which Grip had brought to his master. On seeing the card, Abrams attacks Dennis, and, assisted by McDonald, who now appears, stuns him and goes through his pockets. At this juncture Lomax, having visited Mrs. Brewer and found her away from home, enters the Jew's house, piloted by Punch, an inveterate enemy of Abrams. Lomax grapples with McDonald, while Grip attends to Abrams, and Punch endeavours to restore Dennis.

At Bay.

And Punch was successful. Dennis gathered his scattered wits together, and recognised his saviours.

"How in the world did you get here?" he demanded.

And then he recollected the precious postcard, and, turning to the heap of things Abrams had removed from his pockets, he looked through them hurriedly. The postcard was there; between two letters, it had escaped Abrams' one-eyed search, and with a gasp of satisfaction, Frank crammed it together with his other belongings into his pockets.

By this time the Jew had wrenched himself free from Grip's jaws, but he was immediately seized by the collar by Punch, twisted to the floor, and incontinently sat upon.

McDonald, badly hurt and fast weakening, felt he could keep it up no longer; he had already had something to do with Dennis, and his fists, though hard, were less punishing than Lomax's knuckle-dusters. Suddenly dropping his guard, he rushed at Bob head first, intending to butt him out of the way.

But the Yorkshireman knew the guard to that particular form of attack. As McDonald neared him, he raised his right knee sharply, and upper-cut the pugilist so successfully, that he dropped in a heap on the littered floor. For a few seconds Bob regarded him with a satisfied air; then he turned to his chum.

"Well, Frank," he exclaimed pantingly, "how goes it? And what's the meaning of all this?"

"How did you come here?"

"Thought I'd call on Mr. Abrams," Lomax explained. "And as I couldn't get in at the front door, I had no hesitation in entering at the back. Looks as if I were not altogether ill-timed in my visit, either. Much hurt, old chap? You've been having a decent sort of a scrap here, by the look of things."

"Not much, I think," Dennis answered wearily. "They didn't get the card, though. That's what they were after. They would have had it if you hadn't come in; I was about done."

"So I should think. The blackguards! We'll talk to 'em! We've got the whiphand now—turned the tables! Here, Grip!"

Grip, who had been industriously licking a spot whereon Solly Abram's boot-heel had fallen heavily, bounded forward. He listened with one ear cocked forward, and his brown eyes full of intelligence when Lomax pointed out to him the body of McDonald, just beginning to recover from his knock-out blow. He understood precisely what was required of him, and he sat down on his haunches within a yard of the boxer, with an expression on his jaws and in

his eyes that plainly intimated his intention to make things warm for that gentleman if he were so foolhardy as to move. Probably the terrier, who had already evinced a prejudice against McDonald, wished that his enemy would move.

"Now, my lad"—and Lomax turned to the young man on Abram's chest—"let him get up, please. We want to talk to him, and I guess he won't be able to answer very easily with you squatting over his lungs. Let him go; he can't do any harm."

Solomon Abrams sat up. He recognised Lomax, and started violently. He swore feebly to himself; but as Bob had said, he couldn't do any harm. The turn of events—and Grip's teeth—had broken him up for the time being.

"Now, my friend"—and Lomax picked up one of the fallen chairs and sat down facing the Jew—"what's the meaning of all this? You seem to have let yourself in comfortably for something decidedly unpleasant. This looks very like attempted murder, or robbery with exaggerated violence, and that sort of thing is liable to get the perpetrator, when caught, a sentence of penal servitude. And you are caught, please remember."

The Jew's face turned a disagreeable greenish hue, but he did not speak.

"You and your friend here have laid up a nice bit of trouble for yourselves over this," Lomax went on remorselessly. "Come, loosen your tongue, my friend; I want to have an explanation of this. Why have you and your confederate been doing your level best to murder my partner, and, incidentally, lay the foundation for a prolonged holiday for your two selves in one of his Majesty's official lodging-houses?"

"Murder him!" repeated the Jew, with some show of spirit. "He'th nearly murdered uth. And what have you been doing, eh? What'th the meaning of your athault on uth, I should like to know? And what d'ye mean by breaking into my houth in thith fathion, eh? Anthor me that! It'th you an' your pal here what'th going to git the penal thervitude ath you'll quickly thee. It'th houthbreaking, that'th what it ith—houthbreaking an' attempted murder! You'll look prethiouth funny, my friend, when Icaalth in a politheman an' giveth you in charge, eh? The boot'th very muth on the other foot, I fanthy."

The Hebrew had worked himself into a state of excitement; but his charge, legitimate as it might have been proved—for the detective had no legal right whatever for having entered the house as he had done—did not seem to affect the Yorkshireman's nerves disastrously. In fact, he smiled.

"Finished?" he asked coolly.

"You can grin!" Mr. Abrams snapped. "Wait until we get the polithe here, an' then let'th thee what you'll have to thay!"

"Police!" echoed Lomax scornfully. "I'd like to see you send for the police! It's just what you want, isn't it, for a policeman to come in here and hear what's happened. The very thing for you, isn't it? Do it, my friend, by all means do it! Send for the police. Here, I'll help you! Here's a police whistle." And he produced one from his pocket. "Fetch 'em up, do! Just go and give a call, and you'll get all the police you want in something less than two shakes of a sheep's tail. Police grow plentifully about here; and, by Jove, if many of the gentry hereabouts are like yourself, they're wanted pretty badly. Send for the police, my dear sir; I'll help you get 'em."

But Mr. Abrams evinced no alacrity to accept the hearty invitation or the assistance Bob promised. He looked murderously at the young man out of his one useful eye, and snarled to himself something to the effect that Lomax would probably find himself before long, not quite so cocksure and confident as he was at present.

"Well, Frank, perhaps you'll tell us what has happened?"

went on Lomax pleasantly, seeing that the Jew was not anxious to enlighten him.

"It is told in one sentence," Frank Dennis answered. "You know the purpose for which I came here. Well, I saw Abrams, showed him that I had the card, and he threatened to shoot me if I did not give it to him. He locked the door, and just as I was trying to force my way out, that man, McDonald, appeared from somewhere. What followed, you have seen for yourself—luckily for me."

"Just what I imagined. Now, then, Abrams, you're cornered, you see, and if you're wise, you'll make a clean breast of the business. Why are you so anxious to get hold of that card? What does it mean to you that you're ready to do murder to get hold of it?"

But Solly Abrams made no reply, though his wits were anything but idle. The game had gone very badly against him; he thought that the winning cards were in his hands, and, lo and behold, the ace of trumps, in the person of Robert Lomax, had come up against him. He was cornered, and he knew it. It was up to him to do something. And he dared not bluff. These men, even though they were young, were not of the breed that may be bluffed easily. Still, he had to do something, though he had no intention of speaking the truth. He tried to move off the track—to shirk the main point.

"You've broken into my houth—" he began. But Lomax told him to cut it short; they were not to be frightened by bluffing of that sort.

"I'll take out a warrant for forthible entry, and—"

"Take it out when you get the chance," Lomax retorted impatiently. "I hope you will, and much good may it do you!"

"Well, then," the Jew cried desperately, "thinthe I mutht tell you, I mutht, I thuppothe. That young man, when he thowed me the pothtcard"—he pointed to Frank—"I took to be my bithineth rival; there'th a firm that'th tryin' to underthell me in my cardth. They've forged my regithtered trade mark—the A inthide the ring—and I wanted a copy of one of their productionth tho that I could thow it to a tholithitor and begin an action againtht them. That'th all, an' now you know."

"So that was why you offered me money for the card?" asked Frank. "You were so anxious to get hold of a specimen of your business competitor's forgeries?"

"Yeth," agreed the Jew.

"So anxious," commented Lomax sarcastically, "that you were willing to run the risk of being tried for murder in order to gain your evidence for a minor criminal prosecution. That's it, eh?"

Mr. Solly Abrams nodded sulkily.

"Well, all I can say is, Mr. Abrams," Lomax said, "that you've got a pretty poor idea of our commonsense. Try again, man, try again; this explanation is as great an insult to your own intelligence as it is to ours. It's too thin by half. Think of something else."

Mr. Abrams' expression was very much that of a particularly ugly rat, that, being in a trap, realises that he is safely caught, and no means of escape exists.

The Jew turned fiercely round upon the boys, his eyes gleaming.

"The curse of Judah be on you!" he hissed.

"Certainly," Lomax said cheerfully. "And anything else in a small way? Meanwhile, answer my question, or"—and here the young man dropped his bantering tone and became distinctly threatening—"I shall forthwith go out and fetch a policeman, and give both of you into custody for attempted murder."

A sudden low growling from Grip attracted Lomax's attention, and he turned to the defeated prize-fighter, whose movements, as consciousness returned to him, had awakened the terrier's suspicions.

"Easy, Grip," directed his master. And then to McDonald: "Now, my man, what's the reason for your attempt to murder my friend here?"

McDonald's brain was still a trifle confused after

the severe jolt it had received, and in a dull, half-asleep sort of voice he said: "He lost me the fight."

"At Wonderland, he means," supplemented Dennis, by way of explanation.

"Bunkum!" retorted Lomax sharply. "It wasn't that; you were afraid of my friend, for some reason or other. What was it?"

At the word "afraid" the eyes of McDonald, who was rapidly coming round, glinted viciously. "He lost me the fight," he repeated.

"Coward," observed Mr. Abrams.

"Wot about you?" inquired Punch, who, while this conversation was going on, had been making an interested examination of the contents of the room.

Mr. Abrams favoured him with a scowl, murmuring:

"You wait! You jutht wait—that'th all!"

Lomax was beginning to question McDonald again when his partner, who had been seated on the table deep in thought, came to him.

"Look here, old chap," he said, in a low voice, "it'll be no advantage to us if we do make these scoundrels confess; they'll have to do that when they're placed in the dock. Don't you think our best move is to leave them, and go to obtain a warrant for their arrest? We've got quite sufficient as it is to warrant the issue of one. If they won't talk, they won't, and we can't make them. And, besides, we're doing no real good."

"Perhaps you're right," Lomax replied. "Though, by George, it would give me some satisfaction to force these brutes into owning up. But you're right, Frank; we'll get out of here."

Then he turned to the Jew.

"See here, Mr. Abrams," he said. "No doubt you think you know your own business best, but let me give you a word of advice. If you care to own up, it is possible you'll hear no more of the matter; there's no harm been done yet—no actual harm—so maybe you won't be prosecuted. But if you don't, then you will. I'll make it my business to see that the police take it up if our client declines. I'll give you until nine o'clock this evening for you and your precious partner to think it over. If there's no answer then to my proposition, I go out for a warrant straight away. Now you know where you are."

Letting themselves out of the room, Lomax and his partner, with Grip, and followed by the ex-boxer and ex-pickpocket, Punch, left the house. To the last-named Frank spoke a few words, telling him to come up to the Fleet Street office later in the evening. Their hands and faces were damaged somewhat, their clothes in disorder, and they spent a few minutes in the shop of a neighbouring barber, who eyed them with some curiosity as he attended to their wants.

They had reached the St. Paul's end of Cannon Street, still discussing the events in Mr. Abrams' shop, when Lomax suddenly gave vent to a violent exclamation.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "What a silly, idiotic, gaumless fool I am, to be sure!"

"What's the trouble now?" his chum inquired.

"Why, I clean forgot it until this moment! And I told that rascally Jew no harm had been done, and perhaps our client wouldn't prosecute if he made a clean breast of the matter. My word!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Why, goodness only knows what harm has been done, and we haven't a client now!"

"Haven't a client!" And Dennis stopped and looked at his partner with complete surprise. "What d'you mean?"

"Why, Mrs. Brewer has disappeared!"

"Disappeared?"

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