

Harry Wharton's Bank - Holiday.

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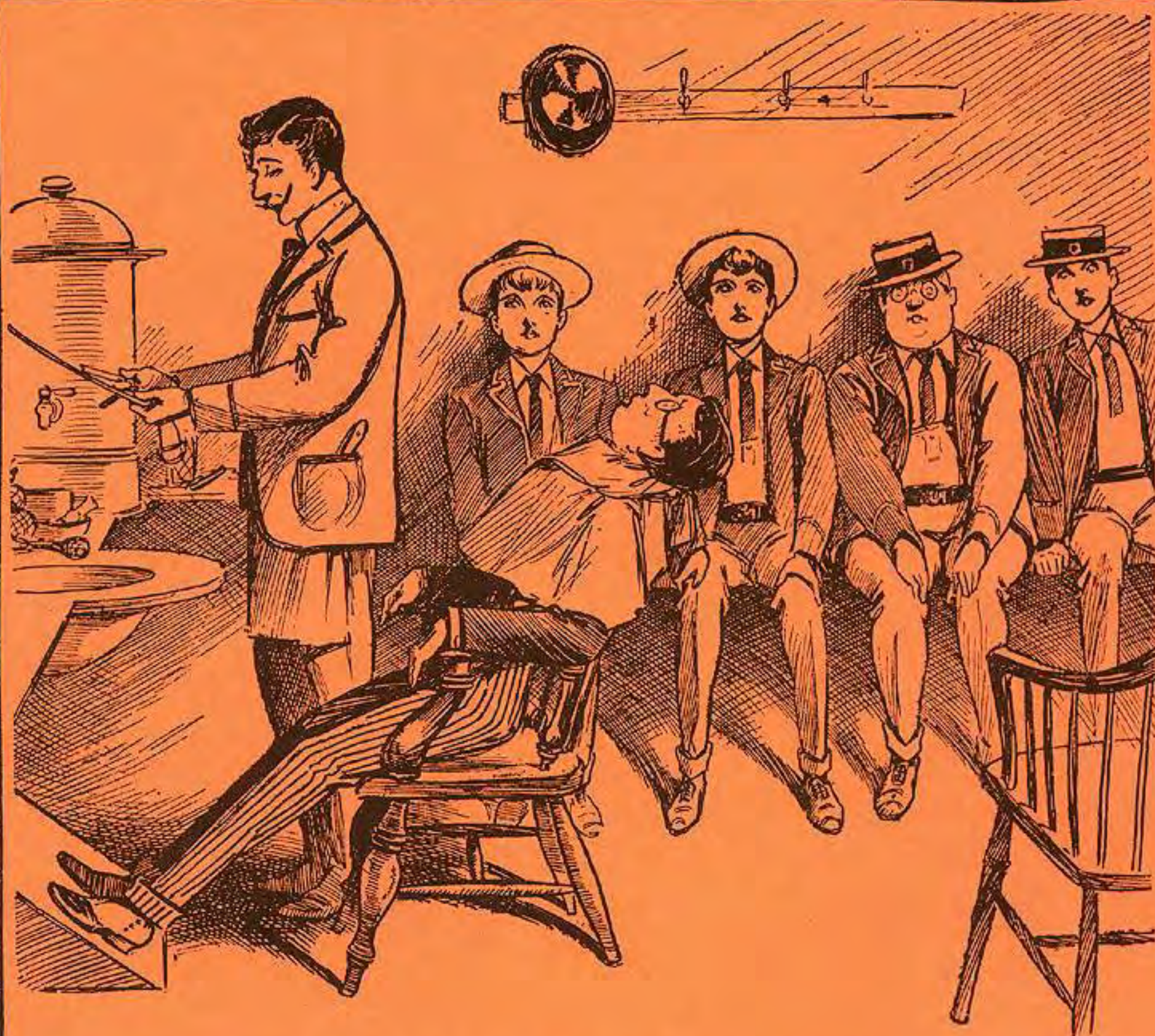
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NUMBER 78.

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By
Frank
Richards.



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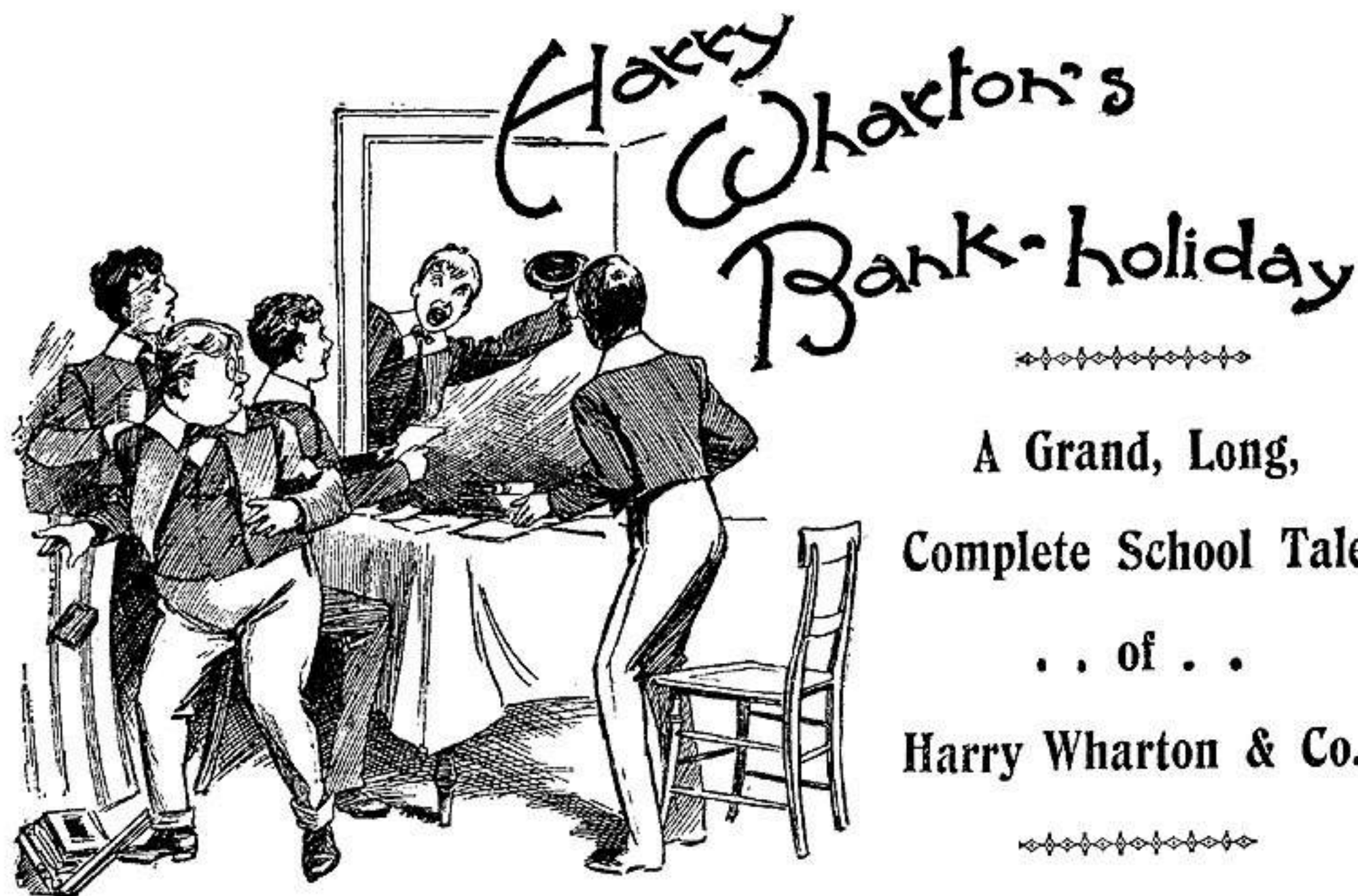


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By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Breaking-Up at Greyfriars.

"HURRAH!" shouted Bob Cherry.
He threw open the door of No. 1 Study in the Remove at Greyfriars, and shouted that shout into the study, and the effect was electrical.

The chums of No. 1 Study were deeply occupied at that moment.

Harry Wharton was reading a letter, Frank Nugent was sharpening a pencil, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was lifting a glass of lemon squash to his lips, and Billy Bunter was packing up some plates belonging to his camera.

The sudden irruption at the door made them all jump. Bunter's packet of plates went to the floor with a crash, and smashed to pieces, Nugent gave a yell as the penknife cut his finger instead of the pencil, and Hurree Singh gasped and choked with the lemon squash all over his face. Harry Wharton lowered the letter he was reading, and laughed. The others did not laugh—they yelled

"You frabjous duffer!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Did I startle you? Sorry! Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "All my plates gone! I gave eighteenpence for those plates. All wasted! You ass!"
"What about my finger?" roared Nugent, holding it up to view. "I might have cut it off."
"What about my esteemed shirtfront and my face?" gurgled Hurree Singh. "The lemon squashfulness is all over me."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You—you laughing hyena——"
"I'm sorry! I really am! I didn't mean to startle you."
"You open a door suddenly and roar into a study like—like a buffalo, and you don't mean to startle anybody!" shrieked Nugent. "Here, lend a hand! Bump him!"
"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's all right!"
"Is it? Bump him!"
The chums of No. 1 Study hardly needed a second bidding. They grasped Bob Cherry and bumped him with hearty goodwill.

The sturdy Removite struggled, but he struggled in vain in the grip of four pairs of hands, for even Billy Bunter was joining in.

He rolled over, and was bumped—again and again, and when the avengers let him go, he sat on the rug and gasped, with his collar hanging by a single stud, and his face dusty and red, and his hair like a mop.

"There!" panted Nugent. "That's better."

"The betterfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You—you asses!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I put a clean collar on just now—"

"Ha, ha! It doesn't look like one."

Bob staggered to his feet.

"Look here—"

"We're looking! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You duffers! Nice state I'm in."

"Well, you shouldn't play your giddy jokes on your old study," said Nugent. "You've kept the Remove passage in an uproar since you were moved into No. 13."

"I wasn't japing," said Bob Cherry indignantly. "Don't you know what to-day is—last day of term, ass! We break up to-morrow."

"You jolly near got broken up to-day."

"I looked in to speak to you chaps about it—"

"What did you yell for, then?"

"Well, I suppose a chap is entitled to yell when he feels cheerful, isn't he?" demanded Bob Cherry aggressively. "Look here, I've got something to say to you chaps—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter. Look here, you chaps, since I was put into No. 13 we've been rivals in a way—I've made No. 13 top study—"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Well, never mind that. What I want to say is, that we're going to be on the old terms during the holidays."

"Yes, rather," said Harry Wharton heartily. "I'm jolly glad to hear you say that, Bob."

"Same here," said Nugent cordially.

"The gladfulness of my honourable self is also terrific," remarked the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Now, are you chaps coming to my place for the vacation?"

"Oh, we've promised Wharton."

"Wharton can come too."

Harry laughed.

"Can't be did," he said. "But I'll tell you what, Bob—you come to me! It amounts to the same thing."

"Well, if the mountain won't come to Mahomet, I suppose Mahomet has to buzz off to the giddy mountain," said Bob Cherry, grinning. "I'll come!"

"Right-ho! We'll have a good time, too," said Harry. "My uncle always looks after me in the holidays, and you know what an old sport he is. But—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"I want you to listen to this letter," said Harry, holding up the letter he had been reading when Bob Cherry burst into the study. "It's about the vacation, and you've come just in time to hear it, Bob."

"Go ahead."

"You remember that chap D'Arcy we met at St. Jim's—the chap who was at the garden party at Cliff House with his cousin Ethel and Marjorie?"

"Yes, rather."

"This is from him. Listen." And Harry proceeded to read out the letter, while Nugent sucked his cut finger, and the nabob wiped the lemon-squash from his dusky face.

"School House, St. Jim's Sussex.

"Dear Wharton,—You may remember saying something about meeting in town, or else I said something about it, I forget which. I shall be in London on August Bank-Holiday, with my young brother Wally, having a look round, and if you and any of your friends cared to meet me, we could have a look round together. I am going to show my young brother some of the sights, and we should be jolly glad to have you. Kind regards to all the chaps.—Yours sincerely,

"ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Your uncle's place is handy to town, and we can run up and meet Gussy and have a giddy bank-holiday, eh?"

"Not a bad idea," said Nugent.

"The not-badfulness is terrific."

"Then it's settled," said Harry, putting the letter into his pocket. "I'll write to D'Arcy and make arrangements. I don't remember meeting his younger brother, but I suppose he's a chap like D'Arcy. D'Arcy is very decent."

"Yes, rather."

THE MAGNET.—No. 78.

NEXT
WEEK:

"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

A Splendid Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"I won't shut up, Bob Cherry. My plates are smashed and—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Harry laughing. "I'll get you some more."

Billy Bunter brightened up.

"Oh, really, Wharton, that's decent of you. You may as well get three dozen while you're about it, as I shall want to do a lot of photographing in the vac. I'll settle for them later. I'm expecting a postal order in the morning."

"That's all right; never mind the settling."

"Excuse me, Wharton, but I must put it down in the account. I'm not the sort of chap to take charity from anybody I hope," said Bunter, with dignity. "I say, you fellows, this run to London will be a ripping idea in the holidays, you know."

"Oh!" said Bob Cherry. "Are you coming?"

"Yes; I shall be staying with Wharton, and I'll come with pleasure. I like that chap D'Arcy, and he's very fond of me. These nice chaps do take a fancy to me."

"No accounting for tastes, I suppose."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say—"

"Come with me, you chaps!" said Bob Cherry, ruthlessly interrupting Bunter. "I'm going to stand a feed to celebrate breaking-up. Come on."

"Oh, rather," said Bunter.

And they went. Bob Cherry seemed to be unusually flush with money, and he gathered friends on all sides as he progressed towards the school shop. Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, and Wun Lung, the Chinese, his study-mates in No. 13, joined him in the passage. On the stairs he was joined by Skinner, Desmond, Ogilvy, Morgan, Stott, and several more fellows. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, joined the party in the Close, and even Blundell and Bland of the Fifth condescended to come in and have a ginger pop. Mrs. Minble's little shop behind the big elm in the Close was pretty well crammed by the time Bob Cherry had marshalled his array into it. Wingate of the Sixth was there; and he, the genial captain of Greyfriars, cheerily consented to join in the treat.

It was a merry party in the tuck-shop, and with the popping of corks, the clinking of glasses, and the buzz of many voices all talking at once, the din was what Hurree Singh would have been justified in describing as terrific. Even Bulstrode clinked a glass of lemonade with Harry Wharton, and the two old rivals drowned their enmity in that harmless beverage.

And the next morning Greyfriars broke up.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Major and Minor!

"WALLY!"

"Hallo, old son."

"Weally, Wally, I must repeat what I have pweviously said on that subject, about your usin' slangy expressions—"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus! If you repeat all you've said on the subject, you know, it will take up twenty-four hours at least, and then what becomes of the giddy Bank Holiday?"

Wally propounded this question as if it were an unanswerable conundrum, standing with his hands in his trousers' pockets facing his elder brother.

Brothers as they were, and somewhat alike in features, there was little further resemblance between Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the most elegant fellow in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, and his minor, the cheekiest and inkiest fag in the Third.

Arthur Augustus cultivated that repose which the poet assures us stamps the cast of Vere de Vere. Wally brimmed with animal spirits, which seemed to be always bubbling over. When the two brothers were together, Arthur Augustus was always

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acting as a brake—but Wally was an irresponsible machine that seldom answered to the brake.

The two juniors of St. Jim's were standing on a crowded platform at Charing Cross Station, on a fine morning in August.

It was Monday morning, early. The station—and indeed every station in London—presented a very busy appearance. For it was the morning of the Bank Holiday—the day when the national nose is taken from the grindstone, and a day's leisure is enjoyed by many who get far too little of it. The busy crowd, the excited exclamations on all sides, trundling trolleys and vociferating porters—all was cheery, good-humoured, and pleasant to see. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was certainly the best-dressed fellow on the crowded platform. He was, in fact, dressed with more than usual care. Nothing could exceed the polish of his boots, the crease of his trousers, the cut of his jacket, and the gleam of his silk hat, unless perhaps it was the set of his necktie. Wally was dressed with far less care, and he had a straw hat on the back of his head, and a wisp of straw in his mouth—but he was remarkably tidy in comparison with the state in which he was usually seen in the Form-room at St. Jim's in term time.

Arthur Augustus had jammed his gold-rimmed monocle into his right eye, and turned it upon Wally with a glance that might have brought a blush of shame to the face of the station clock. But it had no perceptible effect upon the face of D'Arcy, minor.

"Got a pain in your eye, Gus?" he asked sympathetically.

"Wally, that wotten joko has been worked off by Monty Lowthah at St. Jim's scores of times, and it is absolutely thweadbare. Now, ewevy moment I expect the twain to come in with those Gweyfwiahs chaps."

"Hurray!"

"Pway be quiet, Wally! You are makin' the people look at you."

"Let 'em look! Hurray!"

"You young wascal! Pway be quiet. I want you to be particularly circumspect in your conduct to-day," said D'Arcy seriously. "These fellows fwom Gweyfwiahs are vevy decent, and I don't want them to know that I have a howwid young wagamuffin for a bwothah."

"Oh, come, Gus! If I don't mind owning you, you needn't mind owning me, I'm sure."

"I wegard that wemark as lackin' in the wespect due to an eldah bwothah. You know I nevah twent my eldah bwother, Conway, with diswespect."

"No; but your elder brother isn't an ass; and mine is."

"You—you diswespectful young wascal! Wally, I should be sowwy to have to thwash you in public before a cwowd—"

"You would—when you started," assented Wally.

"But if you do not altah your pwesent tone, I shall have no wesource but to administah a feahful thwashin'."

Wally pushed back his cuffs.

"Come on, then! We might have a bit of a scrap to pass the time while we're waiting for the Greyfriars chaps."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It was Bob Cherry's cheerful voice.

A train had come in and stopped during the argument between the St. Jim's juniors without their noticing it, and the Greyfriars party had alighted.

There were five of them, Billy Bunter looking very fat and cheerful, and the dusky face of Hurree Janset Ram Singh wearing an amiable smile. Wharton and Nugent looked in the best of spirits, and Bob Cherry, of course, was overflowing with exuberant cheerfulness.

He gave D'Arcy a slap on the shoulder in hearty greeting, and Arthur Augustus staggered two or three paces, and bumped against a porter who was trundling a trolley, laden with bags, along.

"By'r leave!" grunted the porter.

He shoved on, and D'Arcy sat on the platform.

"Bai Jove!"

Bob Cherry picked him up at once.

"Sorry!" he exclaimed. "Not tired, I hope? There's a seat further along, if you want to sit down."

"I do not want to sit down, Bob Chewwy. Some ass slapped me on the shouladah—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I—I mean I'm sorry! I did it."

"Oh, in that case it is all wight! I did not see your twain come in. I'm awfully glad to see you, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, shaking hands all round with the Greyfriars fellows. "It's quite an age, you know, since I've seen you—except Buntah. Buntah paid me a visit at St. Jim's."

"And I had a ripping time!" said Bunter. "Do you remember how I played cricket? Made them open their eyes a bit, eh?"

"Yass, wathah! I nevah laughed so much in my life before."

"Eh?"

"It was awfully funny, wasn't it?" said D'Arcy innocently.

"I'll bet you hadn't had much cricket like mine played at St. Jim's before, anyhow," said Billy Bunter indignantly.

"I'll bet they hadn't," grinned Bob Cherry. "Shut up, Bunter. We're all jolly glad to see you again, D'Arcy; and

THE MAGNET.—No. 78.

NEXT
WEEK:

"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

EVERY
TUESDAY, The "Magnet" ONE
LIBRARY. HALFPENNY.

it was a ripping idea of yours to ask us up to town for the Bank Holiday. Any of the other fellows knocking about?"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"No. Tom Mewwy and the west are in the countwy. I'm up here for a few days stayin' with a welation, and then I shall join Tom Mewwy. Pway come this way. You must be hungwy aftah your long journey, and it is always a good ideah to begin a day with a solid foundation of gwub. Fatty Wynn says so—and what Fatty Wynn doesn't know about feedin' isn't worth knowin', you know."

"Well, I admit I'm a little bit peckish," said Bob Cherry. "I had a good breakfast at Wharton's show, but that was some time back. We'll have another, and still have a good appetite for lunch."

"Pway follow me. There is a wippin' dinin'-woom I know of this way."

And Arthur Augustus led the way.

Wally pushed his hat further back on his head, and followed, emitting a piercing whistle which made his elder brother jump. It was a signal to a dog, apparently, for a shaggy mongrel came bursting through the crowd, causing several persons he nearly upset to murmur things.

"Good old Pongo!" said Wally. "Look here, you chaps, this is Pongo! Do you keep dogs, Wharton?"

"Yes—at home," said Harry. And he was soon plunged into a discussion upon the doggy world with Wally, who knew everything about dogs, and nearly everything about horses.

"Bai Jove, there's a cwowd here!" said Arthur Augustus, entering an extensive dining-room, in which nearly every table was taken. "No; here you are! Come this way!"

A table had just been vacated, and the juniors secured it. They sat down in a cheerful ring, and Billy Bunter's face glowed with anticipation. Arthur Augustus secured the attention of a waiter, who probably thought, from the gorgeousness of the swell of St. Jim's, that the tip would be a substantial one. He was very attentive at once to D'Arcy, who proceeded to give him a string of orders that made Billy Bunter beam more and more like a full moon.

A stout gentleman with a very red face was sitting at the next table, and he waved a serviette excitedly at the waiter.

"Waiter! Waiter!"

"Yessir! Yessir! One minute, sir!"

"My hat," murmured Nugent, "if the waiter gets through that string of orders in one minute he will have to go one better than a flash of lightning!"

"Ratherfully, my worthy chum."

"Waiter! Waiter! What?"

"One minute, sir."

"Waiter! Are you attending this table, or are you not attending this table?" roared the red-faced gentleman. "What?"

"Yes, sir! One minute, sir," said the waiter, without turning his head this time.

"Waiter, bring me a grilled steak immediately!"

"Yes, sir. One minute, sir."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy paused, and glanced at the stout gentleman.

"May I wemark, sir, that you are intewwuptin' me?"

The other glared at him.

"Waiter! I insist upon being served before these boys—these ragamuffins! Bring me a—"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a wagamuffin, sir."

"Waiter! Waiter!"

"Oh, pway attend to that twoublesome old gentleman first, waitah!" said D'Arcy. "Do you chaps mind waitin' a bit? One must show wespect to one's eldahs, even when they are wedfaced old boundahs."

"Right you are!" said Harry, laughing. "I believe I've seen that old chap before."

"Thank you, sir," said the waiter. And he hastened to appease the irascible gentleman.

Billy Bunter looked blank.

"I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!"

"I am extremely sowwy, Buntah—"

"Yes; but I—ow! What are you jamming your hoof on my foot for, Bob Cherry?"

"Shut up, then!"

"You're—you're a beast—an utter beast!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

And Billy Bunter relapsed into glowering silence, but as he glanced towards the stout gentleman, the cause of the delay, a gleam came into his eyes. The amateur ventriloquist of Greyfriars always had a way of "getting his own back" when he was among strangers, who did not know his little ways.

The gentleman, having received his steak, his chipped potatoes, and his other requisites, bestowed a frown upon the boys at the next table, and commenced operations with knife and fork. And Billy Bunter, leaning back in his chair and blinking through his big spectacles, commenced operations too.

THE THIRD CHAPTER; Bunter, the Ventriloquist.

"STEAK, sir! Did you say steak?"

The voice was so exactly that of the waiter that keener ears than the stout gentleman's might have been deceived. He snorted.

"I snid steak—and I'm eating steak!" he growled. "Don't be a fool! What?"

"Did you say steak, sir?"

"Yes, fool! It is all right."

"Yes, sir. Steak, sir?"

The stout gentleman lifted his head and glared round at that. He was getting worried by that insistent voice at his ear.

He glared round for the waiter, but the waiter was at D'Arcy's table, taking orders, and with no ears for anything else.

The stout gentleman looked surprised, then he glared again, and recommenced operations upon his plate. As the fork rose to his mouth, the voice rapped into his ear again.

"Steak, sir! Did you say steak?"

"Go away!"

"Yes, sir. Steak, sir?"

"You fool! Leave me in peace, will you. How can I eat with you babbling in my ear?" shouted the stout gentleman, losing his temper.

"Yes, sir. Steak, sir?"

The stout gentleman jumped up.

"I will not be badgered in this way!" he roared. "Where is the manager? I insist upon seeing the manager! I will not be badgered! What?"

The waiter looked round with a worried expression.

"Yes, sir! What do you want, sir?"

"I want to see the manager!" roared the stout gentleman.

"I will not be insulted! What?"

Harry Wharton uttered an exclamation.

"My hat, I thought I had seen him before!"

"Bai-Jove, do you know him?"

"I've seen him—we had a row with him when we were caravanning one day. Don't you know his sweet voice, you chaps? It's Major Popham!"

"My word, so it is!"

"He seems to be excited," said D'Arcy. "I wonder what he is excited about? Waitah, pway don't look wound at that old gentleman. Pway attend to me."

"Yes, sir."

"A dozen eggs and washahs of bacon to begin with—yaas, and I'll tell you the west aftah."

"Yes, sir."

The waiter hurried away.

Major Popham grunted and sat down, and took up knife and fork. He had hardly done so, when the voice rapped in his ear:

"Steak, sir?"

The major breathed hard.

"Steak, sir? Did you say steak, sir? Yes, sir."

The major jumped up again.

"I will not be insulted!" he shouted, in a voice that brought every eye in the room upon him. "Where is the manager? I insist upon seeing the manager! Where is the manager?"

"What does this mean? Pray be quiet."

"Are you the manager?"

"Yes, certainly. What is the matter?"

"I have been insulted—badgered, sir, by Jove, badgered, sir, by a rascally waiter. What? I am Major Popham, sir! What? I have been insulted."

"Which waiter? Where is he?"

"This one—he—" The major broke off. The waiter had gone, and had not yet returned. It certainly could not have been he who had worried the major.

The manager looked at the stout gentleman suspiciously.

"You had better go away quietly," he said. "I cannot have you making a disturbance here."

"Disturbance, sir! I have been insulted, begad, by a rascally waiter, sir."

"Which waiter?"

"How can I tell one confounded waiter from another confounded waiter, sir? What? No, sir, I will not moderate my voice. Certainly not."

"Then you will kindly leave the place."

"I will not leave the place. I am Major Popham. I have been insulted, begad—by a waiter, begad. What?"

"If you will not be quiet, sir—"

"Get away! Don't talk to me. What?"

The stout gentleman, having blown off steam as it were, dropped into his chair again, and the worried manager sighed with relief. He walked away; but the major was still gasping with excitement and anger, when the obnoxious voice asked over his shoulder once more:

"Steak, sir? Did you say steak, sir?"

Major Popham bounced out of his seat.

"Sir! Listen to that! I will not stand it, sir! What? Where is my cane? By gad, sir, I will show you! What?"

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NEXT
WEEK;

"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

A Splendid Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

If a waiter had been near the gallant major as he grasped his cane, that waiter would have suffered considerable bodily damage. But there was no waiter! The major glared round him in blank astonishment.

"Begad!" he murmured.

The manager hurried up again.

"I must ask you to retire, sir," he said. "I cannot have this intoxicated exhibition here."

"Intoxicated!" roared the major.

"Yes, sir! It is disgraceful! Please retire."

The stout gentleman caught up his hat and cane.

"I will go, sir—I will go. What? I have been insulted by a rascally waiter—yes, sir, insulted! What? You are a blackguard, sir. What?"

And the truculent major bounced out of the place.

The juniors at the next table were grinning with glee. Bob Cherry tried to suppress his merriment, but in vain. It found vent in a roar that rang through the room.

"Bai Jove! said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "what an extremely curious old gentleman, you know."

"You young rascal, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "It served him right, but you should have drawn it mild."

"Buntah! Was that Buntah!"

"Yes, rather! Didn't you know he was a giddy ventriloquist?" spluttered Bob Cherry, "Ha, ha, ha! My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

Yaas, wathah, I wemembah now he told me at St. Jim's," grinned D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, it was wippin'. It was wathah lackin' in wespect to an old gentleman, but he was certainly a very unweasonable old person. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors chuckled over the joke, and over their breakfast, untroubled any further by the proximity of the fiery-tempered major.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Plans for the Day.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY did the honours of the table in his well-known style, and certainly no one could complain of the feed. Even Billy Bunter was fully satisfied, and Billy Bunter had a stowage capacity that would have made Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's envious. The breakfast was a jolly one, and a cheery beginning to a cheery day. Over breakfast the juniors discussed plans for the day, and of course views were somewhat divergent.

Wally suggested hunting up a dog show somewhere. Billy Bunter thought that a round of all the eating-houses that were open would be a ripping way of spending the day. Hurree Janset Ram Singh suggested the British Museum, and his suggestion was met by a stony glare from all sides. Nugent voted for Hampstead Heath, and Bob Cherry for Earl's Court. Harry Wharton was silent, and Arthur Augustus himself only wanted to please the others.

"What do you say, Wharton, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, at last.

"Oh, I'm agreeable to anything," said Harry, hesitatingly. "Only I remember Hazeldene saying something at breaking-up about going to the Crystal Palace on August Monday."

"Hazeldene! Is that Miss Marjowie's bwothah?"

"Yes. His sister would be with him, I expect."

"Bai Jove! I should say that settles it."

"What-ho," said Bob Cherry, immediately, "I remember now that I have been to the Crystal Palace, and I've always wanted to go there again."

"I was just thinking the same," said Nugent, colouring a little. "I hear that it's a really ripping place, you know."

"The rippingfulness is terrific."

"Especially on a bank holiday," said Wally. "It's a good wheeze."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"Shan't! I like the idea of going to the Crystal Palace. I suppose it will be all right about the grub there?"

"That's all right, Buntie," said Bob Cherry, reassuringly, "there are heaps of grub shops there, and one place especially where you can have a tea for a bob—you eat as much as you like, and only pay a bob."

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened.

"My hat! That will be ripping! I think I shall be able to do a good bob's worth, you fellows."

"Yes, rather, I think so too. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, Cherry. You'll make D'Arcy think I'm a greedy chap, with these rotten jokes. I'm not greedy, only I like a lot. When a chap's got a delicate constitution, the only thing for him to do is to keep it up with constant nourishment. Yes, I'm ready, Nugent—don't keep dragging at my collar like that. I don't like it."

"Get a move on, then, lazybones."

"I'm moving."

Billy Bunter rose from his seat, not without a certain amount of effort. It had been a "breakfast," but it might have been breakfast, lunch, and dinner all rolled into one by the way

Bunter had travelled through the provisions. He had done them full justice, and he could very comfortably have enjoyed a little nap afterwards, to digest that breakfast and prepare for another meal. But it was not to be.

Bob Cherry gently jerked him out, and marched him from the room, while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy settled with the waiter, adding a tip that made that individual open his eyes very wide.

Then Wally whistled to Pongo, who had been discussing rashers of bacon under the table and they left the place.

Arthur Augustus led his friends from the station. The Crystal Palace having been decided upon, it was necessary to get to Victoria to take the train.

"Why not take the train from this station to Victoria?" asked Billy Bunter, with the air of a fellow making a brilliant suggestion.

"Yaas, wathah, that's a good ideah," said D'Arcy, with great politeness "only there isn't one, you see."

"Oh! That's rather stupid of them, I must say."

"Yaas, but the weason is that there isn't a line fwom here to there to wun the twain on, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "But we can walk it or take a bus or a taxi-cab, you know."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Tidy large number for a taxi-cab," he remarked. "Pongo and Bunter could be put under the seats, but what about the rest of us?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Why not walk?" said Harry. "It's early in the day, you know, and we've lots of time, and we could see something of the town on a bank holiday."

"Good wheeze."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up Bunter."

And the juniors walked away. There were a good many people in the streets, and Pongo caused endless trouble by getting out of reach, and exploring all sorts of odd corners and making his master think that he was lost.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, at last, "I think you were a young ass to bwing that wotten mongwel with you, Wally. This was going to be a holiday."

"I suppose Pongo is entitled to a run on a bank holiday, as much as anyone else?" exclaimed Wally, indignantly. "Blessed if I can see why quadrupeds shouldn't have holidays as much as bipeds."

"Yaas, wathah, but—"

"Besides, Pongo isn't any trouble. Looking after him is just a little agreeable excitement."

"Bai Jove! I don't look at it in that light. I wegard that dog as a howwible twouble. Pway put him on the chain."

"Bunter will carry him under his arm if you like," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, I'll shove the chain on him if you like," grunted Wally. "You wouldn't like to be led on a chain yourself, Gus."

"I am not a dog, Wally."

"No, but you'll grow," said Wally.

This retort rendered Arthur Augustus absolutely speechless. The Greyfriars juniors could not help chuckling. Wally gave a piercing whistle as a signal to Pongo to draw nigh, but perhaps Pongo caught a clink of the slim chain as Wally fished it out of his pocket. He did not draw nigh; but instead of that, he scuttled off, and Wally dashed in pursuit.

D'Arcy jammed his glass into his eye and looked after them.

"Bai Jove! I am sowwy, you chaps, to have to waste time like this. That young boundah is always in twouble of some sort."

"That's all right," grinned Bob Cherry. "I wouldn't miss Wally and his mongrel for a term's pocket-money. They're as good as a play."

"The playfulness is terrific."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a row!"

Pongo was causing trouble, as usual. He had darted between the legs of a gentleman in a fur cap and a spotted neckerchief, who had evidently been beginning his bank holiday celebrations at a very early hour. The gentleman's gait was unsteady, and there was a glassy gleam in his eye; but he was only sufficiently intoxicated to be quarrelsome. He nearly fell over Pongo, and he said something, and stooping, caught hold of the dog by the collar.

"Thanks; that's my dog," said Wally, coming up breathless. The man glared at him.

"That ain't your dog," he said. "That's my dog!"

"Here, Pongo!"

Wally whistled shrilly to Pongo, and the latter, finding a hostile grip on his collar, would gladly have returned to his master. But that was not possible now. The rough held him fast.

"This 'ere is my dorg," he said, eyeing Wally truculently. "I'm goin' to keep 'im. He's my dorg."

"You rotter!" exclaimed Wally indignantly; for to Wally a dog stealer was the very worst and most depraved of all thieves. "It's my dog! Hand him over or I'll dot you on the nose!"

The rough grinned; for the fag of St. Jim's to threaten to "dot the nose" of a hulking six-footer was comical enough.

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"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" ONE HALFPENNY. LIBRARY.

But Wally was in deadly earnest. He would have found some difficulty in reaching his enemy's nose, but that did not occur to him for the moment.

"Come hon!" said the gentleman in the fur cap. "Oh, come hon!"

"Are you going to give me my dog?"

"It's my dorg."

Wally waited for no more; he rushed in, hitting out. The rough uttered an exclamation as the fists rattled about his stubby chin. Then he hit out, and Wally rolled over, knocked flying as if a steam-hammer had smitten him on the chest.

That was more than enough for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He might lecture and rag Wally to any extent himself, but anybody who laid hands on the scamp of St. Jim's had to reckon with Arthur Augustus.

All the juniors were running up, but Arthur Augustus was first. With his monocle gleaming in his eye, and his eye gleaming behind it, he rushed upon the scene.

"You uttah wottah!" he exclaimed. "Pway, put up your hands! I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Here, let me tackle him," said Harry Wharton hurriedly. "Let me—"

"Pway wetire, Wharton; this is my affair, deah boy."

"But—"

"It's all wight, I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'."

"Haw, haw, haw!"

The big rough chuckled gleefully, but he ceased to chuckle as the swell of St. Jim's went for him. Arthur Augustus knew something about boxing, and he put in several blows that made the gentleman in the fur cap blink. He had to put up both his hands in defence, and Pongo was released. He skipped back to Wally at once, and Wally, who had risen, fastened his chain on.

The big rough scowled savagely, and went for Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's caught a side blow on the ear, and went staggering into the road, where he went down with a bump. Nugent ran to him at once, and Harry Wharton sprang into the way of the rough, who was following him up.

"My turn," said Wharton.

"I'll smash you!" grunted the ruffian.

But it was not so easy to smash the champion athlete of the Greyfriars Remove. Wharton's defence was perfect, and he put in a blow that sent the ruffian reeling back—and back—and back—till he staggered right into the arms of a policeman, who was hurrying upon the scene. A crowd was already gathering, and the stalwart man in blue came up just in time to catch the staggering rough.

"'Ere, leggo!" grunted the man in the fur cap. "S'elp me—"

He broke off as he saw that he was addressing a policeman.

"What's the matter here?"

The question was asked with all the majesty of the law, and the rough, truculent as he was with the boys, "wilted" at once.

"You'd better move on there!"

And the gentleman in the fur cap moved on, forgetting all about his supposed ownership of Pongo. The policeman pushed on the crowd, and the juniors of Greyfriars gathered round Arthur Augustus and began to dust him down. Arthur Augustus was breathing hard.

"Bai Jove! You know my ear's singin'," he said. "It was a wuff blow, a vewy wuff blow. It is wathah fortunate that it did not touch me in the eye or I might have had a black eye, you know. My hat is vewy dusty, and my clothes are wathah dusty. It is vewy unfortunate."

"Never mind; I've got Pongo," said Wally.

"Wats! Never mind Pongo! I must get a bwush down somewhere."

"Here's a barber's shop open," said Bob Cherry. "Come in, you chaps. D'Arcy must have a brush down, and wash some of the dust off his chivvy. Come in."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the party crowded into the little shop. The hair-dresser was busy that morning, several customers being seated upon the wooden seats round the shop waiting their turns for a shave.

"Morning, gentlemen," said the hairdresser mechanically, without turning his head, and lathering away at a chin.

"Good-mornin', my deah sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with a bow. "I should be glad of the loan of a bwush, sir."

"Certainly, sir. Sit down, sir."

"Vewy good."

The juniors sat down. There was no being attended to, even for a brush down, till the customers had been disposed of. Fortunately they were all shaves, and no hair-cuts, as the barber would have expressed it. The juniors waited, and they pretty well filled the shop, and several faces looked in at the glass doors, and seeing the crowd within, passed on.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Close Shave.

NOW, sir! Yes, sir!" said the hairdresser, rubbing his smooth, shiny hands. "Shave, sir?"

Arthur Augustus started. The juniors grinned; but D'Arcy did not grin. He had taken charge of the party, and that alone gave him a grandfatherly sort of feeling, and after all he was a growing youth, and why shouldn't he need a shave? The hairdresser appeared to think so.

"Shave, sir?"

Arthur Augustus ran his hand over his chin, which was as smooth as the surface of one of the polished mirrors on the walls.

"Ahem!" he said. "Do I—er—want one, deah boy?"

The hairdresser cocked his eye thoughtfully at D'Arcy's chin. It would have needed a microscope to detect the sign of a hair there; but the hairdresser was a man of business. The less hair the easier the shave, and twopence was twopence in these hard times.

"Better, sir. Makes you feel more comfortable for the day, sir."

"Yaas, I suppose so."

"Please sit down, sir. This chair, sir."

Arthur Augustus was hustled into the chair. The hairdresser had his head back, and the towel round his neck in no time.

"Upper lip as well, sir?"

"Well, weally—"

"Do you shave clean, sir?"

"As a matter of fact, I have nevah shaved before. But certainly I shall shave clean. I am not likely to try to wevive the custom of wearin' moustaches," said D'Arcy.

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir."

The Greyfriars juniors looked on blankly as the chin of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was swiftly lathered.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, almost exploding.

"My only grandmother's bonnet! A shave!"

"The shavefulness is terrific."

"My Aunt Jane!" said Wally. "Gussy, you ass, what are you wasting time like this for? What about the Crystal Palace?"

"Pway, don't be a wude young beggah, Wally. I do not wish to turn up at the Crystal Palace with a wuff stubbly chin."

"Stubbly! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Ho, ho, ho! My only Aunt Jane! Oh, what wouldn't I give to have the chaps from St. Jim's here to see this!" gurgled Wally.

"Pway, be—ow—groo!"

D'Arcy broke off suddenly as he caught half a mouthful of lather.

"Sorry, sir. Safer not to talk while being shaved, sir."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The lathering went on. The grinning Removites of Greyfriars watched the process with great interest. The lathering completed, the barber scraped away at D'Arcy's chin and upper lip. His face was serious, his manner businesslike; but he certainly removed nothing from D'Arcy's face except the soap he had put there.

"Thank you, sir."

Arthur Augustus surveyed himself in the glass. Then he ran his hand over his chin with much satisfaction.

"Bai Jove! That feels bettah, you know."

"Jolly glad to hear it," said Harry. "You'd better make it a decent tip, as the chap has had to work so hard. It must have been like—like reaping."

"Pway, give me a bwush down, deah sir."

"Certainly, sir. You young gentlemen require a shave?"

"Not much," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "I prefer to keep my beard on. It keeps me warm in this uncertain weather."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was brushed down, and restored to his usual spick and span condition. The hairdresser polished his silk hat for him.

"Thank you vevy much," said the elegant junior gracefully.

"Pway, accept this, my deah sir. I feel so much bettah for that shave."

And the juniors left the shop, leaving the astonished hairdresser staring at a half-crown in the palm of his hand.

D'Arcy ran his hand over his chin several times as they walked on up the street. Wally was continually exploding, and every explosion brought him a severe glance from his major.

The swell of St. Jim's glanced at his watch.

"We have lost a little time, owin' to the wotten mongwel," he remarked. "Pewwaps we had bettah take a 'bus to Victowiah."

"Good! Here comes one."

The juniors boarded an omnibus, and clambered to the top. There they filled three seats and a half, and Wally took Pongo on his knees. Pongo showed a continual desire to jump off the 'bus, and he would have been killed a dozen times during the journey to Victoria if Wally hadn't kept a tight grip on his collar.

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"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

A Splendid Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

"Here's the station," said Nugent, as the 'bus stopped. "Now about catching a train. My hat! There's a jolly big crowd here!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors crowded off the omnibus, and Arthur Augustus led the way into the station. As Arthur Augustus had taken up his position as leader, the Greyfriars juniors politely followed his lead. The swell of St. Jim's pushed his way through the crowd, and suddenly turned and waved his hand to his friends.

"Buck up, deah boys! The twain's just goin'."

"What about the tickets?"

"No time; pay at the other end!" And Arthur Augustus rushed off.

Wharton hesitated a moment, and then followed. A train was starting from an open platform, and Arthur Augustus rushed for it. The guard was waving his flag.

"Stand back, there!"

"Hold on, deah boy!"

"Stand back!"

"But weally—"

A porter rushed up and caught D'Arcy and dragged him back. The train started. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jerked himself away from the porter and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed him with rising indignation.

"You impertinent wastah! You have made me lose the twain!"

"Saved your life, sir," said the porter, touching his cap.

"Wats!"

"Are you sure that train was for Crystal Palace?" said Bob Cherry, glancing at a notice on the platform which made him think otherwise.

"Bai Jove! I nevah stopped to think, you know. I—"

The porter stared and grinned.

"You gentlemen going to Crystal Palace?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"That wasn't the train, sir. That's going to Newhaven, sir, for Dieppe, and doesn't stop on the journey. The boat express, sir."

"Bai Jove!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally, with emphasis. "We might have been landed into an express for the coast! You unspeakable duffer!"

"I wefuse to be chawactowised as a duffah, Wally. How was I to know that the train was goin' to Newhaven?"

"My only hat!" murmured Harry Wharton to Bob. "I shall follow this chap's lead again in a hurry—I don't think."

"Yes—rather not!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Platform No. 2 for Crystal Palace, sir," said the porter.

"I will show you the way with pleasure, sir."

"Thank you, vevy much, portah."

"You have your tickets, sir?"

"No, I haven't had time to get the tickets. Pway get them for me, deah boy, will you," said D'Arcy, feeling in his pockets. "Bai Jove! I am wunnin' out of weady cash. Pway change that fivah for me."

He put a five-pound note into the hand of the astounded porter.

"Yes-sir," gasped the man. And he hurried off. The Greyfriars fellows looked at the swell of St. Jim's with curious expressions.

"Do you generally shove fivers about into strangers' hands?" asked Nugent.

"I want it changed, deah boy."

"Suppose he bolted with it?"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I should be sowwy to suspect a chap of bein' dishonest, deah boy. Besides, I suppose he has a name, or a number, or somethin', that he could be twaced by, if I inquired of the station-mastah."

"You might find it hard to prove you had given him the fiver."

"Oh, that's all wight, you know. They would hardly doubt my word, you know, and if they had the feahful cheek to do so, I should give them a feahful thwashin'."

Nugent grinned. The porter did not "bolt," however; he returned with the tickets and the change of the five-pound note, and then led the way to the departure platform for the Crystal Palace.

"Here you are, sir. This side, next train in."

"Thank you, vevy much, portah. Will you please accept this half-crown?"

"Thank you kindly, sir."

And when the train came in the juniors boarded it, and being among the first to do so, they secured a carriage to themselves—at first.

ANSWERS

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Off to the Crystal Palace!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY took off his silk hat, and gently fanned his brow with his cambric handkerchief. Wally thrust Pongo under the seat, in case any inquisitive porters should inquire about him. The juniors spread themselves out on the seats with the laudable desire to have all the carriage to themselves which is part and parcel of our British nature. But a train from Victoria to the Crystal Palace on a Bank Holiday is generally full up. The party had the carriage to themselves for a few minutes—because the train was not timed to start for ten minutes yet. As the interval lessened, the crowd increased. Faces looked in at the window and passed along. The carriage being a first-class one, and seating only six passengers, and the party numbering seven, they were, of course, entitled to keep it to themselves. All were seated except Bob Cherry, who filled up the window with his broad shoulders. But first-class, or any other class, there was soon a raid on all carriages.

A head in a fur cap, with a spotted neckerchief knotted under the chin, looked in, and Bob Cherry recognised an old acquaintance.

"No room," he remarked.

The man in the fur cap grunted.

"I'm comin' in. You ain't going to keep Bill 'Arris hout."

"I should be sorry to keep Mr. William Harris hout," said Bob Cherry politely; "but the carriage is full, and you appear to be pretty full yourself, too. If you turn a teetotaler you shall come in, another day."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mr. Harris did not appear to be satisfied with that concession. He tugged at the handle of the carriage. He had evidently been drinking again since the affair with Pongo, and the juniors very naturally didn't want a man the worse for liquor in their carriage. Bob Cherry held the door, and a porter hurried up. It was the same porter.

"I'm goin' hin!" shouted Mr. Harris.

"Show your ticket!" said the porter.

"I won't."

"Then you'll go further down the train," grinned the porter. And he kindly helped Mr. Harris along.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "I wegard that chap as a wottah. Of course, if the third-class cawwiages are full, I suppose he is entitled to twavel first. But I am sure they are not full yet. There are people still gettin' in. To wide with a third ticket in a first cawwiage when the third-class have woom is simply swindlin'."

"That's the company's look-out," said Bob. "But we're not going to have a drunken animal in here. Blessed if I know why a chap wants to mess up his day's holiday by drinking."

"Pwobably they know no bettah, deah boy. It's early twainin', pewwaps," said D'Arcy. "There's a chap at our school, named Skimpole, who can talk for hours at a time on that subject. He says the Government ought to bwing them up bettah, you know. When I go into Parliament——"

"You're not going into Parliament—you're going to the Crystal Palace."

"I mean when I grow up, deah boy. When I go into Parliament, I shall waise these questions, and have them settled. It's perfectly clear to me that what is the mattah is the absurd importance of the House of Commons, you know. If I become Pwime Ministah, I shall go to the countwy with a pwoposition to mend or end them, and leave mattahs to the House of Lords, you know."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Well, if you govern the country as rippingly as you catch trains, you'll make a first-class Premier," he remarked. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come."

They were coming in earnest now.

A stout lady with a red shawl and three children and several parcels presented herself at the door.

"Carriage full, madam," said Bob Cherry politely. "Pray try further along."

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus, reaching out and opening the door. "There is a certain considewation due to the gentle sex. I do not mind standin'."

Bob Cherry grinned. The stout lady bundled the three children in, and followed them, and bestowed her parcels upon the rack with great relief.

"Thank you kindly, young gentleman," she said to D'Arcy.

"'Orrid crowded this train is, ain't it?"

"Yaas, wathah, madam!"

"Thank you," she went on, plumping down into D'Arcy's seat.

"I'm that tired! Going to the Crystal Pallis?"

"Yaas, deah boy—I mean deah madam."

"I'm going, taking the kids. You're a nice lad," said the dame. "'Ere, Maria!" she went on, leaning from the door. "'Ere you are! Bring Jim and 'Arry. There's room 'ere. Come in."

"What-ho!" came from the platform.

D'Arcy looked a little dismayed. Maria and Jim and Harry came in, very jolly and good-tempered, and very warm and perspiring. Harry Wharton gave up his seat to Maria, who sat down beside the old dame. The door being once opened, there

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was no keeping out the passengers. Four or five more crowded in, till the carriage was packed almost to suffocation.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he stood wedged in between Harry Wharton and a young man in a glaring waistcoat.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"It's all right, D'Arcy—you don't mind standing!"

"I am feelin' wathah ewushed."

"You'll get used to it before we get to the Crystal Palace."

"Bai Jove! Will this last all the way?"

"I rather think we're all going to the same place."

"Bai Jove!"

More passengers crowded in. Every seat in the carriage now had two occupants, squeezed in or sitting on one another's knees, and the rest of the room was taken up by five or six standing. The train moved off at last, much to D'Arcy's relief, who feared a fresh invasion and passengers crammed in in layers.

"Bai Jove! it's vewy warm."

"Warm, ain't it," said the old lady, extracting a bottle from some recess under her shawl. "You're a nice young gent, you are. 'Ave a wet?"

"N-n-n-no, thank you, madam," stammered D'Arcy. "I do not dwink."

"It won't 'urt yer. It's the real stuff—Scotch!"

D'Arcy shuddered from head to foot at the idea of drinking whisky.

"Pway excuse me, madam. You are vewy kind. But I do not drink."

"Orl the better for yer," said the dame, good-humouredly.

"You keep that up, young man. You're better without it, you are. I only take it for the lumbago myself."

To judge by the good dame's complexion, and the hue of her nose, her lumbago must have been very bad, requiring a great deal of the medicine she took for it.

The train rushed on with its perspiring burden.

There was an endless chatter in the carriage, bursts of laughter and jolly voices; but everybody was good-tempered and cheerful. The much-maligned "tripper," as a matter of fact, is a jovial and good-hearted person, and though perhaps lacking somewhat in outward show, can very frequently give points, in real good feeling and true politeness, to those who affect to look down upon him. Arthur Augustus, though uncomfortably crowded, did not feel uncomfortable in other respects. There was nothing snobbish about the swell of St. Jim's; and he would never have dreamed of thinking that his advantages of birth and fortune gave him a right to look down on anybody.

"Warm, ain't it," said 'Arry, grinning at D'Arcy. "Might keep your elber outer my weskit, if possible. Don't worry, though."

"I am extremely sorry—it is wathah ewowed. I twust I have not sewiously incommoded you."

"Oh, I'm all serene," said 'Arry. "Don't mind me. Ain't room 'ere for a game of nap. Lord love yer, I'd give more'n a brown for a steady drink now."

"Would you weally?"

"'Ere, missis, give us a squint at that bottle."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus looked a little unhappy as a trickle of the liquor fell upon his waistcoat, but he did not complain. All parties were pleased when the Crystal Palace Station was reached, and the train disgorged its contents.

Arthur Augustus looked round him.

"The Cwystal Palace must be here somewhere," he remarked.

"I can't see it at the pwesent moment——"

"It's not on the platform," said Bob Cherry sweetly. "This way. I've been here before."

"Yaas, that's fortunate. Lead on, deah boy."

Bob Cherry led on.

They went in—the huge, swarming crowd, perforce moving at a slow pace—and passed from the station through the turnstiles into the Crystal Palace.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Fun of the Fair.

"**B**AI Jove! So this is the Cwystal Palace!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pushed his silk hat a little further back on his head, and looked up at the great edifice, as he stood in the wide, green grounds.

"Yes, rather," said Bob Cherry. "It's a fine day, too—that's ripping. There are heaps of things to be seen, and to be done. We shall have a jolly time. What are you screwing up your chivvy for, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—I was just thinking——"

"Then don't! Bank Holidays weren't made for thinking. Come on!"

"I was just thinking that I'm getting peckish after that railway journey. I think it would be a good idea to start with a little snack."

A Splendid Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

"Rats! You've had enough snacks for one morning. Wait till lunch, and then go for it in earnest. Come on!"

"Oh, really—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Perhaps I could do with a few chocolates" said Bunter, catching sight of an automatic machine. "Anybody got any pennies?"

Pennies were forthcoming, and Bunter stood clacking at the automatic machine till people began to gather round and look on. They wondered whether he was trying to empty it. He did not stop till the supply of pence was exhausted, and then he stacked the proceeds in his various pockets, against emergencies. He blinked rather indignantly at his grinning companions as he did so.

"Blessed if I can see anything to snigger at," he grunted. "A day's pleasure is spoiled by getting hungry while things are going on. You should always lay a solid foundation."

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed D'Arcy. "Fatty Wynn says so, and he knows. Wally! Where's that young wascal Wally?"

"Gone after Pongo," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

Pongo had disappeared, and so had Wally. It was useless to look for either. Harry bought a programme of a boy who was selling them at the entrance to the grounds, and looked at it as he walked along.

"Seems to be a jolly good selection of things," he remarked. "I suppose we shall stay for the fireworks to-night. That will be a jolly good show—the fireworks here are ripping, I've heard. Eh, Bob?"

"Yes, rather," said Bob Cherry. "Let's keep out of doors first, and then we can see the indoor shows if it rains this afternoon. You never know."

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard that as a weally wippin' suggestion."

And the juniors, in the midst of a swarming crowd, moved about the gardens. As always upon a Bank Holiday, the place was crowded. Bands were playing in various parts of the grounds, and the whole scene was one of noise, and merriment, and abounding good-humour.

"Bai Jove! What's this, you know!" said Arthur Augustus, stopping in a crowd before a rather curious entertainment.

It consisted in kicking a captive football at a row of figures, and success was attained when one of the latter was struck above a certain level with sufficient force, when it turned over backwards.

The swell of St. Jim's jammed his eyeglass into his eye and looked on attentively. A jolly-looking young man in a glaring waistcoat was about to kick, and the juniors recognised their acquaintance, 'Arry, of the journey down.

"Go it!" said D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, I must watch this! I wathah fancy myself at gettin' goals, you know!"

'Arry ran at the ball and kicked it, and it flopped against the flat figure, but failed to overturn it. The ball sprang back to its place on its elastic fastening. Again and again 'Arry tried, but he could not accomplish it. As he ceased, amid laughter from his friends, Arthur Augustus moved forward.

"Pway let me have a twy, deah boy!" he said.

'Arry grinned at him.

"Go it!" he said.

Arthur Augustus calculated keenly, and the crowd looked on with expectation. The swell of St. Jim's looked a perfect picture, and he was worth looking at. He took a short run, and then halted, and handed his silk hat to Harry Wharton.

"Pway hold that for me, deah boy!" he said.

"Certainly," said Wharton, laughing.

"Now, I am just goin' to begin."

"Put her through," said 'Arry.

Arthur Augustus retreated a little, and dashed forward again; and again stopped without kicking the ball.

"Bai Jove! I think I had better take my jacket off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy whipped off his jacket, and handed it to Bob Cherry. In dazlingly white shirt-sleeves, the swell of St. Jim's walked back to his starting-point, and again took a run.

This time he came to business.

Right up to the ball he dashed, and kicked tremendously, and staggered on with the force of his rush.

The ball bounced against the figure, and bounced back instantly, and caught Arthur Augustus on the knees.

"Bai Jove!"

The elegant junior, taken quite by surprise, staggered forward, and fell. He sat up on the ground with a stare of bewilderment, amid a roar of laughter.

"Bai Jove! Who was that pushed me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have been pushed ovah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent helped him up.

"It's all right," he said. "It was the ball. Try again."

"Undah the circe, deah boy, I shall not twy again! When I come to think of it, this is wathah a boy's game."

D'Arcy might have been seventy by the way he made that remark. He donned his jacket and hat amid universal grins. Several of the Greyfriars juniors tried the kicking, and Harry Wharton succeeded in knocking over the figure. Arthur Augustus clapped his hands when it went over, and gave Harry a clap on the back.

"Jolly good!" he said. "I couldn't have done that better myself!"

And Harry laughed.

The juniors moved off, and stopped at the roundabouts. They were crowded, and Arthur Augustus stood for some moments surveying them with a thoughtful expression. Billy Bunter, who was eating chocolates—he had not left off doing so since leaving the automatic machine—nudged him.

"Getting hungry?" he asked. "Have some of these?"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon him.

"No, thank you," he replied, "I am not hungwy."

"Oh, I thought you looked like it. Try the butterscotch!"

"Thank you, no. I was just thinkin', Wharton, deah boy, whethah it would be consistent with a chap's dig to go on the woundabouts."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Why not?" he said. "It's fun, anyway. We're not in the Form-room now; and we're not exactly grandfathers, any of us."

"Yaas, wathah! That is vewy twue."

"Let's go on!"

And they got on.

Round and round they went merrily, to the rasping strains of the music. The machine worked fast, and a gust of wind carried off D'Arcy's hat. He clutched at it, but lost it—and lost his hold, too. He slipped on the back of the wooden horse, and clung on desperately with one leg and one arm over the back and neck.

"Ow! Help!"

"Hang on!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "You're all right!"

"Bai Jove! I feel all w'ong!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Hang on!"

The roundabout did not stop, and Arthur Augustus had to hang on. He whirled round and round, clinging to the wooden horse, with his jacket flying in the breeze, and his eyeglass streaming at the end of its cord.

From the crowd of spectators came a roar of laughter; and it was borne in upon Arthur Augustus's mind that it was not, after all, consistent with his "dig." But it was too late to think of that now.

Arthur Augustus was immensely relieved when the roundabout stopped at last.

He slipped from his uncomfortable perch with a very red face, gasping for breath, and received his hat from a spectator who had picked it up for him.

"Thank you vewy much, deah sir," he said, dusting it with his handkerchief. "Bai Jove, you chaps, I think I shall let the woundabout alone aftah this!"

"Won't you come on once more," said Nugent persuasively. "Try it again!"

"Thanks vewy much, I won't."

And the swell of St. Jim's mopped his perspiring brow, and replaced his topper; and the juniors walked on. The swing boats were the next attraction.

Most of them were filled, and going up high, and the sight was fascinating to the adventurous juniors.

"This way, gentlemen! Boat just ready!"

"Wight-ho, deah boy! Come on, you chaps!"

"I don't think I'll get in," said Billy Bunter, who never took kindly to any sport that savoured of work. "I'll watch you chaps with pleasure."

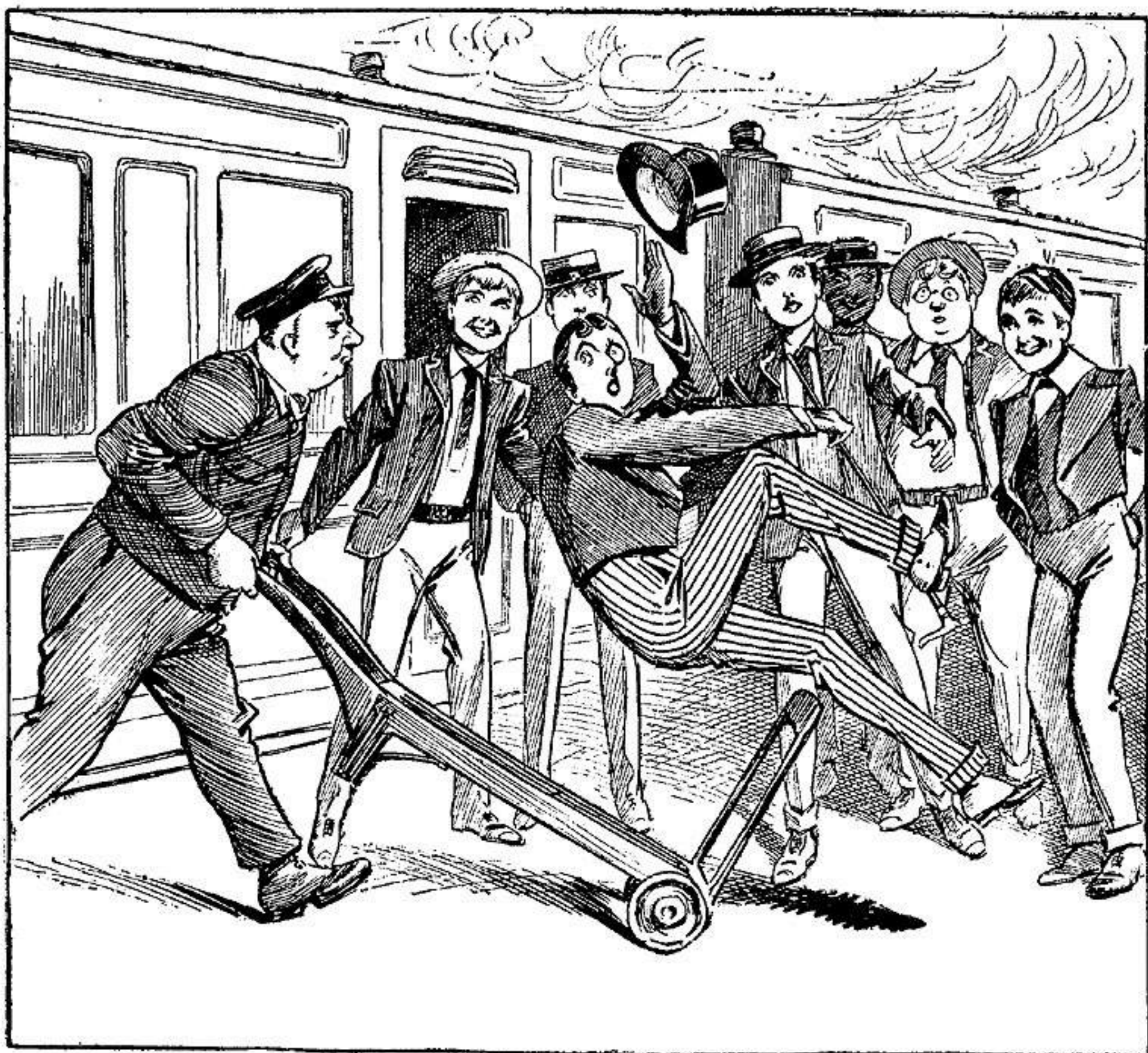
Arthur Augustus stepped into a boat, with Bob Cherry, and Wharton and Nugent took the next one. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh elected to look on with Bunter. The boats were started, and were soon swinging high. Bob Cherry glanced over his shoulder and saw that Wharton was gaining, and he shouted to his companion,

"Pull away, D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Put your beef into it!" shouted Bob Cherry, labouring away at the rope. For the moment he forgot where he was and everything except the excitement of a contest. It was No. 13 Study at Greyfriars against No. 1 Study.

HECTOR DRAKE In The **PLUCK Library.**



Bob Cherry gave D'Arcy a slap on the shoulder in hearty greeting, and Arthur Augustus staggered two or three paces, and bumped against a porter who was trundling a trolley.
"By'r leave!" grunted the porter, and he shoved on, and D'Arcy sat on the platform.

"I am afwaid of soilin' my gloves, deah boy!"

"Blow your gloves!"

"Weally, Chewwy!"

"Are you going to be beaten?" roared Bob. "Put your beef into it! We're going higher than they do, or we're going to bust something."

"Bai Jove!"

"Shove her along!"

Bob Cherry was slaving away as if his life depended upon it, and the spirit of emulation entered the breast of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He forgot all about the risk to his gloves, and put his beef into it as Bob recommended. The boat went higher and higher.

But Harry Wharton and Nugent were working away like demons, too, and they kept their start. The attendant below shouted to the boys; the boats were going dangerously high. Arthur Augustus gave a sudden gulp.

"Pway slacken down, Chewwy, deah boy!"

"Rats! We're going to beat them. Don't be a slacker."

"I am not a slackah, but—but I feel vewy queeah inside."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove! I—I—I—feel vewy queeah, indeed."

Bob Cherry reluctantly slackened.

The boat slowed down, and when it was caught and stopped, D'Arcy stepped out of it with a very curious expression upon his face. Harry Wharton and Nugent jumped out, laughing.

"Beat you hollow, Bob," said Nugent cheerily.

Bob Cherry grunted.

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"It was weally my fault," said Arthur Augustus. "I was feelin' vewy queeah—just as I felt on board the steamah last time I went to sea, when sho began to woll. I'm all wight now, though."

"This way for the racing motor-cars!" said Bob Cherry.

"Bai Jove, that's good! I take a great interest in motah-cars. Where are they?"

"Here they are!"

"B-b-bai Jove! Are they motor-cars?"

"Here you are, sir," said the attendant. "Racing motor-cars, sir. You turn the handle, and that moves the cars along the lines, sir. Jump in, gents!"

Arthur Augustus had been picturing in his mind something like his noble father's magnificent Napier; but he grinned cheerfully and nodded, and jumped into a car. Bob Cherry joined him, and Wharton and Nugent mounted into the next.

"Now, stick it out this time," said Bob Cherry.

"Yaas, wathah! I feel all wight now."

The cars rolled along the lines. Wharton's car bumped at the end first, and began to recede; but Bob Cherry speeded up, and passed him on the return journey. He crashed home about two seconds before Wharton, and grinned with triumph.

"What price Study No. 13 now?" he demanded.

"Twopence, sir," said the attendant.

Bob glared at him.

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"Twopence, sir. The charge is twopence."

"Oh! All right."

The juniors grinned gleefully. The man's reply had come as if he were answering Bob's query about No. 13 Study, quite inadvertently on the man's part.

"Quite right," remarked Nugent. "Twopence is about the figure, I should say."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here, I say, you know, I'm getting hungry. It's high time for lunch, and I think we ought to have some grub next."

"Well, I'm getting rather peckish myself," said Bob, relenting. "What do you chaps say—lunch?"

"Lunch."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And they went to lunch.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Chums Meet Marjorie.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS stood the lunch, and a handsome lunch it was. The dining-room was in the South Nave, and overlooked the gardens. For half-a-crown each a substantial lunch was obtained. Wally joined them as they were going in, looking very heated and wrathful. Pongo was not with him. Wally only grunted when he was asked questions, but it was easy to conclude that Pongo had led him a dance, and had not been re-captured yet.

"I warned you that wotten mongwel would be a twouble, Wally," said Arthur Augustus, shaking an admonishing finger at his minor.

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus," said Wally.

"Weally, Wally——"

"Let's have some grub. I'm famished!"

"Pway don't use those slangy expweasions, Wally. Wemembah that you are in wesppectable company."

"Oh, toffee! Call the waiter."

"Waitah!"

They lunched. Wally had barely finished before he darted off again in search of Pongo. It seemed as if he would spend the best part of his Bank Holiday in tracking down the elusive Pongo.

After lunch, the juniors adjourned to the terrace for a quiet stroll. The afternoon was very pleasant, and the palace and grounds were more crowded than ever.

"Bai Jove, I like this," said Arthur Augustus. "There's somethin' very jolly in bein' in a big crowd, even if there were nothin' else. I wegard Bank Holiday as bein' a rippin' institution."

"What price the captive flying machine?" said Bob Cherry, looking round.

"Good!"

"The goodfulness is terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I should greatly enjoy the tripfulness in the esteemed flying-machine."

But on arriving at the spot they found that it wasn't exactly a flying-machine; it was a kind of aerial roundabout boats. However, there it was, and they paid their money down and marched in, and boarded one of the vessels.

"Bai Jove, this is all wight!"

The machine worked away, and the boats flew round at a great speed at a considerable height above the ground, the effect being increased by the fact that the whole contrivance was planted upon rising ground. As the boats went round Harry Wharton uttered a sudden exclamation, and snatched his cap off.

"Bai Jove. What's the mattah?"

"Marjorie!"

"Oh, pway point her out when we go wound again, deah boy!"

Harry Wharton pointed out the slim form of the girl, standing beside Hazeldene in the crowd below, when the boat swung past the spot again. This time Hazeldene and his sister saw them, and waved their hands. Arthur Augustus was holding on to the boat, for it was going so fast that it was necessary to hold. But he freed one hand and raised his silk topper. The wind caught it, and whiffed it out of his hand, and it floated down to where Marjorie was standing.

"Great Scott!" gasped D'Arcy.

Wharton clutched him by the shoulder as he snatched at his hat.

"Mind you don't tumble!"

"Wight-ho, deah boy."

"Hazeldene's got the topper—it's all right."

Hazeldene had picked it up, with a grin. Arthur Augustus was very anxious, however, till the trip was finished, and he descended quickly to recover his headgear. The juniors greeted Marjorie Hazeldene with great pleasure. Hazeldene and his sister were staying with some friends at Sydenham, as he explained, and they had looked in at the palace to stay for a couple of hours in the afternoon. They were expected back early. Arthur Augustus looked thoughtful.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

A Splendid Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

"Then you must put as much into the time as poss.," he said. "Do you care for the amusements of the palace, Miss Marjorie?"

"Very much," said Marjorie brightly.

"Then let us lose no time, deah boys."

"Jolly glad to meet you fellows here," said Hazeldene, joining the party with great pleasure. "Been here long?"

"Yes; we came in the morning."

"It's jolly, isn't it? Hallo, what's this?"

"The water chute," said Bob Cherry. "I'm the guide; I've been here before. Not afraid of the water chute, Miss Marjorie?"

Marjorie laughed.

"Not at all."

The place was crowded, of course, but they had their turns at last. It was very merry, and they repeated the trip on the water-chute several times. Then they moved off to the electric canoes, and then to the helter-skelter. On this only Bob Cherry and Nugent showed their powers. The maze and the switchback next claimed their attention, and then there was an ascent of the north tower by the lift, Billy Bunter refusing Bob Cherry's challenge to race him to the top of the stairs.

Then there was a visit to the menagerie, and to the marionettes. Wharton looked into his programme.

"What about the monkey-house, Bob?"

"Yaas, wathah! I was just thinkin' of that," Arthur Augustus remarked. "I have a gweat curwiosity to see the monkey house, you know."

"And it's worth seeing," said Bob Cherry. "This way."

The monkey house was swarming with people, but the juniors pushed their way in, keeping Marjorie in their midst.

Down the centre of the place were a succession of stands, on which parrots and cockatoos sat at liberty, preening themselves, and blinking at the visitors, and enduring with great patience the attentions of the latter.

Arthur Augustus looked in at the monkeys' cages with great interest. He fed them with nuts, and watched all their motions through his eyeglass.

"Bai Jove, they're awfully human, you know," said D'Arcy.

"You know, I take wathah an intewest in this subject. There's a chap at my school named Skimpole, who talks on the subject for hours. He says we're descended from the monkeys, or else the monkeys are descended from us, or else we're both descended from somethin' or othah, I can't quite wemembah which, but it's awfully elevah, you know. Skimpole's an awfully deep chap. I wanted to have a good look at the monkeys and see if I could find any like Skimpole, so that I could tell him next term."

Marjorie laughed.

"Have you found any?"

"Yaas, wathah! Look at that chap in the corner of the cage there, blinkin' at us. He only wants a pair of spectacles, and he'd be vewy like Skimpole. I must tell Skimpole about this. There may be somethin' in it, you know. I have a theowry that pewwaps part of the human wace descended from a twibe of apes, and the Darwinian chaps belong to that part, you know. It's extwemely pwob, when you come to think of it; and I don't see why they shouldn't establish their pedigree back to a set of gwinnin' apes if they want to. What?"

"Certainly," said Marjorie, laughing.

"I am goin' to wead the subject up some day," said Arthur Augustus. "The worst of these scientific chaps is that they w'ite their books in such jolly long words, and such an awfully dwy style, you know. You can't keep awake oval them; and, of course, you can't think a subject out when you keep noddin' off all the time. And my expewience of scientific theowies, as a wule, is that when you've sorted them out, and find out what the scientific chaps mean, it usually turns out to be wot, you know, and not worth the twouble. It's discowagin."

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry, with a yawn. "These are jolly cockatoos, aren't they?"

"Now, this monkey here——" began D'Arcy, unheeding; but he broke off as he felt a slight pull at his shoulder behind. "Pway don't intewwupt me, deah boy. Now, this monkey—— Stop pullin' at my shouldah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause for mewwiment. This—— Will you stop pullin' me?"

D'Arcy swung round, annoyed; and then he saw the cause of the laughter. A cockatoo on a perch had fastened his beak in the cloth of D'Arcy's jacket, and was pulling him. The junior's remonstrances had been addressed to the bird.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I thought it was one of you chaps," said D'Arcy, jorking himself away. "Shall we go on down the cages, Miss Marjorie?"

"Yes, please."

And they went on. The crush was great, but they managed to see all that was to be seen, Arthur Augustus held forth on

monkeys, Skimpole, and Darwinism, much to the entertainment of Miss Hazeldene.

They moved along to the end, and returned up the other side of the house. As they reached the entrance again, Arthur Augustus was pushed by a gentleman in a fur cap, who glared at him ferociously as he passed on.

"You uttah wottah!" gasped D'Arcy, as he staggered back. He knocked against something, and there was a flutter and a cackle behind him.

"Look out where you're shoving!" said somebody.

Arthur Augustus whirled round, hat in hand, to apologize to the person he had pushed. He bowed over his silk hat.

"Pway excuse me," he said. "I am vewy sowwy! I——" Cackle! Cackle!

The swell of St. Jim's stopped short.

It was a parrot on a perch he was bowing to, and the bird blinked at him solemnly as he apologized.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Oh, my only hat!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Didn't you see it was a bird you shoved, you giddy duffer? Ha, ha, ha."

"I haven't any eyes in the back of my head, Bob Chewwy. I did not see it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is that wottah who shoved me?" said D'Arcy, looking round. "I am goin' to give him a feashful thwashin'."

"Here, come on!"

"Pway wait a few moments for me, deah boys, while I thwash that wottah!"

"Oh, rats," said Wharton. "Not before the ladies, you know."

"Bai Jove! Of course not. I am sowwy I thought of such a thing, Miss Marjowie. I am afraid I was losin' my tempah. The man acted vewy wudely. Pway excuse me."

Marjorie laughingly excused him, and they proceeded on their way.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Good Shilling's Worth for Bunter.

THE juniors had seen most of what the grounds had to offer them; but there was plenty to be seen yet inside the Palace.

Bob Cherry, as one who knew the ground, had assumed the responsibility of leader; and, as leader, he naturally took possession of Marjorie.

He guided her through the halls and galleries, explaining things, and pointing out interesting stuffed birds and animals, antiquities, and models. He hurried her past the sculpture gallery without entering. Then they came to the tea-rooms, at the sight of which Billy Bunter's eyes glistened.

"I say, you fellows, it's about time for tea, isn't it?" he asked.

Harry Wharton looked at Marjorie. The girl was looking at her little watch.

"You're going to have tea with us, Marjorie?"

Marjorie looked at her brother.

"We were to be home for tea," grinned Hazeldene. "Never mind, we'll risk it, and cut off afterwards. It's all right, Marjorie."

"I shall be very glad to stay," said the girl simply.

"Don't sit down here," said Billy Bunter, as Hurree Singh was moving to a chair. "Let's get to the shilling tea-room, you know. You can have as much to eat as you like for a bob. It's a good business."

"Not a bad idea," grinned Bob Cherry. "This way."

There were many placards indicating the way to the shilling tea-room. The party followed the directions, and arrived at a place that was simply crammed. They succeeded in finding a table after a good deal of delay, and sat down round it, and a waiter was found at last.

"Waitah! waitah! Tea for seven—no!" D'Arcy stopped as his minor came in sight. "Tea for eight, please, waitah!"

"Yes, sir!"

Wally dropped into a chair. He raised his cap to Marjorie with a cheery grin.

"Have you found Pongo, Wally?" asked his major.

"No, the brute's given me the slip. I'll have him presently."

"I trust you will find him before the fireworks, Wally, as we are leavin' aftah that. Othahwise——"

"Otherwise I shan't be leavin'."

"You can't remain here, Wally!"

"I'm jolly well not going without Pongo."

"You ought not to have brought him, deah boy."

"What's the good of saying that now?" demanded Wally.

"But I told you so before we started."

"Yes, you're always saying something about Pongo."

"Weally, Wally——"

"Oh, ring off, Gus, and let's have tea!"

"Pway allow me to apologize for my young bwothah, Miss Hazeldene," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately manner. "He picks up these dweadful expvressions in the Third Form at St. Jim's, you know."

"Don't mind my brother Gus, Miss Marjorie," said Wally with his mouth full. "He's often taken like this; he'll jaw for hours if he can get anybody to listen."

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NEXT
WEEK:

"HARRY WHARTON'S ELEVEN."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE HALFPENNY.

"Order!" said Bob Cherry. "Here, waiter, we're famishing!"

The waiter brought a further supply. There was tea and bread and butter and cake galore; as much as could be consumed by any customer, for the moderate sum of one shilling.

Billy Bunter would have preferred sausages and chipe, or eggs and bacon, or kidney pies or steak puddings; but, if he could not have quality, he could make up for it with quantity, and that he now proceeded to do.

He travelled through bread and butter and cake, taking slices of them alternately, without haste or excitement, but with a steady pace that accomplished wonders.

The other juniors finished. Even Wally, who had a good appetite, was satisfied at last; but Bunter was going strong when Wally left off.

"Go ahead, Bunt," said Bob Cherry, encouragingly. "My word! This is worth watching!"

"So will the waiter's face be soon," grinned Nugent.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, call that waiter. Grub's running short. Don't let me detain you if you've finished. I'm not finished yet."

"We wouldn't leave you for worlds," said Hazeldene, with a grin. "Go ahead! Here, waiter, some more cake and tea."

"Yes, sir!"

More tea, more bread and butter, and more cake were brought. Billy Bunter worked his way through them at a steady pace.

The waiter was called again, and he brought further supplies with a very discontented expression upon his face. He slammed them down on the table and went. Perhaps Bunter's appetite was getting on his nerves.

"Waiter! Waiter!"

The waiter was slow in responding to the call. Other customers were keeping him very busy; but he came at last.

"More!" said Billy Bunter briefly.

"My 'at!" said the waiter audibly, as he receded. "It ain't a human being; it's a hosstrich!"

The chums of Greyfriars grinned round the table.

"Go it, Bunter," said Wharton, encouragingly. "This is about the best part of the show. We'll stand the waiter a good tip for this; but not yet—I want to watch his face."

Billy Bunter grunted.

"I suppose I'm entitled to have as much as I like for my bob, Wharton?"

"Certainly. Wire in!"

"Yaas, wathah! This is vewy intewestin'. Fatty Wynn is a fool to this chap!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Waiter! Waiter!"

"Coming!"

But it was some time before he came, and he jerked the food down on the table in a savage way. The loss of that big tea was not the waiter's, but he seemed to take it personally. But little cared Billy Bunter for savage looks, so long as the provisions came along. He went on steadily with the latest supply. Marjorie Hazeldene looked a little alarmed.

She whispered to her brother:

"Isn't Billy Bunter likely to do himself some harm?"

Hazeldene chuckled.

"No, that's all right. This is nothing to Billy Bunter. I've seen him more destructive than this at Greyfriars. He'll be ready for a big supper in a couple of hours, all the same."

"Goodness gracious!"

Other partakers of shilling teas at the neighbouring tables were beginning to take an interest in Bunter's feats.

They watched him, and encouraged him with audible whispers to take it out of the establishment; and Billy Bunter beamed and worked on.

But next time the waiter was called he had an attack of deafness, and did not turn his head. Harry laughed.

"I'm afraid you'll have to chuck it now, Bunt."

"I'm jolly well not going to do anything of the sort," exclaimed Billy Bunter, indignantly. "I'm paying for this tea, and the terms are as much as one can eat for a bob. I'm going to stand up for my rights. I'm an Englishman, ain't I? I'm going to stand up for my rights!"

"Bwavo! We'll back you up, deah boy. Waitah!"

"Waiter! Waiter!"

But the waiter seemed deaf. Bunter's eyes gleamed. The Greyfriars ventriloquist was not to be neglected with impunity.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Move On!

"WAITAH! Waitah!"

The waiter did not even turn his head. But the next moment he gave a jump, as a sudden growl proceeded from under a table he was standing near.

He stooped and glared under the table, but could not see a dog.

He rose again, looking somewhat puzzled and, as he did so, a sharp yelping broke out behind him.

He swung round, and stared in amazement. He had imagined that he must have trodden upon the animal, but there was no dog to be seen.

"My-m-m-my 'at!" gasped the waiter.

"Waiter! Waiter!"

The angry waiter deliberately passed Bunter's table, without looking at him. He took up a tray laden with crockery to supply several tables further on, and walked past with it.

"Here, waiter! Waiter!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed as the man passed him.

The waiter put down the tray, and placed his supplies before the customer, who happened to be the gentleman with the waistcoat, whom the juniors had made the acquaintance of in the train from Victoria. 'Arry was chatting with Maria, and he grinned affably across to the juniors at the next table.

"Take that away, waiter!"

It seemed to be 'Arry's voice, and the waiter was naturally deceived. He glared at 'Arry.

"What's the matter with it?" he demanded.

"Eh?" said 'Arry, turning from exchanging coy nothings with Maria. "What?"

"What's the matter with that cake?"

"Nothing that I know on."

"Well, why did you tell me to take it away, then?"

"I didn't."

"You did!"

"Oh, you're orf," said 'Arry contemptuously. "Did I say a word, Maria?"

"That you didn't, 'Arry," said Maria.

"You did!" shrieked the waiter.

"If you doubts this 'ere lady's word, it's up to me to dust you," said 'Arry, rising. "Where will you 'ave it?"

Maria pulled him back into his seat.

"Don't 'it 'im, 'Arry. He's drunk."

"Oh, all right," said 'Arry good-humouredly. "'E's only a wown."

And he sat down again. The waiter turned away with a snort. As he did so, the voice proceeded.

"Take that rotten cake away."

The waiter whirled round like a teetotum.

"There you go again! I won't!"

"You won't what?"

"I won't take the cake away."

"Who wants you to?" said 'Arry, cutting the cake. "I'll jolly well see that you don't, for that matter, my boy. Get orf!"

The unfortunate waiter, simmering with rage, all his professional coolness gone, walked away. Bunter twitched him as he passed.

"I say, waiter, I'm waiting. Give me some grub to go on with."

The waiter slammed down cake on the table.

"Thank you," said Bunter cheerfully.

He finished the cake, and called for more. Even his own chums were getting surprised now. Bob Cherry leaned across and tapped him on the nose.

"Hold on, Billy! Better go easy now."

"I'm jolly hungry."

"My hat! What does he do with it?" said Hazeldene.

"Remember, you've got to walk about afterwards, Billy."

"I don't see why I shouldn't have my full shilling's worth. Waiter!"

"Look 'ere," said the waiter, almost bursting with wrath, "hadn't you better walk in and take the whole stock and done with it? It'll save the trouble of carryin' it to this table a bit at a time."

"Look here, Billy, you're going to chuck it now," said Harry Wharton, laughing. He gave the waiter a two-shilling gratuity, which had the effect of banishing the frowns from that gentleman's face. "Come on, you fellows! Get up, Bunter!"

"I don't see why I shouldn't—"

"Rats! Come on!"

And Billy Bunter was dragged unwillingly away. It was high time for Hazeldene and his sister to leave, and the juniors accompanied them in a body to the exit—with the exception of Wally. He excused himself, and hurried off on another hunt for Pongo.

"Sorry you're going so soon, Miss Marjorie," said Billy Bunter. "You really haven't seen anything yet, you know."

"Oh, yes; I have been very much entertained," said Marjorie sweetly.

And it was not till long afterwards that the full meaning of that remark dawned upon William George Bunter.

The chums shook hands all round with Marjorie and her brother, and saw them off, and then strolled back into the grounds again. It was agreed that Harry Wharton & Co. should stay to the very finish.

There was a late train to take them back to Colonel Wharton's house, and as for D'Arcy major and minor, as they were staying in London, a taxicab would take them home at any hour.

Arthur Augustus had some doubts as to whether Wally would come, however. He certainly wouldn't come without Pongo;

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and how was Pongo to be found in such an immense expanse, and amid such a swarming concourse of people!

"Bai Jove! I don't believe he will find the mongwel, and then the young boundah will want to camp out here all night," said D'Arcy.

"Then we'll camp out with you, and send a wire to my uncle," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We may as well help look for Pongo, while we're waiting for the fireworks."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The dusk of evening was descending, and the grounds of the Palace were lighted up; and a very fine effect it was.

There were still great crowds in the grounds, and the juniors moved about among them, looking for Pongo and his master. It was very pleasant strolling in the quaintly lighted grounds, among a swarming, happy crowd.

A sudden sound of barking startled them.

"Hallo! hallo! hallo! That sounds like Pongo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

And Pongo it was. The gentleman in a fur cap had him by the chain, and was dragging him away. Pongo resisted, and barked and yapped, and the hero of the fur cap dragged and jerked, and murmured things. The juniors ran up at once.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Give me that dog!"

"Yaas, wathah! Hand it ovah!"

The rough scowled at the boys.

"This 'ere is my dog," he said. "'Ere, mates, 'elp me to look arter my dorg."

Three or four rough fellows, evidently friends of Mr. Bill Harris, and several of them the worse for drink, gathered round rowdily. The juniors hesitated. They did not want a general "scrap" with a gang of roughs, and at the same time they did not mean to abandon Pongo. It was in a somewhat remote part of the grounds, too; and none of the passing crowd seemed likely to interfere.

"It's my dorg," said Mr. Bill Harris, with a leer. "I'm keepin' 'im! You can get orf. This 'ere is my dog."

"It isn't your dog, you beastly thief!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly, "and you're jolly well not going to have him!"

"Move on, there!"

It was a sharp voice of authority from the crowd.

The truculence disappeared from the manner of Mr. Bill Harris, and he looked round nervously for the expected sight of a policeman's helmet.

He did not see the policeman, but the sharp voice rang again from the crowd.

"Move on! You can't block the way here! Move on!"

"You can 'ave your dorg," said Bill Harris hurriedly, and he hastily disappeared with his friends.

Harry Wharton caught the chain as the rough threw it down, and effectually stopped the immediate attempt made by Pongo to scuttle off. Pongo tugged at the chain; but there was no escape for him this time.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy, "it was jolly lucky that bobby coming' along at that moment, or there would have been a feahful wown. I should like to pwesent him with a half-cwown."

"Hand it over, then," grinned Billy Bunter.

"Eh—what?"

"Move on, there!"

The voice rang behind D'Arcy, and he swung round.

"Weally, officah—bai Jove!"

There was no policeman to be seen. The swell of St. Jim's understood at last that it was the ventriloquism of the fat junior again.

"Bai Jove, you know, that's awfully elevah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in great admiration. "I couldn't do that, you know."

"Go hon!"

"It has saved us fwom gettin' mixed up in a wathah wotten wown. Will you have some ices, Buntah?"

"Won't I!" grinned Bunter. And he had some.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The End of a Jolly Day.

BILLY BUNTER had said that he would have some ices, and he had some. He sat down in the place of refreshment, and took his hat and gloves off, as if he meant business. And indeed he did! At the sixth ice his chums showed signs of restiveness. At the eighth they murmured.

"We're not going to stay here all night, you know," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Why don't you have some ices yourself? D'Arcy is standing treat."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I've had two, and two's enough. Leave off, Bunter."

"Bosh! I've only tasted them so far."

"A jolly big taste, I think."

"They're all right," said Bunter, smacking his lips. "I'll have some."

"You—you'll have some?" said Nugent dazedly.
"Certainly."

And Bunter had some—the eight being only a taster. He was going on cheerfully, when Bob Cherry stopped his triumphant career by slipping an ice spoon down the back of his neck.

It was a drastic method, but it was effective. Bunter squirmed off the stool, and wriggled spasmodically as the cold spoon glided down his back, and gasped.

"Ow! You rotter! Ow! wow! What a rotten joke! Ow!"

"Well, I'm afraid for your health, you know, and I had to stop you somehow."

"Yow! Get that spoon out! Yow!"

Billy Bunter doubled up, trying to work the spoon back to his neck. He did not succeed. He tore off his jacket, and then his waistcoat.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, "I don't want to interfere, you know, but I would remind you that there are ladies present, Buntah. Pway pwoceed no farther."

Thus admonished, Billy Bunter proceeded no farther. Hurree Singh good-naturedly plunged a hand down his back and brought the spoon out. Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the grinning Bob.

"I say, you fellows, somebody ought to kick that beast! Now just wait a minute while I have some ices."

"You've had enough," said Harry, dragging him away. "You're not going to make yourself ill simply because you're getting them for nothing. We're not going to wheel you home in an ambulance."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Come on, you young cormorant!"

And Billy Bunter came on, willy-nilly. The crowd was gathering thickly on the terrace to see the fireworks, which were timed to start shortly. The juniors, keeping a look-out for Wally, made their way in that direction. They did not take any of the seats, choosing a good position to stand, and they had an excellent view of the pyrotechnics when they started.

"Bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus, as the glimmering of the fireworks and the detonations proceeded, "this is extwa wippin'. I am glad that I came to see this, you know."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, what time are the fireworks over?"

"About ten, I believe."

"Shall we have time for supper before the train?"

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "He's thinking about supper already. Have you got over tea, you fat young grampus?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—it was rather unsubstantial, you know. I don't think we ought to risk having a long journey without supper."

"More risk to you if you have supper, I think. We shall see you burst like a four-point seven shell presently."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Shut up, and watch the fireworks!"

The fireworks were well worth watching. Mr. Brock seemed to have surpassed himself in the preparations for that August Bank Holiday.

There were cheers and clapping as the pyrotechnics proceeded, and the juniors watched them eagerly till the finish.

When all was over, and the sky was dark once more, there was a general swarming of thousands towards the exit into the station.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked out anxiously for Wally.

"Better wait for him at the station entrance," Nugent suggested. "He's most likely to find us there."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the party accompanied the crowd. They reached the exit into the station, but did not pass the barriers. They looked about anxiously, but in the swarming crowd they saw no sign of Wally. The crowd passed in thousands; but it was seemingly as thick as ever when a familiar voice was suddenly heard.

"Hallo, you chaps!"

D'Arcy gave a jump.

"Bai Jove! There he is!"

Wally's face could be seen, raised above the crowd at a distance. He was standing on an automatic machine. He waved his hand over the heads of the crowd.

"Good-bye!" he called out.

"Come here at once, Wally!"

"Rats!"

"I insist——"

"More rats!"

"You young wascal!" bawled Arthur Augustus. "Come here!"

"And many of 'em!" called back Wally cheerily. "I haven't found Pongo, and I'm not coming. I'm staying here to look for him. Good-bye!"

"Hold on!" shouted Wharton, as Wally was about to disappear into the crowd. "It's all right about Pongo. We've found him."

"You've found Pongo?"

"Yes; he's here!"

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"Honest Injun?"

"Yea, honest Injun, you young ass!" said Harry, laughing.

"Good! Now you're talking! I'll come."

And Wally squirmed a way through the thick crowd, and joined the chums. He took hold of Pongo's chain, and gave the mongrel a pat.

"I've promised him a hiding," he remarked. "I'll give it to him, too, if he gets lost again. When does our train go, Gussy?"

"It's gone, deah boy."

"Well, you are a chap for catching trains, and no mistake!" said Wally, in great disgust.

"Why, you young ass, we were waitin' for you!"

"Oh, don't argue; let's get into the station."

They clicked through the turnstiles and went on the platform. Trains were being run as fast as they were filled, to deal with the crowd, and the juniors found one waiting. They were jammed into a carriage with about a dozen other persons; but the cramming and jamming did not cause any loss of temper. Everybody was cheerful, and seemed to take it as a joke.

The train started at last, and half an hour later they were disgorged at Victoria. Thence a motor-bus carried them to the Strand; and D'Arcy major and minor and Pongo accompanied Harry Wharton & Co. into the station to see them off for Wharton Lodge.

"Here's the train!" said Bob Cherry. "It's all right. Get in, Bunter!"

"What about a lunch-basket in the train?"

"Oh, get in!"

Bob Cherry helped Bunter in with a shove. The juniors followed him, and they shook hands very heartily with D'Arcy and Wally.

"We've had a ripping time," said Harry, "and we owe it to you. We sha'n't forget this Bank Holiday in a hurry."

"Not much," said Bob Cherry and Nugent.

"The not-muchfulness is terrific."

"It's been a vewy gweat pleasure to me," said D'Arcy. "I hope I shall see you all again soon. Good-bye, deah boys."

"Good-bye."

The train rolled out of the station. D'Arcy took off his topper, and Wally waved his straw hat, and Pongo barked. The juniors crowded the window, waving, till the platform was out of sight. Then Arthur Augustus, Wally, and Pongo went home in a taxicab, very tired and very cheerful. The train rolled out into the darkness with Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Bunter, in a corner seat, fell asleep. He woke up presently.

"I say, Wharton——"

"Hallo!"

"I suppose supper's sure to be ready when we get in?"

"Quite sure," said Harry, laughing.

"Good!" And Bunter closed his eyes again, and slept the sleep of one quite easy in his mind.

THE END.

(Another splendid tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Tuesday, entitled "Harry Wharton's Eleven," by Frank Richards. Order your "Magnet Library" in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)

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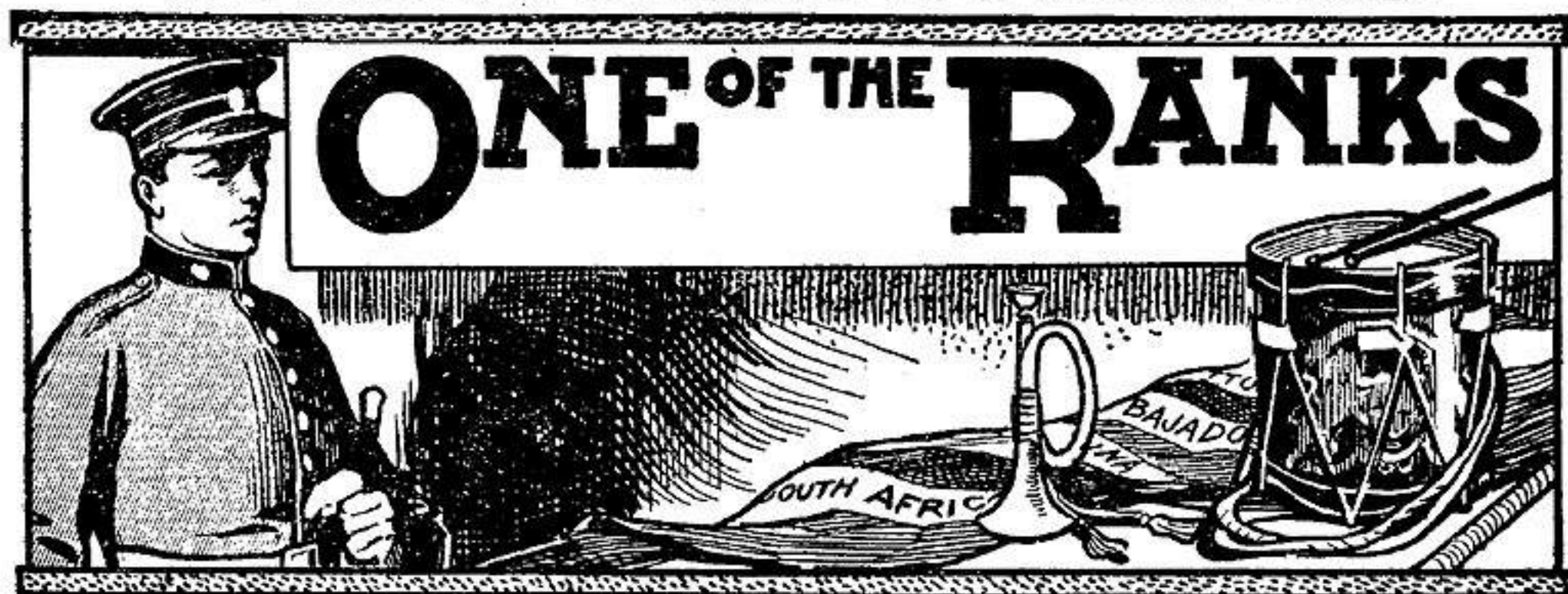
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A BRIEF RESUMÉ OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Ronald Chenys, a cadet in his last term at Sandhurst, is falsely accused of cheating in an exam., so one night, packing up a few necessaries, he leaves Sandhurst with his dog Rough. He walks to London, enlists in the Royal North Wessex Regiment under the name of Chester, and is sent down to Woolchester. Arrived there, Ronald unfortunately manages to fall foul of Bagot, a bullying sergeant, and Foxey Williams, a private, on the first day, and so he comes in for a rough time. On the night that he is doing his first sentry-go, Ian Chenys, his unscrupulous step-brother, enters the regiment as a subaltern. Ronald is persuaded to act as the regimental champion against a Navy boxer, and goes into strict training. One night the gas in the gym. goes out suddenly, and in the darkness Ronald receives a crashing blow on the arm. The assailant is not discovered, but Ronald strongly suspects Bagot. In spite of his injuries, Ronald declares his intention of going through with the fight. "Well, you're a game one!" says Lieutenant Fairly, Ronald's backer. "But put a coat on, and come with me to the doctor."

(Now go on with the story.)

A Pair of Villains.

Ronald was led away to the surgeon, and the crowd of Tommies broke up, vowing bitter vengeance on the traitor if ever they should lay hands on him.

Ian did not return to the mess, but made straight for his own quarters. Here he flung his cap into a corner, sent a chair spinning into the grate, and fell to pacing the floor, cursing aloud in his rage.

At every turn his shadow fell upon the blind. Foxey, standing below in the little garden, watched it come and go, and cudgelled his brains for some solution of the mystery. At last he mounted the stairs and knocked at Ian's door.

"Come in!" cried the young subaltern viciously. "Oh, it's you, is it? What the dickens brings you here?"

"I was wondering, sir," began Foxey, with a cunning twinkle of his close-set eyes, "if what has just happened in the gymnasium would make any difference in the arrangements for to-morrow night."

"Hang you, was it you, then, that made that bungle?" exclaimed Ian, turning on him furiously.

"No, not me. You will excuse me, sir, but I was wondering if it was you yourself."

"Hang your impudence!" growled Ian. "Take care, my fine fellow. I may have sunk so low that I consent to plot with scoundrels like you, but remember I always hold the whip-hand."

"Generally, sir, but not always," corrected Foxey, still with veiled impudence. "When it comes to the clean up, as I might call it, there'll be no whip left. We'll all go under, Slaney, me, and you; but you being on top now will fall furthest and deepest."

Ian was glaring at him, his teeth bared, and his hands twitching, as if he was meditating a sudden spring.

"But that ain't the point," continued Foxey, dropping the tone of mock obsequiousness, and taking up a bolder stand. "The point is that there seems to be more than us in this swindle."

"What of it, you fool?" snarled Ian. "The more the merrier, I say!"

"Yus, and too many cooks spoil the broth, and don't

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forget that. We lay our plans, and now some other fool steps in and makes a hash of everything, puts everybody on their guard, and cuts the ground from under our very feet. How do you think I'm going to do my little bit now? That's what I'm asking."

"You've got to," answered Ian.

"Yes, I've got to, I know. I stand to win a pot if our man goes down, and so do you. Oh, I ain't jibbing, don't think that; but what I want to find out is, who told this blundering ass to put his oar in at the wrong moment, and to see that he don't shove it in again, jest as I'm on the job, and get me lynched as well as himself"

"How should I know who it is, or what his motive is?"

"How shouldn't you?" asked Foxey maliciously. "It's Bagot, of course. Any fool with one eye could see that. He's got it in for Chester, as I know, and good luck to him. The question is, is this a bit of crooked play of yours, and are you settin' one of us against the other to see us come to smash while you get off scot-free? If I really thought that—"

"You needn't think that," said Ian miserably, reading the menace in the blackmailer's tone. "I know no more of Bagot's doings in this matter than yourself. He has a grudge against this man Chester, and with good reason, no doubt. The difference between us is that whereas he struck simply to satisfy his own thirst for revenge, we strike to do ditto, but to put good money into our pockets at the same time. He bungled his plot; we must see that we make certain of ours. Chester must be allowed to enter the ring and come up to the call of time; after that he must not be allowed one chance in ten million of victory."

"'Xactly!" said Foxey, helping himself coolly to a tot of spirits from Ian's tantalus. He had taken to dropping the role of servant in his private dealings with his victim just as soon as it suited him.

To the world, Ian was an officer, and Foxey an ordinary private of the line; but behind the scenes the latter saw to it that he was admitted to full partnership on level terms, at least.

"There's another thing!" exclaimed Foxey, setting the tumbler down and smacking his thin lips. "There's never an ill wind which blows nobody any good. This attempt to cripple our man will lengthen the odds agin him to almost any price. We've got to get more money on, and you've got to find it."

"I've only a hundred!" growled Ian.

"Well, I'll be round to collect it in the morning, and I'll want a pass, too. I must be off to Plymport to catch the bookies. It's going to be seventy-five on for me, and twenty-five for you this time, and don't forget it."

"You scoundrel!" cried Ian.

"So I am, and I never denied it," said Foxey. "There's no call for you advertising the fact, though, at the top of your voice. If I'm going to do the dirty work now, when everyone is on the kwi vive, as the Froggies say, I want a bit added to my share; so no more of that. The last point is, what are my dooties to-morrow night? How am I going to fix it so that our man is fit and well till the last minute, yet gets flopped out as soon as the sailor sets about him? Don't you think it's about time you explained?"

"Certainly; I'll show you now," said Ian, rising, and crossing to a writing-desk, which he unlocked.

A Splendid Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.

Army v. Navy—Drugged.

The news of the attempt to "noble" their champion roused the Wessex men to a perfect fever-heat of rage. There were many who openly declared that it was Sergeant Bagot who had but vented his notorious spite against Ronald in this cowardly, back-handed way, and if it had not been for the chevrons protecting him, there is no doubt that he would have been severely manhandled on mere suspicion alone.

Not only was the honour of the regiment besmirched, but its pocket was likely to suffer heavily, too; for, sad to say, from the colonel to Bugler Midge there was scarcely a man who had not backed Ronald's chances with hard cash.

When it was known that Ronald was determined still to box, and that the medical officer had not attempted to dissuade him from his purpose, the wild excitement began to simmer down a little, though the spirit of vengeance against his unknown assailant was as strong as ever.

Hookey and Mouldy promptly announced their intention of keeping guard over their man all night, in case of a second attempt being made, and half a dozen of No. 4 Section promptly offered their services for that duty.

Among these were Foxey Williams, George, and Alf. They were apparently as resentful as the rest, and gruesome were their vows as to what they would do to the traitor if they once laid hands on him.

Tony Truscott tipped a guarded wink to Mouldy at these protestations, and it was evident also that Hookey's suspicions were also roused.

A moment later, however, news came that Ronald would be kept in the barrack hospital that night, and the arrangements for his immediate protection fell to the ground.

A bodyguard, however, was enrolled at Foxey's suggestion to escort him until he entered the ring, and as nobody else seemed to recall the fact that Private Williams was among the least desirable for a duty of this sort, and that George and Alf were scarcely better, Tony and the two old soldiers thought it wiser to keep their thoughts to themselves.

They were only the more determined, however, to keep double watch and ward.

The next morning, learning that Foxey had been despatched by his master to Plymport on business, they felt a little more relief; with him out of the way they were more than a match for the two ex-hooligans, supposing them to be on treachery bent.

Tony, for his part, was not altogether inclined to doubt the loyalty of the pair. He had been watching George and Alf out of the corner of his eye for some weeks past, and though they growled and scowled whenever Ronald's name was mentioned, it seemed to him that much of the venom of their hatred had evaporated.

Ronald had thrashed both, singly and together, with the gloves and without, and if this rankled with them, they, as born scrappers, could not help but admire his superior science and strength.

As soon as the news that he had consented to match himself against the champion of the Royal Navy had leaked out, Alf and George were the two most regular attendants at the gymnasium to watch him at his training.

They said nothing, they cut him at every turn, but they stood there all the same day by day, looking on with an admiration which would reveal itself in spite of their efforts to stifle it.

Tony had seen all this, had watched their savage wrath when Ronald rose crippled after his struggle with Bagot, and he was not to be blamed, perhaps, if he accepted their repentance as genuine.

Still, he was on his guard, and Mouldy and Hookey even more so.

At last the hour came for the great contest.

The big gymnasium of the Naval Barracks at Plymport was gay with fluttering bunting. Every reserved seat had been sold long before the night, and now the standing room in the galleries and behind was crammed to the last inch.

The grand assault at arms was for the benefit of the widows and orphans of gallant tars who had lost their lives in their country's service. That alone would have sufficed to fill the vast building; but apart from the cause of charity, there was the great match between Stoker Jack Blade, heavy-weight champion of the Navy, and Private Ronald Chester, of the Wessex Regiment, and this every sportsman in the Services was anxious to see.

At the ring-side were a dozen admirals and generals, junior officers by the score, and a sprinkling of privileged civilians, while above and around rose tier upon tier of sunburnt faces, all intently waiting for the big event of the evening.

Excitement was at boiling-point, for the news of the attempt on Ronald's life had long since flashed from Woolchester to Plymport. At first it was rumoured in the latter place that the match was off; but later, a wire came denying this, saying that the Wessex champion, though injured, would take the ring.

Now everyone was eager simply to see so game a lad. That Stoker Blade would defeat him, only the Tommies

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from the Wessex regiment had a doubt. They knew something of Ronald's dogged grit, and they knew, as he did, that while that terrible right of his was uninjured there was hope.

The odds, however, had gone virtually to any price against the redcoat, and there was scarcely a taker.

"Now, then, Chester, are you all ready?" said Lieutenant Bob, bustling into the dressing-room.

"Quite ready, sir," answered Ronald quietly. "He was sitting gloved and stripped for the fray, with his overcoat thrown over his shoulders."

"How does the arm feel?"

"Pretty bad, sir. The stiffness may work off when the muscles get warmed to it, but I am afraid that is rather a forlorn hope."

"H'm! Well, let's hope for the best, then," said Lieutenant Bob, with a gaiety he was far from feeling. "What do you think of your opponent? Have you seen him?"

"Yes; he was in here just now. A sterling good chap, and as sorry as I am that the conditions are not more equal."

"Bravo!" murmured Lieutenant Bob. "Well, I just dropped in to say that the tenth item is in progress now. After that is Sabre v. Sabre, and then you come on. Are you quite ready, Mills and Walker?"

"Ready for the word, sir!" answered Mouldy.

"Well, just take care of our man. It isn't likely now that there'll be another attempt to cripple him, but look out."

"We're looking, sir, and if there is, and we get hold of the sco—"

"We'll tear him in halves and throw him through the roof!" said Hookey, tucking up the sleeves of his sweater.

The thunder of many applauding feet in the galleries announced that there was only one more item before Ronald's appearance. The minutes now passed like hours; but again the din of applause sounded, and Ronald and his seconds rose.

Their way to the raised platform in the centre of the gymnasium lay through a long lane of spectators, kept clear by the garrison and Naval police.

Posted at the door and at various points where they could stem any rush made at their champion were Corporal Kedge, Tony Truscott, Spud Murphy, Gussy, and other trusty men.

Alf and George were there, too, but Kedge and Tony were keeping their eyes upon them.

The first to enter the arena was the Navy champion, and he came in for an ovation from the bluejacket contingent which made the floor tremble.

Then came Ronald, preceded by Lieutenant Bob, with his seconds following closely upon his heels. The house rose and cheered at his entrance, for both Navy and Army were anxious to show how much they admired true grit and British pluck.

Despite the Naval and garrison police, the crowd on either side of the narrow gangway surged inwards, and for a moment Ronald was jostled by men unable to help themselves in the press.

Spud Murphy, using his huge bulk as a battering-ram, did his utmost to stem the rush, and Mouldy and Hookey, losing their heads, punched right and left at innocent noses.

"Don't shove there, d'you hear?" protested a voice, which Ronald recognised as Foxey Williams, and turning his head, found the Cockney hustling at his elbow. Behind were Alf and George.

The next instant a way was cleared for Ronald, and he pressed on, but as he moved he felt a sharp pricking pain in his arm, as if a needle had pierced his skin.

Mouldy and Hookey were urging him forward, however, and the pain had gone almost as soon as he felt it. Still, it made him turn his head again, and just in time to see Foxey struggling with the crowd, using his pal Alf as a shield, apparently, for he was forcing the cockney backwards into the ranks.

The next instant order was restored. The whole incident had passed almost unnoticed in the din of applause greeting Ronald's appearance.

The Navy champion had already entered the ring, and he made haste to follow. Throwing off his coat, he clambered under the ropes and crossed to his corner, where a Union Jack was hung. Opposite to him, where the sailor sat, was draped a White Ensign.

A murmur of admiration rose as the audience compared the two men side by side. Both were of superb physique, deep-chested, and long-limbed, but the sailor's skin had not the satin sheen of Ronald's, and his muscles were chunky and huge, betraying power at the expense of pace.

Ronald's muscles were long and fine, like steel wire, where the sailor's resembled rope. Knowing Ronald's science and ring-craft, there was not a Wessex man now but would have put his shirt on their man, but for one thing—that purple bruise on the point of the left shoulder,

shading to green and yellow where it descended to bicep and tricep. That was a hopeless handicap, and the great audience expressed their pity for it in a sympathetic groan.

Commander Cropper now came forward, and a silence fell. In a few sailorly words he touched upon the unfortunate accident which had befallen the Wessex champion, and acknowledged Ronald's splendid pluck in consenting to enter the arena crippled of half his guns.

He said this and more, yet Ronald, though he tried hard to follow, found himself stumbling at the meaning of the words. A sort of deadly languor seemed to be stealing over his senses, and his muscles felt like soft wax.

He heard a great buzz of cheering, which seemed to come from a mile away, and then he saw the referee step to the ring-side.

The next instant Stoker Blade was on his feet, and Ronald felt someone give him a vigorous nudge, and the chair was dragged from under him.

"Go on! And buck up and walk into him!" he heard Mouldy growl; and remembering dimly what he was there to do, he made the half circle of the ring, moving, it seemed to him, as if on air. What had happened? What had brought this sudden change upon him when he felt so fit only some five minutes before, he could not imagine.

Then he recalled in a flash that pricking pain in his arm; a tiny spot of blood marked the puncture in the skin. It was just above a vein. He had been drugged by an injection of morphia.

The Navy champion caught the extended glove and shook it. Then broke ground, made a weaving feint or two with his hands, and landed flush on Ronald's mouth, driving him spinning on to the ropes, from which he rebounded, falling on his hands and knees in the ring.

Knocked Out—Ronald's Rally.

A half-choked cry of bewilderment greeted the sailor's success. It was inexplicable. Any man with the least knowledge of how to use his fists might have parried the blow, for it was merely a straight lead, and half-hearted at that—meant only to sample the enemy's defence.

Yet Ronald was down, and the timekeeper was counting the seconds one by one.

What could be wrong? Had the fight been sold? Already ironical yells and hootings were beginning to sound from some parts of the house.

Lieutenant Bob was standing up in his seat, staring open-mouthed, while Mouldy Mills and Hookey Walker simply gaped like dying codfish.

Amid the increasing uproar the voice of the timekeeper was inaudible, but Lieutenant Bob could see his lips move, and he knew that in a few more ticks the whole thing would be over—the most amazing fiasco probably ever known in the sporting world.

But Ronald had moved. He raised his dull, glazed eyes to his opponent, and seemed to pull his wits together with an effort. The next instant he was on his feet, and the second hand of the chronometer flew back without a verdict.

"Into him, Bladesey! Finish him! Now's your time!" yelled the Navy men. But the stoker was cunning after his own fashion. He, too, was startled by the ease with which Ronald had fallen; but he meant to go warily.

This might be some cunning ruse to induce him to rush in, careless and over-confident. If, on the other hand, Ronald was ill—and he looked it—he was to much of a sportsman to cut him down in cold blood.

Therefore he circled out of distance, with Ronald following sluggishly after him. Yet the soldier's wits were clearing little by little under the smart of his bruised lips.

The sailor, thinking to try him again, led, but Ronald ducked his head and crossed him heavily with his right. The hooting died away at

the blow. There was good ginger behind it, and the contest was to be a fair one after all.

The stoker staggered under the swinzing thud, but came again like a bulldog, landing right and left. The first hook Ronald parried with his right guard, and then reeled with the pain of the wrench. His shoulder was going to play him false, after all.

Yet pain was spurring his drugged senses to activity. An unintentional chop on the bruised shoulder itself stung him to madness. He rallied under the sailor's rush, taking hits unguarded which would have felled many another man to the boards.

Out came his right glove like a bullet, and the stoker staggered. Out it came again, this time upon the mark, and he grunted like a stricken bullock. He swung blindly at Ronald's head, and missed. The force of the blow spun him round, and a feeble upper-cut from Ronald's crippled left sent him flying to the boards.

If he had had but a sound arm to make that blow, the fight would have been over there and then. As it was, the bell rang to the call of time.

"Why, whatever's wrong with you? You're fighting like a man in a dream?"

Ronald, who was being vigorously sprayed with water by Hookey, turned a dripping face to Lieutenant Bob Fairly standing by the ropes.

"Some brute has tried to drug me!" answered Ronald. "I felt a prick in my arm. Look, there's the place! It looks like a hypodermic injection of morphia."

"Drugged you!" exclaimed the officer, so loudly, and with so much surprise, that his voice was heard all over the crowded building. "Who was it? Could you recognise the man?"

"I don't know. I'll tell you afterwards, sir."

But Lieutenant Bob's blood was up.

"Close those doors!" he roared. "See that not a man leaves this building until orders are given! There has been foul play against Private Chester for the second time; and, by jingo, we'll get to the bottom of it now! Can you go on?" he asked, turning to Ronald.

"Yes, sir; I feel fairly right now," answered Ronald.

"Very well. We'll catch the scoundrel after the contest is over. Mr. Referee, I apologise for interrupting in this manner, but you will see that I have good excuse."

The referee bowed, and amid a babel of angry tongues, the timekeeper ordered the seconds out of the ring.

"Time!"

There was no question that Ronald had recovered considerably under his seconds' care. Still he left the sailor

to make the fighting, contenting himself with ducking, guarding his head as much as he could with his right, and taking what he could not with a grunt and a grin. His left arm hung limp for the most part, and he rarely attempted to bring it into play.

A fierce rally in which he again landed with dazing force on Stoker Blade's jaw, finished the second round.

Ronald came up to time fresher than ever for the third, while the sailor was beginning to show signs of wear. The blows which had landed on him were few, but they had come home like the kicks of a racehorse.

The excitement was intense. The deep breathing of the two antagonists was the only sound in all the crowded building.

Suddenly a shipmate, wild with excitement, yelled out:

"Fearnoughts for ever! Go it Bladesey!"

The battle-cry seemed to fire the sailor's blood in a flash. Like a tornado he swept in upon his man, crowding him, crushing him, smiting him hip and thigh.

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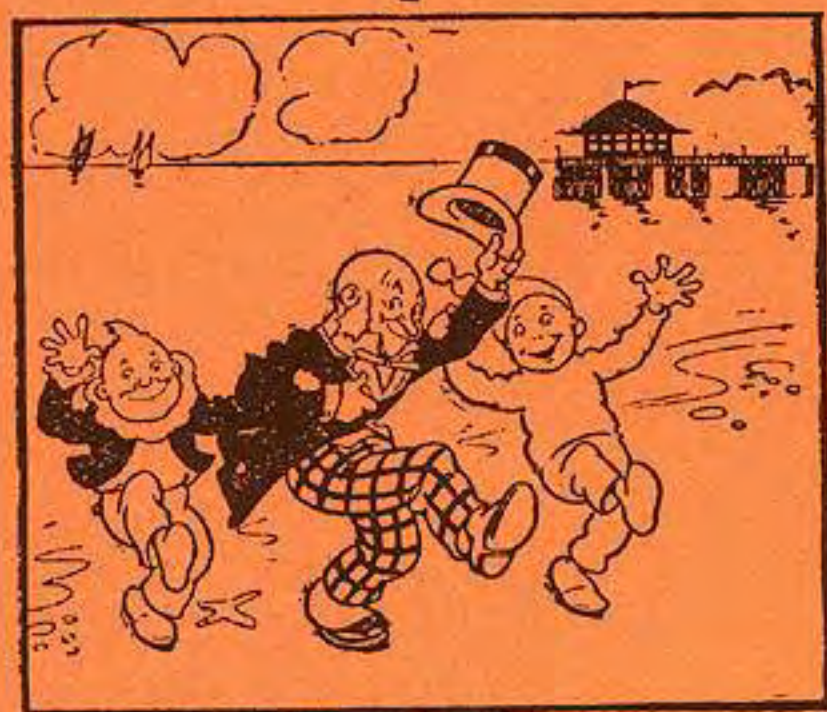
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