

BOY SCOUTS from the **"FADERLAND."**

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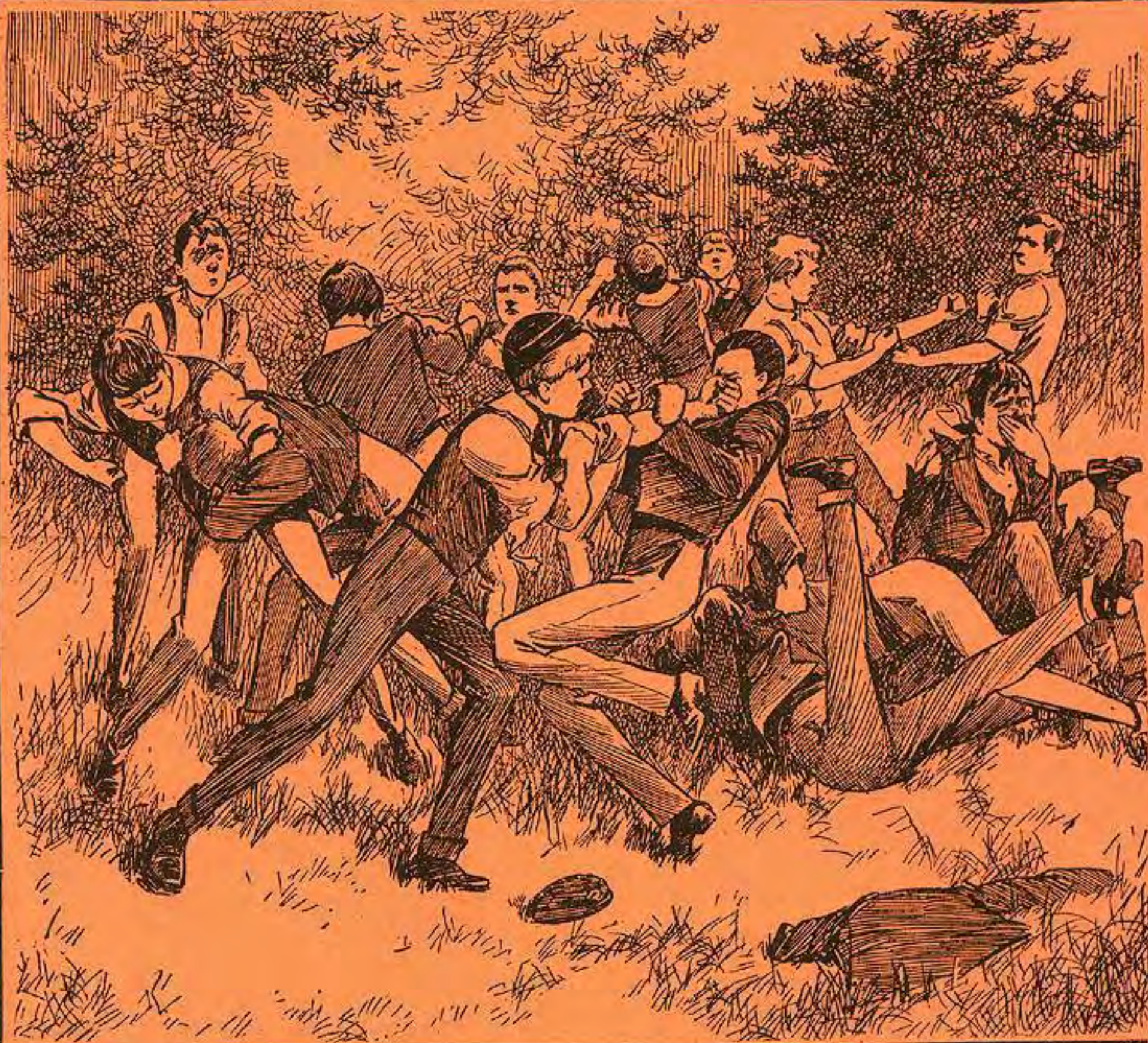
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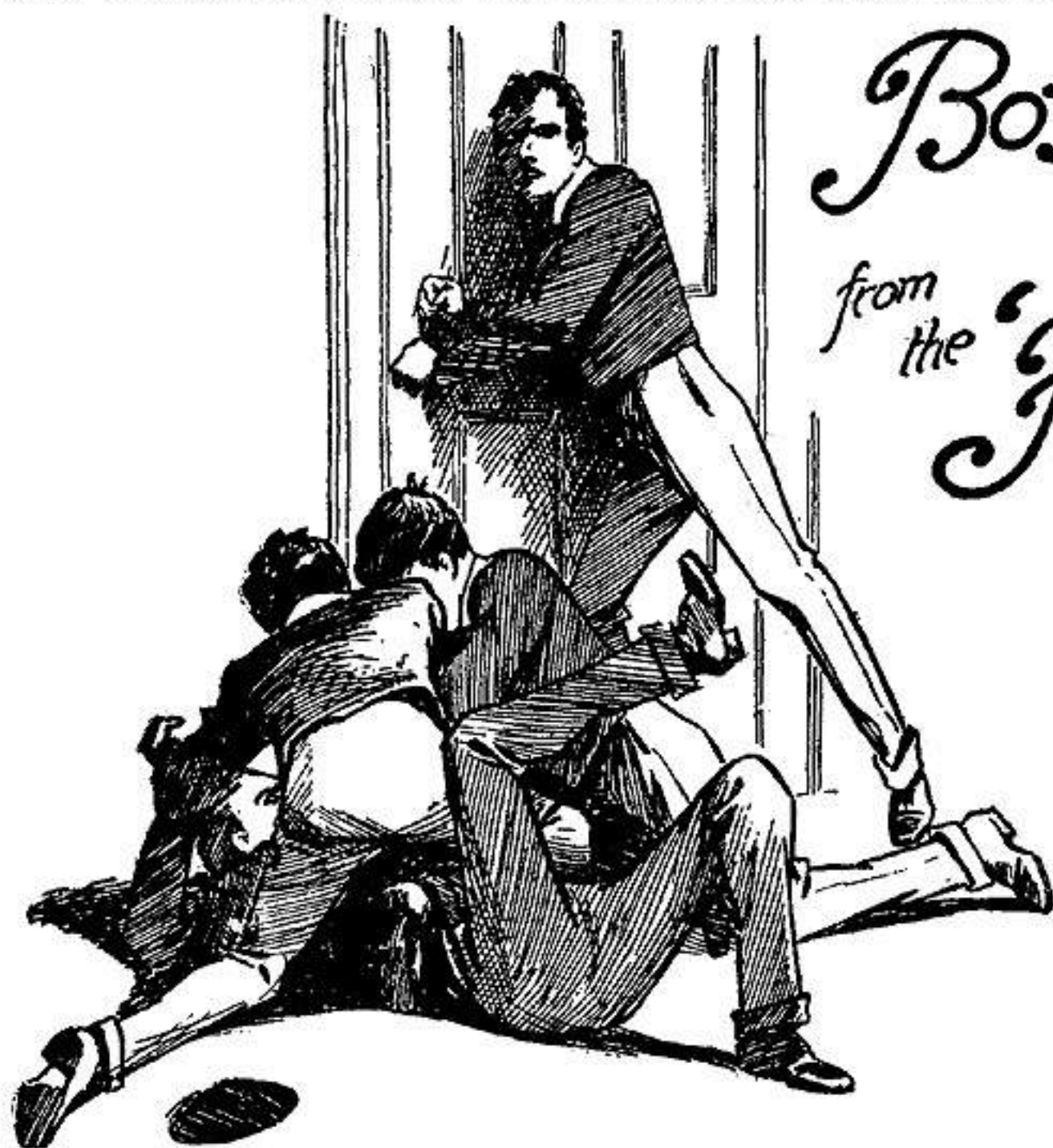
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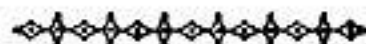


One Halfpenny

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book, when finished with, to a friend.



Boy Scouts from the 'Faderland'



A
Long, Complete Tale
of the
Greyfriars Chums,
— BY —
FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Slight Misapprehension.

"BOY Scouts!"
"Yes."

"Germans?"
"Yes."

"Coming here?"

"Yes," said Harry Wharton, for the third time.

"My hat!" said Frank Nugent. "That's news!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, murmured in his soft Oriental voice that the newfulness was terrific.

The news excited great interest in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars. Boy scouting was very much in fashion there, and a visit from foreign Boy Scouts was naturally interesting.

Even Billy Bunter looked up from his fourth sausage, and blinked through his spectacles in an interested way.

Harry Wharton had just come in with the news. He dropped into his chair at the table, and took the cup of tea Bunter had just poured out for himself, quite heedless of the indignant glare that came through the fat junior's spectacles.

"They're doing a tour of England, and seeing the chief places of note, I understand," Wharton remarked, as he stirred Bunter's tea. "So, of course, they would come and see us."

"Of course," assented Nugent, with a grin.

"The of-coursefulness is terrific," Hurree Singh observed.

"One party of them is coming here," said Wharton. "I don't know how many. Mr. Quelch just mentioned the matter to me. It seems the chaps who are coming here are young fellows, and Quelch seemed to think that it would be up to the Remove to look after them, especially as we've done some scouting ourselves, you know. I shall be jolly glad, for one."

"Oh, yes, that's all right. We've had some experience with aliens here," grinned Nugent. "With Herr Rosenblum's Foreign Academy within five minutes' walk we've had enough chances of learning the gentle ways of the alien. We shall have to get up some sort of entertainment for the German chaps."

"What ho!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here, you know, if you're thinking of entertaining the German chaps, I can help—or rather take the lead in that," said Bunter. "The best thing I can think of is to get up a ventriloquial entertainment, and let them in free. I would do the ventriloquism, and would charge only one guinea for the evening."

"My dear porpoise—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I would vary the entertainment

with some physical culture, some hypnotism, and some practical photography. You had better leave the matter wholly in my hands."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"There's no reason why you shouldn't ventriloquise, hypnotise, photograph, and physical cult," he said; "but you had better do it quietly in a study by yourself, so as not to bother anybody."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The idea is some scouting in the woods, if the weather's decent," said Harry. "We can get up some sort of a scouting competition, and that will have the advantage of showing the German chaps the country, too."

"Good wheeze."

Tap!

"Come in, fathead!" called out Nugent.

The door of No. 1 Study opened, and a big, good-natured, fair-haired German lad presented himself. The juniors knew him well. It was Fritz Hoffmann, a pupil of Herr Rosenblum's Foreign Academy, near Greysfriars.

Herr Rosenblum's pupils were the sons of foreigners resident in England, and they were a curiously mixed crowd. The rows between them and the Greysfriars fellows had been endless, until the iron gates separating the grounds of the two schools had been permanently locked up, and that brought about peace at last.

Hoffmann grinned and nodded at the juniors.

It was a long time since any of the aliens had entered there, and Harry Wharton and Co. looked at him in surprise and with some suspicion. They feared a raid at once, and half expected to see the faces of a crowd of aliens behind the young German.

"Goot-day, ain't it," said Hoffmann, with his wide grin. "We hear te news."

"What news?"

"Tat mein countrymen are coming to Greysfriars on to visit, ain't it. I come over to settle you—"

"By Jove! I thought so!" ejaculated Wharton. "Collar him! Shut the door!"

In a moment two strong pairs of hands were upon the German junior, and he was rolling on the carpet.

At the same time Hurree Janset Ram Singh sprang to the door, bumped it shut, and set his heel against it.

Fritz Hoffmann struggled violently.

He was a powerful fellow, bigger than either Wharton or Nugent, and it was no easy task even for the pair of them to secure him.

"Ach!" he gasped. "Mein himmel!"

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"Settle us, will he? We'll see," chuckled Wharton, as he plumped his weight upon Fritz Hoffmann's broad chest. "We'll jolly well see if he'll settle us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! Tat you lets me go, ain't it!" gasped Hoffmann, struggling desperately.

"Not half!"

They rolled to and fro on the floor.

The juniors were fully convinced that there was a crowd of aliens in the passage ready to rush in, and Wharton called to Hurree Singh to be careful with the door.

The Hindoo junior grinned.

"The carefulness is terrific, my worthy chum," he remarked.

"Ach! Tat you release me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They rolled over again. Hoffmann's collar was torn out, his necktie was streaming. His hair was like a mop, and his waistcoat had lost three or four buttons.

Wharton's collar, too, was hanging by a single stud, and his jacket was split up the back.

Nugent's nose was streaming with red.

Billy Bunter skipped actively out of the way of the combatants.

It was a terrific battle, but the odds told, and the German junior was secured at last.

He lay panting on his back on the carpet, while Nugent sat on his legs, and Wharton pushed down Billy Bunter on his chest.

Bunter's weight would have pinned down a native of Brobdingnag, and under it the hero of the Foreign Academy was quite helpless.

He gasped and gasped with a sound like escaping steam, and rolled his eyes.

"Mein gootness!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed breathlessly.

"Got him!" said Nugent. "He came here to settle us, did he? I think we'll do the settling."

"The settlefulness should be terrific."

"What price anointing him with bacon fat—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Rats! I say, you fellows, you're not going to waste all that bacon fat on a mouldy alien. You can shove the ashes or some

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NEXT
WEEK!

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

soot over him, if you like. You're not going to waste the bacon fat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! Dat you lets me up!"

"Rats!"

"I come over as a friend!" gasped Hoffmann. "I tink tat you are all mad, ain't it. I tink you vas off vat you call te rocker!"

"You said you came over to settle us."

"Ach! I say noting of te sort. I said I come over to settle you about te Poy Scouts coming to te school."

"Oh!"

"I tink tat ve combine to giff dem a welcome!" gasped Hoffmann. "Tat is vy I come mit myself over to settle you about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "It's his giddy English. He meant to settle with us, not to settle us."

"Ach, tat is it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tinks tat you vas all off te rocker, ain't it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors released the German, and he staggered to his feet. The three of them presented a decidedly dishevelled appearance.

Fritz Hoffmann rubbed his swollen nose, glanced down at his disordered attire, and looked aggressive for a moment. But he was good-natured to the core, and the laughter of the Greysfriars Removites was infectious. He was soon laughing too.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ach, it is ferry funny, ain't it?" he remarked. "I come ofer as a friend, and you bumps me on te floor, ain't it, after?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Sausage Mystery.

Fritz Hoffmann dusted down his clothes and adjusted his necktie. His nose was a little swollen, but his grin was as good-humoured as ever.

"I tinks tat you makes a lectle mistake," he said. "It is all right after. I tinks tat ve haf a talk, ain't it?"

"Sit down and have tea," said Harry Wharton hospitably. "Any more of your fellows out there?"

"Nein."

"Call 'em in," said Nugent. "Blessed if I know where we shall find room for nine. But hospitality's the word. Call 'em in."

"I say tat tey vos nein dere."

"Well, call 'em in. Open the door, Inky."

"I say, you fellows," began Bunter, with a nervous eye on the tea-table, and wondering what it would look like if nine healthy Germans started operations upon it, "I say—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Open the door!"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh opened the door, and glanced out into the passage.

Hazeldene of the Remove was passing, but there was no one else in sight.

The nabob looked back into the study.

"The ninefulness of the worthy aliens is nil," he remarked. "The honourable passage is chock-full of emptiness."

"Why, Hoffs said—"

"Nein, nein."

"That's eighteen," said Nugent. "Two nines. Or do you mean ninety-nine?"

"Nein, nein, nein!"

"Nine hundred and ninety-nine?" demanded Nugent. "Look here, are you being funny, or is this some more of your English?"

"Nein."

"Well, that's plain enough. Come in, you chaps," called out

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A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

Nugent, looking out of the door. "My hat! Inky's right! There's nobody here."

"I tells you tat tere is nobody!" exclaimed Hoffmann, growling red in the face with his efforts to explain. "You ask me vas dere anyvun, and I say nein."

"I know you said nine, and what I want to know is what the dickens you said nine for, if there weren't any at all?" said Nugent warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"What are you cackling at, Harry?"

"Nothing—only nein is German for no!"

"Nein! No! Oh!"

"Tat is correct," said Hoffmann. "Tat is all right, ain't it. I tinks tat Nugent is vat you call dummkopf, ain't it."

"Look here——"

"It's all right," said Wharton, laughing. "Hoffmann's alone. Sit down, old chap, and wire into the sausages."

Hoffmann was not slow to accept that invitation.

"I haf had mein tea," he remarked, and Bunter's face brightened up—"I haf had a ferri good tea."

"Good!" said Bunter.

"But I am roddy for anoder, ain't it," said Hoffmann. "I tinks tat I vires in mit pleasure, pefore."

And he sat down.

"Help yourself, old fellow," said Nugent. "These are ripping sausages. I can recommend them—they don't come from Chicago."

"Ach! tey vas nice."

Billy Bunter watched Nugent, and watched Hoffmann. He watched them with a painful intensity. There were six sausages on the dish, but at the rate Hoffmann started at he was not like to leave a speck of grease to show where the sausages once had been. Bunter had had his tea, but he was thinking of his supper. Thinking the matter over carefully, he decided to recommence. Hospitality was not one of Billy Bunter's weaknesses.

"Hallo! You've had your tea, Bunter," said Wharton, as Bunter sat down, and reached over to the dish with a fork.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I haven't finished yet——"

"Your mistake—you have," said Wharton cheerfully, as he jerked the fat junior's chair away from the table. "You're going to take a little run now."

"Oh, really——"

"Sit down, then!"

Wharton pushed the fat junior into the armchair. Billy Bunter sat down; he hadn't much choice about the matter. He fell into the armchair with a bump that shook the study.

He sat there, blinking wrathfully, while Fritz Hoffmann travelled cheerfully through the sausages.

But a sudden gleam came into Bunter's round eyes.

He always, when he was what he called "waxy," remembered that he was an amateur ventriloquist of great skill, and that peculiar gift had often enabled him to "get his own back."

Fritz Hoffmann started on his second sausage with great gusto. Like a true German, he could always tackle those succulent morsels.

"Ach! I tinks tat it is ripping, pefore," he remarked. "I tinks tat I likes him, ain't it. Tat's goot! Apout te Poy Scouts, I tinks tat ve joins te hands to welcome dem. I hear tat dere is vun patrol of dem coming to Greyfriars, and te leader is mein cousin, Franz Hamburger, ain't it. I tinks tat I am glad to see my cousin from te Vaterland vunce more. Mein hat! but tat sausage was a ripping vun! I have vun more, ain't it?"

And Hoffmann helped himself.

"Mew-oo-o-ow!"

The German fairly jumped.

He fixed his eyes upon the sausage he had just jabbed with a fork, and his face turned quite pale.

"Mein gootness!"

"Me-e-e-e-ew!"

"Phew!"

"Vat is tat?"

"It sounded like a cat mewing," said Nugent, looking mystified. "There's no cat in the study that I know of."

"Ach! It come from te sausage."

"From the sausage?"

"Ja, ja! Ach! Vas it made of te cats, den?"

"Mew-e-e-ew!"

"My only hat!"

The German boy backed his chair away from the table, and his eyes were full of horror as he looked at the sausage he had been about to eat.

"Mein gootness! It is made of te cat, and it is alive!" he gasped.

"Bosh! How——"

"Me-e-e-ew!"

"Ach! You hears yourself tat it come from te sausage?"

The juniors were utterly astounded. As near as they could judge, the wail of the cat proceeded from Hoffmann's plate.

But Harry Wharton suddenly remembered the peculiar proclivities of Billy Bunter, and he sprang towards the fat junior.

His hand fell upon the amateur ventriloquist's shoulder, and

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a new ventriloquial "me-e-ew" broke off in the middle, and was changed into a gasp.

"Oh! Ow! Hold on! Really, Wharton——"

"You young rascal!"

"Vat is te matter, pefore?"

"It was Bunter playing a trick," said Wharton, laughing. "It's all right. He was imitating a cat."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Ach! tat is all right, after," said Hoffmann; but his glance was still suspicious as it turned upon the sausages. "I—I—I tinks tat I tries te cake now. I have had enough of te sausage."

And Billy Bunter grinned.

His chums looked at him wrathfully, and but for Hoffmann's presence would have done something more drastic. But Bunter did not mind. He had saved the sausages for his supper, and he was content.

Hoffmann started on the cake, and made good progress with it. He talked as fast as he ate.

"Mein cousin Hamburger is te patrol-leader of te chaps who come to Greyfriars," he said. "I tinks I help you look after him, ain't it."

"Jolly good!"

"You know tat dere are a lot of French peegs in te Foreign Academy—Adolphe Meunier and his pounders," said Hoffmann. "I tinks tat tey tinks tey play off jape on te Sherman scouts. Meunier knows all about it alretty—he was mit me when I heard. I know notting for certain—but I tinks tat Meunier et Cie plan a pig joke, ain't it."

"They'd better not get japing our guests, or there'll be trouble!" said Wharton.

"Tat is right," said Hoffmann. "I tinks ve keeps te open eye on tem, ain't it."

"What-ho!"

And Hoffmann, having cleared the table of everything but the sausages—which he still seemed to regard with suspicion—took his leave, very well satisfied with his reception, rough as it had been at first.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Mysterious Meeting.

"TAISEZ-VOUS, mon ami."

"Oui, mon cher Adolphe!"

Billy Bunter gave a little jump.

He was strolling after tea in the Cloisters of Greyfriars. After Hoffmann had left No. 1 Study, Bunter had finished the sausages. In case of accidents, he reflected, it was wise to make sure of them—there might be another visit from the aliens, perhaps.

Even Bunter felt a little full up when he had finished. Ignoring Nugent's kind invitation to a race down the stairs, and Wharton's suggestion that he should turn out for cricket practice, Billy Bunter ambled away, and retired to the Cloisters for a quiet stroll.

At the further end of the Cloisters were the grounds of the New Academy, where a number of foreign youths, French, German, and Belgian, flourished under the care of Herr Rosenblum.

The gates between were generally kept locked; but of late, owing to the absence of rows between the Greyfriars fellows and the aliens, they had been allowed to stand open again. Bunter was walking along the Cloisters, thinking of the sausages, and debating in his mind whether he should sit down and rest, or stroll on to the school shop on the chance of getting somebody to stand him an ice, when the French voices fell upon his ear.

Heavy laden as he was, the fat junior felt that it would be too terrible to be ragged by the aliens at that moment. At all events, his buttons would all fly off if he were rolled over, and he knew what to expect if Adolphe Meunier and his friends sighted him.

To dodge out of sight behind a stone pillar was the work of a moment.

The silence of the grey old Cloisters was broken by whispering voices and cautious footfalls.

In the shade of the pillar, Billy Bunter crouched and shivered.

It was undoubtedly an alien raid into Greyfriars. Meunier & Co. were taking advantage of the gates being unlocked once more.

And yet, Bunter could distinguish only French voices; and as a rule the aliens, of whatever nationality, united when it was a question of raiding the Greyfriars juniors.

No! They were not passing.

The footsteps and the whispering voices stopped, close to the pillar behind which the fat junior was hidden.

They evidently had no suspicion that he was there, for they talked on freely, in the peculiar English which was current in the Foreign Academy.

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

"Messieurs—Gentlemen!"

It was Adolphe Meunier's voice. Meunier was the chief of the French juniors, and was always at deadly warfare with the German contingent—except when they joined forces against Greyfriars.

Meunier & Co.—or Meunier et Cie., as they called themselves—were evidently on the war-path, but against whom it was impossible to guess as yet.

"Silence!" said Meunier, in a stage whisper. "It is necessary zat ze Sherman peasts know nozzing."

"Zat is so, mon cher."

"Go on, Meunier."

"On ze ball."

"I zink zat ve lay ze plot vizout ze Shermans knowing nozzing of it, and zen ve take zem by surprise."

"Hear, hear!"

"Zat is vy I call you to ze secret meeting in ze Cloisters."

"Zat is all right."

"I have told you zat ze Sherman scouts are coming to pay ze visit to Greyfriars. Hoffmann has a cousin in ze patrol."

"Down viz ze Sherman."

"Vive la France!"

"Zat you make not so much of ze row," said Meunier to the Cie. reprovingly. "Ve not vant to bring ze Shermans here."

"Zat is so."

"Go on, Adolphe!"

"I zink zat ve lay plans to surprise ze Shermans as zey come. Ve falls on zem suddenly, and knocks zem into vat ze English call ze cocked hat."

"Bravo!"

"Zey come to ze station in Friardale, and zey walks along ze road to Greyfriars. Ve lies in ambush," said Meunier, lowering his voice. "Ve falls on zem suddenly. Ve vipes up ze road viz zem, and avenges Sedan."

"Hurrah!"

"Vive la France!"

"Down viz ze Shermans!"

Meunier grinned gleefully at his enthusiastic company. There was no doubt about their willingness to go for the Germans—any Germans—anywhere.

"Zat is all right," said Meunier. "Now to settle ze details, for ve must not be seen talking togezzar too much, or Hoffmann zink zere is somezing up."

"Zat is so."

"At ze corner of ze lane, vere ze road turn off to Lindale, zere is a big clump of trees in ze middle of ze road."

"Ve know zein vell."

"Ven ze Shermans come down from ze railway-station to-morrow ve lays in ambush zere, and waits for zem."

"Hear, hear!"

"Zey may have some Greyfriars fellows wiz zem, but no mattair. Ve are all on ze spot—twenty of us—and ve vipes up ze ground viz zem."

"Bravo!"

"Ve takes care zat Hoffmann suspect nozzing, or else he take all his peastly Shermans zere, and ve have to fight ze great odds."

"Vun Frenchman fight six Shermans and lick zem hollow!" said Chavannes.

"Oui, oui, oui!" rose a yell.

"Zat is so," assented Meunier. "All ze same, ve leaves nozzing to chance zis time, and ve has ze odds on our side. Zat is strategy."

"Bravo!"

"Ve steals away to-morrow after ze dinner, vun at ze time, and meets in ze clump of trees on ze Friardale road," said Meunier. "Ve goes vun by vun, and nobody knows nozzing."

"Hear, hear!"

"Not a vord on ze subject."

"Not a vord."

"Keep silence as ze grave."

"Silence as ze grave," repeated his followers, in awful tones that almost made Billy Bunter's flesh creep.

"Swear!" exclaimed Meunier.

Like a true Frenchman, he could do nothing without a theatrical flourish. He raised his right hand in the air, and his followers all did the same. Twenty right hands rose clenched.

"Ve swear!" exclaimed a score of voices in chorus.

"Zat is good!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Lasalle suddenly. "I hear somezing!"

Billy Bunter almost fainted with terror.

If the French juniors discovered him there, and learned that he had overheard all their plot for the reception of the German Boy Scouts, he hardly knew what they might, or might not, do with him.

He had made some slight motion, and the faint sound had caught the quick ear of Lasalle.

But danger sharpens the wits, and even Billy Bunter could think quickly when required.

He remembered that he was a ventriloquist, and only in time.

"Ach, vere are dose French peegs?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

It was a voice like Fritz Hoffmann's, and it seemed to come from the grounds of the New Academy.

The crowd of French juniors swung round as if all moved by the same spring.

"Fritz Hoffmann!"

And with one accord they rushed towards the iron gates to collar the German junior who had ventured so dangerously near the secret meeting.

The moment the rush of footsteps surged away towards the gate Billy Bunter skipped out from behind the pillar and ran for the Close.

He came into the Greyfriars grounds, gasping and perspiring, but even then he did not stop.

He ran right on towards the School House, and did not halt till he bumped right into the arms of Bob Cherry, who was coming out with a bat under his arm.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Counter-plot.

BOB CHERRY gave a roar, and sat down on the lowest step, his bat clattering on the ground. Billy Bunter lurched, staggered, and finally fell upon Bob. Bob gave a fearful gasp as that by no means light weight fell upon him.

"Ow!"

"Sorry, Bulstrode!" gasped Bunter, staggering up. "I'm sincerely sorry. I——"

"You utter ass!"

"Oh, is it you, Cherry? I'm sincerely sorry, but there's a lot of beastly aliens after me, and——"

Bob Cherry rose, and grunted. He was greatly inclined to take the fat junior by the collar and bump him.

"You young ass!" he growled. "There's nobody after you."

Billy Bunter blinked round through his spectacles.

"Oh, really, Cherry—so there isn't!" he exclaimed. "I—I suppose they didn't see me. I—I say, Cherry——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I've found out something——"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry strode off towards the cricket field, where Mark Linley, his study mate, was waiting for him. Billy Bunter trotted along by his side, his little fat legs going like a machine to keep pace with Bob's long stride.

"I say, Cherry, you know, the German scouts are coming here to-morrow."

"Wharton told me."

"There will be trouble for them, you know. I've found it out—it's a jape——"

"Well, get it off your chest, quick!"

"I—I feel very dry just now; I've been running, you know. If you like to stand me an ice——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here, Cherry——"

But Bob Cherry quickened his pace, and was gone. Bunter blinked at his disappearing form with great indignation. After discovering valuable secrets at such a risk to himself, it was hard that he should not have even an ice before he disclosed them.

"Well, of all the cads!" muttered Bunter. "Hallo, there's Bulstrode! I say, Bulstrode!"

"What do you want, Owl?" asked Hazeldene, for it was he.

"Oh, is that you, Vaseline! I say, I've found out a secret plot of those rotten aliens."

"Rats!" said Hazeldene, walking away.

"The—the beast! I suppose I'd better look for Wharton."

Bunter had a reputation for unveracity, which was rather awkward for him now. He went in search of the chums of Study No. 1, and found them at the nets. It was a bright day, and the Removites were putting in all the cricket practice they could after school.

Harry Wharton was at the wicket, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was bowling to him. Nugent was standing ready to field the ball.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz off!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent, I've got something to tell you! I've found out a plot of the aliens against——"

"Rats! Shut up!"

"Against the German scouts."

"Go and eat coke!" said Nugent, moving further off.

Bunter blinked at him angrily. He was not to be listened to, that was evident. He called to Wharton, but Wharton was not likely to listen when he was batting. The fat junior strolled disconsolately away.

It was nearly an hour later when the chums of the Remove came into Study No. 1. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley, who now belonged to Study No. 13 at the end of the passage, came in with them.

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

"It's settled," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "No more study rows while the German scouts are here. Pax during the visit."

"The paxfulness is terrific."

"That's settled," said Harry Wharton. "I will ask Quelch what time they'll be in at Friardale Station to-morrow, and we can go down to meet them in our scout clothes."

"Good wheeze!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You still alive, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, I've found out a dodge of those aliens to go for the German scouts——"

"Oh, don't begin again, old chap!"

"Look here, Nugent——"

Harry Wharton laughed as he turned towards Bunter.

"There may be something in it," he remarked. "Go ahead, Bunter, and don't be long-winded."

"Oh, really, you know, I—I'm jolly dry, Wharton! I think it would be better if we strolled round to the tuckshop and——"

"Oh, it's all spoof!" said Nugent. "We know Bunter."

"Look here, Nugent, I was in the Cloisters, and I heard the French kids talking it over," exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "If I hadn't been a wonderful ventriloquist, they'd have spotted me too."

"If there's anything in it you shall have half a dozen ices," said Wharton. "Now go ahead, and don't waste time."

"I'd rather have the ices first."

Nugent picked up a bottle of ink. Billy Bunter, who was sitting in the armchair, blinked up at it nervously.

"I—I—I say, you fellows——"

"I give you one minute to spin that yarn," said Nugent. "Then the ink begins to run."

"Ow, oh! I'll get on! I—I'll have the ices after." And Bunter, with his eyes on the ink bottle, poured out the yarn breathlessly.

The Removites listened with great interest. They soon saw that Billy Bunter was telling the truth.

"By Jove, I'm glad we've got hold of that!" said Wharton. "Of course, Bunter was a worm to listen."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Still, I'm glad we know it."

"What about those ices?"

"Catch!" said Wharton, tossing a shilling in the air. And Bunter caught it—on his nose.

He grunted indignantly as he left the study. He felt that, as usual, he was very hardly treated all round.

When he was gone, the Removites put their heads together over the information they had received. As they were particularly desirous of making a good impression upon the Boy Scouts from Germany, the information was really very useful. If Meunier et Cie had carried out their plan, the German visitors would have been very much surprised and shocked, and it might not have been possible to satisfactorily explain. Knowing the enemy's plans, the Greyfriars chums were able to lay a counter plot.

"They're going to gather in the clump in the lane and wait for the Germans," Mark Linley observed. "We can easily take a crowd of fellows and surround them there."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's the idea! Look here, I mean a patrol to meet the German chaps at the station, and walk with them to Greyfriars. It would be a ripping entertainment to start with, to see the French bounders routed out of the trees and wiped up."

"Ha, ha! Jolly good!"

"You can take about twenty chaps, Bob, and lie low near the cross-roads, and when we come up from Friardale, I'll give a whistle, and you can go for the Froggies."

"Good wheeze!"

And so it was settled. The Removites went to bed in high spirits that night. The next day was a half-holiday, and they were intending to have a great deal of fun while their visitors stayed.

But the brush with the French ambuscaders would be about the best of all. They could imagine what the French juniors would look like when they suddenly found themselves attacked by large odds, and put to flight before the eyes of the German Scouts.

They were looking forward to it during lessons the next morning, with the result that Mr. Quelch, who didn't understand anything but work in work time, was liberal in the distribution of lines.

But the Remove did not care. The lines would not have to be done till later, for Mr. Quelch was as anxious as they that the German scouts should be well entertained. The whole of the Remove, or nearly the whole of it, entered ardently into the spirit of the thing.

Franz Hamburger and his scouts were coming by the three o'clock train to Friardale. In good time Wharton's patrol set out to walk to the station.

Wharton, Nugent, Hurree Singh, Ogilvy, Morgan, and Mark Linley were there; Bob Cherry being detailed in command of the large party who were to ambush themselves near the French ambush, and attack at a given signal.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

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Looking very handsome and fit in Boy Scout garb, Harry Wharton and Co. left Greyfriars. They were joined at the gate by Fritz Hoffmann, who had offered to act as interpreter—and an interpreter would certainly be wanted—for the Greyfriars German was decidedly weak, and the German scouts probably understood little or no English.

The Greyfriars scouts set out down the lane, and as they passed the clump of trees at the crossroads they studiously avoided looking towards it.

And a score of gleeful French juniors, hidden in the thick trees, chuckled as the patrol passed.

"Zey have no suspicion," grinned Adolphe Meunier, "ve sall surprise zem ven zey come back viz zo Shermans."

And Meunier and Co. waited.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Greyfriars Guests Arrive.

"HALT!"

The Remove patrol halted at the station. Harry Wharton looked up at the station clock. It wanted five minutes to three.

"Jolly good time," he remarked. "We'd better go on to the platform, and take the German chaps under our wing as soon as they get out of the train."

"Ja, ja," said Fritz Hoffmann.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Why, here's Bunter! What are you doing here, Bunter?"

"Ja, ja! Vat vas you doing here, ain't it?"

Bunter blinked indignantly at the scouts.

"I suppose I was bound to come along and receive our visitors," he exclaimed. "The Head has left it to us to receive the German scouts at the station. I wasn't likely to leave it to you chaps to muck up."

"My dear dummy——"

"I'm jolly well certain that you've overlooked an important part of the reception business," went on Bunter. "The German chaps are certain to be hungry after a journey. Naturally they will want a feed. Of course, the best thing is to stand them something at the tuckshop, and join them for the sake of good fellowship."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"One for the Germans, and two for Billy Bunter," he remarked.

"Of course, I wasn't thinking of myself. I——"

"Of course you weren't, and I'm not going to think of you either," said Wharton cheerfully. "There's a big lunch waiting for the visitors at Greyfriars, and they don't want to spoil their appetites by tuck at the village shop. There's not going to be any feed this time, Bunter, and you can buzz off home again."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

But the patrol marched into the station without listening to Billy Bunter. At Friardale Station the Removites were, of course, well known, and they had the run of the place. They went upon the platform, and waited for the train to come in. Billy Bunter followed them with an extremely discontented air.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

Bunter was standing before an automatic machine, and fumbling in his pockets.

"Can you give me change for a sixpence?"

"Oh, rats!"

"I haven't any pennies, and I simply must have some chocolate to keep up my strength. You know jolly well that I've got a delicate constitution that has to be kept up by constant nourishment. Some day when you see me a cold corpse you'll be sorry for all this."

"I can't imagine feeling sorry at such a time," said Nugent, shaking his head. "How long will it be do you think?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Train's signalled," said Ogilvy.

"Look here, before those chaps come, can you give me change for a sixpence?"

"The question is whether you can give us sixpence for the change," said Nugent.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"I have six pennies," said Mark Linley, who generally had more coppers than silver. "Here you are, Bunter."

"Thank you very much, Linley," said Bunter, taking the coppers, and beginning to rattle them into the machine at once.

"Where's the sixpence?"

"Oh, wait a minute, can't you, while I'm busy!"

"Certainly!"

Billy Bunter contrived to be busy extracting the six packets of chocolates from the machine until the train was puffing into

the station. It clattered to a halt, and the general attention was at once taken up by the train and the new arrivals.

Dr. Locke had entrusted the task of meeting the boy guests at the station to the Remove patrol, who were to conduct them to the school, where the Head himself was to receive them and welcome them to Greyfriars.

"Ach! Here are te poys!"

A carriage door flew open, and a crowd of cheery faces were seen. Six or seven scouts poured out upon the platform—healthy, athletic-looking youths, with florid, good-natured faces.

They looked up and down the platform, and the Remove fellows hurried over to them at once, with the exception of Bunter, who was seated on a bench, munching chocolates at express speed.

Fritz Hoffmann rushed up to a fair-haired, freckled lad, and threw his arms round the new-comer's neck in a transport of affection.

"Ach! Mein dear Franz!"

"Ach! Fritz!"

"Mein dear Franz!"

"Mein dear Fritz!"

"My word!" murmured Nugent. "This is where the hugging begins."

But the embraces were confined to the cousins. The German scouts shook hands with the Greyfriars fellows as they were introduced in the most hearty way. Only one of them—Franz Hamburger—could speak English, and Hamburger's English was more remarkable than Hoffmann's.

"It is glad to see mit yourself," he said as he shook Wharton's hand. "The gladness of us and myself is for you to have met."

"Good!" said Wharton. "Welcome to Greyfriars!"

Fritz Hoffmann burst into a torrent of German, which was more explicable to the scouts than Wharton's English. The services of the interpreter were invaluable at that moment. The boys marched out of the station together, and Billy Bunter, having finished his chocolates, followed them. Mark Linley tapped him on the arm as they went out of the station.

"My sixpence!" he remarked.

Bunter blinked at him, and wriggled uncomfortably.

"What sixpence?" he asked.

"The one I gave you change for."

"Oh, that sixpence!" said Bunter, with a sniff, as if he really didn't expect to be bothered about that sixpence.

"Yes," said Mark quietly; "I cannot afford to lose it."

"Who wants you to lose it? I hope you don't think I'm the sort of chap to sponge on anybody, Linley, and borrow a tanner without repaying it."

"Well, repay it, then."

"I can't at the present moment. I am expecting a postal order this evening, and you can have it out of that."

"Do you mean to say you hadn't a sixpence all the time?" demanded the Lancashire lad indignantly.

"Oh, really, Linley, you do make a fuss over a tanner!" said Bunter, in a peevish tone. "Surely it's all right if you have it to-night?"

"Hadn't you a sixpence when you asked for change?"

"My postal order will be in by the five o'clock post, and I'll change it with Mrs. Mimble, and let you have your measly tanner at once."

"But—"

"And look here, Linley, as you make such a fuss over a trifling loan, this will have to close any monetary arrangements between us. I can't stand being bothered in this way for despicable sums!"

And Billy Bunter wriggled off, leaving Linley looking at him with a very peculiar expression upon his face.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Scrimmage!

FRANZ HAMBURGER and his scouts marched down Friardale High Street in good order, in company with the scouts of the Remove. They looked a fine set of lads on both sides. The German boys looked happy and cheerful, in very fit condition, and were evidently very keen. When Fritz Hoffmann began to explain what Wharton had told him of the French ambush at the crossroads there were many chuckles among the German scouts.

It was evident from their looks that a brush with the French juniors would have been agreeable to them. But that was not necessary, for Wharton's arrangements had been made. At the psychological moment Bob Cherry and his band would fall upon Meunier et Cie, and smite them hip and thigh.

"Ach!" said Hamburger, grinning all over his florid, freckled face. "Ach! It is vat you call ein shape, eh?"

"Shape?" said Wharton, a little puzzled.

"Ja, ja! Ein great shape ain't it after?"

"I—I don't quite catch on. What is what shape?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

Hamburger looked puzzled.

"Dat," he said, "das mein friend. Das ist ein shape."

Wharton gave it up.

"Yes, I dare say you're right," he said. "I've no doubt it is a shape."

He hadn't the faintest idea what Hamburger was talking about, but he thought he might as well agree. But Hamburger did not appear to be satisfied.

"Ach! You understand not. It is ein shape, ain't it?"

Hoffmann undertook to explain.

"Mein friend Franz he mean yape," he explained. "He tinks tat tat is a yape of the Frenchmen, ain't it. Ven he say shape, he mean yape."

"Eh?"

"When he say tat it is a shape, he means tat it is vun yape."

"Which?"

"Yape!" said Hoffmann, growing excited, and spreading out the palms of his hands in his efforts to explain. "Yape! Yape!"

"Shape," said Hamburger, nodding. "It is ein shape."

"He means tat it is ein yape."

"Oh," exclaimed Wharton, a light breaking upon him. "You mean a jape!"

The German boys nodded and grinned.

"Ach! Du habst Recht," grinned Hamburger.

"Dat is right, ain't it?" said Hoffmann. "Ven he says a shape, he means a yape, after."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, it's a jape—the French kids are going to jape us, and they are going to get badly japed themselves."

"A shape," murmured Nugent. "And when he says shape, he means yape, which means jape. This is too funny."

The scouts marched on, chuckling to themselves over the shape, yape, or jape. They came in sight of the cross-roads, with the thick clump of trees in the middle where the lanes met. The French juniors were in ambush, but the keen eyes of the scouts detected faces looking out from the foliage.

"Ach! I tink I sees dem," Fritz Hoffmann remarked.

Hamburger chuckled.

"I sees dem too, ain't it?"

"What-ho," said Nugent. "There's Meunier's mug looking out under that beech. The giddy asses. They want some lessons in scouting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The scouts, chuckling, marched on, Billy Bunter discreetly dropping to the rear.

As they came within twenty yards of the clump of trees, Harry Wharton gave a long, piercing whistle.

It was answered from a hedge, the hedge nearest the clump of trees. In a twinkling the hedge seemed alive.

Greyfriars fellows poured out of it in crowds.

Not only Removites, but fags of the Third Form, and bigger fellows belonging to the Upper Fourth, came whooping into view. Wharton had directed Bob Cherry to have at least a score of fellows at hand. There were more than two score pouring from the cover of the hedges and trees.

They gave a ringing whoop, and rushed into the clump where the French juniors were ambushed.

The attack came as a surprise.

Meunier and Co. were watching the advancing scouts, and had no eyes for anything else, in any other direction.

The sudden whoop of the Greyfriars contingent took them utterly by surprise, and they were staring about them in wonder when the rush came.

Right into the clump of trees came the trampling juniors, yelling and whooping now at the top of their voices.

Bob Cherry waved his cap as he led the rush.

"Go for 'em!" he roared.

"Hurrah!"

"Give 'em socks!"

"Down with the giddy aliens!"

In a moment or two they were fairly upon the French juniors. Meunier and Co. startled almost out of their wits, jumped up, and tried to offer some resistance.

But they were swept out of the trees by the rush of Greyfriars fellows, as a mouse is swept out of a drain-pipe by a rush of rain.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Adolphe. "Zis is a trick."

"Helas!"

"Ciel!"

"A moi! A moi!"

With many a gasp and yell the French were swept out into the road in the direction of the scouts who were advancing from the village.

As they came bundling and scrambling out into the sunshine, the scouts roared with laughter. The sight was absurd enough; and most absurd of all was the expression on most of the French faces.

The French juniors were utterly bewildered and taken aback, breathless and confused, and hardly seemed to know where they were or what they were doing.

Some of them were fighting, some running, and some rolling in the dust.

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The scouts roared—English and Germans joining in a yelling chorus of merriment.

Billy Bunter cackled away with great enjoyment.

Adolphe Meunier tore himself away from the grasp of a junior, and glared towards the scouts.

He had been taken by surprise and utterly routed. But he had heaps of pluck. He shrieked to his followers.

"A moi! Zis vay! Zere is ze foe!"

He pointed to the laughing Germans, and a yell from the French juniors answered him.

The Greyfriars fellows were behind them, the Germans in front, blocking the way of flight. Meunier waved his hands frantically.

"Zere is ze foe! Sharge!"

"Oui! Oui!"

"Vive la France!"

And the dishevelled, dusty French juniors shrieked and charged. The Greyfriars fellows were charging behind them, so they had every incentive for charging rapidly. And the charge took the scouts by surprise. They ought to have been, as true Boy Scouts, prepared for anything. But they were doubled up with laughter, and for the moment helpless.

Right at them the French juniors tore, shrieking and shouting, and they were among and over the scouts in a twinkling.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

First Aid!

"BUCK up!" shouted Harry Wharton.

But it was too late!

Wharton, Hoffmann, and Mark Linley put up a fight, but were swept over by numbers, and left sprawling in the dust.

The rest went down with hardly a blow.

Over them scrambled and swarmed the excited French juniors shrieking and crowing like a whole farmyard.

It would have fared hard with the scouts but for the help of Bob Cherry and his comrades. But they were coming up fast, and were on the scene almost as soon as the French.

Meunier and Co. had the satisfaction of knocking the scouts, German and English, into a cocked hat, and then he and his friends were swept away.

Some of them fighting, and all of them shrieking, they were rushed off the spot, and went scattering up the lanes and into the fields.

Harry Wharton sat up.

His nose felt as if it had been run over by a particularly large waggon, and his left eye as if a Nasmyth hammer had been at work on it.

"My only hat!" he gasped.

"Ach! Himmel!"

He looked round him. Fritz Hoffmann was blinking at him with two eyes that were surrounded with a charming art shade of blue. Hamburger was mopping his nose with a handkerchief, which was rapidly assuming a crimson hue. The other scouts were more or less similarly damaged, and their clothes were thick with the dust of the lane.

"I say, you fellows——"

It was a weak and quavering voice from Billy Bunter.

The fat junior, with his usual discretion, had been keeping carefully in the rear, but on this occasion discretion did not prove to be the better part of valour. For Bunter was directly in the way of the flying French juniors, and he had been knocked down in the flight, and at least half a dozen French fellows had trampled over him. Bunter was covered with dust, and almost covered with bruises, and there was a "thin red line" proceeding from his fat nose.

He groped about for his spectacles, and found them, fortunately unbroken. He sat in the dust, too exhausted to rise, and blinked round him.

"Still alive, Bunter?" said Harry, laughing.

"I—I think I'm dying," said Bunter feebly. "I—I've been trampled on. I'm covered with huge black bruises, and my left leg is broken in three places."

"Too bad! Better have it amputated," said Ogilvy. "If you like I'll begin with the big blade of my pocket-knife."

"Oh, really, Ogilvy! I am not sure that the leg is broken, but the ankle is sprained. It's awful. I—I feel very faint. Could one of you fellows get me something to drink?"

"There's some water in the ditch," said Nugent.

"Ginger-beer would do, or lemonade. It isn't far to the village."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My ankle's out of joint, and——"

"Here, that won't do," exclaimed Nugent seriously. "If your ankle's out of joint the sooner it's shoved in again the better. Lend me a hand, Ogilvy."

"What-ho!" said the Scottish junior.

They ran towards Bunter. He eyed them with some uneasiness—not without reason. He knew of old how little sympathy he was likely to get from fellows in the Remove.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Catch hold of his foot, Ogilvy, and I'll take his knee, and we'll soon have his ankle all right," said Nugent, having

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

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ascertained in a moment that there was nothing at all wrong with Bunter's ankle.

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"It's all right, Bunter, we won't let you grow up a lame idiot, if we can help it. We're qualified to render first aid."

"Ye-e-es, but—but——"

"Take a tight grip, Ogilvy."

"I've got him," said Ogilvy. And indeed he had; he was gripping Bunter's foot with both hands, and with all his strength, and Bunter gave a yelp of pain. Even through the boot he felt that vice-like grip.

"Now I'll get a good hold on his knee."

Bunter went over on his back, and Nugent gripped his knee. He gripped as hard as Ogilvy, and the knee was not so well protected as the foot. Billy Bunter yelled with anguish.

"Ow! Leggo! Yow-wow! Ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"Ow! It hurts! Leggo! Yow!"

"Of course it hurts, but it will be all right when we have got the joint back again."

"I—I mean the knee—the ankle's all right."

"You said it was out."

"It's—it's gone back again, I think," stammered Bunter.

"Nonsense! It couldn't! Pull away, Ogilvy."

"Right-ho."

"Ow! Yow! I—I think perhaps it wasn't out, after all," said Bunter, wriggling in the dust. "Ow! Yow! You're pinching my beastly leg! Ow!"

"Shan't be another minute!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"The bone is bound to go——"

"Yow! Grooh! You—you villain! You'll break my ankle! I don't want the bone to go! It's all right."

"Stuff! Pull away, Ogilvy."

"What-ho!"

"Ow! Help! Rescue! Murder! Yow!"

"There," gasped Nugent, releasing the fat junior's knee, "it's all right now. The ankle's as sound as a drum."

Billy Bunter sat up. He was smothered with dust, and brimming over with wrath.

"You—you beasts!" he roared. "You utter rotters! You've pinched my beastly leg black and blue. Yah! Rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts! Yah!"

"My hat! He seems jolly lively for a chap who was dying just now, doesn't he?" said Nugent admiringly. "I look on this as a wonderful recovery, and a surprising result of first aid administered by Boy Scouts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you beasts——"

"Of course, we never expect gratitude from Bunter. All you fellows are witnesses, though, that his ankle is all right now, and that we revived him when he was on the point of expiring."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter staggered to his feet. The juniors were all yelling with laughter, and the German scouts as loudly as any. They did not understand much of what was said, but they knew that Bunter had been malingering, and had been taken at his word.

The French juniors were quite off the scene by this time. Some of them, on distant spots, could still be observed, making gestures indicative of their great scorn for their conquerors. Meunier and Lasalle and Chavannes were standing on a knoll in full view, and they shrugged their shoulders almost to their ears as the Greyfriars fellows looked in their direction. But that, much to the surprise of Meunier & Co., only made the victors laugh the more.

Harry Wharton looked at his dusty array, and the dusty guests, with a slight feeling of dismay. He had not anticipated this turn of events, and although he really was not to blame, he had allowed the Greyfriars guests to get into a shocking state. With discoloured eyes, and swollen noses, and dusty garments, he could imagine what impression the guests would make upon the Head at Greyfriars.

But it could not be helped.

The scouts dusted one another down as well as they could, and made their appearance as respectable as possible, and then the march to Greyfriars was resumed. Bob Cherry and his victorious band escorted them. All the fellows were looking a little the worse for wear, so to speak, but they were all in the highest possible spirits.

There was a crowd of fellows at the gates of Greyfriars to greet them, and there were exclamations and stares when they came in sight.

"My hat!" said Temple, of the Upper Fourth. "They've been dust-collecting, and no mistake!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Hallo! Been through a motor collision?" asked Fry.

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

And Temple, Dabney & Co. chuckled. But the scouts deigned no reply. They marched in at the gates, and up to the house in good order.

The great door was open, and on the threshold stood the Head, to receive his guests. They marched up—dust and discoloured eyes and bruised noses and all.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head.

Wharton stepped forward.

"The German scouts, sir."

The Head gasped.

"Extraordinary!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A Startling Discovery.

DR. LOCKE was astounded, and for some moments he could only gaze at the dusty and damaged scouts.

But he quickly recovered himself.

The German scouts had evidently been through some adventures on the road, and so had the Greyfriars lads who accompanied them, but the Head wisely left all inquiry till afterwards.

He welcomed the scouts to Greyfriars with the utmost cordiality, speaking in German as good as their own, and Franz Hamburger replied in his own tongue, the juniors catching a part of his meaning here and there.

Then the German scouts were shown into the dining-room, where a cold collation had been laid for them after their journey, which had been a long one.

"Decent chaps!" Frank Nugent remarked, as the chums went their own way. "We must do our best to give them a good time. The Head is going to show them over Greyfriars in person, I hear."

Wharton nodded.

"Yes, that will fill up some time," he remarked. "After that, a scouting contest in the woods is the idea. It will show them the country. We might fall in with Meunier & Co. again, too, and there will be some fun."

"Good!"

"The goodness would be terrific."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I—I say, you know, don't you think the German chaps would take it kindly if I—I went in and grubbed with them you know?"

"My dear porpoise, the Head is looking after them. If you go in, you'll get jumped on. Can't you give your inside a rest for an hour or two?"

"Well, I'm jolly hungry."

"Go and eat coke, then," said Bob Cherry.

"I consider that brutal, Cherry. Look here, if you like to come along to the tuck-shop, I'll—"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Look here, I don't mind giving a ventriloquial entertainment this evening, to entertain the German chaps—"

"But we mind. Buzz off!" said Wharton.

Bunter's eyes glimmered behind his spectacles. Even the worm will turn, and Bunter was a malicious worm sometimes.

"Oh, don't be a pig, Wharton!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice, and Harry swung round in angry surprise.

"What's that, Cherry?"

"Eh! I didn't speak."

"You didn't speak! Why, I heard you—"

"That you jolly well didn't. I—"

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

"Ow! yow! wow!"

It was a wail of anguish from Bunter, who was wriggling in the grasp of Frank Nugent. Nugent administered a shake to the fat junior which made him wriggle all the more.

"Ow! Oh, really, Nugent—ow—wow!"

"It's all right, Wharton," said Nugent wrathfully, "it wasn't Bob that spoke. It was this ventriloquising worm."

"Ow-wow! It was only a j-j-joke!"

"He played the same trick on us before," said Nugent. "But it won't work twice."

"It was a j-j-joke."

"Then you'd better not j-j-joke in that way any more," said Nugent, shaking the fat junior till he quivered like a jelly. "You—you fat worm!"

"I—I—oh, really—"

Harry Wharton's brow darkened.

"I'm sorry, Bob," he said. "Of course, I ought to have

guessed. Bunter, if you ever play a trick like that again, I'll give you the hiding of your life."

"Oh, really, Wharton—leg-go, Nugent—"

Nugent let go, so suddenly that the fat junior dropped in a heap on the ground. He sat there, groping for his glasses, while the Famous Four walked away.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter, scrambling to his feet. "Rotters! I place my wonderful gifts at their disposal, and this is what I get in return. I'm jolly well going to have a feed, though. My constitution always suffers if it isn't kept up by constant nourishment."

But there was no feed for Billy Bunter. Even Wun-Lung, the little Chinese, who was usually rolling in money and very reckless with it, had none for Bunter that afternoon. Billy was in an extremely bad temper. He felt that he was injured and that both circumstances and persons were against him. He was hanging disconsolately round the tuck-shop when the German guests appeared, accompanying the Head upon a tour of inspection round the old school.

Hamburger and his friends were delighted with all they saw.

They visited the old library, where were many precious manuscripts that could not have been found anywhere else in the kingdom—the Form-rooms, the gymnasium, the swimming-bath. Then they looked at the ruined tower, one of the most ancient relics of ancient Greyfriars.

Several fellows kept the party company on their tour of inspection, and all listened with great respect while the Head was explaining things to the visitors; though, as he spoke in German, the English boys understood very little of what he said.

Billy Bunter accompanied the party, in a mood for mischief.

"And this," said the Head, as they stopped before a huge block in the wall of the inner chamber of the ruined tower, "this is the entrance to a secret chamber, in which, more than a century ago, the bones of a prisoner were found—a poor wretch who had evidently starved to death there."

The Greyfriars fellows standing round knew what he was saying, and would have known if he had been talking in Urdu or Arabic. For that stone block was one of the historic sights of Greyfriars. It revolved on its centre—or rather was made to do so, but it had since been firmly secured. Boys had shown a predilection for venturing into the secret chamber, and the stone had been secured by a former Head of Greyfriars.

The German scouts gazed at the stone door in awe and interest.

"And it is not that it can be entered this time, ain't it?" asked Hamburger.

The doctor shook his head.

"No—it has been fastened up for years."

"Den no one can go in?"

"No one."

Hamburger looked a little disappointed. He would gladly have explored the secret chamber in the thickness of the stone wall, where the skeleton had been discovered. The visitors were about to turn away, when suddenly a sound struck upon their ears.

The Head started violently.

The Germans stared blankly at the revolving stone.

For the sound they had heard was a low, faint moan, and it had seemed to proceed from behind that closed stone door.

"Ach!" murmured Hamburger. "Vat vas tat?"

"I say, you fellows, the place is haunted."

"Great Scott!" muttered Hazeldene. "Did you hear that, chaps?"

"There's somebody in there," said Bulstrode.

"Faith, and it's right ye are!" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

"If ye please, sorr, there's somebody in the secret chamber."

The Head looked amazed and troubled.

"Impossible. The door is fastened."

"Hark!"

From the secret chamber came a low, prolonged moan.

"Ach! Somevun is dere!"

"Good heavens!" murmured the Head. "Is it possible! Some foolish boy may have contrived to unfasten the door, and entered, and may have been shut up there."

Groan!

"Great Scott!" muttered Bulstrode. "That's plain enough."

The Head turned quite pale.

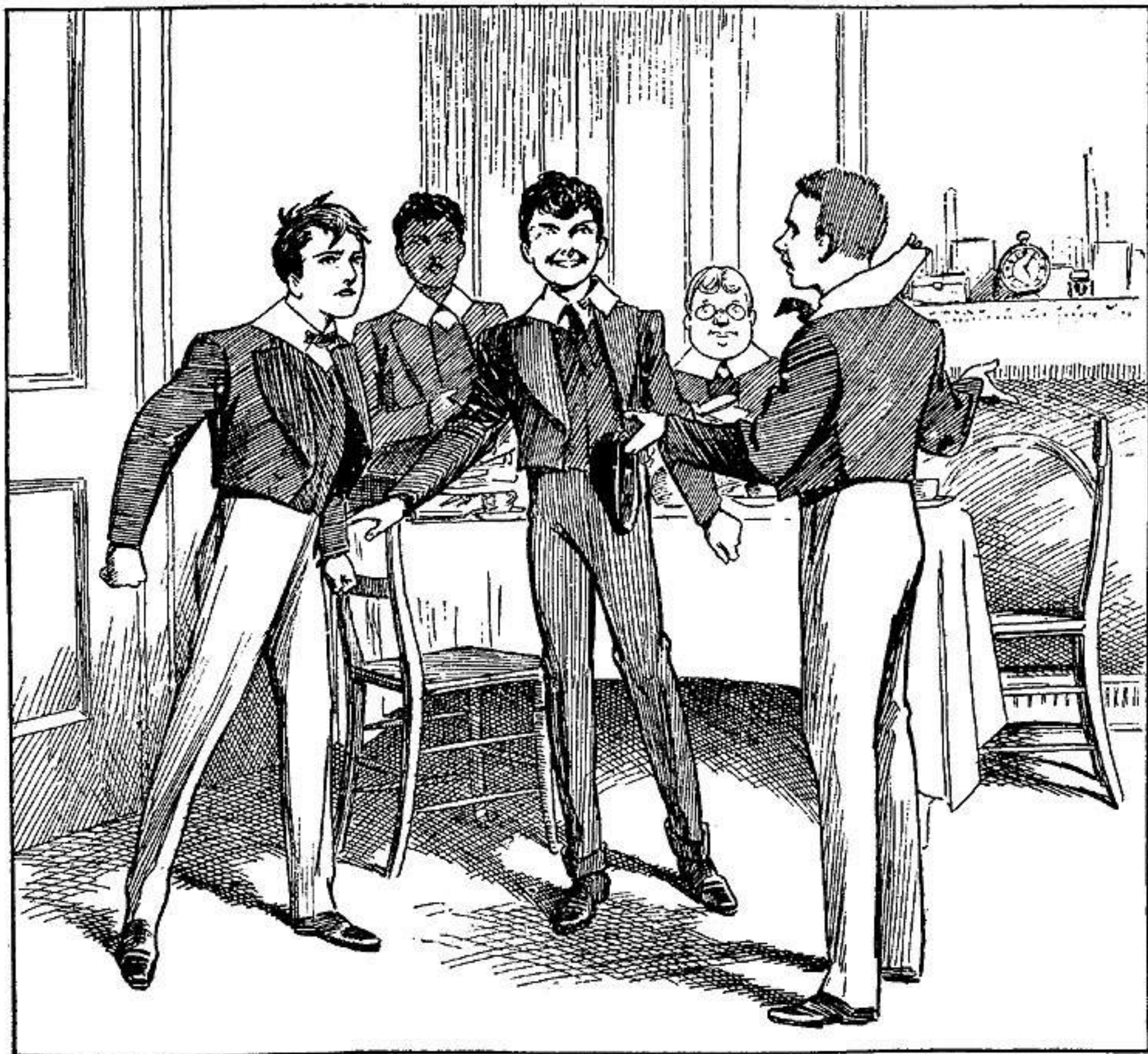
The Germans were looking startled and scared. Every eye was turned upon the great stone. Dr. Locke stepped towards it, and tapped.

"Is anyone there?"

Faintly, as if muffled by the distance and the thick stone, a voice came back.

"Yes! Save me!"

"PLUCK," NOW ON SALE, **"THE FIGHTING PARSON."**
CONTAINS



"Ha, Ha, Ha!" roared Nugent. "It's his giddy English. He meant to settle with us, not to settle us."
"Ach, tat is it," gasped the German boy.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. A Mystery.

THERE was horror in every face.

Someone was shut up in the secret chamber; and how long the poor wretch had been confined there was a matter of guesswork. Hours, perhaps, or, if the prisoner was not a Greyfriars fellow—as was possible—perhaps days. In the thick stone walls of the secret chamber he would not be able to make his voice heard, and the old tower was seldom visited.

Yet, how had he entered the place?

Dr. Locke examined the fastening of the stone door. It was clamped with iron, and the long rivets had not been disturbed.

The door had certainly not been opened.

Dr. Locke passed his hand over his brow.

"There must be another entrance to the secret chamber, of which the existence has never been suspected," he murmured. "This unhappy person has entered, and doubtless the door has closed upon him. Horrible!"

"Ach! It is derrible!"

"Awful!" said Billy Bunter.

The Head looked round.

"Skinner, run as quickly as you can to Gosling's lodge, and tell him to come here at once, and bring a crowbar."

"Certainly, sir."

And Skinner cut off.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

By this time the news of the strange and painful discovery in the tower had spread, and half Greyfriars was crowding to the spot.

The news soon reached the Famous Four, and they came along with the Removites, and fellows of the Upper Fourth and the Fifth and Sixth crowded with them into the old tower.

Spacious as it was, it was soon crowded, and the Head had to order that no more boys should come in.

Wharton and Co., however, were already in, though at the back of the crowd. Harry was looking angry. He could guess a very easy explanation of the mystery; but it was impossible to give Bunter away, if his surmise was correct.

Dr. Locke tapped at the stone door again.

"Can you hear me, my poor fellow?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are in the secret chamber?"

"Yes, I am 'ere."

"Ah!" murmured the Head, "The boy, or whoever it is, does not belong to Greyfriars. It is evidently an uneducated person."

He tapped at the stone again.

"Have courage! You shall be released as soon as the door can be opened."

"I'm dying of 'unger!"

"Bless my soul!"

"'Elp!"

"Help is coming!"

Groan.

The Doctor's face was the picture of distress. Most of the crowd looked pale and awe-stricken. The fellow must be a trespasser, to be in the old tower at all; but the thought of a fellow-creature dying of hunger in the stone chamber was terrible.

Dr. Locke took off his gold-rimmed glasses, wiped them feverishly, and put them on again. Gosling, the school-porter, came back with Skinner, with a heavy crowbar in his hand. His face showed his strong disbelief in the yarn he had heard from Skinner.

"Gosling! There is a poor fellow shut up in the secret chamber—"

"It ain't possible, sir," said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere, there's the hiron clamps still on the stone, sir!"

"There is some other entrance. He has called to us for help. Remove the clamps immediately."

"Elp!"

Gosling started as the voice came from the stone wall again, and he turned visibly pale.

"By gosh!" he murmured.

"Lose no time, Gosling!"

"Suttingly, sir. I'll soon 'ave the hiron hoff, sir!"

And Gosling set to work with the crowbar.

But to wrench off the iron clamps, securely riveted to the stone, was no light task, and Gosling had never been known to exert himself much. He fagged away for a few minutes, and then stopped to rest.

"Go on, Gosling! Lose no time!"

Gosling snorted.

"Yes, sir! Wot I says is this 'ere, sir, a man ain't got more'n his strength, sir, and this is a 'ard job!"

Franz Hamburger stepped forward.

"Tat you giffs me te crowpar!" he said.

"Why, you couldn't—"

"Giff him to me!"

The German scout took the crowbar from Gosling's hand, and the porter, though he made a show of resistance, was glad enough to part with it. He willingly looked on, while Hamburger set to work.

The brawny German had made better progress than Gosling. He soon finished wrenching off the iron clamp Gosling had started on, and then commenced operations on the other.

The crowd looked on with anxious impatience. Dr. Locke seemed to be counting the moments. No sound had been heard from the secret chamber for some time. The Head, when Hamburger paused to breathe for a moment, tapped on the stone, and called out to the hapless prisoner.

But there was no reply.

The Head tapped and called three or four times, but still the same dead silence reigned, and the good old Doctor shivered.

Had the hapless being perished, with rescue so near at hand? Was he lying in a faint on the cold stone floor of the secret chamber?

The Head watched Hamburger with eager, anxious eyes. The sturdy scout wielded the crowbar manfully.

"Oh, it's awful!" murmured Billy Bunter. "I—I can't stand it. Lemme get out!"

And he squirmed his way through the crowd towards the doorway into the Close. But, before he could pass through that doorway, a grasp of iron descended upon his neck. He squirmed round in terror.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You young sweep!" said the voice of Harry Wharton, and he glared down at the fat junior. "You—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Clang!

The second clamp crashed on the stone floor. Wharton looked round again towards the secret chamber, and Bunter wriggled from his grasp and escaped. Dr. Locke pushed the revolving stone, and the crowd watched him breathlessly.

With a creak the great stone turned.

A dark aperture was revealed, extending deep into the thickness of the wall, and the dim light of the interior of the tower did not extend far into it.

The boys peered into the darkness of the secret chamber with awe.

What did that gloom conceal?

"Bring a light!" said the Head.

Bulstrode had already fetched his bicycle lantern. He lighted it, and handed it to the Head.

Dr. Locke stepped into the secret chamber.

The rays of the lantern glimmered on dark, damp walls of stone; on creeping things that ran and crawled in startled confusion in the unaccustomed light.

But there was no sign of a human being.

There was no sign of another entrance to the chamber.

Dr. Locke looked to and fro, and up and down, and round about, in blank amazement.

The scouts pressed forward, and they too searched the secret chamber.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

But it was empty!

They stared at one another blankly. All had heard that faint voice appealing for help, and it seemed impossible that the room should be empty, but empty it was.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head.

"Ach! Den it is a shape!"

"A what?"

"A shape—ein joke!"

"Oh!" A light broke on the Head. "I—I suppose so. We have been tricked. Someone was pretending to be dying, and has left by the other entrance while we were breaking in the door. A very impudent and foolish joke!"

And the Head, very red in the face at the thought that he, the revered Head of Greyfriars, had been jested with in this manner, stepped out of the secret chamber, and directed Gosling to fasten up the door again.

The crowd dispersed, discussing the mysterious incident, and wondering who could possibly have dared to play that jape on the Head.

But Wharton knew—and he went to look for Billy Bunter. He picked up a stick to aid him in the search.

But Bunter was not to be found. He knew that he was suspected, and for some time after that he gave the Famous Four a wide berth.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Keeps Watch!

THE tour of inspection was over. Although the Head was indignant, the German Scouts rather enjoyed the joke than otherwise. They were still chuckling over the mysterious voice from the secret chamber, when they met the Remove scouts in the Remove Form-room.

A scouting contest in Friardale woods was exactly the thing they wanted, and the Remove scouts were willing to oblige. The possibility of another brush with the French juniors from Herr Rosenblum's school was attractive to the scouts of both parties. It would add to the excitement, and make it a great deal more like real warfare. After the scouting, it was arranged that they were to return to Greyfriars to a late tea and, if there were time, the Junior Operatic Society meant to give a little concert before they had to catch their train back to London.

Two Remove patrols, led by Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, accompanied the German scouts when they marched out from Greyfriars.

Wharton's patrol was to attack the German, the latter holding a strong position on the bank of the Sark; and Bob Cherry and his scouts, in the meantime, were to patrol the wood and keep an eye open for a real enemy.

As they tramped down the lane, Franz Hamburger gave a sudden chuckle.

"Vat is tat?" asked Fritz Hoffmann.

"Look!—pehind te hedge!"

The scouts looked in the direction indicated by Hamburger's nod, and they saw what the keen-eyed scout had discerned.

A head was raised above the level of the hedge, and a pair of black eyes were watching them.

Only the cap and the eyes under it could be seen, but the Greyfriars juniors knew very well to whom those eyes belonged. It was Adolphe Meunier who was watching from behind the hedge.

"That means more trouble," grinned Nugent. "All the better!"

A little further on, from a rising point of ground, the scouts looked back, and saw Meunier scuttling away at top speed towards the Foreign Academy.

Then they entered the wood. Harry Wharton knew the ground well, and he had selected an excellent spot for the purpose of the scouting contest.

The German scouts took up their position on a rising ground by the bank of the rippling Sark, and the scouts of Greyfriars undertook to surprise the position and capture it.

The boys entered into the contest in high spirits.

The German colours were planted on a sapling on the highest point of the knoll, and the scouts from the Fatherland, with Fritz Hoffmann, were on guard, while Wharton's patrol retired into the wood.

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry was keeping guard on the side towards the Foreign Academy, patrolling the woodland paths with his scouts, on the watch for any advance of the French juniors.

In case of an attack, all the scouts were, of course, to join forces, and stand shoulder to shoulder for the purpose of giving particularly warm "beans" to Adolphe Meunier et Cie.

Bob Cherry scattered his scouts in a line along the paths, and himself occupied a point where three footpaths met.

He sat down on a grassy bank, hidden, himself, by the bushes, and watched two of the paths, with his ears keenly on the alert for any sound from the third path, behind him.

Suddenly he gave a start. There was the sound of a footfall on the path behind—a soft, gentle footfall, which seemed

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

to Bob's keen ears to be made by someone creeping stealthily along.

The junior grinned quietly. He had no doubt that the French juniors had discovered him on the watch there, and were creeping round to take him by surprise, to silence him before he could give the alarm.

He silently rose to his feet. He could not see through the thickets into the path whence the footsteps came; but he waited, listening, as they came closer.

His idea was to let them close up till they were almost upon him, and then leap out into the path with a whoop, and startle them out of their wits. He chuckled inaudibly as he thought of the shrieks the Frenchmen would give.

Closer came the footsteps! Soft as they were, Bob could distinguish that they were made by two persons, and he heard a rustle of clothing brushing against the thickets.

Closer and closer! With a sudden terrific yell, which would have startled a Red Indian on the war-path, Bob Cherry leaped out into the path.

The crash of the thickets, the wild, ringing whoop, were followed by startled shrieks—but not French shrieks.

Two girls started back, shrieking with unfeigned terror, as Bob Cherry burst upon them from the wood.

"My goodness!"

"Oh, dear!"

"M-m-m-m-m-my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Marjorie! Clara!"

His face went crimson. He would have given a term's pocket-money at that moment for the earth to open and swallow him up.

The soft footfalls had belonged to the two girls from Cliff House, and there were no French juniors in sight.

Marjorie and Clara shrank back among the bushes, their eyes wide with terror; but they were reassured as they recognised Bob Cherry.

"Oh, dear!" said Marjorie, "it—it is Bob Cherry! Why—why did you do that?"

"My goodness!" said Miss Clara, "of all the duffers——"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Of all the duffers," repeated Miss Clara obstinately. "Of all the duffers, I think Cherry takes the—the biscuit."

"I—I—I——"

"The whole bakery," added Miss Clara, on reflection.

"I—I—I'm awfully sorry," stammered poor Bob. "I—I—I'm keeping watch, you know. I—I—I——"

"Is that how you keep watch?" asked Marjorie Hazeldene, innocently.

"I—I—I——"

"It's one of the rules of the Boy Scouts, I suppose," said Miss Clara demurely. "Is it a new rule, Cherry, to keep watch like that?"

Bob could not get redder, for his face was like a well-boiled beetroot now.

"Oh, Miss Clara—I'm sorry, Marjorie! I'm keeping watch against those French bounders, you know, and I thought——"

"He thought we were French bounders," said Miss Clara. "I understand. We had better take our walk in some other direction, Marjorie, or we may be taken for French bounders again."

Marjorie laughed.

"Yes, I think we had better."

"Oh, don't go," said Bob Cherry; "I really——"

"Oh, we cannot risk being taken for French bounders again; our nerves are not strong enough," said Miss Clara. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Bob Cherry stood hat in hand as the two girls walked away. When they had disappeared among the trees, he thought he heard the sound of a rippling laugh.

"Well, of all the asses!" muttered Bob Cherry. "I don't think I ever made such a giddy idiot of myself in all my natural before."

He stood for several minutes on the spot without moving. The incident had quite confused him, and he was keenly conscious of the absurd figure he cut in the eyes of the Cliff House girls. And—painful to relate of a Boy Scout—he forgot that he was on guard in thinking of his unlucky misadventure. A rustle in the trees near at hand passed unnoticed; and he did not know that he was in danger till an arm was thrown round his neck from behind, and he was dragged to the ground.

"Oh!"

He gasped, half-choked, and struggled furiously. But five or six figures leaped from the thickets and piled upon him. He tried to yell a warning, but a hand was tightly clasped over his mouth.

"Ciel! Ve have him!"

"Ve have ze Engleesh ass, mes garçons."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Zis is vere ve laff! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry writhed under the grasp of the foe.

He had been surprised, after all, by the French juniors, and now he was a helpless prisoner in their hands, and unable to give the alarm.

Adolphe Meunier rolled him over in the grass, and sat on his chest, looking down at him with an agreeable grin.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

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

"Mon ami! Ve have capture you, mon ami."

"Gr-r-r!" granted Bob.

"I zink zat you are ze prisoner, mon ami—eh?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Chavannes, zat you? Stuff ze gag into ze mouf!"

"Oui, oui!" chirruped Chavannes.

And Bob Cherry, in spite of his desperate resistance, was gagged.

"Now zat you tie ze hands of him, mon Henri."

"Oui, oui!" grinned Lasalle.

"Also ze feet, mon comrade."

"Ze feet shall be also tie."

And the unfortunate Removite of Greyfriars was reduced to utter helplessness. Then his captors rose, and grinned down at him in the most provoking way.

Bob Cherry glared back. He could do nothing but glare, but his glares only moved the mirth of the French juniors.

"Ciel! Ze victory is to us, mes amis."

"Bravo!"

"Vive la France!"

"Zis duffair is place on ze vatch, and ve surprise him as easy as anyzing."

"Hurray!"

"Now ve goes for ze ozzers, and for ze Sherman peegs," said Meunier. "Follow me, mes braves! Ve avenges Sedan!"

"Oui, oui! Vive la France!"

And the French juniors plunged into the bushes, leaving Bob lying where he was in the middle of the unfrequented footpath.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Makes Terms!

BOB CHERRY'S feelings may be better imagined than described, as he lay in the thick grass, with the insects buzzing in his ears, and watched the juniors of the Foreign Academy steal away into the wood.

Adolphe Meunier & Co. were going to surprise the scouts of Greyfriars and their German guests, and there was little doubt that they would succeed.

Meunier had guessed that there would be scouts on the watch and by a lucky stroke he had penetrated the line of sentries.

Bob's nearest comrades were too far away to hear any sound he might make now, and he could not give the alarm. His men would go on watching, ignorant of the fact that a score of French juniors had passed their leader.

Wharton and the Germans would be taken by surprise when they were in the midst of their mimic conflict, taken at every disadvantage.

Bob Cherry writhed in the grass as he thought of it. He could have kicked himself for allowing the French juniors to surprise him and master him so easily.

What was to be done? Minute followed minute, and the sturdy junior struggled with his bonds in vain. Chavannes and Lasalle had bound him, and they had not meant to leave anything to chance. They had put enough rope round him to tie up half a dozen men. The work was done thoroughly; and wriggle as Bob Cherry might, he could not get a limb loose. Neither could he chew away or eject the gag from his mouth. A yell to his comrades would have been enough to give the alarm; but that yell it was impossible to utter.

His exertions threw him into a white glow of heat, and he desisted at last from sheer exhaustion, with a separate ache in every bone of his body.

"M-m-m-m!" he murmured—"m-m-m-m-m-m!" That was all he could utter.

Besides the terrible heat and the fatigue, other worries settled upon him. The grass, which looked cool and restful at a glance, proved on closer examination to be alive with things that crawled and wriggled and flew.

Gnats began to explore the recesses of his nose and ears and the roots of his hair. Ants went on self-conducted tours through his clothing. Beetles walked round him and over him, and field spiders, doubtless taking him for a fresh addition of a permanent nature to their surroundings, began to spin webs from point to point upon his person.

Bob Cherry settled his obnoxious visitors by the dozen, by rolling over and over in the grass, and bumping against the roots of the trees. But as fast as he got rid of some, others came to take their places, and he felt too utterly fagged to move.

"My word!" he murmured inaudibly, "this is a picnic! Talk about putting prisoners to the giddy torture! Oh, wouldn't I give ten years of anybody's life to land that chap Meunier one good right-hander right on the nose!"

He gave a sudden start and listened. There came a sound of footsteps on the path. He brightened with hope. It was a very unfrequented path. But it was sometimes used, and certainly there was someone coming now. It might be one of his own comrades—or a French fellow, or a stranger. He wriggled round to get a view of the new-comer.

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

A fat form and a glimmering pair of spectacles came into view.

It was Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry's heart beat with hope. If the fat junior came straight on, he could not fail to walk right into him. But Bunter was looking about him through his glasses, evidently selecting a spot to sit down. He had a parcel in his hand, and it was pretty clear that he had come to that retired spot for a quiet feed all to himself.

The fat junior was still a dozen yards from Bob when he found a spot that suited him. He sat down on the projecting root of a great tree, and gave a grunt of satisfaction. It was a warm afternoon. Billy Bunter pushed his straw hat upon the back of his head, and unfastened his parcel.

"This is really ripping," he murmured aloud, and in the silence of the wood every word came plainly to Bob Cherry's ears. "It was a stroke of luck getting four shillings for that pocket-knife. It was quite an old one, too—Nugent had had it a long time. I dare say he won't miss it till I've had my postal-order, and then I can buy it back from Stott and let him have it. Nugent does make such a fuss over a trifle. H'm I think I'll begin with the ginger-beer."

Pop!

Gurgle!

Bob Cherry was vainly trying to make some sound to attract the fat junior's attention. Anybody but Bunter would have seen him wriggling in the path, but Bunter was too short-sighted. Bob might have wriggled there till dark, and Bunter would never have seen him.

There was only one resource. Bob began to roll steadily over and over, in the direction of Billy Bunter. It was laborious and painful work. But it brought him gradually nearer the solitary picnicker.

"Well, that was nice," said Bunter, as he set down an empty stone bottle. "Perhaps I ought to have brought more than three gingers. But four hob doesn't go far, and I had to have ham and cold chicken. Where's that blessed knife?"

The Owl of the Remove started.

He was too busy eating to indulge in any further reflections, aloud or unuttered. Bob Cherry rolled over and over, to the accompaniment of the steady champing of Billy Bunter's jaws.

Nearer and nearer!

Billy Bunter finished his cold chicken and his ham. He was about to begin on pudding when at last he caught sight of Bob, who had rolled within a yard of him.

"M-m-m-my word!" ejaculated Bunter. "W-wh-wh-what's that?"

He jumped up in alarm.

"M-m-m-m-m-m-m!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, it's a boy—it's—my word! Is that you, Cherry?"

"M-m-m-m-m-m!"

"Why don't you speak?"

"M-m-m-m-m-m!"

"Blessed if I can understand. How did you get tied up like that?"

"M-m-m-m-m-m-m!"

"Why, you've got a gag in your mouth!"

"M-m-m-m-m-m-m!"

Billy Bunter stooped down, cut the string that secured the gag in Bob's mouth, and jerked it out. He did not offer to do any more. He stood blinking at the helpless scout, and mechanically munching pudding.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, in a hoarse whisper—his voice had not returned yet—"I've had a horrid time!"

"How did you get like that?"

"The Froggies. They collared me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at, dummy. Untie me, or cut the ropes; I've got to get off and warn Wharton, or they'll take him by surprise."

"I don't know whether I ought to interfere," said Bunter, blinking meditatively at the scout.

"Let me loose, you young ass!"

"Perhaps Meunier wouldn't like it."

"Blow Meunier! Can't you stand by a chap belonging to your own school, you—yo! fat worm?" demanded Bob Cherry indignantly.

"I'm sincerely sorry, Cherry, but I shall have to think it out. Meunier might give me a licking. I've got a delicate constitution, and I can't stand lickings. If I were kept up with good and constant nourishment, it would be different. But I've been jolly short of grub lately."

"Cut me loose!"

"Suppose you were to stand me a feed at Mrs. Mumble's, Cherry, I dare say I could risk the licking from Meunier, then."

"You—you—you—"

"It's just as you like, of course; but I think you might stand the feed."

"Will you let me loose?"

"You see, I've got a delicate constitution."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

"Will you—"

"And if I'm not kept up by constant nourishment—"

"Will—"

"I might go into a decline. You wouldn't like me to fall down dead at your feet all of a sudden, Cherry?"

"Unfasten me and I'll stand you the feed," said Bob, in a choked voice. He could hardly speak above a whisper, so numbed was his mouth from the gag; but fury choked him more than anything else just now.

"I say, Cherry, that's really decent of you, you know," said Billy Bunter; still, however, making no movement to set him at liberty. "What sort of a feed shall it be? Pork pies, I suppose?"

"Yes. Let me loose."

"And a rabbit?"

"If you like. Untie me."

"Any cold chicken?"

"Yes, yes, yes. Take this rope off."

"Beefsteak pudding, I suppose?"

"As much as you like. Open your knife, will you?"

"I've got a knife here. Any jam-tarts?"

"Yes; a dozen. Be quick!"

"What about cream puffs?"

"As many as you can eat. Will you buck up?"

"Anything to drink?"

"Everything there is in the blessed shop!" gasped Bob Cherry. "If you don't cut me loose I'll smash you!"

Bunter stooped and sawed away at the rope. It was some time before Bob Cherry was quite free, and Bunter had cut him as well as the rope, in several places.

"There!" said Bunter at last. "You're all right. I'll remind you about that feed when we get back to Greyfriars. Ow!"

Bob Cherry seized him by the neck and jammed him into the grass.

"Ow! Leggo! Yow!"

"I'll stand you the feed, as I've promised," growled Bob.

"I'll stand you a licking, too, without promising. Take that—and that!"

"That" and "that" were Bunter's pudding and tarts, which Bob Cherry squashed upon his fat face and rubbed there with no gentle hand. Then he emptied the ginger-beer upon the fat junior, and left him wriggling. He rushed away into the wood, blowing shrill blasts upon his whistle to warn the scouts of danger.

Billy Bunter sat up, a shocking sight. He groped for his spectacles, and blinked through the mixture of pudding and jam and ginger-beer.

"Ow! The beast! Ow! I wish I were twice as big as he is, and I'd give him a fearful licking! Ow! yow!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Shoulder to Shoulder.

PHIP! Phip! Phip!

It was the warning whistle.

Harry Wharton gave a shout.

"Look out!"

The contest between the rival scouts had lasted over the hour, and Harry Wharton's patrol could not be said to be getting the best of it. They had taken two prisoners, and lost three, and Franz Hamburger was still in possession of his fortress.

But the warning whistle from Bob Cherry stopped the mimic warfare at once. The real thing was at hand!

"Pax!" shouted Wharton. "I mean schtill, ruhig, or whatever you call it. The French are coming."

"Vat-ho!" called back Fritz Hoffmann. "Tat is all right, ain't it?"

"Dat ist so, pefore," said Franz Hamburger, and he came freely out of cover. "I tinks tat ve licks te French pounders, ain't it?"

And the scouts, English and German, prisoners and all, drew together, looking out for the rush of the French.

It was nearer than they dreamed.

For the French juniors had had time since leaving Bob Cherry to get near the position where the contest was going on, and to scout round and ascertain the position of the Greyfriars scouts and their German rivals.

But for the warning whistle the contesting scouts would have been taken entirely by surprise, and as the odds were against them, they would certainly have had a very rough time, whether Meunier et Cie had succeeded in "avenging Sedan" or not.

As it was, the enemy were upon the scouts before the latter had time to fully prepare for them. They had expected Bob Cherry to give warning immediately he sighted the foe; but for the best of reasons, as we know, Bob had not been able to do that.

"Tat you look oud, ain't it?" ejaculated Hamburger.

"Here dey come after!"

"My hat! Here they are already!"

"Shoulder to shoulder!"

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

"Hurrah!"

"Pravo!"

There was a rustle and a rush in the thickets. Meunier finding that all was discovered, wasted no more time in stealth. The French showed themselves and charged at once.

Twenty juniors, shrieking with excitement, dashed to the attack.

"Give 'em socks!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Hoch! Hoch!"

"Vive la France!"

And in a moment more the rival parties were mingling in a wild and whirling fight. The odds were on the French side, and they were full of courage and vim. The scouts, bravely as they stood their ground, were fairly rushed over.

Half of them were on the ground with French lads sprawling over them, shrieking and clawing like so many cats in their excitement, which nearly amounted to frenzy by this time.

The rest were still fighting, many of them with more than one opponent.

The fight was against the scouts, and it looked as if the French juniors would triumph all along the line.

But there was a trampling in the wood, and a ringing shout.

"Rescue, Greyfriars!"

And Bob Cherry and his patrol rushed upon the scene. Bob had not been long behind his whistle.

"Hurrah!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Give 'em socks!"

"Go for 'em!" roared Bob Cherry, setting the example.

And the scouts rushed into the combat.

The arrival of the reinforcement completely changed the aspect of affairs. The odds were now on the side of the scouts.

Adolphe Meunier and his friends made a gallant stand. But they were fairly licked.

Fighting to the last, they were chased right and left through the thickets, and at last, completely "knocked out," they ran.

The German and English scouts remained in possession of the field of battle.

A field of battle it veritably was, for there had been a great deal of bloodshed—mainly from the nose.

The scouts caressed darkened eyes and flowing noses and thick ears, and grinned congratulations at one another.

"Well, we've licked 'em!" said Wharton, with great satisfaction.

And Hamburger embraced him in his triumph.

"Ve haff, ve haff!" he exclaimed. "Ve haff lick dem hollow, ain't it! Hoch! Hoch!"

"Hurrah!"

And the shouts of victory rang in the ears of Meunier & Co. as they fled.

A high tea of a particularly solid and satisfying nature finished up the day's proceedings for the German guests at Greyfriars. Hamburger, in returning thanks to Dr. Locke, caressed a swollen nose at intervals, and said that the German lads had enjoyed their visit to Greyfriars thoroughly. He said he was convinced that they had had a livelier time than the rest of the German Boy Scouts who were touring England, and they would have much to relate to their friends when they rejoined them in London.

And the Head, discreetly affecting not to notice the signs of damage in the boys' faces, was satisfied to know that they had had an enjoyable time, and was content that they should have had it in their own way.

After tea, the Greyfriars scouts turned out in great force to march with the German guests to the station, to see them off.

The little station at Friardale was crammed with scouts, and when the train started, Hamburger and his friends crammed the windows, waving hats and handkerchiefs to the Greyfriars scouts on the platform.

And from two score of youthful throats came a final cheer, as the train glided down the line, for the Boy Scouts of the Faderland!

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton and Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "Billy Bunter, the Boxer," by Frank Richards. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)

The Opening Chapters of a Grand Story



A Splendid Tale of Life in the British Army.

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, but is drugged on the night of the fight. In spite of this terrible handicap, he manages to win the fight, but there is a riot, and Alf Sheppard, an ex-hooligan, is accused of the crime by Foxey, and half-killed. Alf sends for Ronald to the hospital, and earnestly assures him that he is innocent.

(Now go on with the story.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

The Regiment's Shame.

Ronald had sought out the ex-hooligan's hand, and pressed it lightly. There was a note of eagerness in the husky voice which went straight to his heart.

"Of course! You and I have not been the best of friends, perhaps, but I know you would have cut off your right hand before you would have stooped to such a dirty trick as that."

"And George, too. Shake 'ands agin! I feel better arter that. We're pals now, ain't we? Tell George I said so. Tell him to keep his eye on Foxey, and wait for me, and if I don't ever get better—"

"Oh, rubbish; you'll pull through, and be as right as a trivet in no time!" said Ronald.

"P'raps. But they socked me 'ard—crool 'ard, and all because that weasel-faced, squint-eyed—"

"There, there!" said the surgeon, coming forward. "You've seen your friend, so be satisfied. Here, take a drink of this!"

Alf lifted his eyes, but the light of reason had faded again,

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

and he was slipping once more into delirium. He drank and lay back, babbling softly to himself.

"All right; you can go now, my man," said the surgeon curtly to Ronald.

"Might I ask first, sir, whether you think his condition very serious?" ventured Ronald.

"So serious that it's a toss-up whether he lives or dies; and if he lives whether he will not be a cripple to the end of his days. You must have a good proportion of the scum of the earth in the Wessex, if that's the way you can treat a comrade, however guilty. If they had not abolished the cat-o'-nine-tails, and I were your colonel, I'd flog half the regiment for this!"

And the indignant medico stalked down the ward fuming over the advisability of disbanding certain "collections of riff-raff" which were a disgrace to the Service.

Ronald flushed, but dared venture no reply to the scathing rebuke.

Next morning they could learn no better news than that Alf had tossed all night in a delirium, and was rather worse than better; and with this depressing bulletin they returned to Woolchester Barracks, for their duty was done.

Ian is Cornered—A Bad Quarter of an Hour—Outpost Duty.

While Private Alf Sheppard's life yet hung in the balance, half a dozen who had been identified as the most prominent among the lynchers, remained in cells, while the whole battalion was held in disgrace. Not a single man was allowed on furlough or pass; every dance, sing-song, or function was forbidden, and Colonel Conger set himself to "sweat the beggars," as he put it, for their misdeeds.

Guilty and innocent suffered alike. The bugles were for everlasting sounding "Parade!" and neither officers nor men could call their souls their own.

The Wessex took their gruel like men. They knew that the name of the regiment had been tarnished, and they did not spare elbow-grease to rub the stain away.

All that they asked to know was the name of the traitor who had caused them to forget themselves in their righteous wrath, and none could tell.

Ronald kept his own counsel as to Alf's charge against Foxey Williams, and Alf himself was too much engaged in the battle with death to bother about anything else.

Lieutenant Bob, however, had his suspicions, and he set himself like a "trained sleuth-hound," as he described it to himself, to follow up the broken scent.

The morning after Ronald's victory over Stoker Blades, the champion of the Navy, a small, narrow package, secured with sealing-wax, bearing the label of a well-known firm of surgical instrument makers in London, was delivered at his room with his letters.

He was about to open it in surprise, when he found it was addressed to Ian Chenys. Then he whistled. Unlocking his writing-table, he took out the silver morphia syringe which had been used with such effect on Ronald. He compared the size of the package with the instrument, and whistled again.

Then he strolled out in his shirt-sleeves—for he was in the midst of dressing—and tapping on Ian's door, entered. Ian was shaving.

"Hallo, Fairly! Morning!" he said, a little listlessly, and Lieutenant Bob came forward, and dropped the little box on the dressing-table. He noticed that the youngster looked grey and haggard, as if he had been awake for many nights. As Ian's eyes lit on the parcel, however, his face flushed with mingled confusion and rage. The razor slipped, and gashed his chin, so that the blood welled out, tinged the lather with a vivid crimson.

"Why—why—Where the—How the dickens did you come to get that? That's for me!" blurted Ian hotly, unable to disguise his annoyance.

"So I see. That's why I take the trouble to bring it in to you," answered Lieutenant Bob coldly. "By the way, I suppose this also doesn't happen to belong to you?"

He laid the silver instrument on the table as he spoke.

"That!" cried Ian, recoiling a pace, and dabbing at his gashed chin with a towel. "Look here, Fairly, what the dickens do you mean to suggest?" he burst out, in a fine bluster.

"Suggest? I suggest nothing," said Fairly, in mild surprise.

"Yes, you do! You bring that thing here, knowing its criminal history, and coolly ask me if it belongs to me!" His hand gripped the newly-arrived package as he spoke, and smuggled it into his pocket, as if to avoid comparison between it and the thing on the table. "It is not mine, nor has it ever been mine. Moreover, let me tell you I resent your conduct as being either confoundedly clumsy or intentionally offensive!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

"Indeed!" said Lieutenant Bob quietly. "And now let me draw your attention to one or two little points arising out of this tirade, Mr. Chenys. You have given me the history of this venomous tube, now may I ask you how it comes you have such complete knowledge of it?"

"I?" stuttered Ian, taken aback. "Why, everybody in the battalion knows, of course!"

"But everybody in the battalion doesn't know. Least of all, should you have come by the facts. You were not at Plymport last night, as you were on duty. Therefore, you could not have arrived at them first hand. By the time that we had returned you were in bed. You have only just risen now!"

Lieutenant Bob was looking at him sternly, as much as to say:

"What answer have you to give to that?"

"My servant," he blurted at last, "told me this morning!"

"Ah! Private Williams, known amongst his comrades as Foxey!" sneered Fairly. "A most estimable fellow. It was he who diverted the wrath of the mob on to an innocent man, who now lies half-battered to death in consequence."

"He was not innocent! How can you know that?" yelled Ian, now beside himself with rage.

"I do know it," said Lieutenant Bob, in a hard, level voice. "I also know a great deal more in my heart. Some day I shall be able to prove it, and then—"

Ian seemed to shrink away under the scathing eyes.

"That package," continued Lieutenant Bob, with cruel determination, "which you have just juggled into your pocket contains an instrument identical with this I hold in my hand!"

"You lie!" cried Ian.

"Very well, it will give you every satisfaction, I am sure, to prove that I lie. Open the package, and show me. It is quite simple!"

"I refuse!" said Ian, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Then I will continue to elaborate my theory. This instrument here is yours. It was either lent by you, with your full knowledge, for the purpose of nobbling the representative of your own regiment, or it was stolen from you!"

"It was stolen!"

"Very well. We will forget for the moment that you have just previously stated that it was not yours, and accept your statement that it was stolen. When was it stolen?"

"Yesterday!"

"When?"

"Last night—early in the evening. I missed it just before mess."

"And the postmark on that package is Bond Street, 6 p.m. Thus you anticipated the theft, and ordered a new one to take its place before the first had gone! Strange that, isn't it?"

Ian Chenys looked at him cowed and shaken.

"Think what you like!" he said, with a last flicker of defiance.

"I think what I must in the face of the evidence," answered Lieutenant Bob, with icy calm. "Unfortunately, I have given my word not to act without first consulting another in this matter. Later on, I shall be in a position to say what I shall do. Meantime, I should advise you to open your eyes and think a little. You, a lad not yet twenty, have taken to drugging yourself, a habit which is going to plunge you from one depth of degradation to another until brain and body give way, and you reel into your grave. Just pause where you stand, my boy, and consider before it is too late to turn back. If you go on, then Heaven help you!"

Ian had sunk upon the bed, head bowed, and hands clenched tight, the very picture of hopeless misery.

"Look here, young 'un!" said Lieutenant Bob, softening his voice, and laying his hand upon Ian's shoulder. "if at any time you feel like taking me into your confidence, if you have any trouble that it would help you to make a clean breast of, believe me, Chenys, you can trust—"

"No—no!" said Ian, burying his face in his hands. "I couldn't! I daren't! Go! Do what you like, think what you like, but leave me now! Go!"

Lieutenant Bob looked long at the shaking shoulders and bowed head, and then left the room.

The door had scarcely closed when Ian tore the paper from the package. As Fairly had surmised, it contained an instrument identical with the one he held. In a few

ANSWERS

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
and the Pupils of Cliff House.

moments, the drug was stealing its way through the arteries, lulling his senses, scattering the black shapes and shadows which had been crowding into his tortured brain, and lending him false courage.

"Theory, all theory!" he laughed aloud, at last. "What does the fool know? Nothing! Yet I was off my guard. I made an ass of myself at every turn. Egad! To think that I cannot live an hour now and keep my wits without the aid of this accursed drug! What did he say? 'Till brain and body give way and you reel into the grave!' Hang him for his croaking! But he is right, all the same. Still, if I must go, another must come, too! 'From one depth of degradation to another,' eh? Ah, my good step-brother, you must fall with me, and must fall first!"

And so muttering to himself, Ian patched his wounded chin, scrambled into his uniform, swallowed the coffee which Foxey had brought to him, and marched out to early morning parade.

That afternoon and evening was to be spent at outpost duty on the wide, windy heath, which stretches away from Kit Hill, just outside Woolchester, almost to Plymport and the sea.

Here was an ideal manœuvring ground for a whole brigade, and many a pitched battle was fought on its heather slopes between the troops of Plymport—the infantry and cavalry lying at Blackdown Barracks, two miles inland—and the Woolchester contingent, which comprised, not only the Wessex, but the Fermanagh Fusiliers, an Irish regiment quartered at Fort Kit, just outside the town.

To-day, however, only the Woolchester division were to be engaged. Each regiment was to form its own line of outposts, and when either had scouted out a weak point in the disposition of the foe, it was at liberty to attack.

So the Wessex marched out to its position, ascending on one side of the heath, and the Fermanagh Fusiliers mounted on the other. Both shook out their long line of sentries to screen their front, with an inner line of pickets at greater intervals, to support the first, and behind these a third line of supports, and, lastly, the reserve.

It is in this wise that the front of an army is protected while it sleeps or rests.

First, the outer screen of sentries has to be pierced by the foe. The pickets promptly double out to repel the attack. If necessary, the supports are called into action, too, and perhaps the reserve, and still, while all this hullabaloo is taking place, the main army, some few miles back from the sentry line, may be left to snore in peace.

To pierce the screen successfully, the attackers must find out exactly how the enemy's defence is arranged, where his sentry line is posted, where the pickets and supports are stationed behind, so that by a swift surprise the weak point may be assailed, penetrated, and the wedge of steel driven in, shouldering either flank aside, and compelling it to fall back.

To ascertain all this, one must have scouts and patrols to sneak as close to the enemy as possible, without being detected, and to crawl, if possible, beneath their very lines.

At night, the scouts may succeed in doing this, but in daylight, with nothing but a bald, treeless valley between, as on this occasion, and two hundred pairs of eyes keeping a keen look-out for bobbing heads among the heather, such a surprise should be impossible.

Still, the Fermanagh Fusiliers and the Wessex were the keenest of rivals, and each was determined to outwit the other if they could. And the keenest man of all was Lieutenant Bob Fairly.

He was doubly anxious to-day, for it was his picket which had been surprised and crumpled up on the last occasion the two forces had met, and he had his laurels to retrieve.

Colonel Conger had reminded him of that, as he moved stealthily along to inspect his line, and left Bob grinding his teeth with rage.

Now he was stretched behind a clump of heather, watching the valley and the opposite hill, wondering how he could penetrate the mysteries beyond.

"I've got an idea, sir," said Ronald, who, with Tony and Gussy Smythe formed one of the sentry groups posted to keep watch over some two hundred yards of heath on either side of them.

Lieutenant Bob removed his eyes from his prism binoculars, and squinted up to see who it was that spoke.

"Good, Chester! Let's have it! B Company is under a cloud for that last affair, and I'd eat my cap to get even with those beggars out there!"

"It wouldn't work in warfare, I'm afraid."

"That be hanged! If it will work in peace manœuvres, it's good enough for me. What's the wheeze?"

Ronald told him, and Lieutenant Bob lay on his back, and slapped his leg and laughed.

"First chop! Splendid! Let's get to work at once. Here are my map-sketching materials. You can say you happen to have them because you're the captain's bright, particular pet. Ha, ha!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 80.

NEXT
WEEK:

"BUNTER THE BOXER."

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

A Dash for Liberty—A Ruse of War—Ronald Is Made Prisoner.

Ronald was quite a good hand at military map-sketching, which was not to be wondered at, seeing the months he had put in at Sandhurst.

The map he drew was supposed to be one of their own position, but wasn't. Where they were weakest Ronald, with a few extra dots, made it look as though that point was most strongly held, while he mapped down one flank entirely out of his own imagination, making it look so ridiculously easy to assail that even the dullest private must have set Colonel Conger down as an undiluted ass, if he had really planned it so.

Folding this misleading document up, and leaving a corner of it peeping ostentatiously out of his tunic pocket, Ronald stowed away ruler, compass, and pencils, picked up his rifle, and started out to scout.

On he went towards the enemy's lines, crawling from tussock to boulder in approved style, although he did not seem to use his eyes quite as a scout should, for a reconnoitring patrol of the Fermanaghs, four men strong, suddenly caught sight of him, and clapped down behind a heathery hedge just in Ronald's line of advance.

He seemed blissfully unconscious of their presence, but toiled manfully on, peering every way but that he was going.

The Fermanaghs watched him through the screen of stalks, and grinned. They had seen some mugs at the game, but never one quite so deliciously tender and guileless as this one.

Ronald pushed his head cautiously above the ledge concealing them, and four arms shot out promptly and grabbed him by the collar. The next instant he was being hauled and hustled towards the enemy's lines, protesting breathlessly, but in vain.

With a fist screwed well down inside his collar behind each ear, and his eyes blindfolded by a very dirty handkerchief, he was marched through the lines of the grinning enemy to an examining post, whose special duty it was to receive and examine such unfortunates as Ronald, or flags of truce.

"Hallo, a prisoner!" exclaimed a perky young subaltern in command.

"Yes, sorr," answered the sergeant of the patrol. "We tuk him down the hill yonder, blundering along with his nose on the ground, like an old pig after acorns."

"Ha! Let this be a lesson to you, my man," said the young sub., patronisingly turning to Ronald. "You know, you should always wemembah to exercise exactly the same degwee of circumspection and bwains, so to speak, in manœuvahs as you would in weal wahfare, doncherknow."

"Yes, sir," replied Ronald meekly.

"Yes, it's all vewy well your saying 'Yes, sir,' you know, but it isn't 'Yes, sir,' so to speak. It's through such unintelligent blockheads as you—er—who are sent on such highly important duties as scoutin', that things are liable to get messed up, doncherknow."

"Yes, sir," agreed Ronald sheepishly.

"Quite so," continued the young sub., anxious still further to improve the shining hour with seasonable advice, but not quite remembering how the text-books went on—"er—quite so. Now, of course if this were weal wah— Stop talkin', you men there, and listen! If this were weal wah, we should search the pwisoner and examine him—ask him questions, in fact, as to the stwength of the enemy, his awangements, and so forth. By the way, what is that papah, you man"—to Ronald—"stickin' out of your pocket, there?"

"A map, sir."

"A map!" exclaimed the sub., in amazement. "What of? Take it, sergeant, and give it to me."

"Well, you see, it's like this, sir," began Ronald, looking still more foolish.

"Pon my word," squeaked the sub., surveying the paper with delightful amazement, "if this isn't weally too wick! Why, it's actually of your own outpost line!"

"Yes, sir," stuttered Ronald again; but the officer had gone off into a perfect contortion of mirth.

"Don't you see, my man," he choked; and then collapsed again. "Weally, ye know, it's too widiculous for words! Don't you see how stoopid you are? Here you come potterin' around our lines with a map of your own force stickin' out of your pocket, and— Oh, it's too wick, weally!"

This gilded youth of the Fermanaghs went off into another ecstacy, while Ronald stood first on one leg and then on the other, and tried to look the veriest ass that ever wore ammunition boots.

"Heah, sergeant, we must send this pwize to the colonel at once!" said the sub. at last. "Jove, but we shall cwumple the silly beggahs up again like the last time—just woll 'em

up like rabbits! Give it to a cawpwl, and see that he doubles all the way. Weally, it's the wichest thing I've evah twuck. Don't you see, fellah, how widiculous you are?"

"Yes, sir, I do now," answered Ronald. "Only I didn't think at the time. Being fond of map-sketchin', and our picket on a 'ill, where I could see most of the line, my officer said as 'ow I might take the opportunity to improve myself, and lent me his tools, so to speak. I've got 'em 'ere."

Ronald had fumbled in his pocket, and producing Lieutenant Bob's sketching materials, was looking at them longingly.

"Haw!" exclaimed the sub. of the Fermanaghs. "Well, of course that's very laudable; and all that, and it's the pwoper thing to take an intelligent intwest in your work, dontcherknow; but what you want is bwains. Now, while we are waitin' I might just as well impwove the shining hour by givin' you fellahs a few tips. Hand over those instruments, and all of you pay attention."

"Now, supposin' we are mappin' our own position, I'll show you how to set about it. Taking this point as the base. We'ah on a bit of a hill, aren't we? There's the woad wunnin' down into the valley, and No. 4 picket is ovah theah, isn't it? Heah, where you see that clump of fir-trees, is No. 3; and so we put that down—so."

The gilded youth, who happened also to be something of an enthusiast at map-work, was soon engrossed in preparing an elaborate and accurate plan of his own side, which, needless to say, was exactly what Ronald was hoping to secure.

Sentry groups, pickets, and supports were all dotted down, and a first-class job made of it.

"Now, that's the way to do it, you see, you Wessex man," said the sub., handing over the map for his due admiration; and really it was very prettily done.

Ronald gaped at it, and asked questions—most of them foolish ones—and the result was that more details had to be filled in to make it more plain.

Ronald could see the corporal who had taken his own despised effort to the colonel of the Fermanaghs returning over the heather, and he wanted to gain time.

Moreover, the mists of evening were spreading over the moor, and the sun was sinking lower and lower on the western horizon.

The corporal trudged up at last, grinning broadly. Armed with such elaborate information as to the Wessex defence, it was obvious that the Fermanaghs intended to wade in as soon as twilight fell, and smite their enemy hip and thigh.

"And what did the colonel say, cawpwl?" demanded the sub., his men edging in closer the better to enjoy the fun.

Ronald was forgotten for the moment. Slipping the new map into the breast of his serge, he caught up his rifle, and, ducking behind a ridge of heather, ran like a hare.

He had already gained a clear forty yards before a wild Irish yell behind him warned him that his flight had been detected. He straightened his back then, and dashed at breakneck speed towards the line of sentries which now duly intervened between him and safety.

Crack! Bang! Crack! His erstwhile captors had opened out, and started to fire blank cartridge, as if that was likely to wing him and bring him down.

It was the sentry groups in front of him, converging now from right and left to head him off, that Ronald was thinking about.

"Hould him! Stop the thafe!" yelled the men behind.

Ronald was the best three-quarter of his time at Sandhurst, and could stride like the wind; but heather is rough going compared with a close-cropped field.

Now came the pinch. Some four or five men had scattered across his line of retreat, calling upon him to halt, their rifles to their shoulders.

Blank cartridge will blow a

hole in a man at close range; but Ronald knew that the Irishmen, in their excitement, were not likely to remember that. Nevertheless, he did not mean to throw up his hands, now that his plans had worked so sweetly.

He headed full-tilt for the most scattered part of the line.

A big, red-headed son of Erin barred his way, finger on his trigger. Ronald swerved first to one side, then suddenly back at him, and plunged forward at his ankles.

The rifle exploded, and he could feel the blast of the cordite, as if a heavy plank had dropped across his putted legs.

The next instant he had caught the Irishman round the knees and pitched him on his back. The man clutched his leg, but he tore himself free, only to cannon into the next, who came panting to his help.

Ronald clutched the muzzle thrust out at him, and in an instant had wrenched the weapon away, for the man had hesitated to pull the trigger.

A third, however, was not so merciful. As Ronald stumbled on he fired almost point-blank at the fugitive's head. The streak of flame scorched the hair from one side of his head, seared the flesh, and sent his cap flying. He floundered under the blow, but kept his feet.

The going now was down hill and steep. With mighty bounds he flung himself headlong down the slope into the valley, the furious yells of his pursuers sounding close behind him.

He reached the bottom at last, and here the sheltering mist lay thick.

Turning at right angles, he ran for a hundred yards, then struck up the opposite hill, from which points of flame were darting to repel the attack which the Wessex imagined was being made in that quarter.

Breathless and almost spent, Ronald scrambled through his own lines, and blundered headlong into someone hurrying forward to investigate.

"Why, who the—what the—where the dickens are you galloping to, you clumsy, hulking idiot?" roared a peppery voice, as the man picked himself up out of the prickly furze-bush into which Ronald had managed to butt him full-tilt.

Ronald held his breath in horror, for out of the gathering dusk loomed the infuriated features of Colonel Conger!

"Confound you for a clumsy jackass!" roared the colonel, picking himself out of the bushes into which Ronald had sent him flying. "Where the deuce have you come from that you must go charging along like a bull blindfolded?"

"I beg your pardon, sir!" panted Ronald. "But I've just been over to the enemy to get a map of their lines!"

"Map of their lines? Great Caesar's ghost! Do you think they sell 'em on a book-stall?"

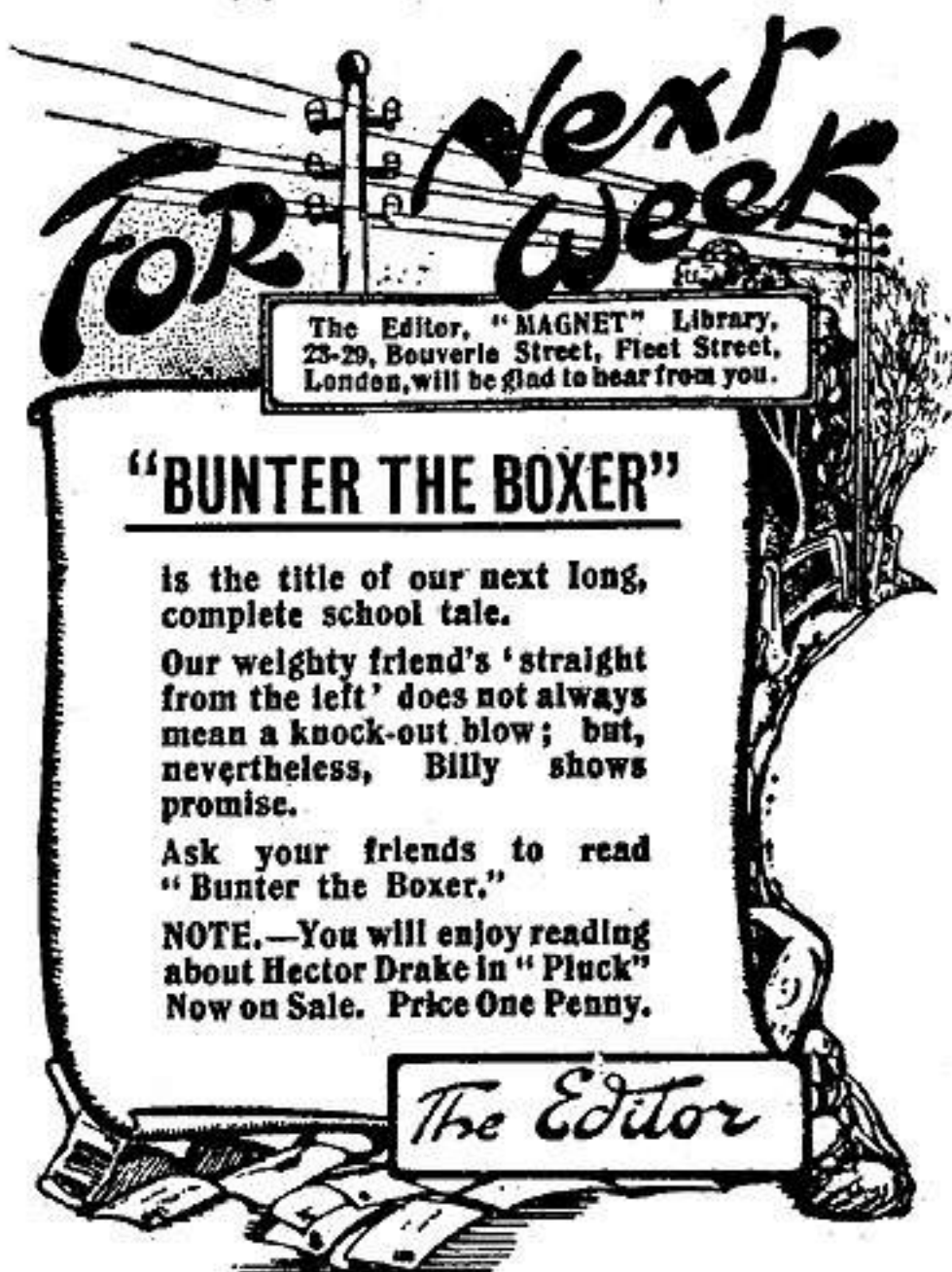
"No, sir; but this one was kindly drawn for me by an officer of the Fermanaghs."

"What!" yelled the colonel, in amazement, reaching out his hand for the precious document.

"Jumping rattlesnakes!" he exclaimed, as he surveyed the well-executed sketch-map of the enemy's position with bewildered eyes. "Here, tell me how you came by this—quick! Did you steal it? If so, how—when—where?"

Ronald made no attempt to disguise the theft, contenting himself with the thought that all is fair in love and war. Putting the story modestly in as few words as possible, he explained the ruse he had suggested to Lieutenant Bob, and the highly successful result which had come of it.

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