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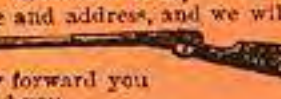
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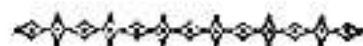
THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Bunter Punches the Ball.

Bunter the Boxer

A Splendid Tale of
HARRY WHARTON & CO.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.



Biff!
Thud!
And there was an incessant trampling of feet and gasping of breath.

"They must be fighting. Now, is it Wharton and Nugent, or Nugent and Inky? I'll look in and ref. for them," thought Bob Cherry generously.

And he threw open the door.

He stood in the doorway, looking into the study in astonishment.

Wharton was not there, neither was Frank Nugent nor Inky. Billy Bunter, in his shirtsleeves, with the perspiration rolling down his face and dimming his big spectacles, was there—very much there.

He had fastened up a punching-ball on two hooks, one in the floor and one in the ceiling.

The former was strongly fixed, being screwed into the planks of the floor; but the hook in the ceiling was hardly likely to prove so reliable.

Bunter, with a pair of boxing-gloves on his chubby fists, was pounding away at the punching-ball with great energy. Every moment or two he gave it a terrific biff, and jumped away to avoid the rebound.

He was panting from his exertions, but sticking to it manfully.

Bob Cherry stared at him blankly.

To see Billy Bunter doing anything like work was a marvel, and this was very much indeed like work.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bunter blinked at him through his spectacles.

"Hallo, Cherry! Don't get in the way!"

"I don't mean to!" chuckled Bob Cherry, keeping back just out of reach of the extension of the punching-ball.

"What's the little game?"

"I'm practising."

"Trying to get your fat down?"

"Certainly not, Cherry! I'm practising boxing."

"Oh, is that boxing?"

"What did you think it was?" asked Bunter sarcastically.

"Five finger exercises? Or part-singing?"

THUD!
Biff!
Bang!
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, as he stopped outside the door of Study No. 1: "What on earth—"

Biff!
Thud!
"My only hat! What's the matter?" muttered Bob, in perplexity. "They can't be fighting among themselves!"
Bob was surprised.

It was some time since he had left Study No. 1, to take up his new quarters in No. 13 with Mark Linley and little Wun Lung, the Chinaman. Since then there had been a friendly rivalry between him and his old study-mates. But Study No. 1 had certainly been a quieter spot since Bob had emigrated to fresh fields and pastures new.

But at the present moment there was as much noise proceeding from Study No. 1 as Bob Cherry had ever made in his most uproarious moments.

"Well, I couldn't guess it was boxing. It doesn't look like it, you know," said Bob. "Are you trying to hit the ball?"

"Of course I am!"

"Good!" said Bob, as Billy made a drive at the punching-ball, missed it with his fist, and banged his nose upon it. "Do that again! This is something new in boxing, and isn't included in National Sporting Club rules."

"Ow!"

"What's the matter now?"

"Ow! I've hurt my nose!"

"Never mind; you might have hurt the punching-ball."

"Oh, really Cherry—"

"Go it, Bunt! I like to see you. You are so splendidly developed physically, that's it's a pleasure to watch you."

"Well, I think I'm pretty well developed, considering," said Bunter, with a glance downwards at his plump form.

"Yes, rather. You develop sideways, of course; but what of that?"

"Oh, really—"

"You may bring down your weight a ton or two—I mean a stone or two—if you keep this up," said Bob Cherry encouragingly.

"Of course, I can understand that you're jealous of my abilities as a boxer—"

"Of course I am. Go it! Let's see you do that little trick with your nose again."

Bunter deigned no reply.

He adjusted his spectacles on his fat reddened nose, and slogged at the punching-ball once more.

Biff!

Thud!

"Jolly good!" said Bob Cherry, as the ball flew back and crashed on Bunter's chin before he could escape it.

"Ripping!"

"Ow! Yow! Wow!"

Bunter sat down with a crash that shook the study.

"First fall to the punching-ball!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Bravo! Now, then, Bunt! Time! Second round!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"One, two, three, four, five, six—"

"Grooch!"

"If you don't get up before I've counted ten, the punching-ball has won," said Bob Cherry warningly. "Seven, eight, nine—"

Bunter staggered to his feet.

"Bravo! Go it! Two to one on the punching-ball!"

"Oh, really Cherry—"

"Stick to it! You're growing thinner already."

Bunter glared through his spectacles. Whenever he had a new wheeze or hobby, he took himself very seriously. That a member of the rival study should take it in this humorous spirit was annoying, to say the least.

"I'm jolly well going to challenge your study, when I'm fit," he said angrily.

"Good! You can box the study all right—it can't hit back, anyway," said Bob Cherry, laughing.

"I mean I'm going to challenge you fellows in No. 13—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I'm rather short of money," said Bunter, rubbing his chin. "I've thought of this wheeze as a new idea for raising tin. I've always fancied myself as a boxer—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said the fat junior peevishly. "I'm a jolly good boxer, and I've a keen eye, you know, and heaps of pluck. I was thinking of challenging a chap for a purse of so much a side—National Sporting Club rules—"

"Why, you horrid young prize-fighting, gambling bounder?"

"Oh, it's sport, you know!"

"It will be—for the chap who walks over you."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"A thousand guineas a side, I suppose," said Bob Cherry.

"The fight limited to five hundred rounds."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Take my advice, Bunt, and box the punching-ball, and don't try a match with anything on two legs. You can hit the ball sometimes."

"Look here—"

"Oh, get on with the practice; I like watching you! It's just like a dancing hippopotamus I saw at a circus once!"

Bunter did not reply to that disrespectful remark.

He threw all his energies into an assault upon the punching-ball, and Bob Cherry watched him with great interest.

Billy was hitting the ball directly towards Bob Cherry, but Bob was a foot or more out of the extreme range of it, so he was in no danger.

At all events, he thought he was in no danger. It had the Magnet Library.—No. 81.

NEXT TUESDAY: "THE HEAD'S HOLIDAY."

not occurred to him that the hook in the ceiling might be in a rocky condition.

Biff!

The ball flew from the crashing glove.

It bounced back, and Bunter dodged it, and then let out his right again in a terrific drive.

Crash!

Bob Cherry gave a roar.

For that last drive had torn the hook from the ceiling—and punching-ball, and hook, and Billy Bunter all crashed upon the unfortunate Bob together.

The junior staggered back, with the punching-ball on his chest, and Bunter's boxing-glove in his eye.

Bump!

Down went Bob Cherry, and over him sprawled the fat junior, with an impact that knocked every ounce of breath out of his body.

"Gr-r-r-r-rooooh!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"Gerroff!"

"Oh! Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton, looking in at the door. "Is that something new in gymnastics, Billy?"

"Yank that fat lunatic off!" gasped Bob Cherry. "He's choking me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton dragged the fat junior up. Bunter groped for his glasses, and adjusted them on his fat nose.

Bob Cherry rose breathlessly.

He was gasping, and his left eye was closed. He seemed to be meditating assault and battery upon the fat boxer.

"You—you—you fat maniac!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton. "Has he been using you for a punching-ball?"

"The hook came out," gurgled Bunter. "I'm sincerely sorry. It wasn't my fault, of course. These ceilings are made rottenly."

"You fat duffer! You howling ass!"

"Oh, really Cherry—"

"You—you—you—"

Words failed Bob Cherry. He blinked out of his half-closed eye savagely, and felt it tenderly with his finger.

"This will be black before morning. If it is, there will be a dead porpoise found in this school!"

And Bob Cherry rushed off in search of a beefsteak to apply to his damaged eye. Billy Bunter blinked after him.

"Help me fasten this thing up again, Wharton," he said.

"I want to put in some more practice this evening. I'm thinking of boxing somebody for a purse of five guineas, and when I've won it, I'm going to stand a series of extensive feeds, and ask you fellows. Lend me a hand."

"I'll lend you a foot, if you begin that again in this study," said Wharton. "Look at the damage you've done to the ceiling."

"Of course, that can't be helped—"

"And how am I to do my prep with you banging a punching-ball about?"

"Never mind your prep—"

Wharton laughed.

"Go and box in the passage, Billy. Go and box in the box-room. That's the proper place to box, when you come to think of it."

"Oh, really Wharton—"

Harry led him gently by the ear to the door, and put him into the passage. Then he threw out the punching-ball.

"Buzz off!" he said. "A chap's study isn't the place for punching the ball."

"Oh, really, you know—"

Wharton closed the door. Bunter put his head in the next moment.

"I say, Wharton—"

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By Frank Richards.

Harry picked up the poker and rushed to the door. Bunter scuttled down the passage like a frightened rabbit.

Wharton burst into a laugh, and settled down to his work uninterrupted now by Billy Bunter. The fat junior wandered disconsolately away with his punching-ball under his arm.

"It's rotten, this jealousy a clever chap always meets with even among his own personal friends," he murmured. "I'd go and give Wharton a jolly good licking, only—I don't think I'm quite up to it yet. When I've had a little bit more practice, won't I make 'em squirm!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Pork Sausages.

"I SAY, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the door of No. 1 Study half an hour later. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were at work, and Bunter, after a cautious look at them, came in.

"I say, you fellows, are you hungry?"

Frank Nugent pushed his books away.

"Hungry isn't the word," he said. "But it's no good talking about tea, Bunt. Funds are right out."

"Absolutely out," said Wharton, without looking up.

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

Bunter blinked at them.

"Oh, as far as that goes, I don't mind going and borrowing something for you," he remarked. "If you like to give me a note to Wun Lung, Wharton——"

"I don't."

"But look here," expostulated Bunter. "What's the good of knowing a rich chap if you don't borrow of him? I call it a sinful waste."

"Go and borrow on your own account, Billy."

"Can't be did! Whenever I try to raise a little loan, somebody always begins talking about an old account, or something of the sort. The fellows here aren't business-like. There's that chap Ogilvy. I proposed to start fresh with him, on a cash basis, and he only went mumbling on about a half-crown last week. I believe he'd remember parting with that half-crown if he lived to be as old as Methuselah. Some fellows are so mean. But look here——"

"How can I look at you and look at my work at the same time?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! What I mean is, I've got something to go on with."

And Bunter laid a parcel on the table.

The chums of the Remove looked at it curiously. It wasn't usual for Bunter to come to the rescue like this. Bunter, with an air of considerable importance, unfastened the string, and unrolled the paper, and disclosed half a dozen pork sausages.

"My hat!" said Nugent.

"Corn in Egypt," said Harry Wharton. "Jolly good, Bunter! I'd like to know where you got them, though."

Nugent felt in his pockets.

"Have you been selling my pocket-knife again, you young burglar?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Or my bat?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, you won't need a cricket-bat much longer, Wharton."

Harry jumped up, and seized the fat junior by the collar, and shook him till his heels rattled on the floor.

"Have you sold my bat?" he roared.

"Ow! Wow! Yow! Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Have you sold my cricket-bat?"

"Ow! No, I haven't!"

"Well, why couldn't you say so before, then?" said Harry wrathfully, as he released his fat study-mate. "A chap never knows whether his property's his own, with a fellow like you in the study."

"I haven't sold your rotten bat. I offered it to Russell, and he said he'd have to speak to you about it first—I—I—I mean, of course, I wouldn't think of selling a chap's bat without asking his permission. I've raised this grub from my own resources, and I must say I don't think you're very grateful."

"Well, you're such a little worm," said Wharton. "If you told the truth sometimes, it would make things easier."

"I'm sincerely sorry to see that you think me capable of a whopper, Wharton——"

"Belay the cackle," said Nugent. "Here are the sossingers, that's the main point. Where's the frying-pan?"

He looked more closely at the pork sausages. His face wore a peculiar expression as he drew it away.

"Ahem! Ahem! Hem! Hem!"

"What the matter?"

"How long have you had these sausages?" demanded Nugent. "Have you been saving them up for a rainy day?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"They do seem a bit wanky," said Wharton suspiciously.

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"Oh, that's all right, you fellows! It comes out in the cooking, you know. You shove in plenty of pepper, and a little vinegar if necessary, and that's all right."

"That's all very well. Look here, did you buy these sosses?"

"I suppose you don't think I purloined them?" asked Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Well, no, but you might have picked them up on a scrap-heap somewhere. They look to me jolly wanky."

"The wankfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, retreating to the other side of the table. "It seems to have a certain amount of growfulness about it, too, my worthy chums."

The nabob was right. The scent of the sausages was decidedly strong, and as Bunter finished unwrapping them it became stronger. Billy Bunter looked uneasy for a moment.

"Oh, that's all right!" he said. "It's no good being too fastidious when you're hungry. Gimme the frying-pan, Nugent. I'll soon kill the scent."

"Seems to me you'd better kill the sosses," said Nugent, with a sniff.

"Oh, really, you know——"

There was a tap at the door, and Hazeldene of the Remove looked in. He was about to speak, when, instead of doing so, he suddenly sniffed, and cast a startled glance round the study.

"Phew!" he exclaimed. "Anything wrong with the drains here?"

"Oh, really, Vaseline——"

"Bunter's just brought in some sosses," said Nugent. "I believe they were left over from the Ark, and he's just dug them up somewhere."

Hazeldene burst into a laugh.

"Those sosses! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Billy Bunter.

"Here, what do you know about them?" exclaimed Wharton. "I can see the things have got a history. They ought to have; they're old enough."

"They were Carberry's——"

"Carberry's!"

Carberry was a prefect in the Sixth, and on the worst possible terms with the chums of the Remove.

"Yes, rather," said Hazeldene, grinning. "You know Carberry's been away two or three days, on a visit to his uncle. He found those sosses in the cupboard when he came back to-day—he'd forgotten them, you see. I don't know how long they'd been there—but I was fagging for Carberry, and when I opened the cupboard door I knew there was something wrong somewhere."

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Carberry told me to take 'em away and chuck 'em somewhere, but I wasn't going to touch 'em. I buzzed off, and I heard Carberry say to Bunter——"

"Oh, shut up, Vaseline!"

"I heard Carberry say to Bunter——"

"Oh, do shut up!"

"I heard Carberry say——"

"Look here, Vaseline——"

Nugent seized the fat junior by the back of the collar, and tightened it till he could not possibly articulate a word. Billy Bunter struggled and gasped.

"Now, then, what did Carberry say to Bunter?" demanded Nugent.

"He said he could take the sossingers away, and that they were good enough for the mongrels—excuse me, it was Carberry's word—for the mongrels in No. 1 Study."

Nugent released Bunter. There was a dead silence in the study.

"Blessed if I thought Bunter would take him at his word, though," grinned Hazeldene. "I thought he was going to chuck the things away——"

"I—I—I say, you fellows——"

"Excuse me," added Hazeldene. "I think I'll be off. This scent is a little too strong for me. The sosses are off, and I think I'll be off, too."

And he closed the door.

Bunter made a quick movement towards the door, but Harry Wharton's grasp was upon him. The fat junior wriggled.

"I—I say, you fellows, it's all right. I—I can eat the sosses, you know—you chaps needn't have any of them if you don't want to. I—I—I like sosses like game, you know, a little high, I do really. I—I—I——"

Three stern glares were bent upon Billy Bunter, and his voice trailed off. He sank into the armchair, blinking uneasily at the three Removes. There was a long, deadly silence in the study, and Billy Bunter quaked. In the dead silence nothing was audible—so to speak—but the scent of the pork sausages.

A School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By Frank Richards.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

An Insult to the Form.

BILLY BUNTER blinked and quaked, and quaked and blinked. He knew that he was in a bad corner, though he did not fully grasp the enormity of his offence.

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances, and Harry Wharton broke the silence at last.

"Bunter!" he said, in measured tones.

"Ye-e-e-es."

"You worm!"

"You crawling apology for a worm!" said Nugent.

"The wormfulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, with a shake of his dusky head.

"I—I—I say, you fellows—"

"You've been a party to an insult to yourself, to your study, and to your Form," said Wharton. "Carberry said that waxy old sausages he was going to throw away were good enough for this study. And you swallowed the insult."

"He was jolly well going to swallow the sosses, too."

"And you let us in for it, too," went on Wharton indignantly. "Nice show we should have made when the yarn was out. I can imagine what the chaps in No. 13 would say. No. 1 Study a place where old fragments are taken and eaten up. You—you fat, over-fed worm! You—you caterpillar!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"What had we better do with him?" asked Wharton, in disgust. "You can't lick a beastly worm!"

"I suggestfully propose that he is extended face downwardly upon the table, and that a cricket-bat is applied with forcefulness to the uppermost regions of the honourable Bunter's esteemed carcase."

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, don't be cads, you know. I—I'll box any of you, when I've had a little more practice. I didn't really mean to cook the sosses. It—it was only a j-j-joke!"

"My hat! Can't he roll them out?"

"It was all your fault, too," said Bunter. "I've got a delicate constitution, and I have to be kept up by constant nourishment. You chaps allow the grub to run out, and go short of funds. That's not my fault. I'm not accustomed to the kind of grub we get in Hall. I don't ask you to eat the sosses. I think you're jolly ungrateful. Besides, Carberry didn't mean any harm. He thought we were hungry; in fact, I told him we were stony, and asked him to lend me a bob till my postal-order came—"

"You worm!"

"Well, if you chaps go broke, I suppose we must feed somehow. You always make a fuss if I sell anything out of the study. I've got a wheeze for raising the wind by giving a boxing show for a purse; but you won't back me up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better apply the cricketbatful ragging, in my worthy opinion," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"What are you making that row for?" demanded Wharton. "You're not touched yet."

"I—I—I—"

"The honourable Bunter must receive an esteemed ragging," said the dusky junior firmly. "Why do you abuse our worthy patience in this way, Bunter, as the esteemed Kickero remarked to the august Cataline?"

"The esteemed whom?" yelled Nugent.

"Kickero, my worthy chum."

"Who on earth's Kickero?"

"My esteemed friend, your ignoratfulness of the justly celebrated Kickero is astounding. I am referring to his worthy speech against Cataline: 'Quo usque abutero, Catalina, patientia nostra?'" said the nabob gently.

"Oh, Cicero!"

"Kickero, if you please."

"Cicero!"

"Kickero!"

"It's a soft 'C,' you ass!"

"It's a hard 'C,' you esteemed idiot!"

"I tell you it's Siss—"

"I tell you it's Kick—"

"Oh, shut up, you asses!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, stopping his ears. "Leave that for the Latin lesson. Now, then, Bunter—"

Nugent picked up a cricket-bat from the corner. Wharton and Hurree Singh seized the wriggling junior and flopped him face downwards upon the table, and held him there. Bunter wriggled and squirmed like a worm.

"Oh, my solitary turban!" ejaculated Hurree Singh, as

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he received a kick on the chest. "Ow! I am painfully hurt! Ow! I have an ache in my infernal regions!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme go! Yow! Ow! Murder! Help! Fire!"

"If he makes that row now, what will he do when we begin?" said Nugent, flourishing the cricket-bat in the air to the great danger of his chums. "Now then—"

"Ow, yow, wow!"

Billy Bunter was held firmly down. Nugent raised the bat, and poised it in the air.

"Where will you have it, Bunter?"

"Ow, yow, help!"

Clump!

Nugent clumped the bat heavily on the table. It did not touch the fat junior, but Bunter gave a yell that might have been heard across the Close.

"Help! Fire! Thieves!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton. "Let him go! I can't hold him! Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter squirmed off the table. Bob Cherry opened the door of the study and looked in in amazement.

"What's the row about?"

"We're killing Bunter! I'm going to brain him with this bat!" exclaimed Nugent, pretending to make a dash at Bunter. "Stop him!"

Billy Bunter squirmed under Bob Cherry's arm, and whisked into the passage, and ran for his life. Nugent flung the bat down and shrieked with laughter. Bob Cherry laughed too; but his laugh died away, and he began to sniff strangely.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that awful niff?"

Harry Wharton pointed to the pork sausages. Bob retreated into the passage.

"Can't say I like the flavour," he remarked. "Where on earth—"

"Come in—"

"Thank you; I'd rather stay here," said Bob, making a wry face.

"It's a question of an insult to the Remove," said Wharton. "We've got to stand together over it."

"Right-ho! But I'll stand at a distance from those sosses, if you don't mind," said Bob Cherry.

"We'll come along to your study, then," said Harry.

"Come on, you chaps. I'll lock the door so that—"

"So that the sosses won't walk away?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No. So that Bunter can't get at them."

And the chums of No. 1 went down the passage into No. 13. Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, was there, sitting at the table at work. He looked up with a pleasant nod as the juniors came in.

"Now then," said Bob Cherry. "Squattez-vous! Who's been insulting the giddy Remove; and how is he to be slain?"

"Carberry, of the Sixth."

"H'm! He's always insulting somebody. What has he done?"

Wharton explained. Needless to say, Bob Cherry's indignation was as lively as that of the fellows in No. 1 Study. An insult to the Remove touched the whole Form. Esprit de corps was very strong in the Greyfriars Remove. They were an unruly Form, and they gave a great deal of trouble, but they had one shining virtue—they stood together as one man against outsiders.

"Bunter's a worm!" said Bob Cherry. "He always was a worm, and he always will be a worm! But we're not going to let even a worm be insulted, if he belongs to the Remove."

"Good!" said Mark Linley, laughing. "Even if he wants to be?"

"Certainly not! It's a question of the dignity of the Form. Carberry has got to be made to understand that the Remove can't have offal sent them as if they were deserving poor and he was lord of the giddy manor."

"He's going to have the sosses back," said Harry Wharton.

"Jolly good!"

"I was thinking that they ought to be planted on him somehow—some in his bed, some in his hat-box, and so on. He can't grumble if he finds his own property in his own study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He will have to be decoyed away first, though, to give us a chance in his study. We can't have those sosses hanging about, or they'll escape out of the window or up the chimney. Are you chaps with us?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Count me in," said Linley.

"Good! Then let's get the sosses in a bag—a thick bag, so that they won't whiff as we carry them about—and get to Carberry's study. One of you can scout first, and see if

he's there; and if he is, he'll have to be dodged out somehow."

"Agreed!"

And in a few minutes the chums of the Remove were on the war-path.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Trap!

CARBERRY, the prefect, sat in his study. He was not alone. Lucas and Loder, of the Sixth, were with him. Lucas and Loder were special chums of Carberry's, and the three were about the blackest sheep to be found in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars. The three seniors were regaling themselves with cigarettes in the seclusion of the study; a little habit they had. No master was likely to look in at that hour, and as Carberry was a prefect, he feared none but the masters. But he started a little, and looked uneasy as a tap came at the door.

"It's all right," he said hastily. "Only shove them out of sight in case—Come in!"

The three cigarettes were hastily thrust under the table, and the three smokers looked uneasily towards the door. There was a very perceptible scent of tobacco in the study.

But it was only Frank Nugent who looked in.

"Hallo!" he said.

Carberry scowled at him.

"What do you want, you brat?"

"Nothing."

"Get out!"

Nugent did not stir. But he stood quite ready to bolt if Carberry should rise from his chair.

"I've just looked in," he remarked casually.

"Well, now get out!"

"Can you give me a light?"

"Eh?"

"And a fag."

"Look here—"

Nugent shook his finger at the prefect in a reproving way.

"Naughty—naughty!" he said.

Carberry glared at him. Such conduct from a junior was astounding. The prefect could hardly contain himself. He bounced out of the chair and rushed towards the Remove.

Nugent was out of the study, and scudding down the passage in a twinkling.

The prefect stood panting in the doorway.

"My only aunt!" said Loder. "I never saw such cheek in a kid before!"

"Nor I!" said Lucas, puffing at his cigarette again. "I suppose he knew we were smoking, though."

Carberry closed the door. He settled down in the arm-chair again, and put his feet upon the grate. He struck a match, and was in the act of lighting a fresh cigarette, when there was another knock at the door.

It opened, and Bob Cherry looked in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Do you want anything?"

"Yes."

"What is it, hang you?"

"I want you chaps to give up smoking, and take to decency, like us fellows in the Remove," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"You young sweep! Get out!"

"Rats!"

"Are you going?" roared Carberry.

"More rats!"

Carberry rushed at him, and Bob fled. The prefect chased him the length of the passage, but Bob slid down the banisters and escaped.

Carberry returned, panting, to the study.

"I can't get on to this," he said. "Those young rotters know I shall lick them later on for this. I can't make it out."

"Well, give us another fag," said Lucas, striking a match. "Look here, they'll very likely be back again soon. Let's stand just inside the door, and pop out on them as soon as we hear them tap."

"Good egg!"

The three seniors stood up inside the door. In a couple of minutes a pattering of footsteps was heard. Carberry made his companions a sign to be cautious.

Tap!

The instant the tap sounded Carberry threw open the door.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stood there with an extremely startled face. The three seniors rushed straight at him. Though it was a different junior, they knew that he was in the plot, as he was one of the comrades of No. 1 Study.

Carberry seized him by one shoulder, and Loder by the other. Lucas fastened a grip upon his hair.

"Oh!" gasped the nabob. "I—I am painfully hurt! Ow! The hurtfulness is terrific. The pullfulness is hurting my honourable hair!"

"You black rascal—"

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The nabob's eyes gleamed.

"The pigfulness of the worthy Carberry's remarks is only equalled by the extreme rottenness of his manners," he gasped.

The prefect shook him violently.

"Yank him into the study," he growled. "We'll give him a lathering with a five's bat, and I don't think he'll be so lively after that."

"Ha, ha! Good!"

"Look out," yelled Loder, suddenly.

There was a rush of feet in the corridor.

Harry Wharton and Mark Linley were coming along at top speed to the rescue. The warning from Loder came too late. The charging juniors rushed right into the seniors. Carberry staggered into his study, and Lucas measured his length on the floor. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, torn from the grasp of his captors, was carried on in the rush, and the juniors were gone in a twinkling.

Carberry grasped the door to steady himself.

"Stop them!" he yelled.

Loder grinned ruefully.

"Not much stopping them now," he said. "They're gone."

"You asses! Why didn't you hold them?"

"Why didn't you, if you come to that?"

"Oh, don't be an ass."

"Well, don't you be a fool."

"Look here, Loder—"

"Look here, Carberry—"

"Oh, cheese it," said Lucas, getting up, rubbing his head savagely. "I've had a nasty crack. Let's go and look for those rats. We shall find them somewhere. I'm going to skin them."

"Good biz," said Loder. "Get a cane out, Carberry. You're a prefect."

"Right you are."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It was a yell from the end of the passage. Bob Cherry was looking at the seniors with a cheerful grin. As they turned and glared at him, Bob Cherry's right hand rose, and the thumb was placed against his nose, the fingers extended to their fullest capacity. It was an old and well-known sign, and the cool nerve of it made Carberry and Co. simply boil over.

"Wait a second till I get that cane," muttered Carberry.

He rushed into the study.

In a moment he rejoined his friends, a thick cane in his hand. As a prefect he had a right to cane the juniors, and on the present occasion, he was not likely to spare the rod.

But he had to catch the Removeites first. The three seniors ran down the passage, and Bob Cherry nipped round a corner and ran.

"After him!" gasped Carberry.

Bob Cherry doubled to the upper stairs, and then went scudding along the Remove passage. The three seniors were in hot pursuit. Fellows looked out of the common-room and the studies in amazement. There were cheers to the racers, and fellows got into the way of the pursuers, seemingly by accident, to give the panting junior a chance.

"Go it, Cherry!" shouted Temple of the Upper Fourth.

"Oh, rathor!" said Dabney.

And Fry collided violently with Loder, and brought him to the floor. Loder jumped up, kicked the Upper-Fourth fellow savagely, and ran on after his comrades.

"Ow!" growled Fry, rubbing his shoulder. "The beast!"

"Come on," gasped Carberry. "He's making for the dorm. We shall corner him there."

Bob Cherry was flying up the upper staircase.

This led to the passage upon which the Remove dormitory opened. The dormitory, rebuilt since the fire at Greyfriars, had a door at each end of the room. Bob Cherry dashed in at the first door, and slammed it behind him. But he did not lock it. The key was in the outside of the lock.

Carberry flung the door open, and rushed in after him.

Bob went at a rush along the row of white beds, making for the other door, at the further end of the dormitory. He skipped out into the passage in a twinkling.

Carberry's outstretched hand was only a yard behind him. Slam went the door after Bob.

A moment more, and Carberry's hand was on the handle. But a click sounded at the same moment. The key was in the outside of that door also, and Bob Cherry had locked it after himself in the passage.

Carberry tore at the door, and muttered an oath.

"Can't get out here," he growled, savagely. "Cut back to the other door."

But as the bullies of the Sixth dashed back to the door they had entered by, it was jerked shut from the passage, and a key clicked on the outside.

A School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By Frank Richards.

Carberry halted, gritting his teeth.

"They've locked us in!"

"The cheeky young scoundrels!"

Loder tried the door. It was fast. He shouted to the juniors outside, but not a sound answered him. He thought he heard a faint chuckle dying away in the distance, but that was all. Then silence!

The three seniors stared at one another.

"They've done this on purpose," said Carberry, hoarsely.

"Some of them must have been hanging about ready to lock the door, and the key was in the outside ready."

"My hat!" said Loder. "We're fairly caught."

"I'll—I'll smash them."

"That's all very well," remarked Lucas. "But the question is, what are we going to do now? How are we to get out?"

"They'll never dare to keep us here."

Lucas shrugged his shoulders.

"Those whelps in No. 1 Study would dare anything, I believe," he said.

Carberry kicked furiously at the door.

But only the echo of the noise he made answered him. He desisted at last, in sheer fatigue and fury.

"Not much good kicking the door," said Loder. "The Remove kids won't let us out, and we're too far away from our quarters for any of our fellows to even hear us. We've got to stick here till they choose to let us out."

"I'll—I'll pulverise them!"

"Presently, I dare say," said Loder, with a shrug, "at present we've got to wait."

And he sat on a bed and began to smoke. Lucas grinned and followed his example. Carberry strode about the dormitory like a caged tiger. But his fury was of no avail: there was no escape till the Removites chose to let them go.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Returned with Thanks!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry shouted out his usual vociferous greeting as he met his chums in the passage. The doors were locked, the seniors were safe. Harry Wharton and Co. foregathered in the Remove passage below, and chuckled.

"It's ripping," said Nugent. "They tumbled into it beautifully."

"The rippingfulness is terrific."

"Well, they're disposed of for a bit," Harry Wharton remarked. "Now let's get the visit to Carberry's study over."

And the chums of the Remove, in great spirits, hurried away to Carberry's room. The imprisoned seniors were not likely to escape, and they had plenty of time to carry out their intentions with regard to the sausages.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter was standing in the open doorway of the study, blinking round. He blinked at the Removites as they came in.

"Get out, Bunter," said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton! I came here to speak to Carberry."

"Well, he isn't here. Get out!"

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes, get out!"

"Well, you might tell a fellow," exclaimed Bunter, indignantly. "Carberry's a sporting chap, you know—it's well known he bets on cock-fights in Friardale, at the Bird-in-Hand. I was thinking he might take up my boxing idea. Of course, I'm willing to give you fellows first chance, if you like."

"Rats!"

"If you like to put up a champion, and make up a purse, I'm willing to meet him in the gym, in a boxing contest, Queensberry rules—"

"Will you travel?" roared Bob Cherry, taking the fat junior by one fat ear.

"You're too numerous! There's too many and too much of you! Buzz off!"

"Ow! I say, you fellows, where's Carberry? He might be willing to put up a purse for me to box for—ow—wow!"

Bob Cherry led the fat junior to the door by the ear, and gave him a gentle lift behind with his boot. Billy Bunter staggered into the passage.

"Now buzz off," said Bob. "If you stay one second, I'll go for you with this bat."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bob made a sweep in the air with the bat, and Bunter scudded off. Bob Cherry slammed the door.

"Now we can get to work," he remarked.

And the chums of the Remove set to work at once. The sausages were taken out of the bag, and even the last hour

seemed to have made them worse, and added a keener edge to the scent.

"Good enough for us to eat, were they?" said Nugent, with a sniff. "We'll jolly well see how Carberry likes his own sosses. One in the bed, under the pillow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carberry's bed was in an alcove, and there was a curtain hanging before the alcove, shutting it off from the study. Bob Cherry uprolled one of the pillows, and placed a sausage there, and carefully covered it up. He smoothed out the pillow and the bedclothes to hide every trace of the visit there.

Nugent, meanwhile, opened Carberry's hat-box.

He took out a silk hat, and with the aid of some pins and fish-hooks, fastened the next sausage inside the hat, close up to the crown.

As the weight of the succulent article was not great, Carberry wasn't likely to notice the sausage unless he looked into the hat; but everybody near him was certain to notice the scent of it, especially if it remained there till the next day.

"Better put one in the drawer of the table," suggested Bob Cherry, as Nugent reclosed the hat-box and put it away.

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

The third sausage was put in the table drawer. The fourth was carefully packed away in a handkerchief-box.

There remained two to dispose of, and the juniors considered the matter. Harry Wharton burst into a sudden laugh.

"He's certain to light the gas when he comes in," he remarked. "We'll hang one just over the gas-jet, and it will begin to fizzle before he notices it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A piece of string and a hook jammed into the ceiling soon accomplished it. The sausage hung directly over the burner, about six inches above it.

"We'll leave the last one on the table, with a note," said Wharton.

"Good idea!"

A fork was found in Carberry's drawer, and upon it the sausage was impaled, the fork then being stuck upright in the table. On one of the prongs Wharton strung a note.

"Returned, with thanks.—The Remove."

"I think that about finishes it," said Mark Linley, laughing. "Ye gods, what an unholy whiff there is in this study now!"

"Yes; I dare say it will seem sorter familiar to Carberry when he comes in," Bob Cherry remarked.

And the juniors, grinning gleefully, quitted the study. Billy Bunter was waiting for them in the passage, and he blinked at them reproachfully.

"I say, you fellows, you might tell me where Carberry is," he said.

"He's in the Remove dormitory," said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It's a fact—honest Injun—he's locked in."

"Oh! Is it a jape?"

"Exactly. I'd advise you to keep out of his reach if you let him out; he doesn't love the Remove just now."

"Oh, that's all right! I'll explain to him that I hadn't any hand in these rotten tricks."

"These what?" roared Bob.

But Bunter scuttled off without replying.

"We'd better keep together for a bit, I think," Bob Cherry remarked. "Let's have a practice of the Operative Society in your study, Wharton, with the door locked. It's no good talking to Carberry till he's had time to cool down."

"Ha, ha! Right-ho!"

And the juniors adjourned to No. 1 in the Remove passage. Bob and Mark brought a much-needed gift of provisions for a general tea, and Elliott and Ogilvy and Morgan came in to join in the singing practice. The juniors did not intend to stir out till bedtime.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter had scuttled off to the Remove dormitory. He was full of his idea of getting Carberry, who was well known as an amateur sportsman, to back him up in his boxing idea.

Bunter never thought of a wheeze without thinking how to make money out of it; but as his wheezes were all of the most impracticable kind, the money was very slow in coming in. In fact, although Bunter was simply crammed with wheezes, he had never been known to make any money at all.

But if Carberry backed him up this time, the amateur pug. felt that a purse of twenty guineas might be had almost for the asking, for he believed in his pugilistic ability with a touching faith.

He reached the Remove dormitory, and soon heard sounds which showed him that the Removites had not been "rotting," as he had half suspected.

There was a tramp of feet inside, and an occasional savage kick at the panels of the door.

"He's there all right," murmured Bunter. "Good! He's bound to be in a good temper if I let him out, and he'll back me up all right."

And Bunter turned the key in the lock and threw the door open. He would have done more wisely to explain things to the angry prefect through the keyhole first.

Carberry jumped as the door opened, and ran towards it. He saw a Removite there—one of the tenants of No. 1 Study, too—and did not stop to ask questions.

He rushed upon Bunter, seized him by the collar, and swung him round. In a second his cane was making rapid play round Bunter's fat limbs.

Billy yelled and squirmed with pain and terror.

"Ow! Leggo! Yah! Yow! Leave off! I say, you fellows, I—I came to let you out, you know. I never had a hand in—Ow—wow—yow!"

Carberry hurled him upon the floor.

"Now I'll settle with Wharton!" he snarled.

And he rushed away, with Lucas and Loder at his heels, in search of the hero of the Remove. Billy Bunter sat up and blinked after him through his spectacles, almost paralysed with indignation.

In a couple of minutes the prefect was raging outside No. 1 Study. But singing practice started just as he started to knock, and a roar of the chorus of "On the Ball!" was the only reply he received. He gave it up at last, deferring his vengeance to a more convenient time, and savagely strode away to his study. Fresh troubles awaited him there.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Haunted.

"**P**HEW!"

That was what Loder said as he followed Carberry into the study. Lucas stopped in the doorway, with a suspicious sniff. Carberry had relighted the gas.

"Well, what are you snorting about?" demanded Carberry, whose temper had not been improved by the recent happenings.

Loder sniffed again.

"'Nuff to make anybody snort, I think!" he said. "Do you usually keep German sausages on the table—and in that state?"

Carberry glared at the pork sausage, the fork, and the note. He read the note, and almost danced.

"Returned with thanks!" read Loder. "What on earth does it mean?"

"It's a joke of those young rotters in No. 1 Study," snarled Carberry. "I sent them the sosses—there were half a dozen of them—by that fat young worm Bunter, as a present. I thought they were good enough for them. This was why they were dodging us out of the study—so that they could bring the stuff back."

Loder chuckled.

"Well, I rather think the joke is up against you this time, Carberry," he remarked. "The Remove will howl over it. It wasn't a very savoury one at the start. You'd have done better to bury those sosses and put a particularly big tombstone upon them, so that they couldn't move. I don't think I'll stay for that smoke. It's a little too thick!"

"Take that soss away with you."

"Thanks! Lucas will take it."

And Loder walked quickly out of the study.

"Lucas jolly well won't!" said the owner of that name. And he followed Loder down the passage, leaving Carberry to deal with the malodorous sausage as he thought fit.

The bully of the Sixth scowled after his friends, and then picked up the fork. He opened the window, and looked out into the dusky quad. With a swing of the hand he released the sausage from the fork, and sent it whirling far into the gloom.

Then he breathed more freely.

"Jolly good riddance, that!" he murmured. "Jolly glad they brought only one back! H'm! The niff doesn't seem to be quite gone, either."

He glanced round the study with a puzzled expression.

There was still a fragrant odour of antique sausage, and, to Carberry's amazement, it seemed to be cooking. There was a distinct sizzle.

"My only hat! What can it be? There's no fire here. Ah!"

He glanced up at the gas.

The sausage suspended over the burner was beginning to drip fat upon the table.

The prefect could scarcely believe his eyes for the moment.

"Oh! The young brutes!"

He grabbed at the suspended sausage, and yelled as he received a drip of hot fat on the arm. Carberry grasped the succulent morsel, and yelled again as it burnt his hand. He hurled it out of the open window.

An astonished voice floated upon the darkness of the Close:

"Bless my soul!"

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Carberry started, and kept close. It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

Carberry knew that Mr. Quelch would be looking up and scanning the lighted windows, and he was careful not to show himself. The Remove-master could not guess from which window the sausage had been hurled.

"I hope it bunged him in the eye!" murmured the prefect. "He ought to keep his Form in better order. I'll skin those young beasts! I shouldn't wonder if the rest of the sosses are shoved into this room somewhere!"

And the prefect, who was haunted by the odour, looked round for any others that might be there, to get rid of them as soon as possible.

He found one in the drawer of his table, and hurled it out of the window, taking care to send it farther off this time. Others he could not find, and he came to the conclusion that the Remove had returned only half his savoury gift.

When he left the study he left the door and window wide open, in order that a strong draught through the room might waft away the last lingering traces of that exquisite scent. He looked out for the chums of No. 1 Study, but he did not find them.

The operatic practice was still going on merrily in Wharton's study, and the bully of the Sixth guessed that the juniors did not mean to come out till bed-time.

Carberry went up to bed in a bad temper that night. He felt that he had been persecuted, and he did not choose to reflect that he had started it himself by his insult to the dignity of the Remove. According to the prefect's ideas, a junior's business was to take all that his seniors chose to give him, and smile sweetly the while. They had very different ideas in the Remove.

When Carberry entered his room to go to bed he was surprised to find that the scent was still strong there.

There was a steady breeze between the door and the window, but it had not succeeded in wafting away the lingering odour.

Carberry looked round angrily. It occurred to him that the rest of the sausages might have been placed there during his absence. But there was no sign of them.

It was pretty certain that some of them were in the room, however. He hunted for them, muttering things under his breath. He discovered one at last in his handkerchief-box, and hurled it forth—and was greatly inclined to hurl the handkerchiefs after it. He contented himself, however, with putting them out into the passage.

And still the scent haunted him.

But he could find no more; and at last he undressed and went to bed.

He had turned out the gas, and laid his head upon the pillow when he started up again, with a savage exclamation.

The scent was stronger than ever.

He scrambled out of bed, and fumbled for a match, barking his shins against a chair, and finally relighted the gas.

Then he searched through the bed. The sausage under his pillow came to light.

Breathing threats of vengeance he picked it up with the tongs and dropped it from the window. He threw the pillow out into the passage, and took a cushion from his armchair. And at last he was able to settle down to slumber.

He was becoming so accustomed to the smell in the room now that he could hardly tell whether it was gone or not. He woke up several times that night with the scent in his nostrils.

When the rising-bell went in the morning and he turned out he sniffed, and sniffed. There was no doubt about it, the sixth and final pork sausage was still in the room somewhere.

Loder looked in at the door as he was dressing.

"Getting up, Carberry? Why—what—how— It's still here!"

And Loder fled.

Carberry muttered anathemas. Where the remaining sausage could be he had no idea, and he could not find it without turning out every receptacle in the study.

But the discovery was near at hand.

He had to don his silk-hat to walk down to chapel; and as he opened his hat-box the scent grew more palpable.

Lucas looked in at the door, holding his nose.

"Bedder gome," he said; "you're lade vor jabbel!"

And he ran.

Carberry snorted, yanked out his silk-hat and jammed it on his head. He took a quick glance into the box, but the "soss" did not seem to be there; but he had no time to look for it then.

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By Frank Richards.

He ran after his friends, and joined the rest of the Sixth in the Close.

Several fellows looked at him and sniffed. It was just Carberry's luck, as he would have expressed it, that there should happen to be a special morning chapel that morning.

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, tapped him on the arm.

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

"Nothing!" growled the prefect.

"Have you been using any rotten hairwash or anything?" asked Wingate, with a glance at Ionides, the Greek, the Sixth-Former, who was much given to facewashes and complexion-powders and hair glossers, and so forth.

Ionides turned red.

Carberry shook his head impatiently.

"Of course not!"

"Then what's that horrid scent?"

"The juniors have been planting high sosses in my study, that's all. I suppose the smell sticks to me."

"If'n!" Wingate sniffed, and sniffed. "Blessed if I don't think you'd better cut chapel! Look here, the scent comes from your napper. It can't be a soss; it must be a hairwash!"

"I tell you——"

"Perhaps there's one in his hat!" suggested Loder.

Carberry snatched his hat off and looked into it. Then he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wingate.

The prefect, with a furious face, detached the sausage from the lining of his hat and dropped it to the ground.

"The beasts! I'll make them smart for this!"

And he held his hat in his hand to air it as they walked down to chapel.

And as they came in sight of the Remove Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Carberry, and the prefect could hardly restrain himself from going for them on the spot.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Gets His Own Way.

THE history of the pork sausages was known all over the Remove that morning, and the Form chuckled over it loud and long. Most of the other fellows chuckled over it, too. Even the Sixth, when they heard it, chuckled in private; though in public they assumed severe expressions, and appeared to think that things were coming to a serious pass when a junior ventured to play tricks on a Sixth-Former.

Carberry was thinking only of vengeance; but he was a little puzzled how to act.

He was accustomed to treating the juniors in a high-handed way. But Harry Wharton & Co. were made of sterner stuff than most of the Lower School fellows. They were not to be easily bullied or licked. Against a bully, even in the Sixth Form, they were pretty certain to unite; and in a tussle with the crowd of them, Carberry was equally certain to come off second-best. As for using his authority as a prefect, that was difficult in this case. For the juniors were certain to resist punishment, and an appeal to a master would bring out the whole of the unsavoury story of the pork sausages.

Carberry didn't want to make himself look more absurd than he looked at present. And he knew that if it came out that he had started the trouble, he would get no sympathy from the powers above. They were more likely to read him a severe lecture on his folly in entering into a japing competition with fellows in a junior Form. They would tell him to be more careful to uphold his dignity as a prefect, and would dismiss the case.

So Carberry thought he had better lie low at present, and watch his opportunity. If he could only catch the Removites napping, if he could only make out a strong case against Wharton & Co.—some case in which the masters could not but back him up—that would be a revenge.

And, as it happened, Carberry was upon the verge of that very opportunity. That Wharton & Co. were not immaculate he knew; he knew perfectly well that they were human boys, and consequently full of faults. They might not be much the worse for it. But if he could catch them at an unguarded moment, it might be easy to make a boyish jape look like a deliberate infraction of the rules of the college.

And in his eagerness to get level with the chums of No. 1 Study, Carberry was quite likely to be indiscreet, and to make another blunder, and get the worst of the contest in the long run.

And yet, when the opportunity came, Carberry might be excused for thinking that he really had a handle against the Famous Four at last.

It was, of course, Billy Bunter who caused the trouble.

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Bunter was keeping up the boxing idea with his usual obstinacy.

It was of no use pointing out to the fat junior that he was too fat, and that he ate too much ever to distinguish himself in the ring. Moreover, he was as blind as a bat without his glasses, and to box in glasses was a decidedly risky proceeding. But Bunter was not in the habit of listening to reason. He persisted that he was a born boxer, and that he only wanted a little practice to become a splendid exponent of the manly art. Any opposition in his own study he attributed to jealousy.

Bob Cherry, of No. 13, was inclined to humour him, and see exactly how great an ass he would make of himself.

Since the rivalry had commenced between the two ends of the Remove passage, Bunter had been fired with ambition. Why shouldn't he be the fellow to make No. 1 top study in the Remove? The idea grew upon him. His mind was quite made up now that he would challenge Bob Cherry to a boxing contest, and stake the supremacy of No. 1 Study on the result.

And with the idea of turning an honest penny, as usual, he wanted a purse made up for him to win.

Argument was wasted on Bunter. The fellows in his study tried to reason with him, but in vain. Bunter was past reasoning with.

"I say, you fellows," he remarked, a few days after the sausage adventure, "you might back up a chap in your own study, you know. You chaps are always saying that No. 1 is top study in the Remove."

"So it is," said Nugent.

"Well, but Cherry and Linley claim that No. 13 is top study; and the best way of putting them in their place is to have a proper meeting, according to proper rules, and knock out their champion with the gloves on."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I've been practising hard lately, and Temple, of the Upper Fourth, has been giving me some tips. He says he's never seen a boxer like me."

"True enough, I dare say," said Harry, laughing. "He was rotting you, you young ass."

"Of course, he could see my quality," said Bunter, with dignity. "Not being in my own study, he wasn't jealous of my abilities. This jealousy of a chap in his own quarters is simply sickening."

"My dear ass——"

"Bob Cherry is quite willing to meet me, I believe, if you chaps backed me up and made a meeting of it. As a matter of fact, Cherry's as jealous as you chaps are."

"Jealous of your good looks, I suppose?" suggested Nugent.

"The looks of the esteemed Bunter are terrific," murmured Hurree Singh.

Billy Bunter smirked into the glass.

"Well, you know jolly well what Hazeldene's sister thinks of me."

"Well, she's too polite to say what she thinks about you," said Wharton. "But I can guess. She probably thinks you're a fat, conceited, nasty, slimy toad."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"And if you say another word on the subject, I'll squash you."

"This jealousy gets on my nerves," said Billy Bunter, backing away from Wharton, who was looking dangerous. "I'm not the chap to plume myself on a conquest. I can't help the girls looking at me. They will do it, and I never encourage 'em. There's something about me, I suppose—a sort of distingue manner——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at."

"Look in the glass."

"Oh, really, Nugent, you know perfectly well that Bob Cherry's jealous of me because Marjorie—— Ow! Wow! Leggo!"

"I told you I would squash you."

"Ow! Yow! Wow!"

Bunter jerked himself away, and blinked furiously at Wharton.

"I've a jolly good mind to give you a hiding, Wharton."

"Go ahead!"

"I'm sincerely sorry to see all this jealousy. But to come back to the subject we were speaking of, will you chaps back me up?"

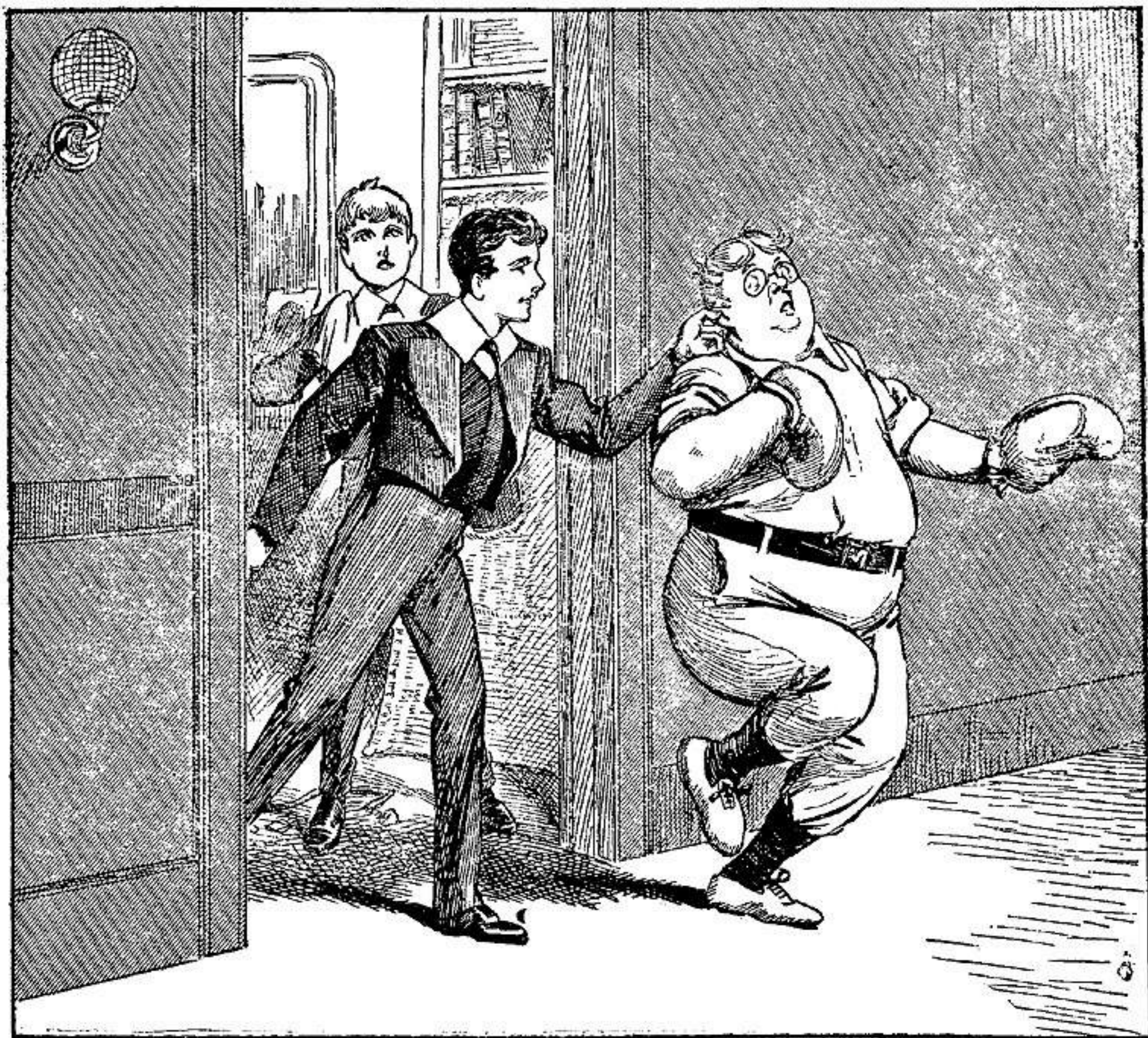
"Oh, ring off, for goodness' sake!"

"Then I shall have to get a backer outside this study," said Billy Bunter. "Carberry's a sporting chap, and he'll back me up. I should think you chaps would like to see a really ripping, first-class boxing contest."

"So we should; but you couldn't box a white rabbit."

"More jealousy! I'll jolly well show you up in the Form, anyway," said Bunter. "I'll let the chaps know how you try to keep me in the shade."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"



"Buzz off!" said Harry Wharton. "A chap's study isn't the place for punching the ball."

Bob Cherry looked in. Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, Cherry, we're discussing the idea of a boxing match, you against me—No. 1 Study against No. 13, you know. Wharton thinks it's a good idea."

"Why, I—"

"Only he's jealous of my scoring, and making a show," explained Bunter.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Too bad!" he said. "I really think Wharton ought to play the game on an occasion like this. Why not back him up, Wharton?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"I think it's a jolly good idea. We could bring the meeting off in the gym., and have a crowd to look on. It's a ripping wheeze."

Harry Wharton laughed. Bob Cherry was a very good boxer, and he was three times as strong as Bunter, and nearly a head taller. A match between them would be utterly absurd. Bob would only have to hit out once to knock the fat junior silly.

But Bunter, blinded by conceit, could not realise anything of the sort. He was anxious to repeat his exploits upon the punching-ball upon the person of Bob Cherry.

Harry knew that Bob's idea was simply to "rot" the fat junior.

But Bunter's importunities and his absurd conceit were getting on Harry's nerves, and he was greatly inclined to let Bob have his way, and let the fat junior make as big a fool of himself as he chose.

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"I say, you fellows, Cherry thinks it's a good wheeze," said Bunter persuasively. "You ought to back me up, you know."

"Look here, Bunter, you're a fat, stupid duffer——"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"But if you insist upon this boxing match coming off, and won't give us any peace till you get it, we'll arrange it."

"Right you are! That's good enough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, going off suddenly like an alarm clock. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at in a business arrangement like this," said Bunter peevishly. "We can fix up the details of the meeting later. Now we'd better see about making up the purse."

"The what?"

"The purse. Of course, we're not going to box for nothing. That would be a waste of time."

"Well, you're a pretty average specimen of a black-guard," said Bob Cherry. "Do you think we're going to box for money?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, it's always done, you know. It's all very well to talk about sport, but I've always noticed that chaps who talk about sport like to rake in the tin all the same. Besides, I'm short of money."

"Not really!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with an air of great surprise.

"Yes, really. I'm almost stony, and I want to raise the wind."

"Hasn't your postal-order come?"
 "No; I've been disappointed about that."
 "Haven't you had a cheque from the Patriotic Home Work Association?"
 "That turned out to be a swindle."
 "What about the remittance from the Imperialist Fair Trading Co?"
 "H'm! That was another swindle."
 "And the big sums you've been getting by sending photographs to the Press?"

"I—I haven't finished any yet."
 The juniors were roaring with laughter as Bob went on with his list. Billy Bunter's schemes for raising money were many and various, and they all ended in the same way.

"Then you'd better sell Wharton's bat, or Nugent's knife, or Inky's diamond ring, or Ogilvy's camera," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "You can't raise any money on a boxing match. You see, we should all be expelled for it, for one thing."

"Of course, we should keep it dark. Fellows always have to keep things dark when they go in for sport at our age," explained Billy Bunter, with an air of great worldly wisdom. "I knew a chap who used to bet on horses with a book-maker, and he had to keep it awfully dark from his pater."

Bob Cherry snorted.
 "Well, I hope his pater found him out, and gave him a jolly good hiding, that's all," he exclaimed, in disgust. "And if I ever catch you doing anything of the sort, I'll take the place of your pater, and give you the licking of your life. And if you say another word about making up a purse for the match, I'll give it you now."

"The purse?"
 "No, ass, the licking."
 Bunter grunted, and left the study. The Famous Four grinned at one another.

"We'll rot him," said Bob Cherry. "We'll get up a boxing match, and have the whole Remove to see it, and make him look the biggest ass in the universe. That ought to have some effect even upon Bunter."

And the Removites agreed that it ought.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Puts Carberry on to a Good Thing.

"WELL, you worm?"
 That was Carberry's polite greeting, as he came into his study and found William George Bunter there.

Billy Bunter was apparently waiting for him to come in. He was sitting on the table, swinging his fat legs. He slid off quickly enough at the sound of a footstep, and blinked a little uneasily at the prefect. He had come there to put Carberry on to a good thing, but he remembered how Carberry had rewarded him the other day for opening the door of the Remove dormitory. When Carberry was in a bad temper, it wasn't safe to come near him, even with the best intentions in the world.

"I—I say, Carberry," said Bunter, watching the bully of the Sixth warily, and prepared to dodge round the table if necessary—"I say, I want to put you on to a good thing, you know."

"What are you jabbering about?"
 "Of course, you know it's an open secret among the fags about your smoking, and playing cards for money, and so on," blinked Bunter. "I—Oh!"

He dodged round the table just in time. Carberry glared at him across the table.

"You fat young scoundrel—"
 "But I—I say, Carberry, I—I didn't mean to offend you, you know. I can put you on to a good thing—a way to win twenty guineas."

The prefect stared at him. He was not above making bets on races with a bookmaker in Friardale, but he kept that a dead secret. It would have meant public expulsion from Greyfriars if it had been known. Some of the fags who took his messages had a pretty clear idea of what went on. But the cheek of a fag coming to him with a tip nearly took Carberry's breath away. He could not speak for the moment, and Billy Bunter rattled on.

"We're getting up a boxing match in the Remove, with a purse for the winner, you see, and I thought you might like to have a hand in it, Carberry, as you're a sporting chap. It will give the affair a tone to have a prefect in it, and I know you put money on Bill Giles when he was boxing the Kentish Buster at the Bird in Hand. We could have a system of sharing out the purse, if you could induce the fellows to put up a decent one."

Carberry almost gasped.
 "You're boxing in the Remove—for a purse!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, rather."
 "Who's boxing?"

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"I am."
 "You? You fat idiot!"
 Bunter blinked indignantly.
 Carberry's remarks could not be called polite.
 "Look here, Carberry, it's a fact. I'm taking up boxing as a science; and Temple, of the Upper Fourth, says I'm a splendid boxer. I know I am, too. I've studied the subject, you see; and there's pretty few things I can't do when I make up my mind. You see, I've got the scientific knowledge, and that's what counts more than mere strength. Cherry has the brute strength, but I have the science. I shall knock him into a cocked hat. You'll see!"

"You're boxing Cherry, of the Remove?"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "For a purse of money?"
 "Yes. I shall refuse to box without a purse. Of course, a chap wants paying for his trouble."

Carberry looked at him in a very curious way. If Harry Wharton & Co. were mixed up, in truth, in a disreputable scheme of this sort, it was his duty as a prefect—to say nothing of other considerations—to expose them, and then that Wharton would be expelled, and his followers flogged, was an absolute certainty. But was it true? Carberry found it easy to believe what he wanted to believe.

The fact that the prefect was undoubtedly interested encouraged Bunter. He went on more confidently.

"You see, Carberry, I came to put you on to this because it's a good thing. I'm a sporting chap myself. There's no reason why you shouldn't do well out of it. If you don't want to take a hand in getting up the fight, you could make bets on it. I know you and Lucas and Loder and Musgrave and the rest make bets among yourselves; and you could land quite a sum of money. Of course, I should expect a commission for putting you up to the thing."

"Who's in this with you?" asked Carberry abruptly, convinced at last that Billy Bunter, at all events, was in deadly earnest, and was not working off an elaborate hoax upon him.

"Oh, all the fellows, you know! I'm boxing Bob Cherry. Linley backs him up. The fellows in my study are making the arrangements."

"Harry Wharton, I suppose?"
 "Yes, Wharton, and Nugent, and Inky. Most of the Remove will be there though to see the match. You ought to see it. Of course, it wouldn't do for a prefect to appear openly in the matter. But you could look on without being seen. Come to think of it, we ought to have it in the open air somewhere, at a distance from the school. It would be safer."

If Carberry had been in the habit of doing his duty as a prefect, he would have felt the insult of being supposed to be prepared to break any rule of the school in this flagrant way.

He did not feel insulted, however. He only felt an inward rejoicing that he had at last caught Harry Wharton napping. Wharton, of course, would not have the faintest idea that Bunter had told him this. The safest thing he could do would be to pretend to disbelieve every word of it, and kick Bunter out of his study. Then it would go on uninterrupted, and at the proper moment he could descend upon the young rascals and catch them in the act. Then, exit Harry Wharton!

Carberry broke into a chuckle at the thought of it. The chuckle encouraged Billy Bunter.

"Do you think it's a good idea, Carberry?"
 "Where are you thinking of having the meeting?" asked Carberry, without replying to that question.

"Well, I haven't had time to think about that. But there's the old barn, you know—the place where Nugent disguised himself when we were having a contest with the Boy Scouts of Pegg. That would be a good place. Lots of room, and very secluded. No danger of masters or prefects—ahem!—no danger of anybody coming along."

"And when is it to take place?"
 "I think Saturday afternoon would be a good time—soon after dinner, you know."

Carberry pointed to the door.
 Bunter, not understanding what that meant when he was getting along so swimmingly, blinked at him.

"What do you mean, Carberry?"
 "Get out!"
 "Eh?"

"Get out!" said Carberry. "I don't believe a word you've been saying. You are trying to hoax me!"

"Oh, really, Carberry—"
 "If I believed you, it would be my duty as a prefect to stop you," said Carberry, remembering that what he said might come out later. "But I don't believe a word of it. I am certain that Wharton would never be mixed up in anything of the sort. Now get out of my study!"
 "I—I say—"

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Carberry picked up a cane. Bunter made a rush for the door, and the prefect was quickly behind him. The cane rang and sang on the fat limbs of the junior as he dodged out of the room, and he went down the passage at express speed.

Carberry flung the cane upon the table and chuckled grimly.

"At last!" he muttered. "I think I've really got you at last, Harry Wharton! We shall see!"

Bunter did not stop running till he reached No. 1 Study. He dashed in breathlessly, and collapsed into the armchair.

Wharton and Nugent were there, and they stared at him blankly.

"What on earth's the matter, Billy?"

"Carberry!" gasped Bunter. "He's gone mad!"

"Is he after you?"

"Yes! I don't know! No, I suppose I've raced him!" said Bunter breathlessly. "I always knew he was a cad and a bullying beast; but I didn't know he was mad! I told him about our boxing-match, and he wouldn't believe a word of it, and kicked me out of his study, and chased me along the passage with the poker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! He's a dangerous maniac. He made a cut at me with the tongs as I turned the corner——"

"Ha, ha! It was the poker a moment ago!"

"He had the poker in one hand, and the tongs in the other. He might have brained me, if——"

"If you had any brains?"

"Oh, really, Nugent! If he had hit me, I mean. Fortunately, I sprang out of the way, and the poker——"

"Ha, ha! The tongs——"

"I mean the tongs—the tongs crashed upon the wall with a sickening thud!" said Bunter, who never stopped to consider the facts when he began to tell a yarn. "He must have bent them with the crash on the wall. He might have brained me. I went to his study to put him on to a good thing, and this is what I get in return!"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! If you'd been chased down the passage by a chap with a cricket-stump in his hand you'd——"

"My only hat! Which hand did he have the cricket-stump in?"

"He must have had a third hand!" grinned Nugent. "A handy man altogether. He's like a chap in the American gore-book, who had a revolver in each hand and a bowie-knife in the other. I say, Bunter, have you really been to Carberry's study at all?"

At this question, which implied a far-reaching distrust of his veracity, the fat junior simply snorted. But he said no more about his visit to Carberry. He had no sympathy to expect in No. 1 Study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Billy Bunter Going Strong.

THE Remove heard of the coming boxing-match with great pleasure. If Bunter the boxer proved to be as funny as Bunter the hypnotist and Bunter the photographer, they were assured of a hearty laugh on Saturday afternoon.

Billy Bunter was taking the matter very seriously.

He was the only fellow in the Remove who did.

The match having been decided upon, the details were soon arranged. The old barn in the field was decided upon for the place. Four o'clock on Saturday afternoon was the time. Nugent and Mark Linley were the seconds, Harry Wharton timekeeper, and Hazeldene referee.

Most of the Remove had determined to come. The barn was a spacious one, and there was plenty of room.

Hazeldene said that he would bring his sister if he could manage it, to see what a splendid boxer Bunter was, and Billy Bunter purred with satisfaction. He was very eager to distinguish himself in the eyes of Marjorie Hazeldene.

The whole Remove was looking forward joyously to the boxing event. Bunter was a distinguished person.

Under the circumstances, he could not be refused permission to have his punching-ball put up in No. 1 Study again. He explained that he had to train. And a great many fellows looked in to see him training, taking good care to keep out of reach.

Bunter flattered himself that he was in excellent condition, and he prided himself particularly upon his knowledge of the science of the thing.

"What you want is science," he explained to the fellows in No. 1 Study.

"You mean it's what you want!" grinned Nugent.

"I've got it!" said Bunter. "I fancy Cherry will find it a bit difficult to get through my guard. Look here!"

Bunter jammed the boxing-gloves on his fat fists and made a pass at Nugent.

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Nugent received a tap on the chest that would not have hurt a fly; but he sat down with a heavy bump.

"Oh! Hold on! I'm done!" he gasped.

Bunter blinked round triumphantly.

"There you are, you see!" he remarked complacently. "I didn't put much force into that blow; it was the science that did it."

Frank Nugent staggered to his feet. He appeared to be labouring under some suppressed emotion.

"Good!" he said weakly. "If you box like that on Saturday, Bunter, the Remove will have something worth seeing!"

"Well, I don't want to brag, you fellows. But what I don't know about boxing isn't worth knowing. But I wanted to show you my guard. Just try——"

Nugent backed away.

"No, thank you! I don't want another of those knock-down blows!"

"I won't hurt you," said Bunter patronisingly.

"I'm not going to risk it. You might hit out hard without thinking, and perhaps smash me up."

"Well, I might; I'm awfully strong," said Bunter. "You try, Inky. See if you can get past my guard."

Hurree Janset Ram Singh sparred at the fat junior.

Bunter knocked all his blows aside with perfect ease, perhaps because Hurree Singh allowed him to do so. Then he gave the nabob a slight tap, and the dusky junior went down with a bump that shook the study.

"Oh, the painfulness is terrific!" he gasped.

"Good! It's the science that does it. Will you have a go, Wharton?"

"No, thanks!" said Harry, laughing. "It's quite enough to see you knock out Nugent and Inky."

Bunter peeled off the gloves. He was swelling so much with importance that there really seemed danger that his waistcoat buttons would not stand the strain.

"And now about the purse?" he remarked.

"What purse?"

"The purse we're boxing for. How much is it to be?"

"Ass!"

"Do you mean to say that you think I'm going to box for nothing?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "I told you plainly there would have to be a purse. And look here. Not so much of your calling me names. I'm not going to stand it!"

"You're not going to stand it?" murmured Wharton.

"No, I'm not! I'm a jolly good boxer, and I'm not going to stand any nonsense. I could lick any fellow in this study, and don't you forget it! Now, about that purse. I want twenty guineas!"

"Twenty rats!"

"Well, suppose we say five guineas. It could be got up by subscription in the Form. Well, I don't want to be exacting. I'm thinking of giving a series of these pugilistic exhibitions, and expect to make a steady income from them. Suppose we say a pound."

A glimmer came into Nugent's eyes.

"Would you be satisfied with a pound?" he asked.

"No, not satisfied, but I would put up with it. I never get treated as I ought to be treated, for that matter."

"Well, if a pound would do——"

"Look here——" began Wharton.

"Leave it to me, old chap. I think Bunter ought to have his pound. Why should he box for nothing? Come on, you chaps, and let Bunter have another go at the punching-ball. Give it one for its mother, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

The three chums left the study. They met Bob Cherry in the passage. From No. 1 Study proceeded a sound of biffing and banging. Bunter the boxer was busy. Harry drew Nugent to a stop in the passage.

"Look here," he said, "what are you driving at? Bunter's not going to have his way in this. We can't leave any gambling mixed up in a jape."

"Who's talking about gambling? Bunter wants to box for a pound."

"Well, a sovereign is as bad as fifty pounds, for that matter. I say——"

"You're jolly dense. Who's talking about a sovereign?"

"A pound's a sovereign, isn't it?" demanded Wharton, perplexed.

"Not always—a pound of treacle, or a pound of candles, for instance."

The juniors stared at Nugent for a moment, and then burst into a roar of laughter that echoed through the corridor.

Nugent chuckled.

"That's the idea," he remarked. "I said a pound—and a pound it shall be. Only it's to be a pound of candles. I'll get them at Mrs. Mumble's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, little dreaming of the real nature of the purse he was to combat for, slogged away at the punching-ball with might and main. After knocking it about for a quarter of an hour, he was satisfied. If he knocked Cherry about like that, the champion of No. 13 Study would be very queer afterwards.

On Saturday morning Bunter was swelling with so much importance that Carberry might have noticed something, even if he had not possessed the clue. The prefect was, however, on the watch all the time. References to the coming match had been made by Removites in his hearing, and he knew that Bunter had not boasted him as far as that was concerned. A boxing-match, of course, there could be no objections to; but a kind of prize-fight for money would bring down upon the juniors all the thunders of the Head's wrath. Carberry was almost sure; he wanted to be quite sure.

"No more of that hoax, I suppose?" he remarked, tapping Bunter on the shoulder that Saturday morning.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him.

"It's not a hoax, Carberry; it's jolly well coming off."

"Rats! Do you mean to tell me you've got a purse to box for?"

"Yes, rather! They're treating me very meanly, only putting up a pound to be fought for, and I believe some of them think Bob Cherry will get that, and stand treat with it; so they won't lose anything," said Bunter, in an aggrieved tone. "Of course, I shall win it. It's not much, but it's a beginning."

"You young ass! I don't believe a word of it!"

And Carberry walked away. But he was sure now. To go to the barn when the fight was on, and to take an unimpeachable witness with him—that was Carberry's idea. The Head would hardly consent to go; but Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, could not decline, as the boys of his Form were involved.

Carberry kept his own counsel for the present. But the chatter among the Remove even in the class-room was noticed by Mr. Quelch himself, and he guessed that there was something on among the juniors, though he had no suspicion as to what it was.

Hazeldene pedalled off on his bicycle in the direction of Cliff House after dinner, and shortly afterwards hardly a Removite was to be seen on the playing-fields or about the school.

Harry Wharton & Co. went out in a group, Bunter with them; and Nugent carried a parcel which the keen-eyed prefect guessed to contain the requisites for the fight.

With a gleam in his eyes, Carberry went to look for Mr. Quelch. The latter gentleman was in his study, and seemed to be busy; but he laid down his pen as the prefect came in. Carberry's grave face warned him that something serious was coming.

"I trust I am not interrupting you, sir," said Carberry. "I have a very serious matter to mention to you—a matter so serious that I do not care to interfere in it by myself."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, who did not seem to be duly impressed by this exordium. "May I ask you to state the matter as briefly as possible?"

The prefect bit his lip.

"Certainly, sir. It is a disgraceful, an utterly disgraceful and degrading matter, and concerns the boys of your Form," he said spitefully.

The Remove-master looked at him sharply.

"In that case, I shall be glad to have it brought to my notice," he said coldly. "But I cannot forget that you have a prejudice against certain boys in my Form, and that you have on previous occasions brought unfounded accusations against Wharton in particular. Does this matter concern Wharton?"

"As it happens, it does."

"I guessed so."

"If you prefer it, I will go to the Head, sir," said Carberry hotly. "If you choose to allow the Remove to mix themselves up in prize-fights—"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Tell me at once what you have to tell me, Carberry."

"Harry Wharton and his friends have gone off to a quiet place, where they have arranged a prize-fight between two boys in the Remove," said Carberry. "If it were a common fight, I should interfere as a prefect. I have received information that it is to be a prize-fight—information I discredited at first. When Bunter mentioned the matter in my hearing, I told him plainly that I did not believe Wharton would ever mix himself up in such a matter. I refused to listen to any more. But certain events have happened to-day which bear out his story."

"What events?" asked Mr. Quelch sharply.

"The whole of the Remove have gone out. They have been whispering mysteriously to one another about some—

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thing. Bunter has been practising with the punching-ball for a week or more."

"Bunter?"

"He is one of the principals. It looks to me as if he is put up simply to be beaten, in order that the gang—"

"The gang?"

"Wharton and his friends—in order that they may obtain the money."

"Do you affirm that these boys are fighting for money?"

"I have only Bunter's word for it, but he is a principal. He is so lost to all sense of propriety, under Wharton's influence, that he imagined I should be willing to pass over the matter, and put money on the fight myself."

"That does not look as if you have made yourself respected as a prefect," said Mr. Quelch drily.

"It is not a question of me now, but of Wharton," said Carberry, with a touch of insolence in his manner. "If you wish to protect him—"

"You know perfectly well that I wish to do nothing of the sort, Carberry. If this story is true, he will be expelled from Greyfriars, and I shall be glad to see him go. But I shall not believe it without the most direct proof."

"It is easy enough to obtain proof. I will show you the way to the barn where the prize-fight is going on at this moment."

Mr. Quelch rose from his chair.

"I will come with you," he said quietly.

And master and prefect left Greyfriars together—Mr. Quelch worried and uneasy, and Carberry in a mood of suppressed triumph.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Great Event.

"KICK off, you chaps!"

That was how the Removites put it. They were waiting in the old barn, in a big circle, eager for the combat to commence.

Billy Bunter was in his shirt-sleeves, his braces tied round his fat waist. He looked very businesslike.

So did Bob Cherry, also in his shirt-sleeves, and trying on a pair of boxing-gloves with an air of great seriousness.

So did the seconds. They had basins of water and sponges, all ready, and towels over their arms. To judge by the preparations, a prize-fight of a very serious order was about to take place.

"Go it!"

"On the ball!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the audience. He was very pleased by the enthusiasm, but he could not quite understand why most of the fellows were grinning. He concluded that they didn't think that Bob Cherry had a ghost of a chance.

"I'm ready!" he remarked.

Wharton took out his watch.

"Referee's not yet arrived," he said. "The bouncer is bringing some lady visitors to see the combat."

"Never mind the referee; start."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

Hazeldene entered the barn with Marjorie, his sister, and her friend Clara. The two girls were smiling. Bunter was very gratified by their presence, though he was a little surprised that they should come to see so brutal a thing as a prize-fight. It wasn't like Marjorie. But he reflected that the girls would probably have gone anywhere to have the pleasure of seeing him; and that reflection was quite enough to satisfy Billy Bunter.

"Now we're all here!" said Harry, as he raised his cap to the girls. "Shove that bench forward for the ladies, Skinner."

"Right-ho!"

"Gentlemen, this historic match is about to commence. Ladies, you are about to behold a combat in which will be revived, and outdone, the heroism of the Middle Ages. William George Bunter is going to tackle Bob Cherry. You can see that Cherry is the bigger of the two, though Bunter perhaps makes up in width what Cherry gains in length."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But look at Bunter, and note the wonderful development of his form, and you will see that Cherry has no chance against him. In this combat the heroism is really on the side of Cherry, in undertaking an apparently impossible task. If Cherry is seriously injured, we shall have to subscribe to send him to a convalescent home. But Bunter has promised not to use him too roughly."

ANSWERS

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"I don't want to hurt him," said Bunter. "I'm simply giving this show as an exhibition of first-class boxing, not because I want to hurt Bob Cherry. My chief incentive is to show what real boxing is really like. As for the pound, I shall stand a feed with that."

There was a general chuckle from the fellows who knew in what the "pound" consisted. A feed upon a pound of tallow candles would not be exactly a treat.

"By the way, I hope that pound hasn't been forgotten," added Bunter, a little anxiously. "I haven't seen anything of it so far."

"It's in my bag," said Nugent, pointing to the bag he had brought the boxing-gloves in. "We raised it in Study No. 1, among ourselves, and I changed it for the pound at Mrs. Mimbles."

"Good!"

"Are you ready, gentlemen?"

"What-ho!"

"Then go it!"

The two boxers stepped into the ring and shook hands with great solemnity, and then Bunter stepped back for a moment.

"Of course, it's understood that there's to be no hitting above the chin," he said. "You might break my spectacles, and then you would have to pay for them."

"That's understood."

"All right, then. Not that I suppose you will hit me at all, as my guard is so perfect."

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Roll on him, Porpoise!"

"Buck up, Peckham!"

And the combat commenced.

Harry Wharton timed the rounds solemnly. Bob Cherry really seemed to have no chance at all. Bunter had only to touch him and he sat down on the ground. He was down twice in the first round, though a spectator might have imagined that he had not been struck hard enough to knock over a mouse.

The audience yelled with glee.

Bunter's air as he retired to his second's knee after the round was superb. The fact that the fat junior had not the slightest suspicion that he was being made fun of was the most ludicrous part of the performance. He really thought he was getting the better of Bob Cherry, who could have wiped him off the earth with one hand in a single round.

"How do you feel, Bunt?" asked Nugent, as he received his principal on his knee, and fanned him with a cap.

"Right as rain," said Bunter. "What do you think of my upper-cut?"

"Your which?"

"My upper-cut—the one I knocked Cherry down with last time."

"Oh! Was that an upper-cut?"

"Of course it was! Blessed lot you know about boxing!"

"It was ripping!" said Nugent earnestly. "I never saw an upper-cut like that in my life before!"

"Time!"

Bunter jumped up nimbly. He was greeted by a loud cheer from the crowd. They were thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Bunter pressed the fighting in the second round. He wanted to show the girls what he really could do. Bob Cherry was rather put to it to guard himself without hurting Bunter. He allowed a few light knocks to come home, and fell down each time he was touched.

"My goodness!" said Miss Clara in a whisper. "How funny it is! Fancy Bunter not knowing that he is being made game of!"

Marjorie laughed.

"He is so conceited," she said.

Bunter saw the two girls speaking together, and fluttered. He had no doubt they were admiring his splendid physique, and thinking that he looked like a hero of romance.

"Time!"

Bob Cherry was gasping like a locomotive at the end of the second round. Bunter was a little winded. He was naturally short of breath, and he had been dancing round Cherry with unusual activity.

"Give me something to drink," he said. "I'm dry. Warm work this boxing you know, when you go in for the real thing."

"It must be," agreed Nugent. "Have some water?"

"Groo! Haven't you got any ginger-beer?"

"No; but there's lots of water."

"H'm! I'll get some out of the pound afterwards."

Nugent wondered how he would get ginger-beer out of the pound of candles, but he did not say so. He sponged over Bunter's heated face solemnly, and at the call of time the combatants faced one another again.

Bob Cherry came up to time, but he was staggering as he faced Bunter. He looked—to Bunter—as if he were decidedly groggy. Bob was not a particularly good actor, and only Bunter could not see that he was putting it on.

Bunter fairly sailed into it this time. He hit out in a splendid windmill style, and his boxing-gloves clattered all

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over Bob Cherry's chest. When Bob was tired of being punched he simply kept one arm out straight, and Bunter could not get past it. But he let the fat junior land many punches. There was not force enough in them to hurt a sturdy fellow like Bob.

Bump!

He went down at last with a heavy bump, and the girls gave a little shriek—but it was of laughter. For as Bob rolled over on the ground he made a grimace at them, unseen by the fatuous Owl of the Remove.

Then Wharton began to count:

"One, two, three, four, five—"

If Bob Cherry did not rise by the time ten were counted he was beaten, according to the rules of the contest.

He gave a terrific stage groan, and did not rise.

"Six, seven, eight, nine—"

Billy Bunter stood in a grand attitude. Ajax defying the Lightning was a mere nothing to William George Bunter at that moment.

"Ten!"

The fateful word rang out, and at the same moment two figures darkened the open doorway of the old barn.

There was a general exclamation:

"Mr. Quelch!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Carberry Is Not Pleased!

MR. QUELCH stood surveying the scene. Carberry, looking in beside him, fairly gloated. Stronger proof of the prefect's accusation could hardly be adduced.

There was the ring, the basins of water and the sponges and towels, the two fighters in their shirt-sleeves and boxing-gloves, Harry Wharton, watch in hand, counting. Bob Cherry extended gasping on the floor, and Bunter standing over him in a victorious attitude!

It looked, at a mere glance, something more than an ordinary junior fight. And if the purse was a fact—! And wasn't it? Carberry knew it!

Mr. Quelch's brows grew black as a thundercloud.

"What does all this mean?"

Some of the Removites looked scared. They were not there for any harm, yet the master's anger tied their tongues, and they did not know what to say.

But Harry Wharton was not likely to be troubled like that. A glance at Carberry's exultant face, and he guessed



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A School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By Frank Richards.

now matters stood, and he could hardly restrain a laugh as he realised the prefect's blunder.

Carberry had over-reached himself this time, as he had done before.

"Wharton, I call upon you, as head boy of the Remove, to explain this."

"Certainly, sir."

"Carberry has brought me here to see, as he alleges, a prize-fight among you juniors for a purse of money."

"A pound, at all events," said Carberry.

"A shilling would be as bad as a hundred pounds," said Mr. Quelch. "I cannot credit, without proof, that any boy in my Form would be so blackguardly. Explain yourself at once, Wharton!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter. "It's all up! I say, sir—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" whispered Mark Linley.

"I'm not going to. I'm not going to be done. I say, sir, I don't think Wharton ought to be expelled, sir. This is only sport. Anyway, I think I ought to have the pound."

"What pound, Bunter?"

"The pound Cherry and I were fighting for, sir."

"Then it is true, Wharton?"

"Please allow me to explain, sir. Bunter is a silly ass—ahem—excuse me, sir, but Bunter can't help being a noodle."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"If there were a real fight going on here, sir, you would hardly be likely to find Marjorie and Clara here."

Mr. Quelch, noticing the girls for the first time, raised his hat courteously.

"I am sure of that," he said. "Go on."

"The fact is, sir, Bunter's an ass, as I said. He thinks he can box, and he can't box for toffee—I mean he can't box at all. He's been worrying us to get up a boxing-match so that he could show off—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And he wouldn't give us any peace till we agreed. But as he can't box, and is too blind and silly to be able to take care of himself—"

"Look here—"

"We got up a spoof match, sir, to rot him—ahem—to make game of him. He's so silly and conceited, sir, that we thought it would be a lesson to him. You must see that Cherry could knock him to pieces with one blow if he liked."

"Well, rather, sir," said Bob Cherry, getting up, all traces of exhaustion suddenly gone.

"Bunter was too conceited and silly to see our fun, sir. He fancies that he has knocked out Cherry, but Cherry was funning all the time."

"It's not true, sir; I have knocked him out, and I'm going to have the pound. I'm not going to be swindled!" roared Billy Bunter.

"What is this about a pound?" said Mr. Quelch. "Even if the match was only in fun—as I fully believe—you must know that there should be no money concerned in it, Wharton."

"There isn't any, sir."

"Then, what—"

"Show Mr. Quelch the pound, Frank!"

Nugent, grinning, opened his bag, and took out a pound box of tallow candles. He passed the box to the Remove-master, who took it, and opened it, and stared blankly at the candles.

"Why, what does this mean? This is a box of candles."

"A pound of candles, sir."

"A—a—a pound!"

"Yes, sir. Bunter insisted upon boxing for a pound, and that's a pound. It was all a joke, sir."

Carberry's face was a study. Mr. Quelch looked at the candles, and then looked at Carberry, and then at Bunter. He tried to remain grave, but he could not—the pound was irresistible. He smiled, the smile became a broad grin, the grin a laugh; the laugh rose, crescendo, to a roar; and in that roar the whole Remove joined.

The old barn rang with laughter.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, at last, wiping his eyes. "This is too utterly absurd. Bunter, take your prize. You are perfectly at liberty to compete for a pound of this sort."

Billy Bunter mechanically took the box of candles, and stood blinking at them. It was dawning at last, even upon his obtuse mind that he had been fooled.

Mr. Quelch looked at Carberry again, with an expression that made the prefect's brow blacker than ever.

"I am glad to see that this is only fun, and that Carberry's suspicions were wholly without grounds," he said. "Carberry has acted hastily and foolishly, and has wasted my time for nothing. Good-bye, my boys!"

And Mr. Quelch walked away in one direction, the prefect in another. Carberry did not say a word. There was nothing for him to say. He stopped at a distance, safe out of the Remove-master's hearing, to say things. But we shall not report what he said. But as he walked home to Greyfriars, a sadder and wiser prefect, he resolved to be very, very sure before he made another move against Harry Wharton.

The meeting in the barn broke up, the juniors chuckling over the affair, and the story was soon common property at Greyfriars. Carberry was chipped over it by his comrades in the Sixth, till he was driven nearly wild.

In the Remove, it was regarded as the joke of the season. But there was one fellow who did not look upon it in that light—one who frowned majestically at every reference to it, and who, for a long time, wore the expression of one who is deeply wronged—and that one, needless to say, was Bunter the Boxer!

THE END.

Next Tuesday:

"The Head's Holiday."

Another Splendid, Complete School Tale of

HARRY WHARTON & CO.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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The Opening Chapters of a Grand Story

**A Splendid Tale of Life in the British Army.****A BRIEF RESUME 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 necessities 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 badly injured. Alf sends for Ronald to the hospital, and earnestly assures him that he is innocent. For the time being nothing more is done in the matter, and the Wessex go out one day to fight an Irish regiment. Ronald distinguishes himself and captures a map of the enemy's. He takes his capture to his colonel and explains matters.

(Now go on with the story.)

An Affair of Cold Steel—Ronald in Hot Water Once Again.

During the narrative of the adventure, the hard-bitten little colonel shot many a lightning glance at the young soldier. If there was one thing he liked to see among his rank-and-file it was resource. He never praised a man openly to his face for it; but he never forgot to put a good mark to the credit side of his account. Nor did Ronald look as if he were expecting praise.

"Very well," said the colonel, when he had finished. "This map will be valuable. You can return to your picket, and report yourself. Say that you have already seen me."

"Egad, a smart chap that!" he murmured, as the dusk swallowed up Ronald's tall form. "I must see about promoting him. Seems to be as handy with his head as with his fists, and a gentleman, too, by his speech. Hum! The next thing is to get these Fermanagh people well by the short hairs, and thrash some of the sinful pride out of them. Shall I wait for them to move, or wade in myself and smite them? That is the question."

The Fermanaghs gave him small time to decide. The gilded sub., who had sold his side so ingeniously, decided to sit tight, and say nothing, leaving his own colonel to flounder into disaster if he would.

So, on the strength of Ronald's "spoof" map, the Irish commanding officer proceeded to carry out a particularly cunning attack under cover of the dusk.

He called up his supports, and like the brave old Duke of York, "he marched them up to the top of the hill, and he marched them down again!"

Unfortunately for him, the weakest point, as shown on the forgery, was really the strongest; and, moreover, armed with the true and particular disposition of the Irish forces, Colonel Conger planned a still warmer reception, with a simultaneous counter-attack, calculated to flummox the foe completely, and drive them helter-skelter.

B Company found themselves with the force detailed for the latter duty. It consisted of two companies, and their purpose was to crawl round the enemy's left flank, capture

his Maxim gun, shown to be stationed there, and crumple up that wing, no matter what the odds, as soon as the assailing force of the Fermanaghs had come to grips.

The Irish line would then be in a zig-zag, to be folded up, if fortune smiled on the Wessex, like a three-foot carpenter's rule.

Captain Carthew commanded the counter-attack, and, like somewhat substantial spectres, A and B Companies trod lightly down the heather slope, and circled wide to fall on the enemy's flank.

To the joy of No. 4 section, they found themselves in the firing line, opposite to the enemy's Maxim gun.

"Now, tread as if you were walking on eggs!" whispered Lieutenant Bob, as they shook themselves out for the advance. "Up you go, and the first man that slips, snorts, or sneezes, will get seven days' cells! Steady, and wait your time!"

The Wessex were well trained to such work, and they made their way up the steep, bush-covered slope like shadows. From their left came the occasional spluttering of blank cartridges, showing that matters were already on the move in that quarter, and serving also to distract the attention of the enemy just in front of them.

Next to Ronald was Mouldy Mills, and Hookey next but one. Tony was on his left, and Gussey somewhere beyond him. A pace behind was Ian Chenys, who commanded the left-half company, and who was seething inwardly with spite and rage at his brother's success.

Suddenly Ronald, who was wriggling his way forward on his stomach, stopped and ducked his head flat to the ground. He had caught the murmur of voices from above, and had seen against the deep indigo sky the black outline of a sentry's head, peering down into the valley below.

A spur of the hill towered some fifty feet above them, and here was posted one of the Irishmen's Maxim guns, screened in a clump of furze.

The armchair civilian may sneer at the idea that there can be any real excitement in sham fighting, with all blanks and no bullets in the rifles, and only umpires to come and tell you whether you are dead or not. To the man who does not know, it seems a sport rather for small boys than grown men. He would be surprised to see how keenly Tommy Atkins enters into the spirit of these mock battles, and how very near to real war matters will come at times, when the blood of the combatants is up.

Lying there in breathless anxiety lest some noise should alarm the enemy above him, Ronald experienced some of the fierce thrill of the "real thing."

Ian had now fallen a few paces behind, and Sergeant Bagot was still further down the hill. The steep climb had pumped them both, and their lagging feet sent the loose soil trickling in a way that was sure to attract the attention of the enemy before long.

Ian's final orders to his half-company, given before the attack, were definite. No one was to move forward to the charge until he had given the word. Meanwhile, Ronald ground his teeth to hear him floundering, and to think of the wasted moments.

The whole line had not halted, either. Some on the flanks, who had not seen as much as Ronald, were still advancing. Success now depended entirely on a swift rush and a surprise, and here they were tied by the heels.

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Yet the sentry's head, outlined against the sky, had not moved. So there was still hope.

Ronald could see Mouldy's face looming pale beside him, set and grim. Tony, too, had halted, but someone not twenty paces away was pressing on.

Suddenly a shrill yell split the silence, and made the veterans curse and flounder to their feet.

"Look! There they are—there they are! See him? Quick, you chaps!"

Augustus Smythe had suddenly spotted the enemy's sentry, and was giving tongue like a country-bumpkin when the hare streaks away over the fallow.

Bang! Gussy fired his rifle at the man, and, crazy with excitement, was scrambling forward to the charge.

Bang! Crack! Bang! The picket on the crest answered the challenge with little darts of flame, and hoarse words of command, sharp, metallic clicks, and the rattle of a cartridge-belt, showed that in another instant the Maxim would come into action.

Ronald, however, was up and climbing like a deer, with Gussy only a few strides ahead of him. To his horror, he saw the latter's left hand go to the bayonet-hilt and whip the blade from the scabbard.

To fix bayonets in manœuvres is forbidden for obvious reasons; for when men's blood is up there is no knowing what they will not do.

"Don't you ass!" yelled Ronald. "Drop that!"

But Gussy had eyes and ears for only one thing—the foe in front of him. He fixed the cold steel as he ran, and came to the charge.

Dropping his own rifle, Ronald put on a spurt to try and overhaul his comrade before he spitted some unfortunate Irishman like a lark in his blind excitement. Gussy, however, had got a good start. One of the Fermanaghs, seeing him come straight at him with eyes blazing and point lowered, sprang to his feet to parry the thrust; but just too late.

The blade clashed along the barrel, and, lodging in his forearm, ripped sleeve and wrist half-way to the elbow. He stumbled and rolled over, howling with rage and pain. The next instant Ronald's arm had closed round Gussy's, the rifle was wrested from his grip, and he was flung headlong into the furze-bushes, where he lay breathless and aghast, only then beginning to realise the consequences of his mad act.

The Irishman's howls drew every eye to where Ronald stood with Gussy's rifle and bayonet still in his hand. The hand-to-hand struggle for victory on the hill-crest ceased on the instant. Round their gun the Fermanaghs clustered, white with passion, while the Wessex confronted them bewildered. None had seen that it was Gussy who had been responsible for the attack, and that Ronald had only disarmed him to save further bloodshed.

But for the interference of the Irish officers, there is no doubt that the defenders would have retaliated with butt and bayonet to avenge the wound of their comrade.

"Disarm that lunatic! Knock him down!" shouted the commander of the picket, jumping forward just in time to avert a collision.

"Why—what do you mean?" cried Ronald, in horror at the position in which he found himself.

"Don't answer me, you scoundrel! Here, seize him and prevent him running amok again!" roared the officer; and then, as Ian came struggling up, he turned on him. "Confound it, sir! What is the meaning of this? Here is a man of yours who comes charging up with fixed bayonet, and runs one of my men through the arm! Disarm him, or, by St. Patrick, I'll not answer for the consequences!"

"Fixed bayonet! Who? Where?" demanded Ian, nettled by the other's blustering tone.

"There! That lunatic yonder!"

"Chester, by Heaven!" exclaimed Ian. And there was a harsh note of triumph in his voice, as he faced his kinsman.

"One moment, sir! Let me explain. This is not my rifle. I—I—"

Then he remembered that to save himself he was about to betray another. He looked round for Gussy to come forward, and take the consequences of his folly; but that young firebrand, having dwindled to his senses like a pricked balloon, had sneaked away into the background, for the moment well satisfied to have escaped so easily.

"It is not my rifle, I say again, repeated Ronald with disgust at this treachery. "I took it away from the man to whom it belongs to prevent his doing further damage with it. The man who is wounded will tell you that."

The Irishman, however, was not so certain of the truth of this.

"Well, the question as to whether it is your rifle or not is easily proved," said the Fermanagh officer.

"What is your number?"

"839!" answered Ronald at once.

By the light of a match the number stamped on the rifle-butt was read.

"Why, this is 839! What is more, you have no bayonet in your scabbard!"

A low, ominous growl ran round the groups of the enemy, and the man with the wounded arm swore under his breath that there would come a day when he would have his revenge.

Ronald was silent and as white as a ghost. Gussy must have caught up his rifle in mistake in the hurry of falling in for the attack. As for his own bayonet, that was with the Fermanaghs, having been taken from him when captured and disarmed. In his flight he had left it behind.

"It appears that you are not only a fool, but a liar as well," said Ian, with venomous scorn.

"I tell you—" burst out Ronald, white-hot with rage.

"Silence!" ordered Ian. "Sergeant Bagot, disarm this man, and make him a prisoner!"

Ronald handed over his rifle and said no more. He was sick with loathing at Gussy's craven behaviour, and the thought that once again ill-luck had put him in Ian's power.

Passing Gussy, he saw that he had already possessed himself of the rifle he had flung down on the hillside. The wretched fellow half turned from him to hide his face, and Ronald saw that his bayonet-scabbard was also empty.

For an instant he hung back, intending to draw attention to this fact, and to demand to see the number of the blood-stained bayonet fixed upon the rifle which had been handed into Bagot's charge.

The sergeant, however, had already unlocked the blade from the muzzle, and Ronald knew enough to be sure that he would get no help from this quarter. Therefore, he decided to keep his defence to himself for the present.

The whistles had sounded the "cease fire" all over the battle-ground, and the various companies having re-formed after the attack, marched to the point of assembly, and here the unfortunate incident was reported to Colonel Conger.

Ronald was allowed to keep his place in the ranks until the parade was dismissed, and then Corporal Wedge and a file of men marched him off to the guard-room, where he once again found himself a prisoner.

As for Gussy, he passed a night of torment, racked between the fear of discovery and aching remorse. If anyone should notice the empty scabbard, if anyone had the curiosity to compare the number of the bayonet he had used with the number on the rifle, he would be caught.

(Another long instalment next Tuesday. Please order your copy of The "MAGNET" Library in advance. Price One Half-penny.)

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The Editor

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