

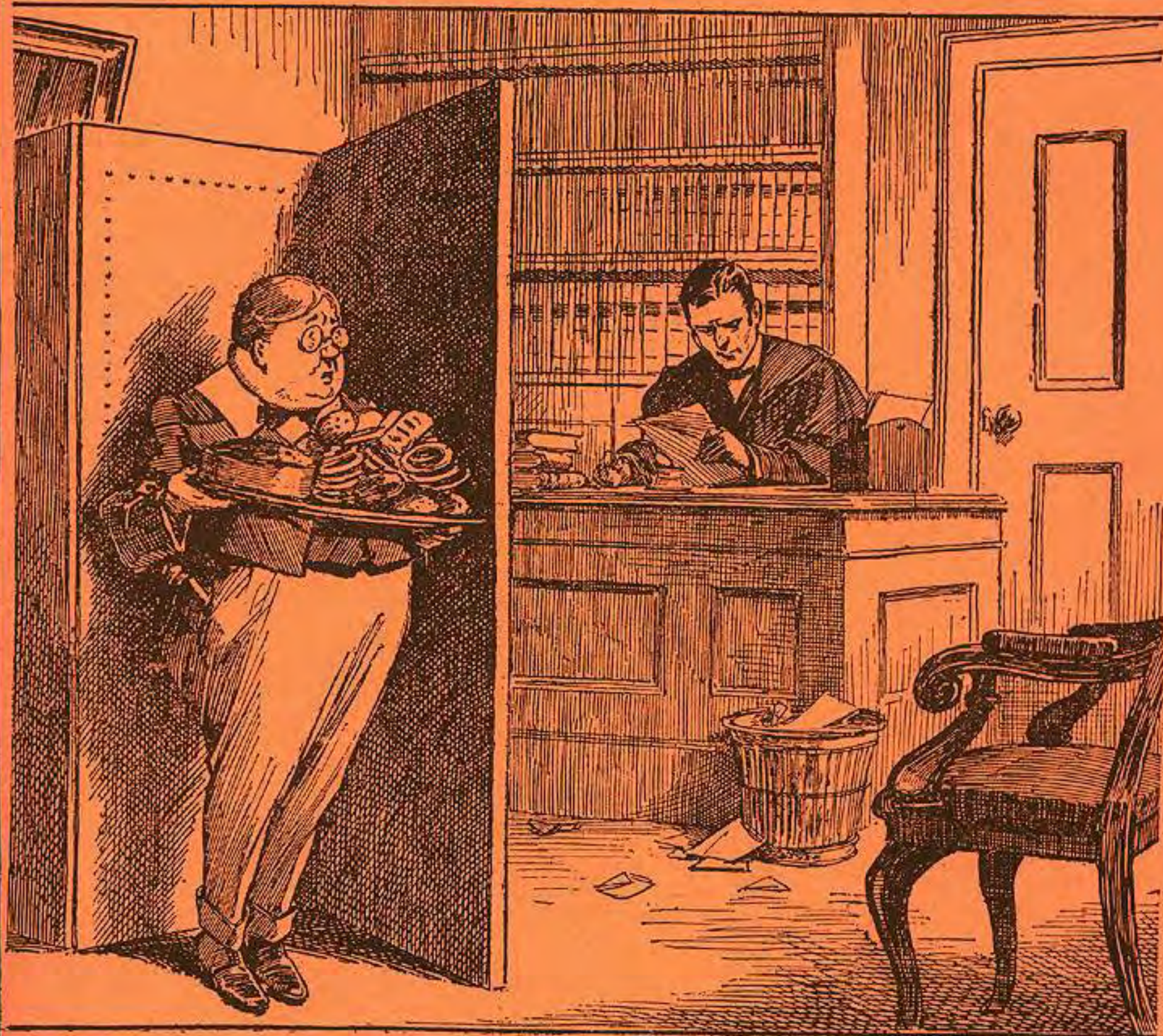
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The Greyfriars & Visitors



A Splendid Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Raided Study.

It had been raining hard for two successive days at Greyfriars, and the juniors were beginning to tire of the incessant downpour.

In Study No 1, Harry Wharton, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Bob Cherry, and Wun Lung sat round a blazing fire.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were reading. Wun Lung was putting the finishing touches to a very strange and weird mask—one of the many the Chinese junior had made during his stay at Greyfriars.

Hurree Singh was at work on a chess problem.

Footsteps were heard in the corridor, and a moment later the study door opened, and a face looked in.

It was Billy Bunter, the fat junior of the Remove, commonly known as "The Owl." He blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he exclaimed.

Not one of the four looked up.

"Hallo, Wharton!" repeated Bunter. "Can I fetch you anything from the tuckshop for tea? I saw Mrs. Mimble

just take in a fresh supply of pastries. They're the best I've ever seen I think, and the sight of them has given me an awful appetite."

"My appetite is terrific, also!" remarked Hurree Singh, putting the chessmen into a box.

"It's very good of you, Billy," said Wharton; "but I think we've got plenty of grub for tea in the cupboard. Nugent laid in a stock last night."

Wun Lung rose, and pushed his chair back.

"Vely good of you, indeed, Billy," he said; "but me showee you what Study Number One have gotee."

Billy Bunter closed the door as the Chinese junior walked to the cupboard.

There was a click and the cupboard opened. The next moment a gasp of astonishment left Wun Lung's lips.

"Some vely bad boy havee taken our grub!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's this?" Bob Cherry exclaimed.

"Someone has lifted our grub, did you say, Wun Lung?" exclaimed Wharton.

The juniors stared at the empty dishes and plates, empty but for a few crumbs.

"Our esteemed friend speaks the truth," said Hurreo Singh.

Then from the cupboard the study chums turned their gaze on Billy Bunter.

"Have you had a feed on the quiet, you greedy young cormorant?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I didn't think you'd accuse an innocent chap. You fellows surely don't think I would take food out of your mouths, do you?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"I believe you'd take it out of the mouth of a crocodile, if you could, Billy," he remarked. "But—"

Bob Cherry was suddenly interrupted.

Wun Lung made a sudden dive for a corner of the shelf in the cupboard.

The next moment he held a big, screeching rat in his hand.

"Well done, Wun Lung!" said Harry Wharton. "Perhaps that explains matters a bit. That was a very smart capture!"

"The smartfulness was terrific!"

"Well, I suppose we must have tea in Hall this evening, as we're rather short of the ready," exclaimed Bob Cherry, "and as this beastly rodent has had a study feed on its own!"

"It's rotten having tea in Hall!" said Billy Bunter. "But come on! I get fearfully hungry in this weather."

"Yes, come on!" exclaimed Harry. "We shall have to buck up, or those greedy Lower-Form kids will have bolted everything. Bring that beastly rat down, and let him out into the quad, Wun Lung!"

Bob Cherry turned the gas out, and all five left the study for tea in Hall—a meal they rarely partook of out of their study—in fact, only when short of funds did they adjourn to Hall for tea.

On their way down, the chums encountered an unusual number of boys walking in the same direction.

"Hallo Hazeldene! Whither wanderest thou?"

Hazeldene stopped and glared at Bob Cherry.

"Hall, of course!" he said. "Some cad has raided our grub. We had plenty in our cupboard; but there's not an atom now, but a piece of mouldy pie-crust."

"Rats, my lads, rats!" exclaimed Bob Cherry laughingly.

"What's that, you say?" interrupted Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, who had joined in the stream of juniors making for Hall.

"Rats, my lad, rats!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"Rats, old son!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rats, my august friend, Bulstrode!" added Hurreo Singh.

"There you are, Hazeldene!" shouted Bulstrode. "I told you these cads had raided our study. I know—"

"Lads!" purred Wun Lung, as he put the squeaking rodent he held in his hand up to the bully's face.

"Ow!" yelled Bulstrode. "Take that beast away, you cheeky young rotter!"

"Don't quarrel, you chaps!" interrupted Billy Bunter, "or we sha'n't get any grub."

And following the Owl's advice, the juniors, with the exception of Wun Lung, went into Hall.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Stormy Meeting—Billy Bunter's Undertaking.

TAP, tap, tap!

Mr. Quelch, the Remove Form-master, rapped the tea-table with his knuckles.

"Silence! Bulstrode, don't you hear me?"

Mr. Quelch's voice was very sharp, and Bulstrode quietened down immediately.

"Boys," continued the master, "I regret to say that the kitchen can supply nothing more than tea to drink to-day. Some boys have evidently raided the school larder. There is no bread left. The cook persists in saying it is the doing of rats; but, personally, I think nothing of the sort. I am making strict inquiries. You may get on with your tea!"

And Mr. Quelch sat down.

The boys sat back, and stared at one another as though a thunderbolt had fallen among them.

"But, sir, isn't there anything to eat?" said Billy Bunter, rising to his feet.

"Silence, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"But, sir, I feel so faint that—"

"Take fifty lines, Bunter!" interrupted Mr. Quelch, "and if I have another word from you, you'll have a hundred and fifty. I repeat what I said, 'There is nothing to eat!'"

Billy Bunter sat down, with blank dismay in his fat face. The tea was soon gulped down, and the master and prefects who were on duty, left the Hall.

Left to themselves, a perfect babel of voices broke out, and indignant speeches were shouted out by the bigger and louder-voiced juniors.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 85.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE CHUM FROM NEW ZEALAND."

As captain of the Remove, Harry Wharton was appealed to to stand up and make an announcement.

Mounting on to a chair, he called for order.

"Shut up yapping, you Lower-Form kids!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"The yapping is terrific!" said Hurreo Singh. "And the worthy prefects will soon be here."

"Order!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Shut up!"

"Speech!"

The appeals for order added to the uproar.

"Are we going to be starved?" shouted Nugent.

"No!" thundered the juniors.

"It looks like it!" yelled Bulstrode from another chair. "And if the captain of the Remove can't—"

"Shut up, Bulstrode!" interrupted Bob Cherry.

The next moment the bully was tilted off his improvised platform by Wun Lung, who quickly slipped into the crowd.

Harry Wharton cleared his voice.

"Juniors of Greyfriars!" he began. "Just because some bounders take it into their heads to wolf the grub, that is no reason why we should be obliged to cut tea. As an example of the state of affairs we are in for you need only look at Bunter."

At this, all eyes were turned on Billy, who had taken a seat in the corner of Hall, and who was sitting back with an expression of woe upon his fat features.

"Niobe II.," murmured Bob Cherry. "Look at him!"

"Yes," moaned Billy. "I think you chaps must raise a subscription to get a feed. I sha'n't live long if I don't have something to eat! You know how delicate my constitution is, and only kept up by constant nourishment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're fat enough to live on starvation rations for eight days!" shouted Bulstrode.

"Order!" called Harry Wharton.

There was silence for a moment or two, and Harry proceeded with his address.

"Rats are evidently responsible for the loss of grub," he said. "And the best thing we can do is to each make an effort to clear the beastly things out of Greyfriars!"

"Hear, hear!"

"So," continued Wharton, "as we're all pining away with hunger let's set to work at once!"

Harry clambered down from his platform, and there was a general rush for the door.

In the meantime, the Head and Mr. Quelch were talking the matter over in the former's study.

"The cook tells me," said the Head, "that she is convinced that rats have entered the school in large numbers."

"So I understand," assented Mr. Quelch.

"The thing is quite likely," said the Head, "for the last two days it has rained incessantly. The fields and barns round about are flooded, and no doubt the rodents have invaded Greyfriars as the only dry spot."

"Well, what are we to do, sir?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"I really haven't anything to suggest, sir," replied the Head. "I am puzzled what to do."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"I think—"

He was interrupted by a tap at the door, and Billy Bunter entered the room.

"What is it, Bunter?" inquired the Head.

"Sir, I—I—I am so faint. I haven't had anything since dinner time, and then I only had three helpings of steak-and-kidney pudding, and four helpings of rice pudding, and—"

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir, and—"

"Leave this room at once, Bunter!"

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

"But, sir, if you could—"

The Head reached out his hand for a cane, and Billy Bunter made a dash for the door.

He collided violently with someone on gaining the corridor.

"Ow! Sorry, Wharton! I didn't see you!"

"It's not Wharton, you fat cormorant, it's me!"

"Oh, is it you, Hazeldene? I thought it was Wharton, and I was just going to ask him to lend me something to buy some grub. But as it's you, will you lend me five bob. I'm expecting a postal-order, and I'll pay you—"

"No, I won't lend you anything. But I tell you what you can do. Here's nine shillings here. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, Wun Lung, and myself have just subscribed together, and they've sent me down to Mrs. Mimble's to lay in the feed. You can join in if you like, and go and do the shopping. Don't wolf it! Here you are!"

And the money changed hands.

"Thanks very much, Hazeldene!" said Billy. "I'll go and get the things at once, and bring them up to Wharton's study."

Billy's countenance had changed, and as he entered the school tuck-shop a smile crossed Mrs. Mimble's face, as a few minutes before he had begged her to let him have something "on account."

But Billy Bunter was known too well, and she had refused.

"I see as you have some money to spend, Master Bunter!" said Mrs. Mimble.

"Yes," replied Billy. "I'll have a dozen of those new pastries, two pounds of those biscuits, half a dozen ginger beers, twelve of those pork pies, that Genoa cake!" And so Billy laid out the nine shillings.

Placing the goods on a large tin tray, the fat junior made his way to Harry Wharton & Co.'s study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Behind the Screen—A Terrible Calamity.

BILLY BUNTER stopped suddenly outside Mr. Quelch's room. He was carrying the well-laden tray. But danger lay ahead of him.

He saw that Bulstrode was coming down the corridor towards him, and he knew that he could not pass the bully without forfeiting the "feed."

It was no good going back, so he did a bold thing. He entered Mr. Quelch's study. He intended to lay low there for a few minutes till the Remove bully had passed. But suddenly he gave a start.

"Great Scott," he murmured, "that's old Quelch outside talking to Bulstrode!"

In a moment Bunter dodged behind the screen placed between Mr. Quelch's desk and the window, and the next instant the master entered the room.

Bunter took a tighter grip of the tray and held his breath as Mr. Quelch sat down at his desk and commenced to write.

Scratch, scratch, scratch went the master's pen, and after some minutes Bunter shifted his position. His arms already ached, and he began to feel extremely hot.

He heard Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry stop one of the Lower Form fags outside Mr. Quelch's door and inquire whether he had seen Bunter.

"Yes," said the fag, "I saw him leave Mrs. Mimble's with a tray full of tuck."

"You did, did you?" Bunter heard Harry reply. "You'll see his funeral next."

"H'hem!" Mr. Quelch coughed, and Billy Bunter nearly dropped the tray. Perspiration commenced to run from his face, and he gazed longingly at the contents on the tray.

Scratch, scratch, scratch!

Billy could bear it no longer, and very gently he lowered the tray to the floor.

"Supposing he finds me," muttered Billy; "all this splendid grub will be wasted. I'd better have my share now, I think." And he stooped down and sampled a pastry. Another he had, and another. Soon the twelve pastries were gone, as also were half the pies. Billy next sampled the cake, the result of which gave him a terrible thirst.

Very quietly he lifted up a ginger-beer bottle; but not without a slight noise, and Mr. Quelch stopped writing.

In undoing the wire to the cork Bunter accidentally kicked his foot against the tray.

The next moment Mr. Quelch's chair was pushed back, and the Form-master walked to the screen.

Pop!

"Ow!"

Mr. Quelch let out a fearful yell as the cork left Billy Bunter's ginger-beer bottle and caught him in the eye.

"I—I—I'm sincerely sorry, sir!" said Bunter falteringly.

"I assure you it was an accident. I only—"

"Bunter," shouted Mr. Quelch, "for this impertinence you shall have the severest thrashing you've ever had. Come out, sir! You use my study as your dining-room!"

Mr. Quelch grew sarcastic. "I conclude you are the rat I've been looking for," he continued. "Come here!"

The next few minutes were the most painful ones Bunter had ever experienced, and he left Mr. Quelch's study, resolving not to sit down for a day or two.

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NEXT TUESDAY: "THE CHUM FROM NEW ZEALAND."

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He made his way to Study No. 1, and knocked at the door. There was no verbal reply to the knock, but on the instant the door was flung open from the inside, and five pairs of hands grabbed Billy Bunter round the neck, and he was whisked into the study.

"You beast!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You rotten, fat cormorant!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"You've wolfed our feed!" yelled Hazeldene.

"The august Fatty has satisfied his extremely huge appetite at our expense," purred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Me savvy."

"Ugh—ugh!" grunted Bunter, whose face was flattened in the carpet. "Lemme get up!"

"Come on, you beast!" said Harry Wharton. "What have you done with that tray?"

"If—if—if you chaps will let me explain," stuttered Bunter.

"Well, go on!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I'm sincerely sorry, you fellows, but—but old Quelch has bagged the feed. I dodged Bulstrode, and had to take shelter in Quelch's study, and—and he's confiscated the tray, and gave me—"

"Hallo, look out there!" shouted Harry Wharton, as three huge rats scampered across the study.

There was an immediate rush made for the rodents, and Bunter was able to get up. He bolted from the study as Wun Lung captured one of the rats and killed it. With the help of a cricket-stump Harry Wharton accounted for another. The third rat escaped.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Nugent's Lonely Walk, and His Strange Companions.

FRANK NUGENT gave his ticket up to the ticket-collector at Friardale.

"Good-night!" he said. "Harry Wharton been down at all?"

"No, young maister, he ain't. Thankee, sir. Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

And Frank Nugent stepped out into the darkness and the rain and wind, with the prospect of an unenjoyable tramp back to Greyfriars School.

He had been on a visit to Market Grayton, a small town some eight miles from Friardale. It was Wednesday, and he had been sent off by the head-master directly after dinner in order to make one or two special purchases for him.

Nugent had been detained rather longer than he had expected, and had caught the 9.3 train back to Friardale.

"Urg-g-g-gh!" he murmured, as he gathered the numerous parcels under his arm, and turned away from the station in the direction of Greyfriars.

Besides making the purchases for Dr. Locke, the Head, he had also bought one or two articles he thought his study chums would appreciate.

Among the purchases, Frank had invested in a pound of Cambridge sausages, and he was wishing now that he was before a good fire in Study No. 1, with Harry Wharton, Hurree Singh, and Billy Bunter.

"By Jove," he thought, "I guess we'll have a high old tea to-morrow! This rain's rotten, and—"

Frank Nugent's wandering thoughts were stopped full, and a curious shiver passed down his back. He felt convinced he was being stalked from behind.

Patter, patter, patter!

The junior had a fearful desire to turn round and see what it was.

"Ow!"

Nugent jumped to one side as something soft rubbed against his leg. The next moment a threatening growl came from the roadside, and Frank saw that two wet, bedraggled stray dogs were his companions.

Frank Nugent stopped, and turned.

"Go home!" he said severely. "Home!" And he stamped his foot authoritatively.

The two dogs, both looking lean and hungry, growled, approached Nugent, and sniffed at his wet feet.

Frank shivered.

"Good doggies!" he said. "Good doggies, go on home!"

The dogs sniffed, and gazed up at Frank's parcels.

"Good doggy!" murmured the Greyfriars junior. "You beasts, go home, will you, you brutes? There, there, good doggies!"

An unpleasant thrill ran through Frank Nugent. He still had a good mile to go—a mile along a dark road, and on a stormy night. He was no coward, but it seemed to him that these two stray dogs were the size of elephants, and their eyes seemed to glare at him with strange flashes.

He commenced to walk on, but stopped again as one of the dogs growled.

"Good doggy!" said Frank; and he bent down to stroke

the larger of the two beasts. The smaller one immediately resented this favouritism, and emitted a low growl.

Nugent looked at it, as beads of perspiration rolled down his forehead.

"What shall I do to the beasts?" he muttered. "I know; I'll try 'em with a sausage. I'll give the brutes half each. We sha'n't miss one."

The mongrels, however, looked up intelligently as Frank slipped the string from his brown-paper parcel, and rustled the paper in his endeavour to pull a sausage in half.

The larger brute growled, and the Greyfriars junior tried to pacify him for the moment.

"There, good doggy!" said Frank Nugent encouragingly. "Good doggy! You—you beast! There, take that!" And he slapped half a sausage down on to the wet road.

There was a scramble, and the smaller dog gulped the sausage down. Its companion was dissatisfied, and growled hungrily.

"Well, take that, you pigs!" muttered Frank, as he threw down the remaining half sausage, and walked on.

He had covered some twenty yards, when the two dogs came scampering up to him, barking furiously. The big dog made a jump at the brown-paper parcel, which Frank had tied up again, and Nugent changed colour for a moment.

"Great Scott!" he gasped.

In a moment the parcel was undone, and Frank threw out a whole sausage to each of his tormentors.

The Greyfriars junior continued his walk, putting on extra pace; but once more he had not proceeded far when, with a scampering of feet, the dogs again rushed up, and he was obliged to stop and throw out two more of the sausages.

"I wonder what Billy Bunter would say if he saw me?" thought Nugent. "When I come to think of it, it is a beastly waste." He hurried on as he heard the brutes champing away at the sausages. "I know what I'll do if they catch me up again. I'll land out at the brutes, and then——"

Plonk!

With a resounding smack the remaining sausages fell on to the wet road. In trying to save his cap, which was lifted off by a gust of wind, Frank let the parcel of sausages slip through his arm.

He pulled his cap well on to his head, and bent down to pick up the sausages.

"I'll recover some of 'em, anyhow!" he muttered; and he picked up one that had escaped a watery grave.

"Oh-h!" he yelled suddenly, as the dogs again scampered up, and made a snap at his hand as he was rescuing a second sausage. "You beasts! Eat 'em up, then, you pigs!" cried the junior desperately, and without hesitating another moment dashed off at a great pace in the direction of the school, the walls and chimneys of which he could now see silhouetted against the sky.

Frank Nugent rushed up to the big iron gates, and rattled them violently.

Gosling, the school porter, came out of the lodge, and shambled towards the gate.

"Come on, Gossy, buck up!" said the junior excitedly.

Gosling rattled the keys.

"I shall not buck up!" he answered surlily. "I 'opes as 'ow the 'Ead will give you a good licking for coming in at this time o' night."

Frank Nugent laughed.

"That's all right!" he said. "I'm sorry you had to come out in this beastly wet."

Gosling grunted something, and opened the gate, and let the junior in.

There was a sound of scampering feet as Frank closed the gate behind him, and the next moment the dogs dashed up, yelping.

"I shall not allow you to bring them two beasts in, Master Nugent. There 'as always been a rule as no boys shall bring dogs or cats or birds into the college. And the 'Ead——"

Frank Nugent faced the school porter quickly.

"If you let those mongrels in, Gosling," he said fiercely, "I'll—I'll——"

The porter turned the key in the lock, and put the bunch in his coat pocket, and walked back to his lodge.

"Good-night!" shouted Frank. "You're a disagreeable beast, Gosling."

"Ham I?" grumbled the porter. "Wot I says is this 'ere, you would be the same if some himps 'ad raided your supper."

And Gosling banged the door of the lodge violently.

"Yes," thought Frank Nugent, as he walked up the soddened gravel path towards a side door, "if anyone did raid our grub, we'd give—— Hallo, who's that?"

"It's me, you young scamp!" said Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of the school. "Dr. Locke has just sent me down to ask Gosling to go down to the station to meet you. You're late, youngster. Where've you been?"

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"Yes," replied Frank. "I had to wait for the 9.3 back from Market Grayton. It's lucky you didn't go down to old Gossy, Wingate; he's not in a perfect mood this evening."

The big Sixth-Former laughed.

"Come on!" he said. "Take your parcel to the Head, and get into bed sharp. You're wet through!"

A minute or two later Frank Nugent knocked at the Head's study, and, upon being commanded to go in, explained matters.

Dr. Locke listened attentively, and sent the junior up to bed at once, with kindly orders to get his wet things off as quickly as possible.

"Hallo," said Nugent, smiling, as he entered the Remove dormitory, "here's a lot o' sleeping beauties!"

Billy Bunter turned in his bed restlessly. He was murmuring in his sleep, and Nugent thought he caught the words "pork pies."

Frank grinned.

"Good old Billy! I can guess what he's dreaming of!"

The junior was soon undressed, and, blowing the candle out,—which he had brought up to save disturbing the sleepers by lighting the gas—he jumped between the sheets.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Fresh Mystery—The Damaged Boots.

FRANK NUGENT jerked his head up from his pillow suddenly.

The junior had been asleep for some considerable time, when a strange sound in the dormitory disturbed him.

"Anybody awake?" he asked, his voice sounding strangely sepulchral in the stillness of the night.

There was no answer; but an extraordinary scampering sound came from the other side of the long room.

Frank Nugent thought of the dogs, and a shivery feeling ran down his back.

"Anybody awake?" he repeated once more.

He listened attentively for some moments, and then pulled the bedclothes over his head.

After a time he commenced to snore violently, and once more that strange scampering noise was audible. But Frank Nugent slept on!

Clang, clang, clang!

The rising-bell of Greyfriars tolled out its warning that it was time to turn out.

Micky Desmond, the Irish junior, between Wun Lung's bed and Bob Cherry's, turned and yawned.

"Hallo," he said suddenly, "and sure, the prodigal has returned safe and sound!"

"Who's that, Ireland?" came in a chorus from heads that bobbed up from the two rows of white pillows.

"Why, and sure, didn't we all turn in last night without Frank Nugent? And faith, there he is, sleeping his senses away!"

Hurree Singh put one leg out of bed.

"As our esteemed friend says," he assented, "the worthy Nugent is sleeping his senses away. He must have a douche of the most magnificent cold water, and——"

Hurree Singh stopped suddenly, as he bent down and picked up one of his boots, which had been ripped up in several places, and was now irretrievably damaged.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that picture-puzzle you've got in your hands, Inky?"

"It's as you say," replied the Nabob of Bhanipur, "my worthy boot is a picture-puzzle. Look at this!"

And Hurree Singh threw his damaged boot across to Bob Cherry.

A moment later a gasp of astonishment came from Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire.

"What cad has done this?" shouted Mark Linley wrathfully, and he held up a boot that looked as though it had been through a chaff-cutting machine, but had blunted the knives.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "It's been treated in the same manner as Inky's!"

Looks of wonder were cast at the curious articles, and each junior simultaneously stooped to get his own boots, to see if they had been damaged.

Exclamations arose from all sides, and boots absolutely unfit for further use were held up.

"Great Scott," cried Harry Wharton excitedly, "it must be the rats!"

"Me savvy!" said Wun Lung.

"The little beasts!"

"Kill 'em!"

Cries from bootless owners arose, and to these cries Frank Nugent awoke from his heavy sleep.

"What are you kids making all this row for?" he said, sitting up in bed.

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

"Look, my esteemed friend!" said Hurree Singh—"look at my worthy boots!"

"Boots? What d'ye mean—boots?"

"They're his boots, really," explained Harry Wharton; "but a swarm of rats have entered the school, and besides wolfing all the grub yesterday, they have been playing about with the boots in the night. I've heard before that rats are fearfully destructive in boot factories. They have an acquired taste for the special kind of paste that is used in boots, and——"

"Well, I'm blessed!" interrupted Frank.

"Yes," continued Harry, "and——"

"Well, I'm diddled!" Frank Nugent interrupted once more. "Well, this explains a lot of things, then—old Gosling's raided supper, the strange noises in the night, the——"

"What noises!" shouted Bulstrode, whose boots were unwearable.

"Rats!"

The Remove bully threw the damaged articles to the floor, and glared at Nugent.

"Look here," he shouted, "if you cheek me, I'll—I'll——"

Nugent lay back in bed and closed his eyes. His countenance assumed a look of absolute boredom.

"Take it away!" he said. "It's balmy! It wanted to know what noises, and I distinctly said that it was rats, and now——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Hear me smile!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode glared at Mark Linley, who had joined wholeheartedly in the laugh.

"You beastly factory bounder!" he exclaimed. "You can laugh now; but I suppose papa will have to work extra shift to buy you a new pair of boots!"

"Shut up!"

"Cad!"

"Booh!"

A chorus of dissentient cries arose. But trouble was stopped from going further by Ionides, the Greek, Sixth-Former and prefect, putting his head in at the dormitory door.

"Hurry up, now," he said sharply, "and not so much noise! Fifty lines apiece for those not down in seven minutes!"

"That's all very well," grumbled Skinner—Bulstrode's particular crony—"but we can't come down without anything to put on our feet! If the beastly rats do——"

But Ionides had gone.

"Come on, buck up, Wun Lung!" said Harry Wharton.

"Me leady in a moment, Hally!" answered the Chinese, stooping down to get his boots, which had not been touched by the rodents.

Skinner coughed, and winked his eye at Bulstrode.

"What are you pulling that face for?" asked the bully.

"S-sh!" whispered Skinner. "Not a word! I've got the Chinese's boots on! They fit a trifle small; but——"

Wun Lung stared about him.

"Half a moce, Hally Whalton!" he shouted. "My boots seem to have donee the disappearing act!"

Wun Lung looked at Bulstrode, and then down at Skinner's feet.

"Me savvy!" he murmured. And then, raising his voice, he shouted to Harry Wharton & Co. to stop Skinner, who had moved towards the dormitory door.

"Stopee Skinner! He wealing my boots! Stop him—quick!"

Harry Wharton turned on Skinner and shook him by the collar.

"You rotter!" he said. "Take those boots off immediately."

"Don't you, Skinner!" shouted Bulstrode. "You're a beastly bully, Harry Wharton, that's what you are! Just because a confounded Chinese says Skinner is wearing his boots, you try to boss the show! Don't you take them off, Skinny!"

Skinner struggled hard to break away from Wharton's strong grasp.

"Let me go, you beast! I didn't know whose boots they were, so I shoved 'em on!"

Wharton turned to Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent.

"Come on, kids!" he said. "A log each, and off with Wun Lung's boots!"

Bob and Frank rushed forward and held Skinner's legs, while Wun Lung unlaced the boots. In a moment they were off, and the Chinese slipped them on to his own feet.

"Me lemembel," he said, looking at Skinner with a bland smile. And left the dormitory as Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry each put an arm through his.

Mr. Quelch turned in his chair with a stern look on his face as the Removites walked into Hall for breakfast.

"You're late, boys! Have you any excuse? You have kept the first meal of the day waiting."

"I'm very sorry, sir," said Harry Wharton; "but we have been wondering what to do. The confound—I mean—er—the rats have chewed up half the boots in our dorm."

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Mr. Quelch stared down at Hurree Singh's feet.

"Why haven't you anything on your feet, Hurree Singh?" he said abruptly.

"The worthy rats have eaten up my esteemed boots, oh, learned master!" replied Hurree Singh, in his choicest English.

Strange wrinkles puckered up the Remove Form-master's face.

"Well," he said, "sit down for the present. I will see to this after breakfast is over."

And the Removites sat down.

Bob Cherry leaned across to Hazeldene.

"Did you see old Quelch's face just now?" he whispered.

"Yes. There's nothing the matter with it, is there?" And Hazeldene looked down the long table, and stared at Mr. Quelch.

"Rather!" said Bob Cherry. "Didn't you see it?"

"Didn't I see what, fathhead?" said Hazeldene irritably.

"Didn't you see that benign smile flit across his noble countenance when Inky called him 'Oh, learned master'?"

"Ass!" muttered Hazeldene. And he attacked the ham and eggs before him.

The cook had evidently taken good care to protect the food over-night. Nothing was wanting, and Dr. Locke had ordered an extra amount of food to be placed before the boys as they had been almost starved at tea and supper the night before.

Billy Bunter was in his element, and egg after egg, and slice after slice of ham disappeared from his plate.

After a time the Falstaff of Greyfriars sat back in his chair, with a smile of satisfaction.

"I don't think I mind the rats much," he said to Trevor, who was sitting next to him.

"Good old piggy!" said Trevor.

"Oh, really, Trevor——"

"Silence, Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "Boys," he continued, "you may dismiss! Those who have come down without shoes or boots on will remain, and line up at the end of the room!"

The seniors rose from their chairs, and left Hall in a dignified manner, followed a moment later by a scampering crowd of juniors.

A dozen of the Removites had to remain, and these lined up in single file, as ordered by Mr. Quelch.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Wun Lung remained behind with the crowd.

Mr. Quelch was engaged for the moment in speaking to Carberry, the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars, and Wun Lung saw his chance of paying off his score against Skinner.

"Watchee me," he said.

"I'm watching you, you imp of Celestial lands. What——"

But Wun Lung had glided away, and was making towards the line of bootless juniors.

Harry Wharton grinned, and touched Bob and Frank on the arm.

"Watch that wily young Chinese!" he whispered.

"Ow!"

"Oh-er!"

"Get off my feet!"

"Oh, you beast!"

Bulstrode, Skinner, and Stott were dancing about like a trio of Maori warriors.

"I'll smash you, you young Chinese fiend!" shouted Bulstrode fiercely, hopping about on one leg, and holding his other foot in his hands.

"You beast!" roared Skinner. "I'll—I'll——"

Mr. Quelch stamped up to the juniors angrily.

"Silence, Skinner!" he shouted. "Bulstrode, Stott, will you stop those ridiculous antics?"

"But——" spluttered Bulstrode.

"Silence, boy!"

"That young——"

"Fifty lines, Bulstrode!" said the Form-master. "Now then, boys, I understand that rats have damaged your boots, and you have no others but those in the shed—the ones Gosling will be cleaning this morning?"

"As my esteemed master says!" assented Hurree Singh.

"Well——"

The master stopped short, and stared down at Bulstrode's feet, for through each of the bully's socks a big toe protruded.

Bulstrode blushed, and fidgeted uneasily.

"Make those fifty, seventy-five lines, Bulstrode!" said Mr. Quelch. "You may now dismiss to fetch your boots!"

And the twelve walked silently out of Hall.

Billy Bunter, who was one of the twelve, turned to Mark Linley.

"Shall we have to go across the quad in our socks?" he asked.

"Yes," laughed Mark, "it is a bit awkward, isn't it? But I suppose we've got to do it."

And the twelve went down the steps leading into the quad. The shed, wherein were the boots, was right on the other side of the playground, and for the first twenty yards or so the juniors managed to hop along all right. The sun was out, and the surface of the ground was now almost dry.

"Ow!" yelled Bulstrode suddenly, as he hopped on to a flinty stone.

In a moment, the twelve bootless ones were on rough ground, and they danced from one foot to another.

"Oh—oh—er!" gasped Billy Bunter, as his foot found a particularly rough stone.

The rest of the Greyfriars' juniors, who were in the quad, now came flocking up to see the fun.

"Faith!" laughed Micky Desmond, "don't they do the war dance prettily?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode turned on the amused audience fiercely.

"You cads, you wait till I get my boots on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here you are, Inky!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Up you get!" And he bent slightly to give Hurree Singh a back.

The Hindu gave a spring, and, with a cheer, Harry rushed him up to the shed.

But the rest had to hop to the shed like so many bathers from their tents down the pebbly beach to the water's edge.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Boy Scouts' Capture:

DINNER was over, and Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Bob Cherry were sitting in Study 1.

"I think poison is too dangerous," Harry Wharton was saying. "You don't know who might go and slap poison on a biscuit, or a bun, or something, and then some fathead like Bunter might come along and wolf the lot—poison and all!"

"Yes," agreed Bob Cherry. "There is an element of danger in that rat-poison wheeze of yours, Nugent."

"I don't think so, anyhow, do you, Inky? Why, if an eating machine like Bunter does come along, and he wolf's the poison, whose fault is it?"

"Well," said Bob Cherry, smiling, "whose fault is it?"

"Yes," added Harry, "if it comes to that, whose fault is it?"

Nugent sat back, and glared at the two questioners.

"If you think you're——"

"Not at all," interrupted Cherry. "What I say is: whose fault is it?"

Frank Nugent jumped to his feet, and pulled Bob Cherry from his chair.

"If you ask me that question again, I'll——"

Bob Cherry turned, and appealed to Harry Wharton.

"Look here, Harry," he said, with a stolid look on his face, "can you tell me whose fault is it, because——"

Nugent took a tighter grip on Cherry, and the two fell to the floor with a crash. In a moment, they were scrambling all over the study. The table was bumped violently aside, and a steady stream of ink flowed down on to Cherry's head. A chair went over with a bang, as Nugent vainly tried to put the half-nelson on his opponent.

"I'll tell you whose fault is it!" roared Nugent. "I'll——I'll just about——"

"Cherry!"

"Nugent!"

The two wrestlers stopped struggling, and looked up into the stern face of Wingate, who had entered the room during the uproar.

"Sorry, skipper, I was only just showing Nugent that latest hold—you know, that one where——"

"Get up at once, you young scamps!" said Wingate.

"If you haven't got this room straight in two minutes, I sha'n't tell you the good news I came here intending to tell you. Quick, now!"

Hurree Singh pulled the table into the centre of the room, and mopped up the ink, while Harry Wharton jammed in a leg to the chair which had got knocked over. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent both busied themselves, and, after putting their collars and ties straight, stood respectfully before the captain of Greyfriars.

"Well, what's the good news, Winny?" said Harry Wharton.

"On account of the rotten weather we've had the last three or four days, the Head has sanctioned a half for

to-day. There'll be no cricket, although it's fine at last, as the ground's half under water, so you can amuse yourselves just as you please—none of this study wrecking, though, mind that!"

And it was to a resounding cheer that Wingate slammed the door of Study 1.

"By Jove!" said Bob Cherry, enthusiastically. "The Head's a brick, isn't he?"

"The worthy Head is a whole hod of bricks!" assented Hurree Singh.

"The thing is, what are we going to do this afternoon? Wingate says there'll be no cricket. It's too uncertain whether it'll rain or not, so it wouldn't be safe to take Marjorie & Co. for a picnic on the river. So what shall we do?" said Frank Nugent.

"I know!" replied Harry Wharton. "Let us go out on to Friardale Common, and see the country from there. It'll be a fine sight, I should think, with nearly all the land about here under water!"

"Good idea!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on, buck up. We don't want to waste time!"

And the four chums made their way out of the school.

Wun Lung and Billy Bunter were talking to Gosling, the porter, as the Remove juniors reached the big iron gates.

"Hallo, Wharton!" said Bunter to Bob Cherry. "This is jolly decent of the Head, isn't it?"

"Yes, fathead," said Bob, "I'm not Wharton, though, thank goodness; but I quite agree with you about the Head!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Cherry. I thought you were Harry Wharton. You see, I'm a trifle short-sighted."

"Well, I'm not, thank goodness," said Bob, "and——"

Harry Wharton turned round, and caught Cherry by the scruff of the neck.

"Look here," he interrupted, "not so much of the 'thank goodness!'"

"Right-ho!" laughed Bob. "Pax!"

"We're going on to Friardale Common to see what the floods look like," said Nugent. "Like to join us, Wun Lung, and you, too, you fat cormorant?"

"Yes, thanks very much," replied Billy Bunter, "but I don't think you ought to say I'm fat, why I haven't had very much grub lately, and I was going to suggest——"

"Oh, come on!" said Harry Wharton, and walking by the side of Wun Lung, he set the pace in the direction of Friardale Common.

"Hallo, what's this coming along?" said Harry Wharton.

"No savvy!" replied Wun Lung.

"Why, it's Trumper, the patrol leader of the Pegg Bóy Scouts!" said Harry, as the healthy young fisher-son came down the heavy road at a steady trot. His staff carried a pennon of colour which was fluttering in the breeze.

Trumper did indeed look smart, and he exchanged a hearty "Hallo!" with the Greyfriars' juniors.

"What are you doing right out here?" shouted Frank Nugent, as he passed him.

"Goin' to capture a red flag on the common!" panted the Boy Scout. "Got the whole patrol out this afternoon!"

"Then why are you running away from the common then, if——"

But the patrol-leader was out of ear-shot.

"Great Scott!" said Harry Wharton to Wun Lung.

"Just look at the lower road leading to Little Grayton!"

"Me looker," replied Wun Lung, "but me not see any load!"

"No, ass, of course not," said Wharton, "it's all under water."

And they stood looking down at the expanse of water until Bob Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh and Bunter joined them.

"Fine sight, isn't it?" said Nugent. "Come on, though, and let's get out on the common."

And the juniors trudged on.

"I suppose that bit of rag over there is the red flag young Trumper was talking about," said Bob Cherry, as the chums gained the common.

"Yes, it's sure to be," agreed Nugent. "Can't see any scouts, though, can you?"

"No; but, by jove! Look at old Farmer Weston's meadows. Is that a sheep on that fallen tree?"

"Great Scott!" said Harry Wharton. "It is, I believe. Come on, let's get down to the meadows, and rescue the poor beast."

And the juniors started running down the hill.

"Wait a minute, you chaps," shouted Bunter.

Wun Lung stopped.

"What we waiter fol, Fatty?" asked the Chinese.

"Those chaps haven't got any sense," answered Billy Bunter. "Now, instead of risking their lives in trying to save a sheep from drowning, they should have come

under my leadership. If those Boy Scouts are really out for the afternoon, they are sure to have brought some grub with them, and I'm going to see whether there is anything in that basket by the red flag—it looks like a basket from here, doesn't it?"

"Me no savvy!" answered Wun Lung.

"Come on, then," said Billy. "I believe it's a grub basket. Let's come and have a look."

And Wun Lung followed Billy Bunter.

Now, although the Falstaff of Greyfriars had not really seen a basket by the red flag, by some extraordinary coincidence he had imagined correctly, for the Boy Scouts of Pegg had brought their food out with them.

One of the Pegg fishermen had been driving into Friar-dale, and Trumper had asked him to put the basket in the trap, as the scouts intended cooking their tea over a camp fire.

Bunter's eyes glistened as he caught sight of the basket, and he soon had the string which secured it, undone.

"Me vely hungry," said Wun Lung, as Billy pulled out a loaf of bread and a pot of jam. Next came a bag of eggs, which was laid very carefully upon the grass. There was a small packet of tea, some sugar, a large cake, and a bottle of milk. And at the bottom of the basket there was a kettle, a small saucepan, three tin plates and some knives.

"Shall we light a fire and boil some eggs, Wun Lung?" said Bunter, cutting a large slice of cake for himself.

"Me gettee on with cake and jam befole the scouts come," said Wun Lung.

And the Celestial got up, and pulled the red flag down. It had been strung up to a young sapling, and Wun Lung foresaw trouble if the Pegg boys arrived before he and Bunter had decamped.

Billy cut the bread, and laid the jam on with a generous hand. After the two had satisfied themselves with bread and jam, they finished the cake, which was washed down by the bottle of milk.

Bunter reached across for the bag of eggs.

"I suppose we had better take these back——"

Crack!

Bunter turned round nervously, as a twig was snapped behind the bush they were sitting by.

"What was that, Wun Lung?" whispered Billy.

"Me savvy!" replied the Chinese, and he squirmed away into the gorse, until he was hidden from Bunter's sight.

There was a rustle behind the bush again, and a scout's hat appeared round the side.

The Falstaff of Greyfriars jumped to his feet; but the next moment Trumper's staff caught him in the chest, and he fell with a crash on to the bag of eggs which he had been about to pick up.

"Ouch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the scout-leader. "That serves you right, you greedy young rotter!"

"Lemme alone!" gasped Bunter. "If you don't——"

"Shut up!" commanded Trumper, and Billy did shut up!

The scout-leader gave a few shrill blasts on his whistle, and one by one his followers rallied round him.

Billy lay trembling on the ground, as he heard the threats of each scout on being told of the raid on the grub basket.

"Let's gag and bind him to a tree, and leave him!" suggested one.

"I know!" said Dicky Brown, who was the second-in-command of the patrol. "Let's cut his hair off, and then——"

"You beastly cad!" shouted Bunter. "If you cads dare do anything——"

"Stop calling us cads!" interrupted Brown.

"Sha'n't!" said Bunter.

It was not often that Billy Bunter lost his temper; but now the knowledge of the close proximity of Harry Wharton & Co. gave him courage.

"If you don't shut up," said Dicky Brown seriously, "you'll have to fight me to see whether——"

"You're a cad!" said Bunter, finishing the sentence for the Boy Scout.

"Then you shall fight me!" said Dicky Brown.

And Trumper pulled Bunter to his feet with a jerk, as the patrol formed a ring.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Fight.

BILLY BUNTER removed his glasses unconsciously, and Trumper took them from him.

"It's no good you fighting with these windows on," he said.

Matters looked serious, and Billy gave a sickly smile.

"What are you rolling up your sleeves for?" he asked, as Dicky Brown made these preparations. "I don't think we need fight about it. I expect a postal-order will be waiting for me at the school, and I will invite you chaps

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in to a study feed to make up for what Wun Lung has eaten."

"Oh, no, you won't!" said Dicky Brown. "You are going to fight me now."

Dicky Brown advanced towards Bunter, and Billy thought it was to deliver a blow. He put up his hands to guard the imaginary fist, and in so doing he tapped Brown lightly on the nose.

The water came to Brown's eyes, and he gave Bunter a punch on the chest.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Pegg Scouts. "Go it, Dicky!"

And the fight commenced in earnest.

Trumper took out his watch, and shouted out that there would be two-minute rounds.

Billy roared with pain as Brown's fist caught him on the chin, and he rushed in blindly.

"Take that!" he yelled, giving Brown a flat-handed smack on the cheek.

Dicky Brown lowered his head and rushed in, giving Billy a painful prod in the chest.

"Oh!" yelled Billy. And he caught hold of the Boy Scout, and tried to throw him to the ground.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Pegg boys.

"Break away, there!" said Trumper.

The two separated, and sparred for the next blow; but "Time!" was called, and the two combatants sat down on the grass for a breather.

Billy Bunter blinked painfully at his opponent, and at the grinning scouts.

He did not see very well with his glasses on; but he saw still worse with them off, and the grinning faces formed a kind of blur round him.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Time!" said Trumper.

"But, I say——"

"Time!"

Dicky Brown rose to his feet.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, I don't want to hurt Brown——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I always liked Brown; and I respect you all very much," said Billy Bunter feebly. "I—I approve of the Boy Scout movement."

"Thanks!"

"I—I think you're very brave and noble."

"Go it!"

"I admire you awfully! You're just the fellows I should like to chum with."

Dicky Brown sniffed.

"Well, of all the miserable worms," he said, "I really think that this fat chap takes the Peek Frean!"

Trumper chuckled.

"It's touching, the way he admires us!" he remarked.

"Have you any more nice things to say about us, Bunter?" Bunter blinked at him.

"I always liked you, Trumper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really——"

"Get up!"

"I'm exhausted."

"Anybody got a pin?"

Bunter jumped up as if moved by a spring.

Dicky Brown pranced up to him, and began sparring.

Bunter backed away.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Go it!"

"Knock him out!"

"Teach him to wolf our grub!"

"He doesn't need teaching that!" grinned Trumper.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo! Here come the rest of them!" said one of the Boy Scouts, pointing to the figures of Harry Wharton & Co., visible in the distance.

Bunter's expression changed.

He caught sight of his comrades of Greyfriars, and he was too short-sighted to see that a rivulet of water in a hollow of the common separated him from them.

He saw that they were not twenty yards distant, and his courage rose at once.

He waved his hand excitedly.

"Rescue, Remove!" he roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Trumper. "Rescue the prize ox! This way to save the oyster!"

"Rotters!" growled Billy Bunter. "Come on! I'll tackle the lot of you! This way, you fellows! Back me up!"

As Bunter had no doubt that Harry Wharton & Co. would immediately rush into the combat and back him up, he did not hesitate to go for Dicky Brown again.

The Removites of Greyfriars advanced as far as the flooded hollow, and then perforce halted.

The Boy Scouts, who had seen that obstacle in their way all the time, roared with laughter.

Bunter sparred away with Dicky Brown, expecting every moment to hear the rush of Removite feet to back him up.

But the rush did not come.

"Here's for your nose!" said Dicky Brown, giving Billy Bunter a tap on that organ. "Here's a reminder for your eye! And one for your nob!"

"Ow!"

"That's for your ear! And that's for your cheek!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-wow!"

"And that——"

"Help! Rescue!"

"Go for him!" shouted Bob Cherry across the water. "We'll see fair play—from here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Rescue!"

"We can't get at you! The water's in the way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Boy Scouts.

"Come on!" yelled Dicky Brown, dancing round Bunter like a wild Indian. "Come on! One for your nose, and one for your eye! Come on!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"One for your——"

Bunter collapsed, and rolled on the ground.

"You cads!" he roared at the grinning Removites across the water. "Why don't you back a fellow up? Yah!"

"Get up!" roared Dicky Brown.

"Yah! I can't!"

"You're not hurt!"

"I've dislocated my spine, and twisted my ankle."

"Which ankle?" demanded Trumper, only too willing to air his knowledge of first-aid to the injured.

"I—I don't know. I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts! I'm nearly expiring!"

"Better chuck him into the water, and put him out of his misery," said Craye.

"Good idea!"

"Yah! Lemme alone! Rescue!"

Billy Bunter squirmed away with remarkable agility for a junior whose spine was dislocated.

He disappeared into the gorse, and the Boy Scouts yelled with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Greyfriars is licked!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

For the Honour of Greyfriars!

"GREYFRIARS is licked!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Boy Scouts of Pegg indulged in that triumphant shout for the special behoof of Harry Wharton & Co.

The Removites looked serious at once.

They had looked on and laughed heartily at the ridiculous fight Billy Bunter had put up. They knew of old that Bunter had no pluck to speak of, and that he couldn't fight a Third Form fag.

But the shout of the Boy Scouts brought another aspect of the case to their minds.

Greyfriars had been licked in the person of Billy Bunter! It was "up" to Harry Wharton & Co. to uphold the honour of the old school.

"Blessed if we're going to stand this!" said Bob Cherry.

"Not muchee!"

"The cheek!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific!"

"Here, you bounders," shouted Harry Wharton, "don't clear off yet! We've got something to say to you!"

Trumper removed his big hat with a mocking bow.

"Say on!" he said, with a grin.

"You've just said that Greyfriars is licked."

"Exactly!"

"Well, you know it's all rot!"

Trumper chuckled.

"We don't know anything of the sort. The smallest chap here could lick that fat oyster with one hand, and with his eyes shut!"

"That's not licking Greyfriars!"

"Oh, you can't stand up to us!" said Trumper. "We're Boy Scouts, you know; and you chaps are mostly spoonies!"

The Removites turned pink with excitement.

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"I'll jolly well show you whether we're spoonies or not!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Just you wait there till we get round to you!"

"Rats!"

"Stop there, and——"

"We can't waste all the afternoon standing here!" said Trumper. "If you want to argue matters out, that water's shallow enough to walk through."

The Removites looked doubtfully at the flooded hollow that separated them from the Boy Scouts of Pegg.

The water was probably not more than four feet deep in the middle; but a walk through four feet of cold water was not a pleasant idea, nor was it likely to improve their clothes.

"You jolly well come over here and argue!" called back Nugent.

Trumper laughed.

"Oh, we're not anxious to argue! We've argued with Bunter."

"Wait till we get round——"

"Rats!"

"Oh, blow! We've heard too much of rats lately," said Nugent.

"Are you coming?" said Trumper. "We'll wait two minutes, so if you're not only gassing, come across."

"We should get jolly wet——"

"Oh, if you're afraid of a little wet——"

"We're not afraid!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Then come across."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Boy Scouts. "We've licked Greyfriars! Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton breathed hard through his nose.

"I could lick the best man you've got!" he roared.

Trumper waved his hat again.

"Come and do it, then," he said.

Wharton threw off his jacket.

"Hold on!" said Mark Linley. "You're not going through the water, Wharton."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I jolly well am, Linley. They're not going to crow over us."

"But——"

"It's all right, I shall get through first-rate."

"But your clothes."

"Blow my clothes!"

The Lancashire lad laughed.

"All right; but I can't afford to be reckless with mine, or I'd come with you."

"That's all right—you fellows stay here and watch. The Boy Scouts will give me fair play."

"Oh, yes; that's certain!"

"Are you coming?" roared Trumper.

"Yes."

And Harry Wharton plunged into the water.

"Phew!" ejaculated Trumper. "I—I never expected him to do it. The ass!"

"He's a plucky ass, anyway," observed Dicky Brown.

Trumper ran down to the water to give Wharton a hand ashore. The captain of the Greyfriars Remove struggled through, and dragged himself out and shook the water from him in showers, a great deal like a Newfoundland dog.

"I'm ready for you," he gasped breathlessly.

Trumper grinned.

"Well, you're a plucked 'un," he said. "Are you fit, after getting through the water?"

Wharton knuckled the water out of his eyes.

"Fit as a fiddle," he said.

Trumper threw off his hat.

"Then I'm ready for you."

Billy Bunter's voice was heard from the gorse. The fat junior was not far off.

"Give him one for me, Wharton."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Removite and Boy Scout faced one another, with grim looks. There was no enmity between them; on the other hand, they liked and respected one another. But it was a point of honour; a question whether the Boy Scouts of Pegg, or the Lower Fourth of Greyfriars should take the biscuit.

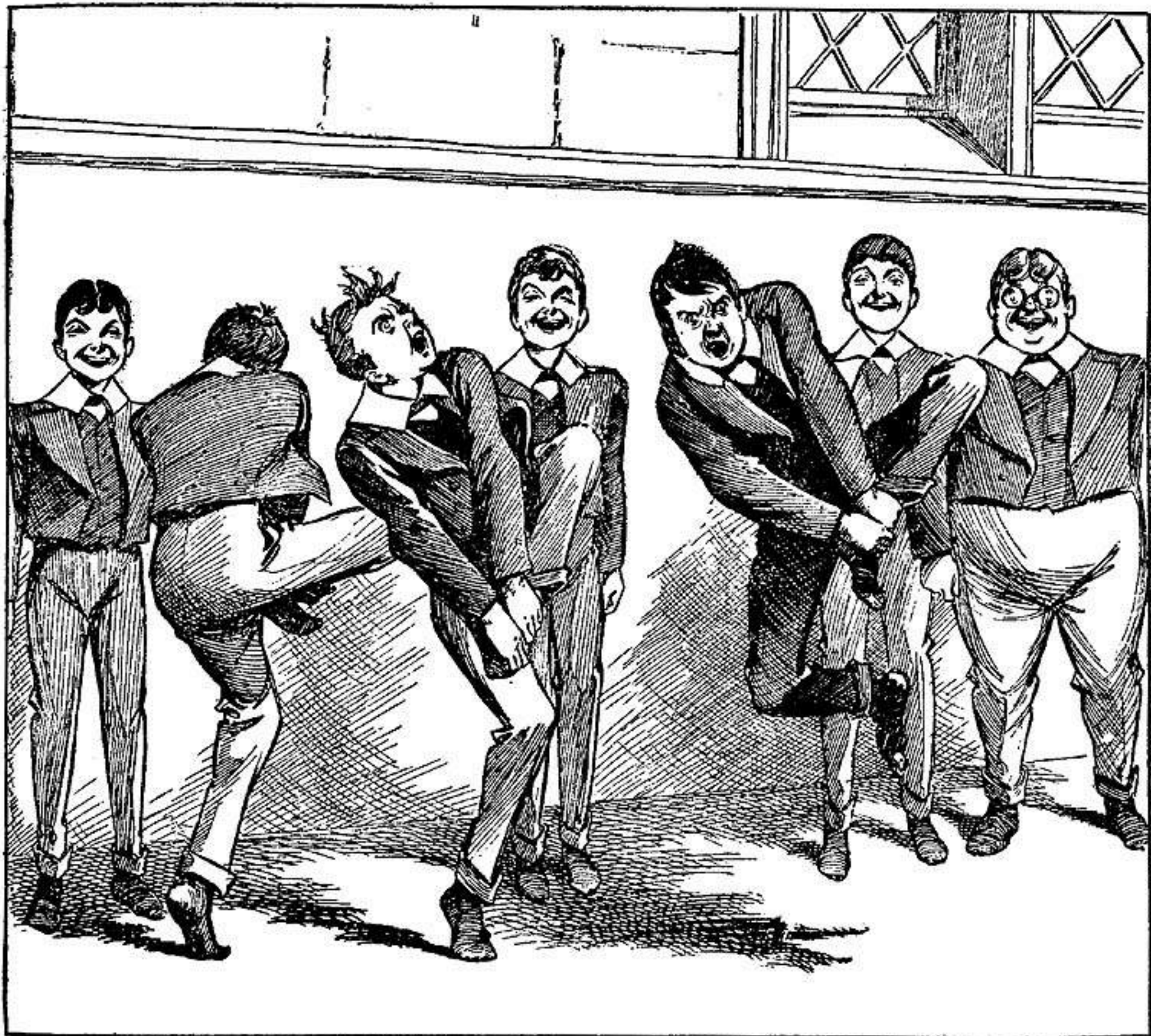
"Give us your fin," said the burly fisherman's son, with a grin.

And Wharton shook hands with him cheerily enough.

"Go it!" called out Dicky Brown.

And the tussle commenced, watched with equal interest by the Boy Scouts standing round, and by the Greyfriars' Removites across the water.

Trumper had the advantage both in size and strength; but Harry Wharton had ten times his science. Wharton was the finest athlete in the Remove—the best boxer in the lower school.



"OW!"

And his skill told in the first round. Trumper's heavy drives were all guarded easily, and again and again Wharton's blows came home upon his bronzed face.

The scout-leader gradually grew excited, and then he threw carefulness to the winds, and strove to reach his adversary by sheer force and persistence.

His punishment was heavy, but his persistence had some effect, and several times his fists came home upon Harry Wharton's face.

Three rounds were fought out grimly, and then it became clear that Trumper's strenuous attack was exhausting him.

But, fagged as he was growing, he continued the fight with undiminished spirit.

In the fourth round, Wharton attacked steadily, and the scout-leader of Pegg slowly but surely gave ground before him.

Back and back he was driven, till he was on the very verge of the flooded hollow, and a couple more backward steps would have seen him floundering into the water.

There was a shout of warning from the Removites and the Boy Scouts together.

"Look out!"

But the warning came too late.

Harry Wharton had let out a blow straight from the shoulder, which the scout-leader failed to guard.

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It caught him on the point of the chin, and hurled him backwards as if a cannon-ball had struck him.

Right back he went, staggering—to fall backwards into the water, with a resounding splash.

Spl—ash!

The water swirled and eddied over Trumper as he disappeared from view.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

More Rats!

HARRY WHARTON stood staring blankly at the eddying circles on the water for a second. He hardly realised what had taken place.

Then a hand came above the surface—far out in the deepest water.

In a moment Harry Wharton had plunged in.

Trumper had been dazed by the blow and the sudden crash backwards into the water, and he could not make a movement to save himself.

But Harry Wharton's grip was quickly on him.

Wharton dragged the Boy Scout's head above the water and held it there, helping the burly fisher to his feet in the mud below.

Trumper stood up, with Wharton's grasp holding him upright, and the water eddying and swirling round him.

"Oh!" he gasped. "I—I thought I was a goner."

Wharton gasped, too, with relief.

"So did I," he exclaimed. "Thank goodness the water was shallow, and—"

"And that you jumped in so quickly," said Trumper, as he scrambled towards the shore. "Chaps have been drowned in shallower water than this."

"The drownfulness might have been terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Come out this side, Harry," called out Nugent.

"Right you are!"

Trumper was helped ashore on one side by the Boy Scouts, and Harry Wharton on the other by his chums. Harry waved his hand to Trumper.

"That's the finish," he said.

Trumper laughed breathlessly.

"It's jolly well the finish for me," he said. "I couldn't strike another blow to save my life. I'm much obliged to you for pulling me out."

"Oh, that's nothing!"

"And I'll give you best, if you like."

"Not at all; only you haven't licked Greyfriars. You'd better cut off and get into some dry clothes."

"Yes, rather! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye; and keep an eye on that porpoise of yours in the future, or you will find him scalped one of these days."

The Removites turned in the direction of the school. The afternoon's excursion had been cut rather short by the mishap; but they had been the means of rescuing a drowning sheep, and that was one good deed done, at all events. And the tussle with Trumper had been exciting while it lasted; though Harry, with a darkened eye and a streaming nose, was not so satisfied with the results of it as his chums were.

"Better get a run home," said Bob Cherry. "You'll catch cold in those wet clothes if you hang about, Harry."

"Come on, then—race!"

"The racefulness is terrific."

"What about Bunter?" asked Mark Linley.

"Oh, he can get in by himself, I suppose!"

And the juniors set off at a rapid run for the school. The exercise kept Harry's blood in circulation, and saved him from the cold he might otherwise have caught; or, rather, which he would certainly have caught if he had moved slowly in his wet clothes. The juniors reached the college, and Harry ran up at once to the Remove dormitory for a rub down with a rough towel and a change of attire.

As he came downstairs after his change, feeling very fresh and fit, Mr. Quelch met him in the passage. The Remove-master's keen eye noted the darkened circle round the eye and the swollen nose.

"You have been enjoying your unexpected half-holiday, Wharton?" said the Remove-master sarcastically.

Harry Wharton coloured.

"Ye-e-es, sir," he said.

"You have been fighting, Wharton?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"I should not imagine that to be the most pleasant way of spending a half-holiday," remarked Mr. Quelch, still in the tone sarcastic. "I suppose tastes differ."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"For a change, you might try writing fifty lines of Virgil, which you will show to me by tea-time," said the Form-master. "This will keep you from any further damage to your features."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

And Harry Wharton went to his study. It was too bad to have lines to do on that afternoon, of all afternoons; but there was no arguing with Mr. Quelch.

As Harry entered No. 1 in the Remove passage, there was a sound of sudden scampering in the room.

"My hat!" muttered Wharton. "More rats!"

He caught sight of two or three figures whisking away in the corners of the room. There were rats in the study—and they were not all gone. A sound of biting and gnawing and rustling came from Wharton's hatbox, and he opened it in surprise. Three or four large rats whisked out and scuttled away.

Wharton uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

His Sunday topper, which had been new at the beginning of the term had been gnawed almost to rags.

Wharton gazed at it angrily.

He gave a guinea for his silk toppers, while most of the Removites were satisfied with ten-and-six, and so the loss was a considerable one.

How had the rats got in the hatbox?

There was no hole in the box, which was of strong leather, and the rats could not, of course, have opened the lid for themselves.

It was plain to Wharton that a mean trick had been played.

The rats had been purposely placed in the hatbox; and

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THE CHUM FROM NEW ZEALAND."

that fact let in a great deal of light upon the previous happenings of Greyfriars.

Wharton kicked the ruined hat into a corner, and sat down to write his imposition. He was busily at work, scratching away with the pen, when the study door quietly opened.

Wharton was too busy to look up. He was working away at express speed to get his lines finished before tea, and before his chums should come in.

As a matter of fact, he imagined that it was one of his friends who had just opened the door, and he waited for the new-comer to speak, at the same time driving away with his pen.

He heard a slight exclamation, as of surprise, and then the sound of the door quickly shutting.

He started and looked round.

The study was empty.

Wharton stared blankly at the closed door.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Who's that?"

But no reply came from the passage. He heard a sound of feet scuttling away towards the staircase.

He jumped up from the table and threw the door open.

The passage was empty.

The unseen intruder into the study had vanished.

Wharton returned to the study table in a puzzled frame of mind. What the unknown should have come into his study for was a mystery. But suddenly he started, as a ray of light seemed to flash into his mind.

It was the joker who had placed the rats in his hatbox returning for some further jape, who had entered the study.

The fellow had not, of course, expected to find Wharton there on a fine half-holiday.

"By Jove!" muttered Harry Wharton. "That's it, and no mistake! I wish I'd caught sight of him! I wonder who it was?"

But it was no use wondering. He could not guess. He returned to his imposition, and finished it, and carried it to Mr. Quelch's study. As he came back to No. 1, after delivering the lines to the Remove-master, he met his chums in the passage, and they entered their quarters together.

"I suppose one of you chaps didn't pop into the study a while back, and pop out again?" Wharton asked.

The Removites stared at him blankly.

"I didn't, for one," said Frank Nugent. "Did you, Inky?"

"The neitherfulness of my worthy self is terrific!"

"And I jolly well didn't!" said Billy Bunter. "Perhaps it was Bob Cherry. He left us at the door, and said he was going to No. 13."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said a voice at the door, as Bob looked in. "Who's that taking my name into common use?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I—I was just telling Wharton that it couldn't have been you who popped into the study awhile ago—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Billy Bunter peevishly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You see, I heard all you said."

"Well, you see, I—I—I may have expressed myself unfortunately. What I really meant was—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Wharton. "I suppose it wasn't you, Bob, popped in here ten minutes ago, and went out before I looked round?"

"Not much."

"Then it was the japist!" said Wharton, closing his lips hard.

"What japist?"

"Look at that hat!"

"My hat!"

"No, my hat!"

"Ha, ha! I meant—"

"Somebody has been putting rats in my hatbox! I have suspected for some time that this plague of rats isn't wholly accidental. It's a jape!"

"By Jove!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter is Put to the Torture.

HARRY WHARTON nodded decidedly.

"A jape!" said Bob Cherry. "And who's the japist?"

"That's what we've got to find out."

"We've got to! Why we?"

"Because it's gone far enough," said Harry. "Too far,

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

as a matter of fact. I've lost a guinea topper, and that's rather more than a joke."

"By Jove, yes!"

"Look here, how did the rats get into this study? There are no holes in the floor; we've looked. They must have got in at the doorway. The floods have driven them to Greyfriars, of course; and my belief is that somebody has been catching them and shoving them in here."

"Phew!"

"Then there's the raiding of the grub. I never believed that was all due to the rats, and I know Mr. Quelch didn't, either."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Somebody has been raiding the grub, and has introduced the rats into the house as a cover for it," said Wharton. "He's shoved an extra lot into our study, because he's got something up against us. That's my idea."

"Looks like it, too," said Nugent, nodding.

"The lookfulness of the likefulness is simply terrific."

"Well, I shouldn't wonder," said Bob Cherry.

"You don't know anything about it?" asked Harry, looking directly at Bob.

Bob Cherry gave him a startled look.

"I? No! What should I know about it?"

"Well, since you have been in No. 13 Study you've been keeping up some rot about No. 13 being top study in the Remove——"

"Oh, that's not rot; that's fact!"

"Bosh!"

"The boshfulness is terrific!"

"Look here——"

"Rubbish!"

"The rubbishfulness is equally terrific!"

"I'm jolly well willing to fight anybody who says that No. 13 isn't top study in the Remove, and chance it!" said Bob Cherry warmly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"And that would settle it, of course," he remarked. "The thought crossed my mind for a moment that this might be a No. 13 jape, that's all, Bob. I shouldn't be surprised at it from Wun Lung."

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Well, it isn't," he declared. "I never knew anything about it, and I'll wager that Wun Lung and Mark Linley knew no more than I did."

"That's all right, then. Now, the question is to find the japist."

"The questionfulness is terrific!"

"We've got to do it. From what's happened in this study it's pretty clear that it's somebody who's got something up against us. Bulstrode, or Stott, or Snoop, or one of that set; perhaps the lot of them."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Bunter! Bunter, of course! When any grub is raided, it's always safe to put it down to Bunter."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"And then, being a rat himself, he would naturally have a sort of fellow-feeling for rats!"

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry seized the fat junior by the collar.

"Put the poker in the fire, quick, Nugent!" he exclaimed. "We'll put him to the torture, and make him confess!"

"Right you are!" said Nugent heartily; and he thrust the poker between the bars of the grate.

"Lay him flat on the table."

"Ow, ow! Yow! Ow!"

"Bump him down! Shove a cushion over his face so that he can't yell while we're torturing him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Help! Hellup! Yow!"

"Hold him tight! Blessed if I knew that a porpoise could struggle like that. Keep still, Bunter. We're only going to torture you!"

"Ow! Yow! I won't be tortured! Help!"

"Grab him!"

Billy Bunter was flopped down on the table on his back. He blinked at the ceiling through his big glasses with terrified eyes.

How much the Removites were in earnest he did not know, but he never could tell exactly what they meant or did not mean. Bunter was a little obtuse, and he never fully understood anything but cooking and eating.

At all events, it was certain that the juniors had very grim and truculent faces, and that the poker was heating, red hot, in the fire.

"Is it red yet, Nugent?"

"Nearly. 'Nother minute."

"Right-ho!"

"Ow! Hellup! I'm being murdered! Help!"

"Bung that cushion over his chivvy!"

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

"Ow! Help! Hel—groo—ooooooooh!"

The cushion cut short the flow of Billy Bunter's ellquence. While his fat face was covered up the Removites allowed their countenances to relax, and they grinned at one another. Of course, they had not the slightest intention of hurting Bunter. But they all thought it very probable that he had had a hand in the raiding, and they meant to scare the truth out of him.

Nobody but Bunter, of course, would have believed for a moment that he was going to be tortured. But Bunter was capable of anything.

"That poker ready, Inky?"

"The readiffulness is terrific!"

"Is it quite red?"

"It is so red that it is white, my worthy chum!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Hand it over!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur took hold of the poker to draw it from the bars. Then he let out a terrific yell, and dropped it clanging into the grate. Then he danced round the study, sucking his fingers.

Bob Cherry stared at him inquiringly.

"That's very pretty, Inky, but it's not the time to show us a Bhanipur dance just when we're putting Bunter to the torture."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"If you suck your fingers like that you'll get the colour off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter with the inky ass?"

"Ow! The poker was hot; the handle of the esteemed poker partook of the extreme heatfulness!" groaned the nabob.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why didn't you use something to take hold of it with, you inky duffer?"

"I did not thinkfully prepare myself for the heat of the esteemed handle."

"Well, here's Nugent's cap; you can use that——"

"That he jolly well can't——"

"Well, take Wharton's handkerchief——"

"More rats!"

"Oh, hang it! There's an old exercise-book," said Bob Cherry. "Hold it with that, and bring the poker here Bunter is getting impatient."

The fat junior got his head free from the cushion for a moment.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"But—but I say——"

"Keep that cushion over his chivvy."

"I—I say—groo—groo—yarooh!"

And Bunter's remarks again tailed off under the cushion.

"Gimme that poker," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose the end's still hot. Can I try it on your leg, Nugent?"

"If you bring that poker near me, you ass——"

"All right, don't be rusty; I won't! Now, where will you have it, Bunter?" said Bob Cherry, quietly putting the poker into the grate again, and taking up a tumbler instead.

"Ow, yow! Groooh!" came in muffled tones from under the cushion.

"Which leg do you prefer?"

"Yarooh!"

"Blessed if I understand Esperanto. Can't you speak English?"

"Groo—yerrrooooh!"

"It's Russian now—or Sanskrit. Blessed if I knew Bunter was such a linguist. Roll up his trousers, Inky."

"The rollfulness is terrific."

The nabob rolled up Bunter's right trouser-leg, and disclosed an extremely gorgeous sock. The sock being pulled down, the fat calf of the Owl of the Remove was exposed to view. Billy Bunter was struggling spasmodically.

"Are you ready, Bunter?"

"Groooh!"

Bob Cherry touched the bare skin with the edge of the tumbler. The contact of the cold glass was a burn from the poker to the heated imagination of William George Bunter. He gave a terrific yell, and wrenched himself free, and bounded off the table.

"Ow!" he roared. "Help! Murder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help!"

The chums of the Remove were laughing too much to reach out a hand to stop Bunter. It seemed too utterly ridiculous that he should really believe himself to be burnt. Billy Bunter tore open the study door, and rushed into the passage, and right into the arms of Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, who was just coming along to see what the disturbance was about.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Feed.

MR. QUELCH grasped Bunter by the collar, but the fat junior, too terrified to see who it was, or to think of anything but escape, struggled violently, and kicked and squirmed.

"Bunter! What does this mean?"

"Ow! Yow! I'm murdered!"

"Bunter!"

"Oh, is it you, sir?" Bunter ceased to struggle. "Oh, sir, I'm jolly glad you've come, sir. I've been murdered—I mean nearly murdered, sir!"

"Nonsense, Bunter!"

"I've been put to the torture, sir—horrible Red Indian tortures, sir! I'm burnt all over, and suffering fearfully from loss of blood!"

"Go into your study, Bunter."

"But, sir—"

Mr. Quelch marched the fat junior in with an iron grip on his collar. The chums of the Remove had ceased to laugh. They did not quite know how the matter would turn out now.

Mr. Quelch looked at them sternly.

"What does this mean, Wharton?"

"It's only a little joke, sir."

"It wasn't a joke!" shrieked Bunter. "They've been putting me to the torture. I'm burnt in a dozen places! My leg will have to be amputated!"

"Bunter!"

"They burnt me on the leg with a red-hot poker, sir. I've got the place to show. It's awful—full of shooting pains, and you can smell the burning flesh yourself, sir, if you sniff."

Mr. Quelch sniffed.

"I can smell nothing of the sort, Bunter."

"Oh, sir! Why, the air's thick with it!" said Bunter, who had an imagination that would have done credit to a poet or a journalist. "It's reeking—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"You say that your leg has been burnt with a red-hot poker?" demanded Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Yes, sir, fearfully, in a dozen places—at least, in—in one place."

"I cannot believe that these boys have been guilty of such brutality. Show me the place, Bunter."

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch was a little staggered as Bunter stooped down to pull up his trouser-leg. It was evident that the fat junior believed that he had been burnt.

But the Form-master's face cleared the next moment, when the Owl of the Remove disclosed his fat calf to view.

Mr. Quelch looked at it attentively.

"Is that where you were burnt, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir."

"There is not the slightest mark there."

"Wh-wh-what, sir?" stammered Bunter.

"There is no mark there!" thundered the Form-master.

"You have not been burnt. What do you mean by telling me this ridiculous tale?"

Bunter blinked down at his leg through his big glasses in stupefied amazement. It was beginning to dawn upon him that the juniors had been rotting.

"Will you explain this, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir. It was a jape—I—I mean a joke, sir. Bob tapped Bunter's leg with a tumbler, and Bunter thought it was a red-hot poker."

"Oh—ah, really, Wharton—"

Mr. Quelch tried hard not to smile; but he did not succeed. His severe face relaxed in spite of himself.

"This is very absurd," he said. "Bunter, I think you are the most ridiculous boy in the Lower Fourth. But you should not play these tricks, boys. A boy so foolish and so cowardly as Bunter might be injured by the fright."

"Yes, sir. I never thought of that, sir," said Wharton frankly. "But I didn't think Bunter would be idiot enough—ahem!—foolish enough to take it so seriously, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Well, be more careful in future."

And the Form-master quitted the study. Billy Bunter squirmed to the door. He held it open with his hand, and blinked nervously at the Removites.

"It's all right, Bunt," said Wharton, laughing. "You're in no danger."

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"I'm jolly well not going to trust you," he said. "It's all very well you soft-soaping Quelch like that! You can't take me in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're a set of rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT TUESDAY: "THE CHUM FROM NEW ZEALAND."

Billy Bunter went out of the study and slammed the door. The Removites, chuckling to themselves, settled down to tea. They expected that Billy Bunter would return as soon as he remembered that it was tea-time; but somewhat to their surprise, Bunter did not reappear.

As a matter of fact, the fat junior was busy. He did not quite know what to make of the late proceedings of the Famous Four, and it had occurred to him that he might be able to get his tea elsewhere. Tea in Hall never appealed to Billy Bunter; plain fare was only to be taken when better could not be obtained. He remembered that, after coming in from Friardale Common, he had seen Wun Lung leave the school shop with a basket under his arm—a basket that seemed to be heavy laden, by the way the little Chinese carried it. Now, as Bunter knew, both Wun Lung and Mark Linley were in the gym., and Bob Cherry was having tea in No. 1 Study. No. 13 would, therefore, be unoccupied, and there was a glorious chance for the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter went quietly along to the door of No. 13, and opened it and peeped in. All was serene; the study was empty.

Bunter scuttled in, and closed the door behind him.

"This is all right," he murmured. "I wonder whether they've locked the cupboard? They are such suspicious beasts that— No, it's all right. Ripping."

The cupboard door came open at his touch.

Within lay the recent purchases of the Chinese junior, and the mere sight of them was sufficient to make Billy Bunter's mouth water.

There were pork-pies, and ham-pies, chicken-patties, and all sorts of patties, rice-puddings, and meat-puddings. Wun Lung had evidently been going to stand a feed of some magnitude, probably to the chums of No. 1 Study.

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his glasses.

"My only aunt!" he murmured. "This is—is scorching! What a chance! I'll teach that Cherry beast to burn me with tumblers—I mean red-hot pokers! Here goes!"

Billy did not attempt to carry the plunder away. At that hour the Remove passage was lively, and he was certain to be seen. Even if the alarm were not given to the rightful owners, no doubt Bulstrode or some of the Removites would despoil him of the loot.

Bunter dragged the eatables out upon the table, and started.

He started at a good speed, and did not slacken. Bunter had the digestion of a horse, or rather of a rhinoceros. The puddings and pies disappeared down his capacious throat as if by clockwork. No sound was heard in the study save the click of knife and fork, and the steady champing of the fat junior's jaws.

Bunter had come in very hungry from the common. It was late for tea. The fat junior had, in consequence, a tremendous appetite. But, tremendous as it was, Wun Lung's supply of provisions sufficed for it.

After half an hour's steady eating, even Billy Bunter began to slacken.

There were still a great many items left, and he began to pick and choose now, instead of going straight ahead as at first.

"My hat!" he murmured. "This is simply ripping! I wonder what the bounders will say? There will be a row, and I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

And Bunter began to fill his pockets.

Then he turned to the table again, and made a fresh attack, demolishing a dozen jam-tarts in rapid succession. He was just finishing the tarts when the door opened, and Wun Lung came in.

Billy Bunter whisked round, and for a moment the fat junior and the little Chinese stared at one another blankly.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape.

"GLEAT Scottee!"

"I—I must be off," murmured Billy Bunter. "I—I'm sorry I can't stay! I—I've got an important appointment."

He moved towards the door. Wun Lung closed it, and stood on the inside. Bunter came to a halt. Once or twice before he had tried to lay hands on the little Celestial, encouraged to do so by the diminutive size and the bland good temper of the little junior from the Flowery Land. But he had discovered that, small as he was, Wun Lung was good metal all through, and he knew all there was to be known of the secrets of ju-jitsu. Bunter had a painful feeling that if he tried to move the little Chinese from the door,

ANSWERS

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

he would find himself upon his back on the carpet, without exactly knowing how he got there.

But Wun Lung was not looking angry. His almond eyes had flamed for a moment, but now they were quite calm again.

In fact, he looked at the fat junior like Hamlet's father, more in sorrow than in anger.

"I—I've got an appointment," murmured Bunter feebly, in great fear that Bob Cherry or Mark Linley might come into the study at any moment. "I—"

"You have catee glub."

"I—I've just taken a snack."

The Chinese grinned for a moment.

"Gleatee plenty snack."

"You see, I—I—"

"Me savvy. Me solly."

"As for the grub," said Bunter, "I don't mind paying for that. I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning."

Wun Lung shook his head mournfully.

"No mindee glub."

"Then what's the matter?"

"Me tinkee of you."

"Me! I'm all right," said Bunter puzzled. "What are you getting at, you heathen?"

Wun Lung shed tears.

"Me so solly, Buntel goin' to die!" he sobbed.

Billy Bunter jumped. If Bunter had been going to die, he would have been very sorry himself, as a matter of fact.

"What do you mean?" he demanded shrilly. "You heathen ass! What are you talking about?"

"Me so solly."

"Sorry for what?"

"Buntel dice."

"You—you idiot! I'm not going to die. What are you getting at?"

"No chance livee. Dice to-night, dead celtee!"

"What? Why—how, you ass!"

"Eatee poison pie!"

Billy Bunter jumped clear of the floor.

"What! What! What!"

"Me puttee poison in polkee pie, to poison lats that came in study!" explained the little Chinese mournfully. "Havee you eatee polkee pie?"

"Yes, of course I have. I—I didn't taste anything."

"Me velly plenty solly."

Bunter sat down in the chair he had just left. His fat red face was slowly turning to a beautiful art shade, something between green and yellow.

"You're—you're not rotting!" he gasped. "I—I feel very faint! Tell me it's a joke! Don't tell any beastly lies, you heathen beast!"

"Me velly solly! Me missee Buntel velly much!"

"But—but—but—"

"Buntel likee me goee to funelal? Me goee with pleasule."

Bunter felt the cold sweat creeping all over him. Already imagination made him feel strange pains in his inward regions.

"Help!" he murmured feebly. "Help! I—I'm dying! I feel as if a fire were alight in my tummy. Ow! Help!"

"Me fealfully solly. Me no guessee Buntel eatee poison piee. How me guessee that Buntel stealee glub?"

"Ow! Fetch a doctor!"

Wun Lung shook his head solemnly.

"No doctol helpee Buntel now, if he eaten poison piee. Buntel got fol houls to livee. Me helpee him makee will."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"Me keepee Buntel's spectacles as a mementee," said Wun Lung tearfully. "Me hangee dem over mantelpiece, and when me see dem, me tinkee of Buntel, and weepce."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"Me velly solly! Me weepce muchee!"

"You—you rotten heathen!" groaned Bunter. "You beastly pagan! Fancy leaving a poisoned pie about where a chap might eat it."

"Me no knowee Buntel a teef!"

"Ow! I'm not a thief. I was hungry! Ow! I'm dying!"

The study door was suddenly burst open, and Bob Cherry and Mark Linley came in. They stared at Wun Lung, and then at the expiring Bunter, in blank astonishment. Then Bob Cherry gave a whoop as he caught sight of the wreck of the feast on the table.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Has that fat owl—"

"Allee light!"

"He's been lifting our grub!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Allee light! Folgivee all to chappee who dice!"

"Rats! Bunter won't die for a long time yet. No such luck!"

"I'm expiring!" murmured Bunter faintly. "I'm poisoned! That villainous pagan put a poisoned pie especially to catch me, and he's poisoned me!"

Bob Cherry looked startled for a moment.

"What's all that?" he demanded. "Is it a rag?"

Wun Lung half-closed one eye, an action that was seen by Bob and Mark, but was quite invisible to the short-sighted

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junior groaning in the chair. The New Co. exchanged grins.

They understood that the Chinese junior was "pulling the leg" of the Owl of the Remove once more.

"Me poison piee for lats," said Wun Lung. "Buntel say he eatee polkee pie. All up with pool old Buntel!"

"Ow!"

"He dice to-night. He going to leave me his spectacles."

"Can I have your camera when you're gone, Bunter?"

"Ow! You heartless beasts! Yow!"

"Well, it's no good to you where you're going."

"Ow! Help! Fetch a doctor! I—I don't want to die! I—I feel better already."

"The beginning of the endee."

"Ow!" Copious tears rolled down Bunter's cheeks. "It's awful. I forgive you, Bob Cherry. You're a beast, but I forgive you. I—ow—this is awful!"

"What is awful?"

"This fearful pain. I'm suffering horrible torments."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you heartless rotters!"

"Are you quite sure you swallowed the poisoned pie, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry, taking pity on the Owl of the Remove. "Where did you put it, Wun Lung?"

"In the colnee of the floolee."

"Did you pick up one from a corner of the floor, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter sat upright suddenly.

"No, I didn't!" he exclaimed. "I only took those from the cupboard."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I haven't eaten the poisoned one!" demanded Bunter, showing sudden signs of resuscitation, and forgetting the terrible pains he had been complaining of the moment before.

"Apparently not."

"Oh, you heathen beast! You've been rotting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter jumped up from the chair.

"You—you beast! I don't believe there was a poisoned pie at all. I'm all right."

"Ha, ha, ha! Where are your fearful pains gone?"

Bunter made no reply to that question. He stamped furiously out of the study, and slammed the door, with a slam that rang along the Remove passage, leaving the chums of No. 13 doubled up with merriment.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act.

HARRY WHARTON did not close his eyes when lights were turned out in the Remove dormitory that night.

He had fully decided in his mind that the plague of rats at Greyfriars was due to human agency, and the particular attention that had been paid to his study convinced him that the delinquent was a member of the Remove. He had very little doubt that it was Bulstrode, or one of his friends, or, perhaps, several of them. And as it was only at night that they could carry out their little schemes, Harry had resolved to remain awake and watch.

He made no sound. In the darkness of the dormitory, he sat up in bed, as a precaution against going to sleep, and waited.

Eleven o'clock had struck before there was a sound in the dormitory. Then a voice whispered in the gloom:

"You fellows asleep?"

Harry Wharton smiled grimly. It was Bulstrode's voice.

He made no sound whatever.

After a full minute of waiting, to satisfy himself that the dormitory was asleep, the bully of the Remove spoke again.

"Up you get, Snoopey!"

"All right, Bulstrode!"

"Wake Skinner!"

Harry Wharton lay silent. There was nothing more said; but he heard the faint sounds of the three Removites making for the door.

The door closed quietly. Harry jumped out of bed, and drew on a pair of rubber shoes and his trousers, tying his braces round his waist.

Then he hurried to the door, and passed out into the Remove passage.

It was very dark there.

But he guessed in what direction the night raiders had gone. He crept downstairs, and approached the lower staircase that led down to the kitchen and pantry.

There was a sound of whispering voices from the gloom.

"Careful, Skinny!"

"All right! Don't get in the way!"

"Look here, I'll get down to the pantry and lift the grub, and you chaps fetch in the cage from the old drain under the chapel!"

"All right!"

And the raiders separated. Snoop and Skinner passed close by Harry Wharton, without seeing him in the darkness. Bulstrode went down to the pantry.

Wharton smiled grimly.

He understood now where the plague of rats came from. The old drain under the chapel was easy of access, and it was certain to be swarmed with rats now that the fields were flooded. A big wire cage—he remembered now that Bulstrode possessed one—might be easily filled with them.

Wharton hesitated a moment. He was by no means a perfect boy, and he was as fond of a "jape" as anybody. But introducing rats into the house, and into the fellow's studies, was more like an outrage than a jape. And raiding the pantry, and leaving nothing for breakfast, was a little too "thick."

Wharton soon made up his mind what to do. He remained on guard at the top of the kitchen stairs. In about ten minutes Bulstrode came up, and by his grunting breath, Wharton knew that he was heavily laden.

The bully of the Remove loomed up dimly in the shadows, and Wharton stepped forward.

"Bulstrode!"

He heard a gasping breath of terror, and there was a clatter as the startled bully of the Remove allowed several of the articles he was carrying to fall.

"Oh! Who's that?"

"It's I—Wharton!"

"You startled me! You—you cad! You're spying on me!" hissed Bulstrode.

"I'm not spying. I'm watching," said Harry quietly. "You're going to take all those things back to the pantry, Bulstrode! This is going too far for a jape. There's been more than enough of it. You or one of your friends put rats in my hat-box, and cost me a guinea."

Bulstrode chuckled slightly. That chuckle was quite enough, in the circumstances, to put Wharton's "back up."

"I dare say it's funny to you," he said. "It's not so funny to me to have to ask my uncle for another guinea. I don't like it. Destroying a chap's things isn't a joke, it's beastly hooliganism!"

"Will you be kind enough to get out of the way?" said Bulstrode.

"No."

"Look here, Wharton—"

"You're going to take those things back to the pantry."

"I'm going to do nothing of the sort."

"You are. You can go of your own choice, or you can go with my grip on your neck," said Wharton grimly.

Bulstrode trembled with rage.

"You—you hound! You know I can't fight you now."

"You can fight me to-morrow, if you wish. For the present, you can remember that I'm captain of the Remove, and you'll do as I tell you."

"I won't!"

"You will, Bulstrode!" broke in a deep voice, that made both the juniors start, for it was the voice of their Form-master.

"Mr. Quelch!" gasped Harry.

"Yes. I also have been watching to-night, Wharton; and when I heard your voice, I feared that you, too, were

concerned in these disgraceful proceedings. I am glad to find that I was mistaken. Bulstrode!"

The Remove bully shivered. He could not see Mr. Quelch in the darkness, but the Form-master's tone sent a chill right through him.

"Ye-es, sir?"

"You will take those things back to the pantry."

"Ye-es, sir."

"Then you will return to your dormitory. To-morrow morning you will come into my study before breakfast."

Bulstrode went down the kitchen stairs without a word.

"You may go back to your bed, Wharton," said the Remove-master quietly. "You have done your duty in this matter. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And Wharton went to his dormitory. Mr. Quelch remained standing by the stairs, grim and silent, waiting for the return of Skinner and Snoop.

There was a sound of squealing and squeaking in the darkness. The two juniors were approaching, and the sounds indicated that there were a good many rats in the cage.

Bulstrode came up the kitchen stairs, after returning his plunder to its place, as his two confederates arrived. Snoop heard him, and whispered:

"Is it all right, Bulstrode?"

"Oh, hang," said Skinner, "it's all right! I say, Bulstrode, what price putting some of the rats in old Quelch's hat-box, same as we did with Wharton's?"

"A very good idea indeed," said the voice of the Form-master.

Skinner dropped the cage he was carrying.

"Wh-wh-what was that?"

"You did not expect to meet me here," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I did not expect, either, to hear such words on the lips of one of my Form."

"Mr. Quelch!"

"Exactly. Go back to bed, and report yourselves in my study to-morrow morning."

Mr. Quelch took the cage of rats, and the three dismayed and terrified japers went dismally back to the Remove dormitory.

"My hat!" said Skinner. "It's a sell! This means a big licking to-morrow."

"It's all Bulstrode's fault," whined Snoop.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bulstrode.

There was little sleep for any of the three that night. And when they visited Mr. Quelch's study in the morning, their painful anticipations were fully realised.

Mr. Quelch had selected a nice strong cane, and he laid it on with the scientific accuracy for which he was famous in the Remove.

"You must learn the difference between a harmless joke and a brutal outrage," he said. Swish, swish! "You must learn"—swish!—"that property must not be destroyed"—swish!—"and that food must not be raided from the school larder." Swish! "You have many things to learn"—swish!—"but I hope this will help you to learn them." Swish, swish, swish!

And the three practical jokers crawled out of the Form-master's study, after he had finished with them, feeling as if life were not worth living.

Needless to say, the plague of rats was at an end, and after the swishing of Bulstrode & Co. nothing more was seen of the Greyfriars visitors.

THE END.

Next Tuesday.

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A School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co
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ONE OF THE RANKS



A Splendid Tale of Life in the British Army.

A BRIEF RESUMÉ OF THE EARLIER CHAPTERS.

Ronald Chenys is forced to leave Sandhurst through the treachery of his step-brother, Ian, and enlists in the Wessex Regiment under the name of Chester. Unfortunately for Ronald, Ian joins the Wessex as a subaltern, and, assisted by Sergeant Bagot and Private Foxey Williams, does his best to further disgrace Ronald. Ronald's dog, Rough, becomes the pet of the barracks and the terror of the town dogs. One day, when Rough is lying in the sun just inside the barrack gates, he notices the butcher's dog opposite. At the same time the rumble of an approaching carriage is heard.

(Now go on with the story.)

Rough's Chivalry.

The butcher's mongrel wondered whether it was the milkman's Manchester that had been blabbing as to his intentions. If so, the Manchester had better look to his skin, for the mongrel knew he could tackle the average Manchester with impunity. He only wished he was as certain about the cocky little beast in the red coat.

Rumble, rumble! The wheels drew closer. It was an open carriage drawn by a smart pair of bays, and seated inside, wrapped in cosy furs, were two young ladies, both charming, but one particularly so.

Rough thought he must have seen the very pretty one somewhere before. If he had not been a purely military dog, he would have got up and gone to the edge of the pavement to have a good look and make sure.

Happening to catch the eye of the butcher's mongrel at that instant, he shot such a scathing sneer straight at him, that the mongrel positively squirmed with rage. He felt he must fight something, or have a fit.

At this moment the carriage drew abreast, and the mongrel's eye lit up with joy, for there on the floor among the furs was a tiny toy Yorkshire terrier, with a ridiculous pink bow tied round its neck, staring haughtily at him.

To dash headlong at that carriage-step was but the work of a hundredth part of a second. To seize that pigmy caricature of a dog by its pink bow, and fling it out into the road like a rat, occupied even less time.

Thud! fell the Yorkshire. Plump dropped the butcher's mongrel on his victim's chest on all paws. Snap went his teeth—to his disgust on a mouthful of brass-studded leather. Foiled of his first bite, he threw the toy-terrier again over his head like a rat, and got to grips for a fresh hold.

Now, Rough, even apart from the fact that he was a soldier-dog, was not going to sit there quietly and see this sort of thing go on. He hated toy-terriers of any sort, and detested pink bows; but fair play's a jewel all England over.

The butcher's mongrel was ten times the weight of the other dog; and, moreover, he was also the butcher's mongrel. Rough waited no longer.

Forgetting his ills, and the fact that he was supposed really to be in bed, he flew across the road, shot through among the horses' hoofs like a scarlet rocket, and had the butcher's mongrel by the ear at the very first try.

The butcher's mongrel ripped out a yell like the coward

he was, relaxed his grip of the toy-terrier's neck, and pirouetted round. The latter, finding his feet for the first time in the fight, so to speak, fastened all his teeth in his adversary's stump tail, and feeling that that was a good enough hold for the present, while he got his wind, held on.

Rough, meantime, had shifted his grip to the mongrel's throat, and then arose such a hullabaloo as turned the guard out more smartly even than when the general officer commanding was due, and brought six heads to every barrack window overlooking the scene of the conflict.

The carriage had pulled up; the pair of spirited bays were showing a strong desire to stand on their hindlegs; the footman was dashing backwards and forwards like a scared chicken, divided between the dictates of the coachman, who yelled to him to "hold the 'osses' 'eads, or they'd be hoff," and the shrill commands of his young mistress to save little Dot's life at any cost.

Dot was all right; so was Rough. It was the butcher's mongrel which was requiring most sympathy at that moment.

Seeing this, the guard forgot their dignity so far as to roar with delight, and whoop their champion on.

The only one who seemed able to act in the emergency was the very pretty young lady. She sprang lightly out of the carriage, and essayed to disentangle the extraordinary muddle of white, grey, tan and black fur and kicking legs, with her own dainty hands.

It was a dangerous task for any fingers, as she quickly learnt. The butcher's mongrel, having already arrived at the sad conclusion that he had bitten off more than he could chew, decided on just one more snap for luck, and that at the gloved fingers groping at his collar.

Again his luck was out. He missed the fingers, but his teeth caught the smart, tailor-made coat, and he worried and tore at it with a fury born of the excruciating pain he was himself suffering.

At that moment, Ronald, who had spotted the fight from the middle of the barrack-square, came through the gate at the double. He understood the canine breed in all its moods. In two shakes he was grappling with the fighting, yelping pack.

Rough's iron jaws yielded like magic to a numbing grip which his master set upon his cheek. He was sent spinning across the pavement. The butcher's mongrel went over a fence, heels over head, and the now disreputable little beast with the tattered pink bow was left lying on its back in the road in absolute bewilderment, a mouthful of yellow tail-hair still in its determined, rat-trap jaws.

Before Dot could inquire for the whereabouts of his late adversary he was caught up and conveyed to his mistress's arms.

"Oh, I'm ever so much indebted to you!" panted the pretty young lady, looking gratefully at the tall young soldier, who was hastily buttoning his ancient drill-serge, which for ease he had left half open at the neck.

"Not at all," said Ronald, a little lamely, suddenly awakening to the fact that he was addressing the most beautiful girl it had ever been his good fortune to meet.

Something seemed to tell him that he had seen her face before, and yet he was equally positive in his mind that this could not be so.

She, too, was gazing at him with a pretty look of bewilderment, as if the bronzed face was strangely familiar. It was the little toy Yorkshire which she was holding, nestled to her cheek, that brought them both back to their senses. His fighting blood was up, and he yapped and wriggled and squirmed to be set down, so that he could pursue his enemy, now slinking down the road.

Rough, like a soldier-dog, had fallen in quietly at his master's heel, awaiting further orders.

"Hush, Dot! Do be quiet!" said the girl, laughing at the little imp's struggles, and turned again to Ronald, who was feeling as awkward as a ploughboy. "We are so much obliged to you for coming to Dot's rescue!" she continued. "And your dog, Rough, too. He behaved like a little gentleman. He is your dog, is he not?"

"Well, he was, and is still, I suppose," explained Ronald, with a laugh; "but the regiment have assumed the responsibility of looking after him. May I assist you to your carriage?"

The other young lady, who had remained seated, was fumbling ostentatiously with her purse, as if she thought some reward would be expected by a man who was obviously no more than a common soldier. But the pretty one, as she entered, put her hand over it, and pressed it out of sight.

"Thanks, once again!" she said, with a smile, to Ronald. "And, now, can you tell us how best to reach Colonel Conger's quarters? This is Woolchester Barracks, is it not?"

"Yes, and the only gate is the one you see. If your coachman bears to the left when he enters the square, he cannot make a mistake, and in any case there is an orderly at hand to tell him."

The ladies bowed—the one stiffly, but the other as sweetly as if Ronald had been the colonel himself. The restive bays were wheeled round, the men of the guard jumped back in a flutter, and the carriage rattled under the archway and across the square as Ronald had directed.

"Come on, Rough," said Ronald, suddenly awaking from a brief day-dream, and he followed after.

"What ch'er, Chester! Who are your tony friends?" sang out one of the guard as he passed.

"Some of your donahs what you used to know in Hyde Park an' Rotten Row?" inquired another, amid a guffaw of laughter.

But Ronald kept on, without offering a reply to the rough chaff.

Turning into the deserted skittle-alley, he sat down on a bench, and the terrier squatted at his feet and rested his head on his knee.

"Well, old boy, it's a curious thing, but I could swear that I have seen that face before somewhere," he said, catching a twinkle in Rough's bright eye.

"R-r-wuch!" replied Rough, which, in doggy language, means: "Here is just another instance where, because you have not brains enough to understand what I say, I am powerless to help you. I know who that young lady is, but there you are! What's the use of my wasting my breath trying to tell you?"

A Madman's Frenzy.

Sergeant Bagot had been "smashed."

The sentence of the court-martial was read out by the adjutant just before the battalion was dismissed from parade that morning, and now the only remaining vestige of fifteen years' rank as a non-commissioned officer was a few ends of thread sticking from his sleeve where the chevrons had once been.

The ceremony of degradation had been watched in silence unbroken, except by the creaking of leather belts as the men drew breath. Bagot was not popular with any of his

fellows; in fact, he was openly detested, even in his own mess. Only a few were sorry for him in his terrible plight. The rest ignored the man, but watched with awe the tragedy of the act itself.

Now Private Bagot was sitting on his bed-cot in the barrack-room, the picture of sullen despair and misery.

The young soldiers of the room climbed out of their accoutrements in silence, treading lightly, as if someone were sick. The older soldiers, with rankling memories of injustices suffered at the broken non-com's hands, were not inclined to let the occasion go unmarked. There were old grudges to be settled, and now a turn of Fortune's wheel had given their enemy into their hands.

"Now, then, Privit Bagot," sang out one, who, until ten minutes ago, had been the ex-sergeant's own "batman" or servant, "come and lend a hand, cleaning my kit for guard. Jump to it, my lad, if you don't want to taste the toe of my boot!"

A cruel laugh went up at this, but Bagot sat unmoved, his hands clenched between his knees, and his scowling eyes bent upon the floor at his feet.

"D'ye hear, you sulky swab? Clean them boots, and sharp about it!" shouted another, slinging a pair of heavy, hobnailed boots across to Bagot's cot. One struck the man on the shoulder, but even then he showed no sign.

Somebody behind him filched his own belts and pouches, which lay upon the bed, and, stealing to the other side of the room, chimed in, with a wink, to the rest:

"And just set about pipeclaying them belts, too, and don't you forget to 'ave 'em done before 'guard dress' sounds."

He flung the heavy accoutrements at Bagot as he spoke, and one of the pouches struck their victim in the face.

The window by Bagot's cot was open. Goaded by the shock of the blow, he picked up the tangle of pipe-clayed straps, and flung it out into the square beneath.

A mighty yell of laughter went up at the success of the ruse, for the equipment was Bagot's own, and he would now have to go downstairs and fetch it.

Bagot rose to his feet slowly, and his green eyes ranged about the room, as if seeking someone on whom to discharge the lightnings of his passionate wrath.

"Here, steady, you fellows!" said Ronald, who felt really sorry for the wretched man, in his extremity. "Don't go too far."

In a flash Bagot's eyes had lit upon him.

"You—you cur! I was just waiting for you to speak!" he said hoarsely, for the bursting hate within him seemed to be choking him, swelling the veins on his forehead, and turning his drink-blotched face all purple.

"It's for you to cry that, now, isn't it—you crawling, toadying mongrel! You'd crawl to me now, would you? You'd lick my hand and take my part, in the hopes that I'd forgive all I owe you, and forget that it was through you I'd been smashed after all these years!"

Bagot was fumbling in a slit pocket in his tunic as he spoke. There was madness in his eyes for all to see. Despair and degradation and the drink he had been steeping himself in to drug the gnawing pain of it all, had crazed him.

That which he was searching for, his shaking fingers found at last; but he had the cunning not to reveal it until he had caught up the rifle from the rack at his bed head.

Then a glint of brass showed as the breech was jerked back—a glint of yellow brass, and the cold gleam of a bullet.

"Look out! He means murder! Stop him someone!" shouted a man behind where Ronald stood. The rest of the occupants of the room seemed too horrified to move hand or foot to avert the tragedy impending.

(Another instalment of this fine serial next Tuesday. Please order your copy of the "MAGNET" Library in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)



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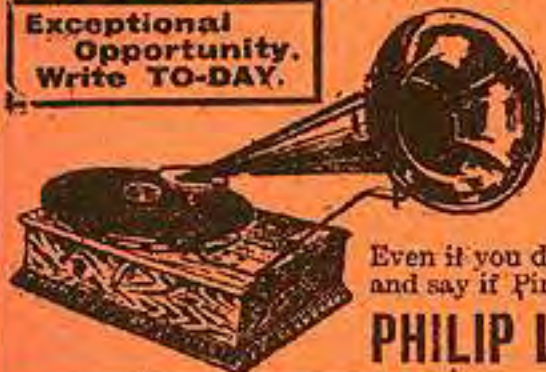
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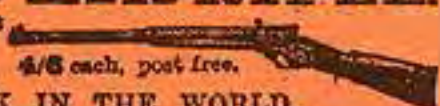
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