

'THE CIRCUS AT GREYFRIARS.'

THE

Magnet

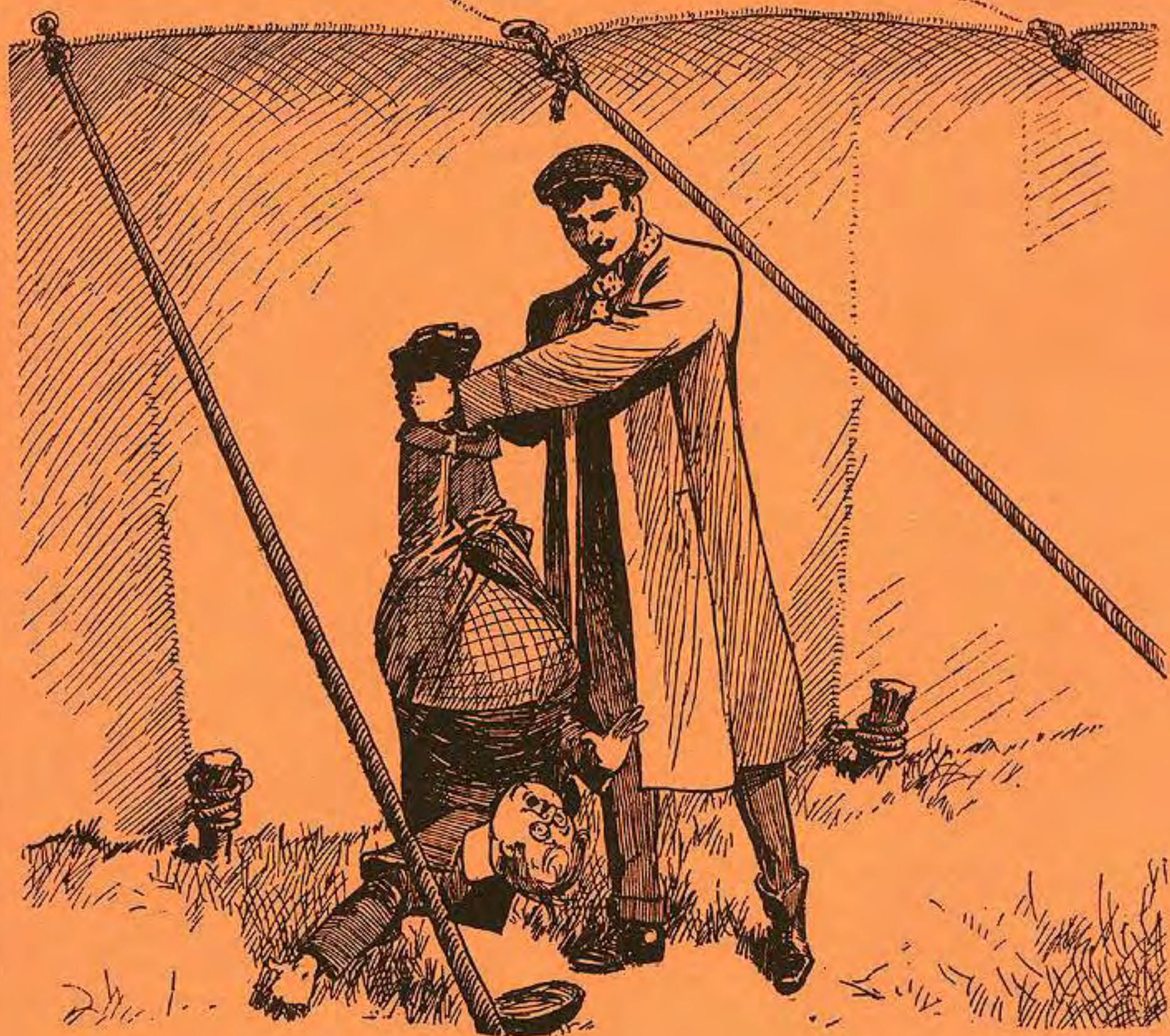
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LIBRARY NUMBER 93.
VOLUME 4.

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Story
for All.

Grand School Tale of
HARRY WHARTON & CO.

By
Frank
Richards.



CAUGHT IN THE ACT!

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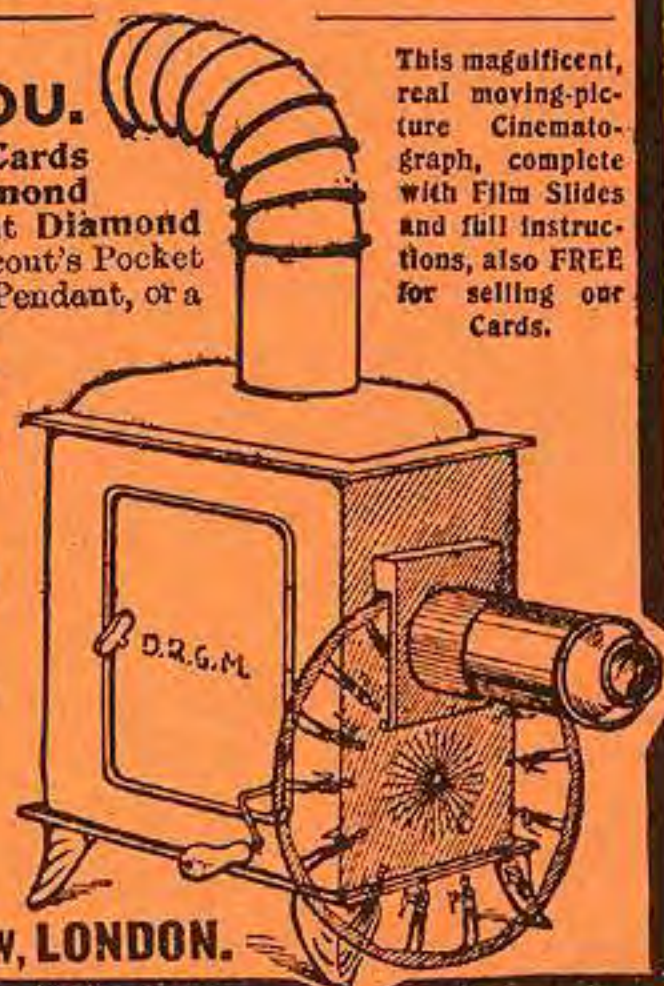
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NEXT
WEEK:

"The Smugglers' Cave."

A Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.

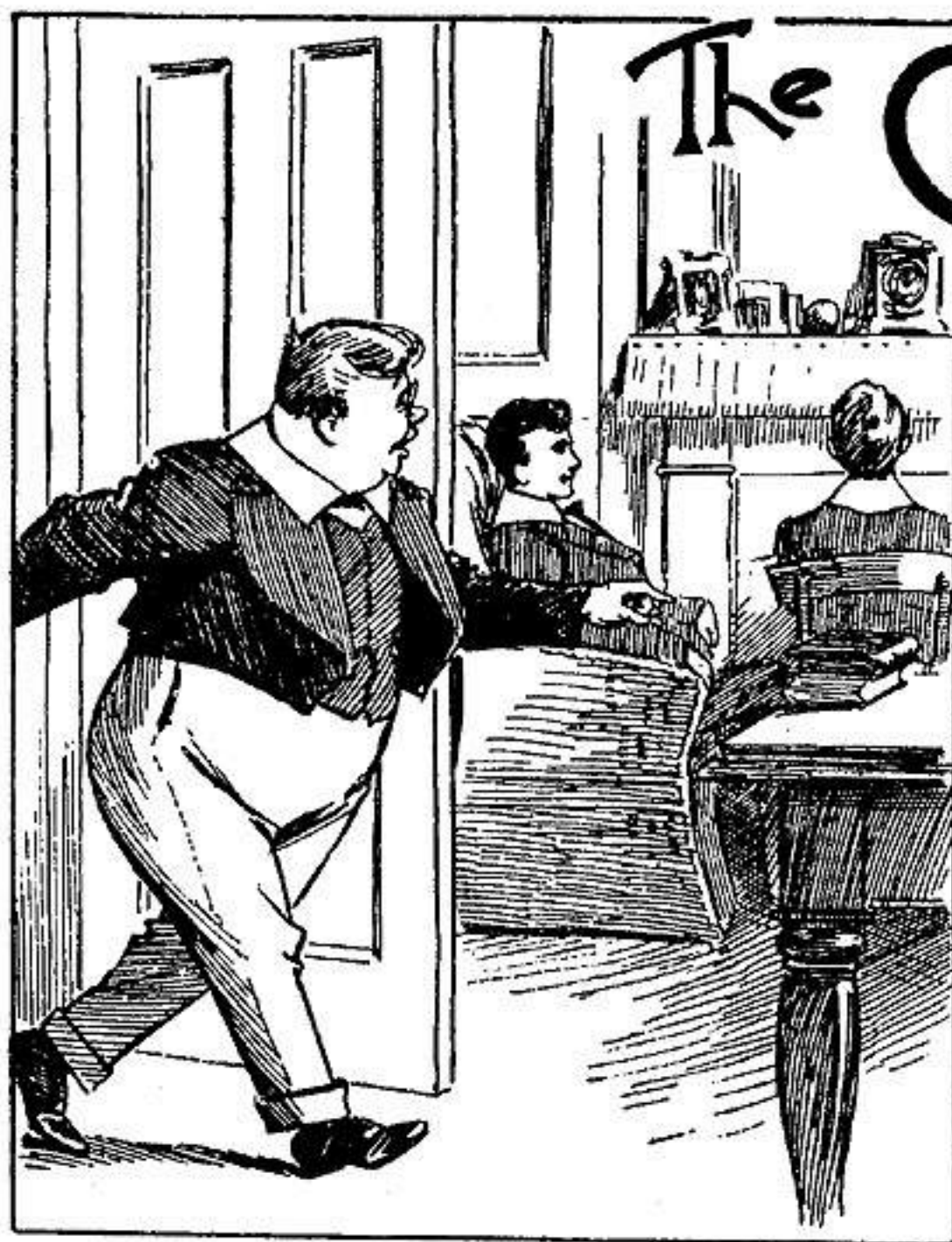


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The Circus at Greyfriars

A Splendid, Long,
Complete School Tale
of
The Boys of Greyfriars.
— BY —
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Limit.

"I SAY, you fellows, there's news!"

Billy Bunter made that announcement at the top of his voice, as he rushed into No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter was excited, and he apparently expected his announcement to cause equal excitement in No. 1 Study. But, if so, he was disappointed.

Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurreo Jamsset Ram Singh were there, and they were talking football. Not one of them turned his head, or looked at Bunter, or gave any outward and visible sign of having heard the fat junior's exclamation.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles, and repeated his words, crescendo.

"I say, you fellows, there's news!"

"About the inside-right," said Harry Wharton, continuing

his remarks to Nugent and Hurreo Singh. "I was thinking of Desmond. What do you fellows think?"

"I say, give him a trial," said Nugent.

"The trialfulness," said Hurreo Singh, in his elegant English, "appears to my esteemed self to be the proper caper."

"I say, you fellows——"

"I was thinking of putting Tom Brown in the forward line, too, on Saturday. He's picked up Soccer wonderfully for a chap who's played Rugger all his life till he came to England."

"Good idea."

"I say, Wharton——"

"There's not much doubt about Morgan and Ogilvy for the backs."

"The doubtfulness is nil."

"Look here, you fellows——"

"As for the halves——"

"I say, you fellows," shrieked Bunter, "don't you pretend you can't hear me! You can hear me jolly well!"

"As for the halves, what about giving Hazeldene a chance at centre? Ho——"

Billy Bunter rushed up to Wharton, caught him by the sleeve, and gave him a wrench. Harry, with his attention thus forcibly drawn to the fat junior, looked down at him.

Bunter blinked at him with almost speechless indignation.

"You—you—you——" he stuttered.

Nugent pointed to the door. Bunter blinked in the direction of the outstretched finger, and then blinked at Nugent.

"What do you mean, Nugent?"

"Outside!"

"But——"

"Outside!"

"I say, you fellows——" spluttered Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton seriously, "you'd better travel. I suppose you must dig in this study, but the less we see of you, the better we shall like it. You've passed the limit at last, and we can't stand you."

"That's it," said Frank Nugent. "You were always a worm, Bunter; but you've passed the worm limit, and we're done with you."

"The wormfulness of the esteemed Bunter is great, and the donefulness is terrific," remarked the dusky junior from India's palmy shores.

Bunter blinked at them.

"What's the matter?"

"You know jolly well what's the matter!" said Wharton warmly. "You have always been the biggest fool in the Remove, and the worst rotter, except Snoop——"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"But so long as you kept within the limit we stood you. We put up with your silly hobbies—your rotten hypnotism, your silly photography, and your bothersome ventriloquism—but when you took to playing the amateur detective, that was too much. Of course, there's no objection to your making a fool of yourself in any way you please, as it's a free country. But a chap who reads another chap's letters isn't the kind of chap I want to talk to, and that's plain English."

"But—but, you know, I have splendid abilities as a detective," said Bunter. "I—I didn't read Brown's letters in my—my private capacity, you know. I read them as—as an amateur detective."

"As a mean rotter, you mean!"

"Besides, that's an old story!" said Bunter indignantly. "I suppose you chaps are not going to rake all that up again?"

"Why, it only happened yesterday!"

"Well, I've got news," said Bunter, changing the subject.

"I suppose you want to hear the news, you fellows?"

"No, we don't!"

"The fact is, Bunter, we're going to give you a lesson," said Wharton. "You have acted like a mean worm, and you don't seem able to realise it. We're going to make you realise it. You're cut by the study until the end of the week."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"I don't want to be hard on you, because I really think you're such an ass that you hardly know right from wrong," said Wharton. "But it's necessary to draw the line somewhere. The fellows have all got hold of the story, and Bulstrode and his lot are making a great cackle over it. They say this is the study where fellows open other chaps' letters."

"I'm sincerely sorry; but, as an amateur detective——"

"You've got to stop that rot, too!" said Wharton, frowning. "Keep off the grass. If you say the word detective again in this study you'll be biffed. We've decided on that. Every time you speak that blessed word, we bump you!"

"But as a detective——"

"There he goes again!"

"Bump him!"

"Ow! Oh, really—I—help! Yah! Ow!"

Three strong pairs of hands grasped the Owl of the Remove, and he was bumped down in a sitting posture on the carpet with a mighty bump.

The bump knocked all the breath out of him—he never had much—and he remained sitting there, staring dazedly at the chums of the Remove.

"You—you—you beasts!" he gasped. "I—I—I——"

"Shut up! Keep off the grass!"

"But—but, I've got news!"

"Blow your news!"

Bunter staggered to his feet. He dusted his trousers, and blinked at the chums, and put his big spectacles straight.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, I—I've got news. I hope you're not going to keep this rot up. I wanted one of you to lend me some tin for the circus——"

"Circus!"

THE MAGNET.—93.

NEXT

WEEK:

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

"Yes; that's the news. There's a circus come to Greyfriars."

"Well, that's news, anyway," said Nugent. "But is it true?"

"Of course it is, Nugent. They're giving a performance this evening on Friardale Common, and, by the Head's permission, every chap who's got any tin will go. I haven't any, unfortunately, as I have run out of cash, and I have been disappointed about a postal-order, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I had a postal-order coming this morning, but there has been a delay in the post. If one of you fellows will stand me five bob——"

"Five rats!"

"Well, one bob, then."

"Not a tanner!" said Wharton firmly. "We're going to give you a lesson, as I said. You're cut by the study until the end of the week. No more loans, no more free feeds, no more anything—except bumping. Talking to you's no good. We'll see what severe measures will do."

"But, I say——"

"You've said enough. I'm sorry about the circus, but a chap must stick to his word. You've got to have your lesson. Still, I don't want you to miss the circus. I can't break my resolution on the subject. But Wan Lung will lend you a bob."

"Look here, you fellows——"

"Nuff said. Outside!"

"I'm jolly well going to stay in my own study if I want to!"

"Very well! We'll get out, then."

And Harry Wharton & Co., left the study. Bunter blinked after them in dismay. He had tried the patience of his study mates many times, and very far; but always he had been able to squirm into their good graces again somehow. This time, as Wharton said, he seemed to have really passed the limit.

It was rather a gloomy outlook for the Owl of the Remove.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Original Joey Pyc.

BOB CHERRY and Mark Linley, of No. 13 Study, met the chums of No. 1 as they came down into the hall. Bob Cherry was full of the news.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed. "I was just coming to look for you chaps. Have you heard about the circus?"

"Yes; from Bunter a few minutes ago. It's a fact, then?"

"Yes. Unlike most of Bunter's news," said Bob Cherry, laughing. "The circus has pitched on the common—fifteen minutes from here, you know. They're running up the big tent already, Ogilvy says. He's seen 'em."

"Who are they?"

"Blessed if I know! We shall know soon. We're all going to-night, I suppose? They're staying only one night, and then they move on, I believe."

"Then it's now or never?"

"Exactly!"

"Gentlemen!"

It was a strange voice, and the juniors of Greyfriars looked out into the dusky Close in surprise. They were standing in the open doorway. The early evening had fallen, but there were still a good many fellows out in the quadrangle. It was a fine, clear, starlit evening, and not much past six o'clock.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that—ahem—I mean, who's that?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

A fat figure had loomed up in the dusk before them.

They saw a good-natured, jolly face, which showed plentiful traces of paint and chalk, as if the fat individual were accustomed to making up for the ring, and did not always succeed in getting the make-up quite off afterwards.

The stranger bowed to the Greyfriars juniors, so low that his head touched the ground, and then, to their utter amazement, he turned right over, executing a somersault without an effort, and standing right end up again before their bewildered gaze.

"My only hat!" gasped Wharton. "The chap must be made of indiarubber."

"The indiarubberfulness is terrific."

The stranger took off his hat.

"Gentlemen, allow me to introduce myself. If you have a wide acquaintance with the crowned heads of Europe, you must have heard of their special chum, Joseph Montgomery Pyc—known to his intimates as Monty."

"Never!" said Harry.

Mr. Pyc looked sad.

"You pain me," he said. "I had no idea that such a

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

depth of ignorance could exist in a public school. You have heard of Julius Cæsar?"

"Oh, yes."

"And Napoleon Bonaparte?"

"Certainly!"

"And not of Montgomery Pye?"

"No!"

The stranger shook his head sadly.

"Such is fame!" he said. "The lesser lights are seen, and the greater ones—ahem! But I will not repine. I will introduce myself. I am Joseph Montgomery Pye."

"Glad to meet you," said Bob Cherry affably. "You belong to a very extensive family, sir. There are some connections of yours at this school."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Pye.

"Yes; not in the school exactly, but in the tuckshop, you know. There is Beefsteak Pie, and Apple Pie, and Plum Pie, and several others."

Mr. Pye burst into a chuckle.

"Good!" he said. "Distinctly good! You are a youth after my own heart. What a clown you would make."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "That's one for you, Bob."

Bob turned pink.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he exclaimed.

"Come to my arms!" said Mr. Pye. "Let me welcome a brother-wheel-wangler to my heart. Let me fold you to my bosom and weep."

"No fear!"

"How the dickens did you get here?" asked Harry Wharton, guessing by this time that Mr. Pye belonged to the circus camped on the common.

"Walked," said Mr. Pye. "I left my motor-car at home on the grand piano—a moment's absent-mindedness—so I had to walk. I have come to do you young gents a favour. No, don't thank me. It's my way—pretty Joey's way! I was afraid some of you might miss the performance of Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus and Hippodrome."

"Oh!"

Hence these fears—I mean, hence these handbills," said Mr. Pye, producing a pack of small pink bills from under his arm. "I have given you a look-in to acquaint you with the fact that you simply must not miss this chance. Tomsonio's World-Famous is camping here probably for one night only. It is the chance of a lifetime. If you do not come, you miss seeing the original Joey Pye in his professional capacity."

"The awfulness of that would be terrific."

"Exactly. Then you would miss seeing Jack Talbot—otherwise Jungle Jack, the Boy King of the Tigers!"

"That sounds good."

"And Jim Carson, the Handsome Man—the King of the Trapeze."

"Ripping!"

"And Miss Clotilde, the Queen of the Ring!"

"Quite a Royal family!" grinned Nugent.

"And Samson, the Strong Man, who breaks iron bars and bars of chocolate cream with his teeth; and Puggles, the juggler, and Count Smelowiski and his Marvellous Monkeys. But greatest of all, Joey Pye and his original jokes, Joey Pye and his startling new wheezes, Joey Pye and his striking turns."

"Can't miss that!" said Harry, laughing. "Rely on us."

"Here's the bills," said Mr. Pye, shoving a pack of about fifty into Wharton's hands.

"Study them at your leisure, and then roll up in your thousands. Special feature catering for youthful tastes. Tomsonio's Circus completes the education. See small bills!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bring all your friends," said Mr. Pye liberally. "All are welcome, so long as they pay for admission, and the more they pay the merrier!"

Mr. Pye took off his hat again.

"Adieu, young gents! We meet again at Philippi—I mean at the circus."

And Joey Pye drifted away.

The juniors laughed heartily.

There was something very amusing and taking about the original Joey Pye.

"Funny beggar!" said Nugent. "We must go."

"Yes, rather."

"We don't get many circuses here," said Bob Cherry. "Ought to support any that come our way. What are you going to do with those bills, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Blessed if I know! Hand them round, I suppose."

"Good! Let's distribute them along the Sixth-Form passage. It's bound to please the seniors."

"Hold on! There'll be a row."

"Never mind!"

And Bob Cherry grabbed the handbills, and swung off towards the Sixth Form quarters to distribute them.

THE MAGNET.—93.

NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

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

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter is Barred!

THE coming of the circus caused considerable excitement at Greyfriars.

The Remove—the Lower Fourth—determined as one man to go. The fags of the Lower Forms all made up their minds to do the same. There was some hesitation in the Fifth. They did not quite know whether it was consistent with their dignity. But when they heard that Wingate, of the Sixth, the Captain of Greyfriars, and the hero of the school, the great Panjandrum, whom all looked up to, was going, then the Fifth Form fellows thought they might go, too.

They were not long left in ignorance of the list of attractions Signor Tomsonio's World-Famed Circus had to offer.

Mr. Pye had been liberal in ladling out the handbills, and Bob Cherry was liberal in the distribution of them.

He hurled them right and left into the Fifth and Sixth-Form studies, and the seniors said things when they found their carpets littered with the pink bills covered with glaring type.

Some of them looked for the enthusiastic distributor, but Bob Cherry did not remain on the spot after distributing the obnoxious bills.

The study of Ionides, the Greek in the Sixth Form, was the last he looked into. Ionides, who prided himself upon being fast, was smoking a cigarette, in company with Carberry, the prefect. They started up guiltily as Bob Cherry looked in, and, relieved to see that it was not a master, they scowled at Bob for startling them.

"You rat!" growled Carberry. "Get out!"

"I've brought you news."

"Outside, you whelp!"

"But there's a circus," said Bob Cherry, in an injured tone. "Among other attractions, Count Smelowiski's performing monkeys. I thought Ionides and you might like to run across and see your relations."

The two seniors started up. Bob Cherry hurled a handful of bills into the room, and fled. The pink handbills scattered over the floor, and Carberry and Ionides said things, not loud but deep.

Bob Cherry rejoined the chums of the Remove in a cheery temper.

"I've ruffled up the Fifth and Sixth," he announced cheerfully. "And there's no chance of their not knowing what's going on at Tomsonio's Circus this evening. You fellows can come into my study to tea before we start, if you like. Brown's coming, too."

"Right you are!"

"The rightfulness is terrific, my worthy chum."

The handbills stated that the circus performance commenced at seven, and it was fifteen minutes' walk to the common, as the juniors knew. There was no time to waste. The tea was a cold one in Bob Cherry's study—the tea was hot, but the more solid portion cold—ham and hard-boiled eggs from Mrs. Mimble's little shop. As the juniors sat down to the table, a large pair of spectacles blinked in at the door.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bob Cherry seized a loaf.

"Get out, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Are you going?"

"I'm hungry," said Bunter indignantly.

"Go and have tea in Hall, then!"

"I—I've had it, but I'm still hungry."

"I hear he wants more," grinned Nugent. "You're paying the penalty of being a cad, Bunter. You're barred till the end of the week, as we told you."

"But, really—"

"Get out!"

"I—"

Bob Cherry poised the loaf.

"I give you two seconds to travel!" he said.

"Hold on, Cherry!" said Bunter, hurriedly dodging behind the half-open door, and peering round the edge of it. "Hold on! I— Oh!"

Crash!

He popped back behind the door in time.

The loaf flew out of the doorway, crashed on the opposite wall of the passage, and rolled on the linoleum.

Billy Bunter peered round again cautiously.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bring me that loaf back, and I'll take better aim next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm sincerely sorry you're jealous about my being a detective."

"Bump him!"

There was a rush at Bunter, and before he could escape he

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& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

was seized, and down he went, bumped heartily on the carpet.

He gave a breathless roar.

"Ow! Yow! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They left him sitting there, gasping, and went back to the tea-table. Bunter picked himself up slowly, and blinked at them furiously.

"You—you rotters! I'll—I'll make you sit up for this!" he exclaimed. "I'll jolly well show you! Am I to have tea here or not?"

"Not!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"Who's going to stand me a bob for the circus, then?"

Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, looked up.

"Me standee bob already, Buntel."

"I've spent that," said Bunter aggressively. "I meant to pay for admission to the circus with it, but I was famished. I've got a delicate constitution, and I can only keep it going by constant nourishment. I spent the bob at Mrs. Mumble's. If you like to lend me another—"

"No savvy."

"You can lend me another nine, if you like, and have my postal-order for ten bob. It's coming by the first post in the morning."

"No savvy."

"Look here, make it five, and you can have the postal-order to-morrow. That's cent. per cent. interest for a single day's loan."

"No savvy."

"Will you lend me a bob, then?" roared Bunter.

"No savvy."

Mark Linley put his hand into his pocket. The Lancashire lad was poor, and his shillings were not numerous, but he didn't want Bunter to miss the circus.

"Here you are!" he said, tossing a silver coin over to Bunter.

The fat junior caught it greedily.

"Thank you, Linley! You're better than these sweeps, though you're only the son of a workman, or street-sweeper, or whatever it is. If you can lend me another bob—"

"I'll lend you a thick ear if you don't get out of this study," said Mark.

"Well, you blessed cheeky, mill-working, machine-minding waster—"

Mark Linley rose from his chair, and the fat junior left his remarks unfinished, and scuttled down the passage.

"Nice animal, ain't he?" said Bob Cherry. "I really wonder they didn't drown him, and keep one of the others, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

No Admission for Bunter.

TEA was finished, and the Greyfriars juniors put on their coats to go down to the circus. They found a big crowd setting out from the school. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were there, with a crowd of Fourth-Formers. Blundell and Bland, of the Fifth, could be seen, going out with a half-shamefaced, half-bored expression—wholly assumed—for they were as keen to see the circus as the youngest and inkier fag in the Third or Second Form. Towering over the other fellows could be seen the broad shoulders of Wingate, the skipper of Greyfriars.

As Harry Wharton & Co. went out, a fat figure stepped in their way, in the glimmer of light from the schoolhouse door. It was Bunter, of course.

Harry Wharton frowned at him.

"Why don't you clear off, Bunter? Haven't we told you you're barred?"

"You don't think I want your company, do you?" said Billy Bunter sulkily. "I want a bob to pay for my admission to the circus. You can have it back out of my postal-order to-morrow morning."

They stared at him.

"Why, Wun Lung gave you a bob, and Linley gave you another."

"I told you I was hungry."

"Then you've blued Linley's bob too?"

"Well, I had to have a snack, or I shouldn't have enjoyed the circus, you know. I've asked Bulstrode to lend me a bob, and he refused brutally."

And Billy Bunter rubbed his ear, which was very red.

"Well, I can't go back on my word," said Harry. "You're barred, and you'll get nothing from us till the end of the week. Besides, if you had another bob, you would only blue it at the tuckshop, so what's the use?"

"But I want to go to the circus."

Tom Brown fished in his pocket.

"Here you are, you porpoise; now buzz off and be quiet."

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

Bunter blinked at the New Zealand junior.

"Thank you, Brown! I'm sincerely sorry you got shown up the other day through my being such a splendid detective—Oh!"

Bump!

The chums of the Remove were keeping their word; at the mention of "detective" they bumped the fat junior with hearty goodwill.

Then they walked on, leaving him gasping on the ground, in the way of the rest of the fellows who were pouring out of the house.

Bulstrode came along with Skinner and Stott, and stumbled over him.

"Hallo," ejaculated Skinner, "what's that?"

"It's that worm Bunter."

"Give him a kick."

"Oh!" roared Bunter, as Bulstrode's heavy boot biffed on him. "Ow! Yah! Yarrah!"

He scrambled up wrathfully. Bulstrode and his friends walked on, laughing, and Bunter bumped blindly into Carberry, of the Sixth.

The prefect gave him a savage push that sent him rolling on the ground again, and Billy Bunter squirmed away furiously.

"The—the beasts!" he murmured. "Everybody's against me at this school, because they're jealous of my good looks and my cleverness. The rotters! I feel awfully hungry. I wonder if I could wriggle in under the canvas if I spent this bob on some grub. My system needs keeping up."

Bunter had to pass the school shop on his way out, and the sight of it was enough to decide him. He walked in, and five minutes later he came out—a little fatter, perhaps, but the shilling was gone.

"I—I wonder if I shall be able to creep in under the canvas," murmured Bunter, giving the matter serious thought rather late in the day.

He followed in the track of the crowd from Greyfriars.

In the distance, on Friardale Common, could be seen the glare of naphtha lights, and heard the strains of a band.

The band was not one of the best, and the music was not classical; but it answered the purpose of attracting to Signor Tomsonio's Circus people within a wide radius.

Dr. Locke, at Greyfriars, closed his window a little more tightly, but the boys did not mind it; in fact, they liked it.

Billy Bunter was the last to arrive in the circus field.

The flaring naphtha lamps made the field almost as light as by day, and he could distinctly see the huge circus tent, and the caravans camped near it, and the canvas stables in which the animals were bestowed.

Most of the crowd had gone in, but many were arriving, although the performance had now commenced.

Country people from all sides, and villagers from Friardale and Lindale, as well as the boys from Greyfriars, poured into the huge tent.

There were girls, too—girls from the village, and girls from Cliff House, the seaside school presided over by Miss Penelope Primrose.

Bunter joined the crowd at the entrance, and managed to dodge in the crush past the first man, who was giving out tin discs in exchange for the entrance money. But the second man, who received the discs at the opening of the tent, stopped him.

"You haven't paid!" he exclaimed.

"I—I—"

"Where's your disc?"

"I—I haven't one."

"You young cheat! Get out!"

"You—you low brute!" gasped Bunter. "You—you dare to call me a cheat! I'm a gentleman, you low cad!"

The man seized him by the shoulder and swung him away.

"You won't come in 'ere without paying," he said.

Bunter moved disconsolately away.

He was so bent upon getting into the tent, that he had not even stopped to reflect whether it was honest or not to enter without paying. Reflections of this sort did not trouble the Owl of the Remove very much.

But there was clearly no getting in at the entrance without paying for admission, and Billy Bunter went on another tack.

He skirted round the tent, towards the staff entrance at the other side, and selecting a spot that seemed to be unwatched, he tried to squirm in under the edge of the canvas. He might have succeeded in that; but, as a matter of fact, there were eyes on him all the time, though he had been too short-sighted to notice it.

A big, stalwart fellow with a good-natured face was watching him, with considerable astonishment in his looks.

He uttered a sharp exclamation as Bunter's intentions were put beyond doubt by his squirming under the canvas.

"My hat!" said the big gentleman to himself.

He strode to the spot, and, stooping down, picked Bunter up by his ankles. The fat junior gave a horrified gasp.

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"Ow, ow! Leggo!"

But Samson, the Strong Man, did not let go.

Billy Bunter was a good weight, but Samson lifted him up as if he had been a bag of feathers.

Bunter came out from under the canvas wrong end upwards, his ankles in the Strong Man's grip, and his head in the grass, his jacket curling about his ears.

"Ow!" he roared. "Leggo!"

Samson grinned, and sent him rolling over in the grass. "You young thief!" he said. "You were trying to get in!"

"I—I wasn't! I—I mean——"

"Clear off!"

"Look here——"

"Clear off, I tell you!"

The big man drew back his foot, and Bunter hastily cleared away. In the darkness under the trees, on the edge of the field, he stopped, and shook his fist towards the tent.

"Beasts!" he muttered. "I'll get even with you somehow. You rotten, low beasts, to insult me like this!"

Bunter felt that he had been insulted twice by the circus people, without stopping to reflect that they were entitled to payment for their show.

It was enough for Bunter to be disappointed, for him to nurse spite and revenge, and he never stopped to consider whether he was in the wrong.

"I'll make 'em squirm!" he muttered, as he blinked towards the tent. "My word! What a joke it would be to let the animals loose—the monkeys, and horses, and other beasts! It'd take 'em a week to get 'em together again!"

And the fat junior's eyes glinted behind his spectacles at the idea.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

At the Circus.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. paid for admission at the door, and entered the big tent with the crowd of Greyfriars fellows and village folk.

The big tent was ablaze with light, and filling fast. The juniors tobogganed and leap-frogged over the seats, scrambling for good places. Harry Wharton uttered a sudden exclamation as he caught sight of two graceful forms in the crowd, and he plunged towards them, followed by a roar of protest from fellows whose feet he trod upon, or whose shins he knocked against in his haste.

"Miss Marjorie!"

Marjorie Hazeldene looked round with a smile. She was with Miss Clara Trevlyn and Fraulein Wilhelmina Limburger, the stout and happy German girl.

"So glad to see you here!" said Harry, as he raised his cap. "Come this way; I'll get you a good seat. Hallo, Hazeldene! Your sister's here."

"Good!" said Hazeldene.

"Thank you!" said Marjorie, who was as a matter of fact a little nervous in the thick crowd, and was glad of the assistance of Harry's strong arm.

Wharton piloted the girls to front seats, and they sat down, amid the chums of the Removs. Miss Clara's eyes twinkled.

"Isn't Bunter with you?" she asked.

Harry looked round.

"Not with us," he said; "but he was coming. He doesn't seem to be here, though."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"He's blued the tin again in the tuckshop, I'll bet my hat."

"Ach!" said Miss Limburger. "Der tuckshop is goot, ain't it, but der circus is petter pefore."

Marjorie laughed.

"I'm sorry if Bunter misses it. Perhaps he will come in later. What a curious fellow that clown is."

The curious fellow was the original Joey Pye. He was turning somersaults in the ring at present, to the accompaniment of the braying of the band.

Signor Tomsonio—known in private as Dick Thompson—was in the ring, too, in a silk hat and a wonderful waistcoat, with a whip in his hand.

He cracked the whip, and Joey Pye straightened up.

"Bless my heart, if my young friends ain't here!" exclaimed Mr. Pye, taking off his paper cap with a bow to the Removites.

Nugent waved his hand, laughing.

"I like that chap!" he remarked. "What a jolly chivvy he has! I've heard all his blessed wheezes before, but he has a funny way with him."

"I want to see the tigers," remarked Bob Cherry. "Is it one of the early turns?"

"No; there's bareback riding first."

"Ah! The Queen of the Ring," grinned Nugent. "The first of the Royal family. My hat! Here she comes. What a stunning girl!"

"What-ho!" said Tom Brown.

Miss Clotilde, the girl rider, came into the ring mounted upon a big black Arab. She was a girl of Marjorie's age,

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as supple and graceful as she was beautiful, and that was saying a good deal.

Her riding was perfection itself, and Harry Wharton, who knew something about riding, gazed at her admiringly as she cantered round the ring.

Marjorie's eyes were sparkling.

"What a sweet girl!" she exclaimed. "And how beautifully she rides!"

As if she knew she was being spoken of, Clotilde glanced up as she passed the place where the Greyfriars' party sat, and smiled a little.

"Bravo!" said Nugent.

Three more horses came galloping into the ring, and went round and round in company with the black Arab.

The girl rider rose to her feet upon the Arab with a quick, supple movement.

Her long, clinging dress of white floated about her, only gathered at the waist with a sash, that made her look even younger than she was.

The boys gazed at her with great admiration.

First upon one horse, and then upon another and another, the girl galloped round the ring, passing over banners and through balloons with perfect ease and grace.

If she had missed her footing in coming down, she would have been trampled under the heavy hoofs; but the danger seemed to make no difference to her.

The flush in her cheeks, the sparkle in her eyes, showed how she enjoyed her work.

"Bravo!" shouted the juniors. "Hurray!"

And Marjorie and Clara clapped their hands enthusiastically.

Miss Clotilde, with a happy, flushed face, rode out of the ring at last amid a perfect hurricane of applause.

A lad in red velvet and spangles at the staff entrance gave her a smile as she rode past him.

It was Jack Talbot; billed on the signor's posters as Jungle Jack, the King of the Tigers.

"Well done, Clotilde!" he exclaimed.

"Bravo!" thundered the audience.

Then there was a murmur as a huge iron cage was trundled into the arena.

"The tigers!" said Bob Cherry.

The boy tiger-tamer walked in beside the cage. The juniors looked admiringly at his well-set-up figure, his splendidly developed limbs.

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton. "That chap's fit, if you like. Look at him."

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Tom Brown. "He can't be much older than we are, either."

"Give him a cheer to start with," said Nugent.

"Hurray!"

Jack Talbot looked round with a smile as the schoolboys cheered. He saw their Greyfriars caps, and a curious look came over his face.

Joey Pye nudged him in the ribs.

"I've told 'em all about you, Jacky!" he remarked. "I went up to the school, you know, and talked 'em over."

"Like your cheek, Joey."

"Well, the original Joey Pye never did want for cheek," remarked the clown complacently; "if cheek could make a chap rich, I should be rolling in golden coin now."

"It's curious to see Greyfriars' fellows here," said Jack abruptly.

"Why? They've come to see me."

"I mean—it's curious. You remember I told you once, Joey, that I came near getting a scholarship for a public school—before I joined the circus?" said Jack thoughtfully.

"Yes?"

"Well, the school was Greyfriars."

The clown whistled.

"I might have been a spectator here," said Jack, "instead of—hum!"

"My hat!" said the original Mr. Pye, in surprise.

Jack walked to the cage.

Within it two huge tigers were moving restlessly to and fro. They were Julius and Julia, the property of Herr Biberach—wholly, however, in the charge of Jungle Jack.

There was a deep breath among the audience as the cage door was opened, and Jack Talbot entered.

"My hat!" said Wharton. "That chap has a nerve!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The nervefulness of the esteemed youth is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "There are old shikarees in my country who would not care to face those esteemed beasts in the cage."

The juniors watched Jack's every movement.

They were almost spellbound as he put Julius and Julia through their tricks, and showed his absolute mastery of the powerful beasts.

The turn brought out thunders of applause, as it always

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did; and the signor grinned with satisfaction, as he always did when he heard the public shout.

"They like it, Joey," he confided to the mirth-merchant—"they like it! That's what I like about the B.P.—when they like a thing they ain't above saying so. Now, there's no mistaking that yell, is there?"

And the original Joey Pye agreed that there wasn't.

Carson, the acrobat, was the next turn.

He was a dark, handsome fellow, and his performance on the trapeze was a splendid one, showing amazing activity and boundless nerve.

The Greyfriars' fellows cheered him heartily.

Carson was still on the trapeze, and the crowd watching him intently, when a circus hand came hastily into the ring, ran towards the signor, and spoke to him in a low voice.

Signor Tomsonio turned deadly pale.

"What! Impossible!"

"It's true, sir!"

"But—but impossible!"

"Mr. Talbot sent me to warn you, sir."

The signor clenched his hands.

"Good heavens!"

Half the audience were looking at the fat signor now.

The agitation in his face was too plain to pass unnoticed, and the spectators knew at once that something had gone wrong.

"There's trouble in the camp!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Look at that chap's chivvy! It's as white as a sheet, where the paint isn't on it."

"Something's up!"

Marjorie changed colour.

"Can it be the tiger—"

Her voice faltered.

"My hat! I hope not!"

"Listen—he's going to speak!"

The signor cleared his throat with an effort.

"Ladies and gentlemen—"

There was a loud buzz. Carson slid down the rope from the trapeze; but no eyes were upon him now. There were no "hands" for the acrobat.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I beg of you to be calm—"

Then there were shrieks.

"Pray keep your seats!"

Before the signor could say more there was a deep, reverberating roar from without. It struck terror to every heart.

In an instant the great tent was the scene of wild confusion.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Folly.

BILLY BUNTER stood under the trees on the edge of the field, waiting for his opportunity. He could not get into the tent, and the strains of the band formed the only part of the entertainment that reached the fat junior.

Bunter was angry and exasperated.

That he had thrice had the money given him to pay for his admission weighed nothing with him. His Form-fellows were at the circus, and he was left outside; and it seemed to him that he was deserted and wronged.

The rebuffs he had received, too, in trying to enter the tent, rankled deeply in his breast.

He was in a humour for any act of mischief which might show the circus people, and the chums of No. 1 Study, that William George Bunter was still somebody to be reckoned with.

"The rotters!" he murmured. "I'll make 'em squirm!"

He had already decided upon the means.

He knew that in one of the tents was the big cage in which Count Smelowiski's performing monkeys were kept, and he had determined to let them loose, and also any other animals if he could.

The trouble that would be caused by his action would be almost endless, but that was all the more pleasing to Billy Bunter.

He had seen men passing to and from the staff entrance, but a little later it came on to rain—not heavily, but in a shower.

Bunter waited under the trees.

The rain drove all the circus hands under the shelter of tent or caravan, and Billy Bunter felt that his time had come.

It was quite dark in the circus camp, save where a lantern or two glimmered, and there was not much chance of his being seen now, especially while the performance in the big tent was in full swing.

He crept forward through the wet, dank grass, blinking nervously on all sides, and dodging into the cover of the caravans when he had a chance.

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Which of the tents contained the monkey's cage?

He listened outside several, and a sound of chattering and squirming came to his ears, and he knew that monkeys were inside.

He glided round to the entrance of the tent, and peered in.

Within, all was pitch darkness.

The fat junior hesitated a moment, and then he stepped lightly and cautiously in. He waited a few minutes for his eyes to grow accustomed to the darkness.

Then, dark as the interior had seemed viewed from without, he found that he was able to see objects dimly inside the tent.

There were two cages—one on either side of the tent, with a considerable space between them.

Bunter could only dimly make out the outlines of the cages; but the sound of chattering was still in his ears, and he knew that the monkeys must be there.

His eyes glinted behind his spectacles.

"I'll make 'em squirm!" he murmured.

He felt his way to one of the cages, found a big-barred door, and calmly unbarred it, and pulled the door wide open.

Then he groped to the other cage, and did the same with that one.

He heard a sound, as of a heavy body moving on straw, and scuttled back to the opening of the tent.

He was just stepping out, when a sound of footsteps and voices fell upon his ears. He crouched low in the shadow, his heart beating with terror.

If he should be discovered there, the circus people would know who had released the animals, and Bunter had some rough usage to look for, even if Signor Tomsonio did not complain to the Head of Greyfriars and get him a flogging.

There were two voices—both of them strange to Bunter's ears—but anybody belonging to Signor Tomsonio's World-Famous Circus would have recognised the voices of Herr Biberach and the Doc.

Herr Biberach was the old German tiger-tamer, whose place Jungle Jack had taken in the circus, owing to the German's bibulous habits; and the Doc was a general utility man and hanger-on; and both were deep drinkers, and could seldom be kept away from their bottles, even when there was work to be done.

"Ach!" said Herr Biberach. "Dis is a quiet spot, Doc."

"Good!"

"Come into te tent, ain't it, out of te rain."

"The tiger's tent?"

"Ach! Te tigers are safe in deir cages, ain't it? Dey vill not hurt us."

"But the count will be coming for his monkeys for the next turn."

"Ach! I forgets tat. Let us go along to te caravan, den!"

The voices moved off.

The Doc and Bibby were evidently going to have a quiet carouse together, and were looking for a secluded spot.

Billy Bunter's hair stood almost on end as he heard the foregoing dialogue. He understood now what he had done.

Owing to want of space in the camp, the tigers' cage and the monkeys' cage had been put into the same tent, and Bunter had opened the doors of both.

He had intended to release the monkeys; he had released the tigers as well!

The thought turned him almost sick.

Behind him, in the darkness, the tigers were loose—or would be loose as soon as they chose to quit their cage.

Was there time to get back and fasten the door before they got loose?

The thought hardly occurred to Bunter.

Not for the wealth of the Indies would he have gone back into the tent at the risk of running into a huge tiger in the darkness.

He hardly waited for Bibby and the Doc to be gone before he bolted from the tent, and fled into the night.

Heedless of the rain, which was falling pretty thickly now, the fat junior dashed away, and never paused till he was within the walls of Greyfriars. And there he only slackened for a moment to recover breath.

Then he dashed into the House, up the stairs to the Remove passage, and rushed into No. 1 Study, and locked the door.

The door locked, he crossed with hasty steps to the window, and closed it tight, and fastened the catch.

Then he sank into the armchair, pale as death, and trembling in every limb.

"My—my word!" he muttered. "What—what will happen? Oh, dear! I—I didn't know! Oh dear! Oh, oh, oh!"

There was a tap at the door.

Bunter started up with a shriek. To his fevered and

terrified imagination every sound was a footfall of an approaching tiger.

"Oh, oh, oh!"

Tap, tap!

Even Bunter understood that a tiger would not tap at the door.

"Hallo!" he said feebly. "Who's there?"

"It is I, Mr. Quelch! Open the door!"

"Is—is there a tiger there, sir?"

"What!"

"A—a tiger, sir!"

"What are you talking about, Bunter?"

"The tigers, sir."

"You must be wandering in your mind. Open the door at once!"

Bunter opened the door reluctantly. He blinked past the figure of Mr. Quelch, but the passage was clear of anything like a tiger.

The Remove-master looked at him attentively.

"What is the matter with you, Bunter? I saw you come in, and thought that perhaps you had no money to pay for your admission to the circus, knowing your unthrifty habits. I intended to offer you the necessary amount."

"Th-th-thank you, s-s-sir!"

"Don't you want to go to the circus?" asked Mr. Quelch, in surprise.

"No-n-n-no, sir."

"Come, Bunter, what is the matter? You appear to be afraid of something."

"T-t-t-t-t-the tigers, sir," stammered Bunter.

"You need not be afraid," said Mr. Quelch, puzzled.

"They are probably not very dangerous. And, in any case, I presume they are under guard."

"They've escaped, sir!"

"What!"

"They're loose!"

The Remove-master clutched him by the shoulder.

"Bunter, calm yourself! Are you telling the truth, or is this a silly joke? Come answer me—quickly!"

He dragged the fat junior into the light.

Bunter's white, terrified face was answer enough. Then Mr. Quelch changed colour, too. He was not thinking of himself, but of the boys at the circus.

"They're loose, sir!"

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Quelch released Bunter, and dashed down the passage. Without even stopping to discard his gown, or put his hat on, he rushed from the house, and sped away in the direction of the common.

Bunter stared after him for a moment, and then slammed the door and locked it again. Behind a locked door he was safe; and that, after all, was the consideration of the greatest importance—to Billy Bunter!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

In Terror.

'LADIES and gentlemen——'

"Oh!"

"Help!"

"The tigers!"

Signor Tomsonio waved his hands helplessly.

"Keep your seats—keep your seats!"

"Help!"

"Run for it!"

"Oh, oh!"

"Keep your seats! The tigers are not here!"

But there was a wild scramble for the exits.

The juniors were on their feet now, and several of them were joining in the rush, when Harry Wharton's voice rang out:

"Hold on! Don't be cowards! Stick it out! Keep cool!"

"Right you are!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Keep cool! Stand where you are!"

Harry Wharton & Co. set the example of keeping cool.

There was no sign of the tiger in the great, lighted tent; and, as a matter of fact, there was more danger outside than inside, at present.

The signor bellowed that out to the crowd, and it had some effect upon them, and the example of the Greyfriars fellows added to it.

Wingate and the Sixth-Formers with him were keeping their seats, and Harry Wharton's example made most of the juniors do the same.

The tumult still raged, but with less noise and confusion.

"Calm yourselves!" shouted Signor Tomsonio. "You are safe here!"

Marjorie was deadly pale, but calm. Clara was wringing her hands. Wilhelmina sat, almost stunned, without a word.

Harry pressed Marjorie's hand.

"Courage!" he whispered. "There's no danger—yet."

The girl nodded without speaking.

The crowd was pouring out of the tent, but sufficient order

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had been restored to stop any danger of crushing or trampling.

After that one roar from the tiger, no further sound had been heard from him, and the inference was that he had gone.

Signor Tomsonio wrung his hands as he thought of it.

The damage a loose tiger on the countryside might do was endless, and in his mind's eye the signor already saw a lengthy bill for damages, even if there were no fatalities.

"Now we'd better go," said Wingate, when the crowd had almost cleared off. "May as well get back to Greyfriars."

"I shall jolly well lock my door to-night," said Blundell.

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, I dare say they'll soon have the tiger again!" said Wingate. "Come on. Keep close, you juniors."

They moved towards the exit from the tent.

The crowd was streaming off in various directions, the idea of everyone being to place as great a distance between himself and the common as possible.

Outside the tent, in the glare of the naphtha-lamps, Wharton stopped.

"We're coming back to Cliff House with you, Marjorie," he said.

"But—but you have no permission to——"

"Oh, we shall be excused under the circumstances!" said Harry. "We can't let you go back alone, anyway."

"I—I shall feel much safer with you."

Cliff House was only a few minutes' walk from the common. The Greyfriars juniors gathered in a body round the Cliff House girls, and walked with them to the school. They did not run, but their walking was certainly very rapid.

The matter was serious enough.

Exactly how savage the escaped tiger might be they did not know, but it would be terribly dangerous to meet him in the lanes.

The circus men were now searching in all directions, with guns and lanterns; but apparently they had yet discovered nothing of the beast.

Cliff House was reached in a few minutes.

Miss Penelope Primrose shrieked when she learned that there was a tiger loose, and she wished the Greyfriars juniors to accept the shelter of Cliff House until the morning, but Harry shook his head.

He felt that it was necessary to get back to Greyfriars, whatever the risk. If they remained absent, they would be searched for. The Head might even conclude that they had fallen victims to the escaped tiger.

They hastily said good-bye to Marjorie and her friends, and hurried away towards Greyfriars, leaving the girls full of the keenest anxiety.

The precautions Miss Primrose took before going to bed that night were endless; but none of the girls was inclined to smile at them. The danger was too real!

Harry Wharton & Co. went back by way of Friardale Common to discover at the circus whether the escaped tiger had been captured yet.

They found Mr. Quelch there, and the Remove-master, who was breathless with his run from Greyfriars, uttered an exclamation of relief when he saw them.

"Ah, you are safe, then, my boys?"

"Yes, sir. We thought we ought to see the girls to safety, sir," said Harry.

"Quite right, Wharton—quite right. I learned from Bunter that the tigers had escaped, and came here immediately. I am glad to find that no one has been hurt. Keep with me."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch hurried towards Signor Tomsonio. The signor seemed to be almost beside himself. Jungle Jack had just come back from a fruitless search.

"You haven't seen him, Jack?"

"No, sir," said the circus lad. "We've got the tigress, though. Julia is safe in her cage again. We found her under a caravan."

"Good luck!" said the signor. "But Julius?"

"He hasn't been seen."

"How could he have got loose?" exclaimed the signor. "Surely you saw to the fastenings of the door after you left the cage, Jack?"

Talbot nodded.

"I'm afraid there's been foul play, sir," he said.

"Foul play!"

"Yes; someone deliberately let the tigers loose."

"What!"

"There's no doubt about it, signor!" chimed in Joey Pye. "The door was unbarred—and the door of the monkeys' cage, in the same tent, was unfastened, too! The monkeys are gone, as well as the tigers!"

"Smelowiski's monkeys!"

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"That's it! Somebody's let the lot out!"

Signor Tomsonio gasped.

"But—but—but who could have done it? What villain——"

"That's what we've got to find out," said Jack Talbot, between his teeth. "But the first business is to recapture Julius."

Mr. Quelch broke in.

"Pray allow me a word, sir. I understand that there is still one of the tigers at liberty?"

"Yes, sir," said Talbot respectfully, with a look at the Form-master.

"Is it a dangerous animal?"

Talbot hesitated.

"Pray, tell me exactly how matters stand," said Mr. Quelch. "Precautions will have to be taken at the school."

"Well, Julius isn't exactly dangerous," said Talbot slowly.

"He's all right as long as he's not angered. He's not likely to attack anybody first, but if anybody snaps a gun at him, it may make him wild. And if we don't recapture him before he gets hungry, he will make havoc in the farmyards, I think."

"And when he has once tasted blood?" said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I can't say! I hope we shall capture him before then."

"This is terrible!" said the Form-master. "How long is it since he was fed?"

"Oh, that's all right, luckily! They are always fed after the performance, and it isn't half an hour since he had a big meal," said Talbot.

"That is fortunate. Will you please send us word as soon as you have found the tiger, if you find him?"

"Rely upon that, sir," said the signor.

"Thank you. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And Mr. Quelch and the boys hurried their steps towards Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton would willingly have stayed to help the circus men in the search for the tiger, but he knew it was no use asking permission for anything of the sort.

They reached Greyfriars without an alarm, and before any of the boys went to bed a party of masters and prefects went round the house, carefully examining the fastenings of the doors and windows.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Night of Fear.

"BUNTER!"

"Where's Bunter?"

"Bunter! Bunter!"

"Where's that ass Bunter?"

"Is it possible that Bunter is absent?" said Mr. Quelch anxiously. "I saw him in your study, Wharton! Pray look for him!"

The chums of the Remove went up to Study No. 1. It was bedtime, and Billy Bunter was not to be seen. There was no light in the study, and the chums had not thought of looking there for him.

"Door's locked!" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton rapped on it.

"Bunter, are you there?"

A quavering voice came from within the study.

"Who's there?"

"It's I, Wharton?"

"Have they captured the tigers?"

"Only one of them—the tigress."

"Where's the other?"

"Blessed if I know! He's not here! Open the door!"

"You're sure the tiger's not there?"

"Yes, ass!"

Billy Bunter opened the door. His fat face was very pale, and there were beads of perspiration upon it.

He blinked nervously past the chums into the dusky corridor.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, you're—you're sure——"

"Of course, you duffer! It's all right—the tiger can't get into Greyfriars!" said Harry, reassuringly. "I daresay he'll be captured before morning, too! Come up to bed!"

"I—I say, is it known how they got loose?" asked Bunter.

"Somebody opened the cages."

"Oh—oh—oh, really——"

"Nobody knows who it was, though."

"What will they d-d-d-do to him when they c-c-c-catch him?"

"Lock him up, I expect."

"Oh! Oh!"

"What are you 'oh-ohing' about?" demanded Wharton impatiently. "I suppose he will deserve to be put in prison—and it won't hurt you, anyway! Get to bed!"

Billy Bunter went up to the Remove dormitory in fear and trembling. The Removites, like everybody else at Greyfriars, were discussing the scene at the circus, and the escape of the tiger.

Billy Bunter went along the row of beds, looking under every one of them before he began to undress.

"Well, how many tigers have you found?" demanded Bob Cherry, as he finished.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"If you come across one in your trousers-pocket, or in your watch-case, don't forget to put some salt on his tail," said Skinner humorously.

"It's not a j-j-j-joking matter," said Bunter. "I shouldn't wonder if the tiger got into Greyfriars to-night. He may be hungry."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Then you'll be the first morsel, Bunter! If the tiger's got any sense, he'll pick out a fat oyster like you for the start!"

"The dangerousness of the esteemed Bunter is great."

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"If you feel him biting you in the middle of the night, just call out!" said Skinner. "We'll clear out while he's finishing you!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

The juniors turned in, and Carberry put the lights out. Bunter quivered and quaked in the darkness for some time before he went to sleep. His action in opening the cages was weighing upon his mind, but worse than the sting of remorse was the feeling that he was in danger.

He dreamed of tigers—of being shut up in cages with huge, ferocious beasts, and of being chased round the dormitory and over the beds by them.

He woke up suddenly, in a cold sweat with terror.

Still under the influence of his dream, he lay still, quiet, not daring to move a limb, and hardly daring to draw a breath.

What was that sound he could hear in the darkness? It was a sound of moving—of creeping! And what was that tugging at his bedclothes? What was it that had awakened him?

His fanciful terrors suddenly becoming very real, Bunter sat bolt upright in bed, shaking with fear.

Something was pulling at his bedclothes—it must be the tiger!

The fat junior sat palpitating.

The bedclothes disappeared—he was left shivering. Then there was a bump against the bed. It was too much for Bunter!

He gave a sudden frenzied yell, and bounded out of the bed on the other side.

"Help! Murder! Tigers! Help!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What's the row?"

"Who's that yelling?"

"Help, help! Tigers!"

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton sprang out of bed and struck a match. The alarm suddenly in the middle of the night was sufficiently startling, yet Wharton did not believe that a tiger could possibly have got into the Remove dormitory.

"Help!" shrieked Bunter.

"Shut up!"

"The tiger!"

"Where?"

Wharton had lighted a candle-end. It flickered through the long, dark room, and showed the terrified Bunter and the fellows sitting up in bed with startled faces—and it showed Skinner just getting into bed, with a grin on his face.

"Where's the tiger, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked wildly round him.

"I—I don't know! It was close to my bed, pulling my bedclothes off! I——"

"You ass!"

"I tell you it's in the dorm. It——"

"Skinner!"

"Hallo!" said Skinner.

Read about **BILLY BUNTER, "THE CIRCUS VENTRILOQUIST"** in **PLUCK**, now on sale.



The Greyfriars juniors gazed at the Queen of the Ring in admiration as she cantered gracefully round the ring on her splendid black Arab.

"Did you pull Bunter's bedclothes off?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner and Bulstrode together.

"Oh, really!" gasped Billy Bunter. "You don't mean to say—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, get into bed!" growled Wharton. "It was only a silly practical joke!" He blew out his candle. "You'd better chuck it, Skinner! You might have frightened the fat young duffer into a fit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I wasn't really frightened, you know," said Bunter. "I—I knew it was a joke, really, you know; only—only—"

"Rats! Go to sleep!"

Bunter turned in. But his nerves were in a jumpy state, and though he was usually ready for more than his share of sleep, he found that he could not compose himself now. Low chuckles were coming from Skinner and Bulstrode's beds, showing that they were still awake and enjoying the joke they had planned between them.

Bunter's eyes glinted in the darkness.

With all the things that Bunter thought he could do, and could not do, there was one thing he really could do, and that was ventriloquism—and that often helped him to "get his own back" upon humorous fellows in the Remove.

Skinner's chuckles suddenly ceased as a peculiar sound fell upon his ears.

It was a low growl.

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"M-m-m-my hat!" said Skinner, in a startled whisper.

"Did you hear that, Bulstrode?"

"No," said Bulstrode. "What was it?"

"A growl like—like a tiger."

"Rats!"

"It seemed to come from under my bed."

"Rot! It's your nerves!"

"I—I heard it—there! There it is again!"

Growl!

This time Bulstrode heard it, too, and he gave a sudden bound in bed.

"M-m-m-m-my word! You're right!" he gasped.

"It's—it's the tiger!"

"M-m-m-m-my only hat!"

"I—I daren't move! Call for help!"

Gr-r-r-r-r!

Skinner made a desperate bound out of bed, and ran for the door. Harry Wharton started up out of a doze.

"Hullo! What's the matter now?"

"The tiger!" gasped Skinner. "It's in the dorm."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"I—I tell you it is. I'm going out."

"Oh, cheese it! You can't play the same wheeze twice."

"I tell you it's here," said Skinner, fumbling with the lock. "We shall all be torn to pieces. Oh!"

Harry Wharton lighted his candle again.

"I'll take a look," he said. "If he's here, all right; if he isn't, I'll give you a welt with my belt, so look out."

He looked up and down the dormitory. There was nothing to be seen or heard of the tiger now that the candle was lighted. Bunter was snoring.

Skinner hesitated at the door. But when Wharton had looked under every bed, and all round the room, Skinner could doubt no longer that he had been mistaken. Wharton picked up his belt and glared at him.

"Well, are you satisfied now?" he demanded.

"Ye-es; but—but I heard something."

"Rats!"

"I heard something, too," said Bulstrode.

"More rats!"

"Look here, Wharton!"

"Oh, shut up, and get to sleep, and let me do the same. Get into bed, Skinner, you ass! It's your silly nerves, through your playing that trick on Bunter."

"I tell you I heard——"

"Bosh! Get to bed!"

Skinner got to bed, and as he passed Wharton, the captain of the Remove gave him the promised "welt" with the belt. Skinner gave a roar, and hopped into bed.

Wharton blew out the candle. And after that peace reigned in the Remove dormitory till the rising-bell clanged its summons in the morning.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

An Unlooked-for Visitor.

"H AS the tiger been caught?"

That was the first question everybody asked at Greyfriars in the morning.

No one was able to answer it till Joey Pye walked over from Friardale Common. He came to inform the Head that Julius the Tiger had not yet been captured, and that a number of the monkeys were still loose, and to caution the doctor to keep gates and doors shut.

It was a caution the Head was not likely to neglect.

The gates of Greyfriars were shut and locked all the morning, and as the gates were high, and the walls tall and thick, the Head had little fear that the escaped beast would find its way into Greyfriars.

Doors it was impossible, of course, to keep shut, unless there should be alarm. Everybody was on the look-out, and if the tiger entered the precincts of Greyfriars it seemed certain that he would be spotted. But he could not get in. All were certain of that, and with a few exceptions, such as Bunter and Snoop, the boys were reassured.

But the fellows were in a serious mood when they went into the class-rooms for the morning's lessons.

A tiger loose in the countryside was a serious matter. And though they knew that Miss Primrose would be taking proper precautions at Cliff House, Harry Wharton & Co. were anxious about their friends there.

Even Mr. Quelch found it a little hard to bring his mind to the morning's work, and harder still to bring his pupils' minds to it.

The door of the class-room was shut, but the windows were open, and Bunter more than once glanced nervously at the windows, as if he expected to see the escaped tiger's huge form come hurtling in even in that narrow space.

Suddenly the fat junior started.

Mr. Quelch had at last induced the class to settle down to work, and they were deep in Roman history, when Bunter, looking at the nearest window, discerned a form there.

It was not the tiger, but the figure of a monkey, and its queer appearance showed at a glance that it was one of those that had escaped from the cage belonging to Count Smelowski, in the World-Famed Circus of Signor Tomsonio.

The monkey had a curious little brown face, with keen, ratty eyes, and it was clad in a pair of short white trousers and a red tunic.

It had evidently climbed up a pipe on the wall outside, and the sight of the room within the window apparently interested it for it hopped upon the open sash, and was blinking down upon the Remove.

Just as Bunter looked at it, the monkey swung down inside the window, and sat on the sill within, blinking at the class.

Several juniors caught sight of it then, and there was a general chuckle.

Mr. Quelch looked round angrily.

"Boys, what does this mean? What——"

He broke off as he caught sight of the monkey.

"Dear me, how did this animal get here?"

"He got in at the window, sir," said Bunter. "I—I think the tiger might get in at the window, sir."

"The window is too small for the tiger to get in, even if he were outside, Bunter. Don't be ridiculous! I presume this is one of the animals that escaped last night from the circus."

"Shall we catch it, sir?" asked Bob Cherry.

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"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

"Yes, you may do so."

Bob Cherry jumped up, not sorry to get a rest from the Gracchi and their incomparable mother. The monkey chattered at him as he advanced towards it with outstretched hand.

"Here you are, old boy!" said Bob. "Come to your uncle, there's a duck! Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

He was within reach of the monkey, when the latter skipped out of reach, and hopped away across the class-room.

Mr. Quelch made a grab at it as it passed, and missed, and nearly lost his footing. The monkey squirmed up the blackboard, and sat perched on top, and chattered.

The Remove chuckled joyously.

The chase of that monkey was likely to prove interesting.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch, taking up his pointer. "I will drive it off the blackboard, and you can stand ready to catch it, Cherry. You may help, Wharton, and you Brown."

"Certainly, sir!"

The three juniors stood ready for the monkey. Mr. Quelch lunged at with the pointer. Then he uttered an exclamation of annoyance as the pointer was jerked out of his hand.

"Dear me!"

The monkey flourished the pointer. Mr. Quelch started back, and only just in time to escape a crack on the head.

The monkey chattered and grinned gleefully. He whirled the pointer round, and it went flying through the air.

The Removites instinctively ducked.

Crash!

There was a splintering of glass, and the pointer dropped outside in the Close, with the best part of a large pane with it.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "This—this is a most troublesome animal! Shoo!"

But the "Shoo!" has no effect upon the monkey.

"Help me take down the blackboard, please!"

"Yes, sir."

The blackboard was jerked down. The monkey shifted his seat to the top of the easel. The easel was brought down with a run.

"Collar him!" shouted Wharton.

The three juniors rushed at the monkey together. The active animal skipped out of the way, and Tom Brown biffed against Cherry, and the two of them rolled over the easel and sprawled on the floor.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Brown.

"Ow! You ass!"

"You duffer!"

"Fathead!"

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch. "Pray return to your seats. I will catch the troublesome animal myself. You can help me, Wharton."

Tom Brown and Bob Cherry went back to their places. Mr. Quelch and Harry Wharton ran after the monkey.

The curious little figure in the red tunic skipped away, and clambered up the door of the cupboard in the corner of the Remove-room, which was used for stacking away easels, rolled maps, globes, and other paraphernalia necessary for the instruction of youth.

The top of the cupboard was a couple of feet from the ceiling, and that space was nearly filled with several sorts of lumber—disused maps and a damaged geographical globe among the rest.

The monkey ensconced himself there, and grinned down at the pursuers in a most exasperating way.

"The—the wretched animal!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He was half-inclined to give up the contest. But he was growing angry, and, besides, he knew that the Remove would never do any work while the monkey was chattering and grimacing on the cupboard, and sending them into fits of laughter.

"Wharton, pray get me the steps!"

Harry Wharton fetched the steps. As he set them up, the monkey grasped the globe.

"Look out, sir!" gasped Wharton.

He dragged the Form-master back just in time. The globe came whirling down, and it crashed upon the floor at their feet and broke into a thousand fragments.

"Upon my—my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Look out, sir!"

After the globe came the rest of the lumber, crash on crash. Mr. Quelch and Wharton hurriedly withdrew out of range.

Having cleared the top of the cupboard, the monkey grinned and chattered in a satisfied way, grimacing down at them.

ANSWERS

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton
& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"The—the brute!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I—I will seize it, and—and hurl it forth."

He pushed the steps towards the cupboard, and valiantly mounted.

The monkey, having nothing further to hurl, crouched back, its red, ratty eyes sparkling dangerously.

Mr. Quelch reached out to seize him.

The monkey made a spring, and alighted upon the Form-master's head.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Oh! Oh!"

He sprang wildly from the steps.

The monkey, probably as much frightened as mischievous, clung tightly to the Form-master's scanty locks, as the unfortunate Mr. Quelch careered across the class-room.

There was a roar from the Remove. The sight was so utterly absurd, that they really could not help it.

"Help!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Oh! Help! Oh!"

The juniors rose as one man and dashed to the rescue. The monkey scuttled down the Remove-master's back to the floor, whisked over to an open window, and climbed out before he could be touched.

Mr. Quelch sank upon a form and gasped. The monkey, with a final grimace back at the juniors, disappeared out of the window.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"He's gone, sir!"

Mr. Quelch smoothed out his hair with his hands. The monkey's clutch had hurt him, and it had revealed the bald spots, which Mr. Quelch carefully arranged his remaining hair to hide.

It was some time before Mr. Quelch was sufficiently himself to resume; and then, till the end of the morning's lessons, the Remove broke out into continual chuckles, which the Form-master affected not to hear.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

Another Visitor.

AFTER morning school, most of the juniors of Greyfriars would have been very glad to go down to the circus and help Signor Tomsonio and his men to look for Julius. And as the Head guessed that such would be their wish, he had cautioned the prefects to keep a very keen look-out; with the result that Bob Cherry was yanked back by the leg from the top of a wall, and Tom Brown was headed off in the doctor's garden and turned back, and several other fellows found themselves in trouble, too.

"It's no good," said Nugent. "The Head thinks there would be danger——"

"Well, I suppose there would," said Wharton, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh expressed the opinion that the dangerousness would be terrific.

"Yes, but we're not afraid of danger, are we?"

"Oh, no!"

"And we should be jolly useful in hunting the tiger," said Bob Cherry discontentedly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It would be great fun," he said; "but I don't see where the use would come in. I dare say they can manage it alone."

Jack Talbot, the young tiger-tamer, looked in to tell the Greyfriars authorities that the tiger had not been captured yet, but that nothing of a tragic nature had happened so far.

"Have they discovered who let the animals loose?" asked Harry, speaking to the circus lad as he was leaving.

"No. I suppose no fellow at Greyfriars would play such a trick?"

Then Talbot departed. He left Wharton looking very thoughtful.

"Hang it!" exclaimed Harry. "Surely they don't suspect a Greyfriars fellow of playing the giddy goat in that way?"

"I should say not."

"Oh, it's impossible!" exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly. "It was rotten cheek to hint such a thing. As if one of us would—would—what are you staring at me like that for, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton's eyes were fixed sternly upon the fat junior. Bunter's very eagerness had given him away.

"Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es. What——"

"Did you loose the animals?"

"I! Oh, really, Wharton——"

Harry's grip dropped upon the fat junior's shoulder like the grip of a vice. Billy Bunter wriggled uneasily.

"Did you do it, Billy?"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I—I—— How——"

"Then you did?"

Under Wharton's accusing eyes the powers of lying seemed to desert Billy Bunter. He began to whimper.

"I—I only meant to let out the monkeys," he murmured.

"I—I was insulted at the circus, and I was going to let out the monkeys for a joke. How was I to know that the silly asses had shoved the tiger's cage in the same tent?"

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

EVERY
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The "Magnet"

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ONE
HALFPENNY.

"You young fool!"

"Oh! Oh, really, I—I—I didn't know, you know! Don't you give me away, Wharton. I—I should be expelled."

"And serve you jolly well right!" said Harry wrathfully. "Somebody may be killed, for all you know, through your stupid caddishness."

"They insulted me——"

"I suppose you were trying to sneak in without paying?" said Harry scornfully.

"Well, I hadn't any tin, and——"

"Oh, shut up! I ought to march you straight to the Head now, and tell him what you've done!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ow! Don't! You can't be a sneak! I—I——"

"No, I won't," said Wharton savagely; "but mind this, if any harm comes of the tigers being loose, you'll have to own up. There may be an inquest before this matter's over, for all you know, and then the police will get on the job."

Billy Bunter almost fainted.

"The police! Oh, oh, oh!"

"You—you dummy! You'll have to own up. I'll jolly well make you. But it wouldn't do any good now, and if no harm comes of it, I'll keep it dark."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

But Wharton strode away contemptuously without listening.

Bunter was in about the most uncomfortable state of mind that he had ever experienced. He was afraid that the escaped tiger might get into Greyfriars, somehow, and now he was still more afraid that there might be some tragedy, and that he might be arrested for letting the animals loose.

He sincerely wished he had never tried to revenge himself upon the circus folk, and he would have given his little finger to undo the night's work.

But it was too late now.

He was still palpitating at dinner-time, and it was remarked that he ate a very light dinner; a circumstance so unusual for Bunter that the whole Form noticed it. They all put it down to his dread of the tiger.

Wharton was keeping his own counsel, for the present at least.

The Remove went into afternoon school, still thinking of the circus and of the escaped Julius. But fear of the tiger weighed little with them now. He had not found his way to Greyfriars yet, and they did not think that he would do so.

They soon dropped into the usual mood, and the tiger was forgotten as they ground their painful way through deponent verbs.

It was about the middle of the afternoon when Gosling, the porter, glanced out of his lodge at the school gates, just to be sure that they were still secure. Instead of standing open as usual in the daytime, they were locked, and Gosling had been expressly commanded by the Head to keep them so.

Gosling gave a jump.

Through the iron bars of the gates, he had a view of a considerable portion of the road, and the ditch, and the trees beyond.

From those trees, looking across the ditch into the road, appeared a face.

It was a face that froze Gosling's blood with fear, though there was a tall iron gate between them.

For the head that came out of the thicket was the head of a huge tiger!

"My—my 'at!" stuttered Gosling.

He stared dazedly at the terrible apparition.

The head and neck of the tiger emerged further from the thicket, and then part of the huge striped body.

The animal looked up and down the road, and then, apparently reassured, came right out into view—a splendid creature, huge, powerful, beautiful, but terrible.

"Ow! Elp!" gasped Gosling.

There was a sound of clattering hoofs on the road—a cart was approaching. The tiger turned towards the sound, and snuffed the air.

Then he ran quickly towards the iron gates.

There was a crash as he bumped against them; but the gates would have withstood the rush of an elephant. The tiger growled and drew back. Between the level top of the gates, and the arched stone above, was a considerable space, and the animal's quick eye had noted it. The beautiful body crouched back—a quiver ran through it—and with a sudden lissome movement the tiger sprang.

Gosling gave a gasp of inarticulate terror.

The tiger had leaped the gate.

The porter dashed back into his lodge, slammed the door, and locked and bolted it, slammed the window shut, bolted into his bed-room and locked that door, and crawled under the bed, and lay there palpitating.

Julius, the tiger stalked into the Greyfriars quadrangle.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Julius Takes a Fancy to Bunter.

JULIUS did not appear to be in a bad temper. Julius was very fond of Jack Talbot, his master and tamer, and most of his savage proclivities had been eradicated. Unless he was attacked, or unless he was hungry, Julius would probably do no harm; but the sight of a huge tiger stalking in the quadrangle was not a reassuring one. One of the maids first saw him, and fled shrieking.

Then there was the flight of the gardener, who caught sight of him. He barricaded himself in the garden shed.

By this time the alarm was spreading.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, glanced out of the Form-room window to see what the disturbance was about, and saw—Julius!

He was standing on a form to look out of the window. He nearly fell off it as he saw the tiger.

"My—my goodness!" he gasped. "The—the tiger!"

"The tiger!"

The terrible word ran through the Fifth Form like lightning.

"Oh!" gasped Blundell. "Lock the door! Pile up the forms!"

Mr. Prout's eyes gleamed. He was a sportsman, but at Greyfriars he seldom had a chance of killing anything.

He thought of the unused guns in his study, and felt warlike ardour rising within him. It was big game at last.

"Stop a minute!" he exclaimed. "I will go and get my gun. You boys barricade yourselves in the room after I have gone."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Prout slipped out of the room, and then the Fifth piled forms against the door. The door of the school house was open, and Mr. Prout glanced towards it as he entered the broad, flagged passage.

Then he gave a gasp.

Upon the steps of the house stood a terrible form with bristling whiskers, looking into the house, not a dozen yards from the master of the Fifth.

It was the tiger!

"Oh!" sputtered Mr. Prout, and he ran.

There was a growl from Julius, and he came in. Mr. Prout reached his study and banged the door after him, and hastily took down a gun from the wall. It was the same gun that he had used on a famous occasion when, mistaking a kite made by Wun Lung, the Chinese, for a new variety of bird, he had brought it down with great success.

Julius came as far as Mr. Prout's door, bumped his head against it, and passed on. At the end of the passage there were fresh shrieks and running, and Julius turned back. He bumped against the door of the Remove Form-room, in which he heard the murmur of voices. Deep in deponent verbs, the Remove so far knew nothing whatever of the arrival of the tiger.

Mr. Quelch looked round with a glance of annoyance as he heard the bump on the door.

"Dear me!"

He went on with the deponent verbs, but the next minute there came another bump. The Remove-master was exasperated.

"Bunter, open the door, and see who is making that noise."

"Yes, sir," blinked Bunter.

He rose from the form and crossed to the door, and opened it carelessly enough. Julius looked at him.

Bunter staggered away.

He had not the nerve to close the door again; he left it wide open, and staggered away with a face like chalk, almost fainting.

Mr. Quelch looked round irritably, and stood petrified as he saw the tiger. Julius looked into the room.

"Good heavens!" muttered Harry Wharton.

The Removites sat motionless, as if turned to stone. Terror held them spellbound.

"Upon my—my word!" murmured Mr. Quelch feebly.

Julius, the tiger, stalked into the room.

The Remove-master, even at that terrible moment, did not lose either his courage or his presence of mind.

"Remain quite still, boys," he said, in a low, anxious voice—"quite still! Not a word, not a movement!"

So long as the tiger was not provoked, the chances were that he would not attack them. He was not looking hostile at present. But a single unlucky movement might cause a spring, a lash of the terrible claws, and if the monster once tasted blood—Mr. Quelch felt himself sick at the thought.

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WEEK:

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

Julius glanced round the class, sitting like statues, and seemed a little puzzled. His glare turned upon Billy Bunter, who had backed away with palsied limbs, till he had backed against the blackboard easel, and could back no further.

There Bunter stood spellbound.

Julius moved towards him.

Bunter's lips moved. He seemed to try to speak, to call for help, but the sounds died on his tongue. He was speechless with horror. This was the beast he had let loose from its cage for a spiteful trick.

Julius came closer. Bunter backed away, foolishly, for in doing so he pushed over the easel, and the blackboard fell to the floor with a crash.

In the dead silence of the class-room the crash rang like thunder.

Julius, startled, leaped back, and gave a growl.

Bunter, shaking like a jelly, stumbled over the easel, and fell. He rolled on the floor, and lay there mumbling, too scared to move.

He almost fainted as a great muzzle came snuffing over him. In his mind's eye he saw himself in the red jaws of the tiger.

His senses were whirling, and it was a mercy for the fat junior that terror overcame him, and he swooned.

Julius was snuffing him over. In the cage in Tomsonio's Circus Julius was accustomed to carry Talbot round the cage, holding the boy tamer's belt in his teeth.

Some reminiscence of his arena performance seemed to be in the tiger's mind now. His jaws gripped, not upon Bunter, but upon Bunter's clothing, and the fat junior was dragged from the floor in the tiger's teeth.

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He did not stir. He could not hurt the tiger with bare hands, and any hostile movement now might be instantly fatal to Bunter. The good-humour of a tiger is always uncertain.

Julius trotted round the room with Bunter. The juniors watched him with fascinated eyes.

"My hat!" said Wharton. "He's going through the circus tricks, with Bunter instead of that chap Talbot. Do you see?"

"He—he can't be so savage, then," said Nugent, with a gasp of relief.

"Not now—he's all right—but goodness knows how long it will last. One of us ought to slip out and warn them at the circus. I'll go."

Wharton was near the door. He exchanged a glance with Mr. Quelch, who nodded. Harry rose from his place and quietly slipped from the room.

He darted down the passage and out into the sunny Close.

"Talbot!"

The circus lad was running towards him from the direction of the gates. Wharton looked at him in amazement.

"How did you get in?"

Jack laughed.

"Climbed the gates. We learn to climb in the circus, you know. No one came to the gate when I rang. Has the tiger been here?"

"Yes—yes!"

"I thought so. I tracked him in the wood as far as the school, and lost him on the road. I was afraid he was here."

"He's in our Form-room."

"By George!"

"I was just coming to warn you," gasped Wharton. "I cut out of the class-room. He hasn't done any harm yet, but he's got Bunter in his jaws, trotting round the room with him the same as he does with you in the cage."

Jack Talbot drew a quick breath.

"Thank Heaven there's no harm done! Show me the way."

They had been hurrying towards the house while speaking. They ran in, and Wharton led the way to the Remove class-room.

"But you are unarmed," he said dubiously.

"That's all right. A weapon wouldn't be of much use against Julius at close quarters," said Talbot. "Besides, he will obey me."

Wharton said no more. They entered the Remove-room. Julius had dropped Bunter now, and the fat junior lay just where he had fallen, inert, in a dead faint.

For Mr. Prout, gun in hand, had entered the Form-room. Julius, the tiger, was bristling now, and his tail was lashing his ribs as he glared at the master of the Fifth.

Jack Talbot sprang forward.

"Stop!" he exclaimed, in agony. "Don't fire! Hold!"

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton
& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Exit Julius.

TALBOT caught the Fifth Form-master by the arm. Mr. Prout, who was brave enough, though certainly wanting in discretion in this case, had levelled his gun at Julius.

Julius had abandoned Bunter, and turned his attention to the Fifth Form-master, and already he was crouching.

Talbot knew what that meant, if Mr. Prout did not.

The chances were that Mr. Prout's shot would superficially wound the tiger, and then Julius, excited to rage, would become once more the savage monster of the Indian jungles.

"Hold!"

Jack's grasp completely spoiled Mr. Prout's aim, and he did not fire, but looked round angrily at the interrupter.

"Boy, how—"

"Stop! I am the tiger's master; he will obey me. If you fire there will be death here—death to you and the rest. Don't you understand?"

Without giving Mr. Prout time to reply, Jack strode towards the tiger. He had placed himself fairly between the animal and the warlike Mr. Prout, and so it was impossible now for the master to fire.

Mr. Prout sniffed. He had more faith in his gun than in the persuasive powers of the tiger tamer. However, he lowered his weapon, letting the butt clump on the floor.

Jack Talbot strode towards the tiger.

The crouching left Julius, and he straightened up as his young master came towards him. The threatened spring was averted.

"Julius!"

Jack laid his hand upon the tiger's huge head.

The boys watched him in amazed admiration.

"There's pluck for you!" said Bob Cherry, in an undertone. "Blessed if I should care to do that."

Jack had eyes only for the tiger.

Master of the animal as he was, he knew the uncertainty of the feline temper, and that Julius, too, had tasted freedom.

It was by no means certain that the tiger would obey him now; but Jack did not allow any doubt to appear in his look or voice. The tiger, with an animal's keen instinct for fear in its master, would have detected it at once, and would then have become unmanageable.

"Julius! Allez!"

At the familiar word of the ring Julius shifted uncomfortably. Jack took a firm grip on the studded collar round the tiger's neck, and led him towards the door.

Julius moved slowly and unwillingly.

"Allez!" exclaimed Jack sharply.

Julius's movements quickened. He cast a glance at Mr. Prout, and growled, and the Fifth Form-master turned a little pale.

But Jack's strong grip drew him on, and he passed out of the room, and there was a general gasp of relief as he disappeared into the passage.

"Dear me," gasped Mr. Quelch—"dear me! I—I would not go through this again for—for anything. Keep your seats, boys!"

Several fellows were peeping round corners in the passage. At the sight of the tiger they promptly vanished.

Jack Talbot smiled. He marched Julius out into the Close, and down to the gates. But the gates were locked, and he had to knock at Gosling's lodge for the keys.

Gosling, crouching under his bed, heard the knocking, but he did not choose to venture out.

"Yes, you may knock," he murmured. "You can go on knocking, too, but I ain't a-opening that there door, I ain't. Wot I says is this 'ere, I ain't goin' to be chawed up by no tigers, that's wot I says."

Gosling did not know that Julius, the tiger, was just outside with Talbot; but he did not mean to open his door again till he was quite assured that the terrible visitor was off the premises.

Jack knocked at the door in vain.

"Hallo!" he shouted at the window. "Hallo! Come out and open the gates!"

"Catch me!" murmured Gosling.

"I've caught the tiger."

"No fear!"

"Come and open the gates, will you?"

"No blessed fear!"

Gosling's replies were inaudible, but the silence showed Jack that he would not get the keys. But Mr. Quelch was looking from the schoolhouse door now, and he understood the difficulty.

He did not like to get too near the tiger, under control as Julius seemed to be now, but he did not hesitate.

He came hurrying across the Close towards the circus lad.

"I can't get the gate open, sir," said Jack, with a grin.

"The chap in here doesn't seem inclined to come out and unlock them either."

THE MAGNET.—93.

NEXT

WEEK:

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

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

Mr. Quelch smiled a little uneasily.

"I am not surprised at that," he said, "but I will call him. Gosling!"

He rapped on the door and called. Gosling, in the inner room, heard Mr. Quelch's voice, and recognised it. He crawled out from under the bed dubiously.

The Remove-master rapped sharply on the door with his knuckles.

"Gosling!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You may come out now; it is quite safe. I want the gates unlocked."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Still Gosling did not open his door. Gosling was too cautious for that. He crept to the window, and looked out.

The tiger, as it happened, was concealed by the angle of the wall from the window, and Gosling only saw Mr. Quelch.

He breathed freely with relief.

Rap, rap, rap!

"I'm a-coming, sir," said Gosling.

"Be quick, then."

Gosling unbarred and unlocked the door, and opened it with a shaking hand. He blinked nervously out.

"You see, sir, I—I wasn't afraid; but—"

"Come and unlock the gates!"

"Yes, sir. Of course, I'm not afraid of a tiger; but—"

"Come out, then—quick!" said the Remove-master impatiently.

"Yes, sir. Has the beast been caught, sir?"

"Yes, yes."

"Werry good, sir," said Gosling, becoming brave all at once. "Wot I says, sir, is this 'ere. I ain't afraid of a tiger, sir. I'm coming, sir!"

And Gosling stepped out of the lodge, and caught a full view of Julius standing there, with Talbot's hand upon his collar.

Gosling stared at Julius a second, his knees bumping together; and then, with a single bound, he was back in his lodge, and the door was slammed in Mr. Quelch's face.

The astonished Form-master rapped on it.

"Gosling!"

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

"Come out and unlock the gates at once!"

"The t-t-t-tiger, sir."

"He will not hurt you!"

"Which I ain't goin' to risk it," murmured Gosling. "I—I'm sorry, sir, but the key have got jammed in the lock somehow, and I—I can't hopen this 'ere door agin, sir."

Mr. Quelch made a gesture of impatience.

"Throw your bunch of keys out of the window, Gosling, and I will unlock the gates myself!" he exclaimed.

"Suttinly, sir!" said Gosling, with alacrity.

The bunch of keys dropped outside the lodge. Mr. Quelch picked them up, and strode down to the gates, followed by Jack Talbot and Julius.

The gate swung open, and the tiger and the tiger-tamer passed out into the road. Julius was quite docile now.

"Good-bye!" said Mr. Quelch, holding out his hand.

"You are a brave lad—a very brave lad. Thank Heaven no damage has been done!"

And Jack Talbot shook hands with the Remove-master of Greyfriars, and went his way, and marched Julius back to Friardale Common, and did not let go of his collar till he was safe in his cage again.

Signor Tomsonio gave a grunt of relief as the cage door closed upon the tiger.

Meanwhile, in the Remove-room at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton and some of the others were bringing Billy Bunter round.

The fat junior had had a terrible fright, and his faint seemed an obstinate one. They unfastened his collar, unbuttoned his waistcoat, and dashed cold water over his face.

Then he opened his eyes at last, and blinked at them.

"Oh! Oooh! The tiger!"

And he went off again.

He was carried up to the Remove dormitory, laid on his bed, and the chums of the Remove remained with him, and looked after him; he came to, and sat up, streaming with cold water and shivering.

"Ow! I say, you fellows—Ow! The tiger!"

"He's gone," said Harry Wharton reassuringly.

"Gone?"

"Yes; quite gone."

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Has he been caught?"

"Yes; and taken away. He's at the circus by this time."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

He recovered his courage a little, and blinked through the water that streamed over his face, and groped for his spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows, it was awful!"

"The awfulness must have been terrific."

"I was seized in his jaws, you know, and streaming with blood——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. The wonder is that I wasn't torn to pieces!" said Bunter irritably.

"Perhaps. But you weren't bitten at all. He only took hold of your toes," explained Bob Cherry.

"I felt his teeth meet in my——"

"Imagination!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"You're not hurt, old chap," said Wharton reassuringly; "only frightened."

"Oh, really, Wharton! Of course, I wasn't frightened. I've read about its being best to keep quite still when a wild animal's got hold of you, and while he was holding me in his jaws I never moved. It was wonderful presence of mind."

"Why, you'd fainted!"

"Oh, no; I fainted afterwards! It was wonderful presence of mind on my part."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I don't expect you fellows to do me justice. You never do. I suppose I cannot show wonderful presence of mind without exciting jealousy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you fellows——"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Wharton. "You can call it presence of mind if you like. It's jolly lucky for you matters were no worse; and as you've had a lesson, we won't keep you barred, as we intended to. You can have tea with us in the study this evening, and eat as much as you like."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Lessons are over for to-day—thank Julius the tiger for that. Get up and dry yourself; you're simply mopped with water."

Bunter squirmed off the bed. He mopped off the water, and changed his collar, which was soaked. He did not say anything more about his wonderful presence of mind. But if his claim to heroism was not admitted, he was admitted to a feed, and that was of even more importance to the fat junior.

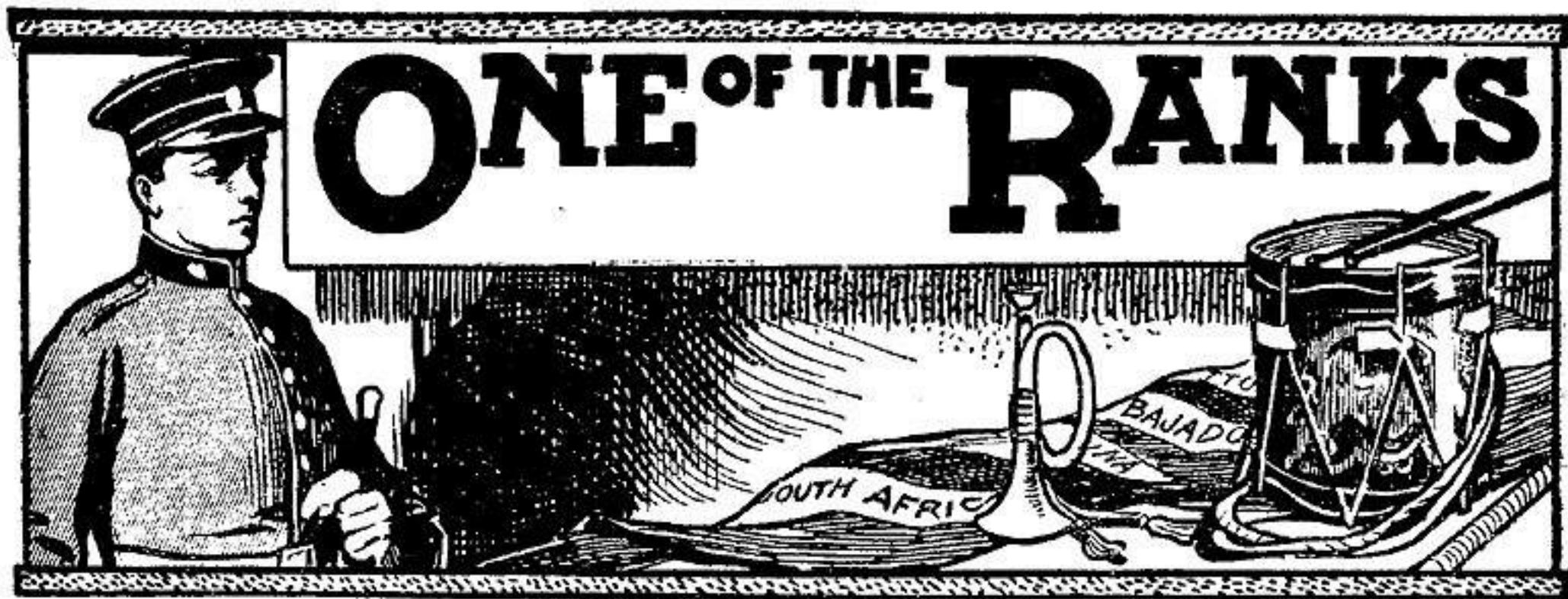
"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly hungry, you know," he remarked. "I hope there's going to be a decent spread."

And there was. The juniors felt that Bunter deserved something after his terrifying experience in the Form-room, and they fed him royally.

For a long time the Owl of the Remove remembered that feed which followed the visit of the circus at Greyfriars.

THE END.

(Another long, complete tale of Harry Wharton and Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "The Smugglers' Cave," by Frank Richards. Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)



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 stepbrother 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. The unscrupulous Bagot, however, gets caught in his own toils, and is publicly degraded to the ranks. Foxey Williams meets his death mysteriously in a burning barn. The Royal Wessex are forming the garrison of Eastguard Forts, near Plymport, during manoeuvres. Two old soldiers of the regiment form the project of buying up all the fishing lines from the garrison gunners, and letting them out on hire to the men. This they do with great success the first day, and for the second they raise their prices.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Rival Firm.

There was a vast deal of grouching at the extortion, but all the available handlines were hired out all the same.

Mouldy and Hookey hugged themselves with joy at the good times before them. Another day and a half like this, and all their outlay would be wiped off. After that everything would be a clear profit.

Gussie watched the two, and ground his teeth with rage at their success. He had always rather fancied himself as a business man, and here he had let these two old scoundrels get ahead of him and positively scoop the pool.

THE MAGNET.—93.

NEXT WEEK.

"THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE."

A Government tug called that day with some special stores, and Gussie was told off on fatigue to help unload them.

In an hour or two the tug was on its way back to Plymport for a second consignment, and Gussie, as he watched it churn on its way, wore a six-inch grin right across his face.

At the second coming of the tug, Gussie mounted the gangway with an eight-inch grin distending his features, and his tunic bulging all over in a most unaccountable fashion.

That afternoon he was nowhere to be found, except when the bugle sounded, and then he appeared, only to disappear again at the "Dismiss" like a stage goblin through a trap.

In the evening, when Mouldy and Hookey had counted their gains, what was their horror to come across a rival placard to their own, announcing that a Grand Deep Sea Fishing Competition, under the auspices of the Royal Wessex Fishing Tackle Corporation, Limited, was to be held also on the following day. The bill was signed "Augustus Smythe, Managing Director and Secretary."

"What's this, the sneaking little scoundrel?" spluttered Mouldy, turning green. "Ire of 'andlines, tuppence. Entrance fee, tuppence. First prize, five bob. Gosh! It knocks us silly! It can't be done!"

"Where is the varmint? Let's reason with him," said

(Continued on page 16.)

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Hookey, catching up a belt. "If we don't buy him out, we're ruined. It's awful!"

But Gussie was nowhere to be found until "First Post," when he sauntered up and reported himself. It was no opportunity then for the two warriors to negotiate so delicate a matter; in fact, they could not get near their rival, so busy was he booking up competitors for the match next day.

As for the tournament of the Eastguard Fort Handline Hook and Bait Supply Association, not a single entry was booked. The slump in their stock was appalling.

Work it out how they would, they could only come to the conclusion that if they brought their prices down to Gussie's, and put the prizes up, only a starvation profit would result, while Gussie, no doubt, would promptly lower his, and cut the ground from under their feet again.

After that only ruin awaited them, to say nothing of a warm reception at the hands of their unpaid creditors, the gunners.

Gussie, by buying his line by the skein, and his hooks by the gross, had manufactured his outfit at the cost of only a few shillings, so he had ample margin for reduction. He could fight his rivals on almost any terms.

The next day's fishing was a huge success. Five fights resulted, and seven men who had fallen out over the possession of a crab only two inches across, had to be put in clink by the picquet to cool their heads and heels.

Finally, one enterprising youth, who was caught hooking on an old boot and lowering it into the sea with the intention of hauling it up and claiming it as a catch, was flung neck and crop into the water, and only rescued with great difficulty.

Mouldy and Hookey went about all day like a pair of undertakers with the toothache. When the competition was over, they waited on Gussie, cap in hand, and the result of prolonged negotiations was that they bought him out, lock, stock, and barrel, fishing tackle and goodwill, for the sum of two pounds spot cash.

The money and the business had scarcely changed hands than Colonel Conger, who was quartered with the other half battalion at Chequer Fort, arrived to inspect his command.

When he found the guard-room full of prisoners with swollen noses, he was furious, and issued an order promptly that all further angling operations were to be stopped at once.

Mouldy and Hookey were paralysed at this death-blow to their financial schemes. Ruin and destruction stared them in the face.

There seemed nothing for it but to seek peace and rest in a watery grave. Together they climbed into an open embrasure with a vague idea of looking their last upon the world, and then dropping headlong into the whispering waves. It was a chill, dreary night.

"It looks a bit dampish and uncomfortable, doesn't it?" said Hookey huskily.

"Ark! What's that I see?" whispered Mouldy, in a hoarse voice. "Is it a whale, or a vision? Over there! Look! Yonder!"

"Great tambourines, it's a submarine arose from the bottom of the ocean! It's the enemy attacking us! Guard, turn out!" yelled Hookey, at the top of his voice.

A twelve-pounder quick-firer stood in the embrasure. Hookey had been studying its mechanism only the day before. In the excitement of the moment he forgot that such a weapon did not come within his department.

Without giving Mouldy a chance to skip back out of the embrasure, he leaped to the gun, clapped a blank cartridge into the breech, and, grasping the pistol-trigger, brought the muzzle round with a sweep to a level with Mouldy's nose.

Mouldy took one fleeting,

terrified glance at the grinning steel mouth, and promptly fell backwards out of the gun-port into the sea. Hookey saw him go, and in his excitement pulled the trigger.

There was a flash and a roar, which startled the fort, already aroused by Hookey's shouts. The bugles blew the "Alert," but Hookey heeded them not.

He dashed out on the stage, and, tearing down the gangway, yelled loudly to his drowning pal.

Up and down the landing-stage he charged like a distracted hen, shedding clothes and boots, ready to dive in at the first glimpse of Mouldy's head.

Of the submarine nothing was to be seen. Hookey was just wondering whether, in descending to the depths again, Mouldy might not have been collared and dragged in by its crew, or, what was worse, mopped up by its propellers, when something dishevelled and dripping, suddenly clambered on to the stage at his feet. It was Mouldy!

"Old chum! Old pal!" choked Hookey, preparing to fall on his neck, quite overcome with emotion.

Mouldy said never a word, but raised himself up, and, drawing back his right fist, thumped Hookey heavily on the nose.

At that instant the air was split with a succession of thunderous crashes overhead. Green lightning played with every report. The searchlight-beams wheeled and darted here and there in panic.

In the white paths of light which they struck upon the waters, half a dozen of the enemy's destroyers were revealed careering headlong up the channel between the forts, ghostly and half obscured in the drizzle and mist.

Deafened and bewildered by the din of gunfire, the two veterans cowered where they stood. Then Mouldy floundered up the gangway to the fort, and Hookey followed, helter-skelter, holding his nose as he ran.

Hookey Scores a Bullseye.

It was a determined attack, well-conceived and splendidly executed. Both the Chequer and Eastguard Forts had been caught napping, and, though they did their best to retrieve their carelessness by pitching a terrific fire at the passing enemy, the destroyers held on, unchecked by the umpires.

As for the submarines, they might have penetrated the line of sea outposts an hour before, for all that anybody knew. One only was put out of action, and she came creeping back past the fort disconsolate.

It was Hookey's well-timed shot that was supposed to have sunk her, though the shell, unaimed as it was, would have had a good chance of hitting the moon.

Still, the umpire on Eastguard was on the alert. He had seen the conning-tower of the submarine rise only a few yards from the fort—for its commander had lost his bearings for the moment. Then came the crash of the twelve-pounder, and the trick was done!

Nobody had time to ask who fired the shot—everybody was too busily engaged in peppering the rest of the waspish enemy.

And now a second division of the enemy's flotilla was suddenly spotted creeping in by the eastern channel, and the cannonade broke out with redoubled fury.

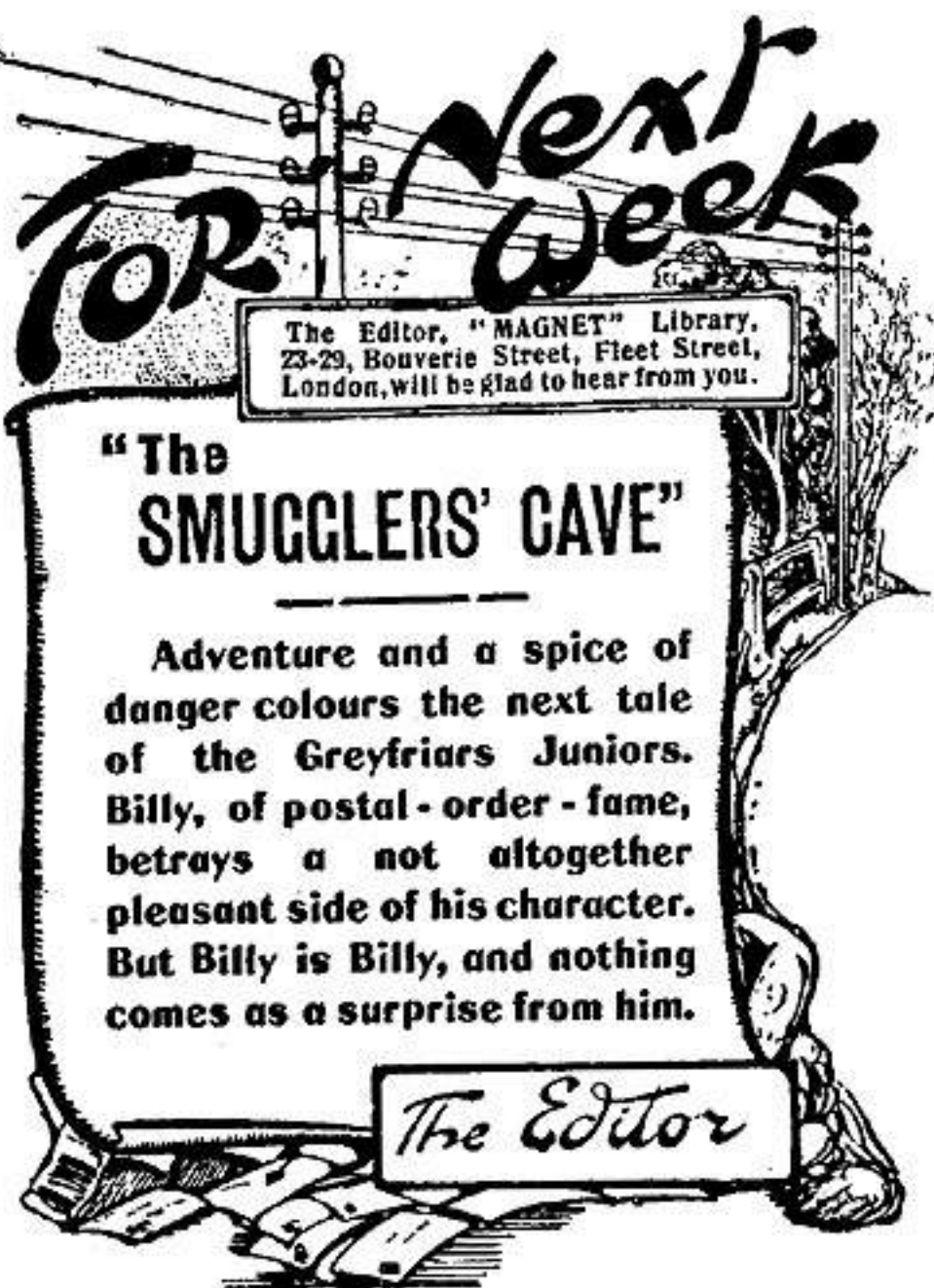
Ronald saw nothing of the fight. He and a squad of No. 4 Section had been told off to assist in the magazine, deep down under the fort, hoisting cartridges for the big guns into the hydraulic lifts.

In thick felt boots, on a felt-covered floor, they worked in uncanny silence.

(Another long instalment of this splendid serial next Tuesday.)

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FREE

When ordering please state the following particulars:—

1. Your full height with boots on.
2. Whether erect or stooping.
3. Shoulders square or sloping.
4. Slender, corpulent, or medium.
5. Chest measure over top of vest.
6. Trousers length outside seam.
7. Trousers length inside seam.
8. Inches round trousers waist.

If you have any other special instructions to give, by all means do so. If not, just leave the other detail measures to our discretion, and we will take all responsibility, and if suit is not the largest advertising bargain you have ever received, return it to us and we will refund you 1/- more than you have paid.

SEND 1/- TO-DAY to
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(Dept. 5).

Head Office: 81, DUNLOP ST., GLASGOW.



Patterns sent **FREE** on receipt of Postcard **7/6** **BOOTS,** 1/- per week. Send size

CASH COUPON.

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With every Packet.

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ALL GIFTS FREE.

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THE CARD CO. (49 Desk), Willesden Junction, LONDON.



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Handsomely bound and profusely illustrated. This Astounding offer is made to more widely circulate our "Guide" (usual price 6d.), a limited number of which we shall also give FREE to applicants for our 3d. "Pictorial" Packet of Stamps, comprising 70 Different from Tasmania, New Zealand, French Congo, unused, Costa Rica, Queensland, Roumania, Cape Colony, Canada, U.S.A., set of India, Unused German Official, Grand Set of Japan, etc., alone worth 1/-. Under no circumstances can two packages be supplied to same applicant. Send three penny stamps at once. (Abroad 6d.).

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