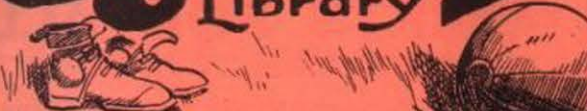


"The Leader of the New School."

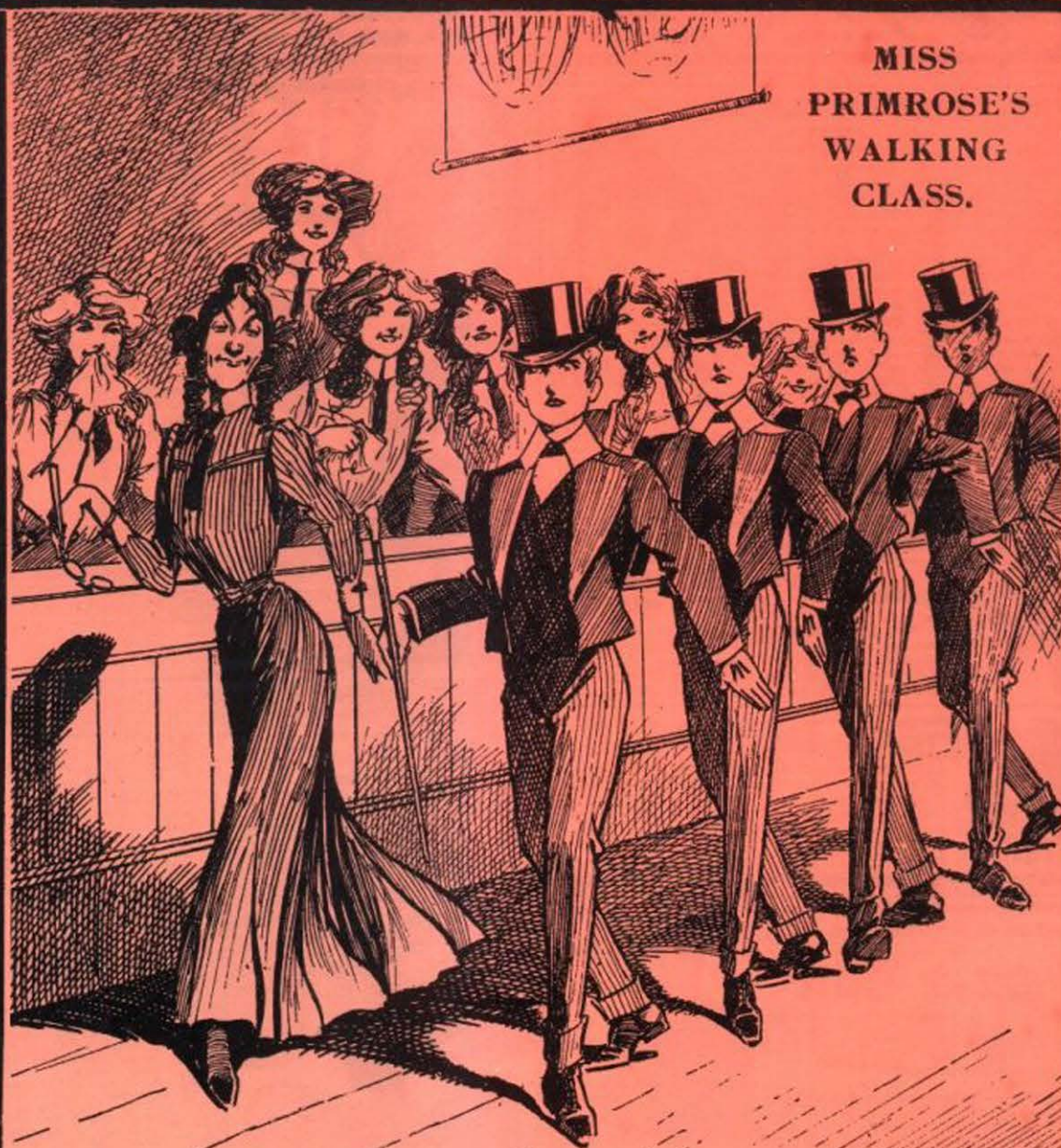
In this
issue—
A
splendid
long
School
Tale—

The **Magnet** 1st Library



of
Harry
Wharton
& Co.
By
Frank
Richards.

No. 148 | Grand, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. | Vol. 5.



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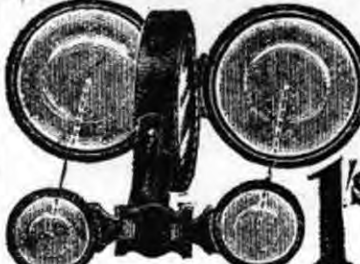
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A Splendid Long,
Complete Tale of

Harry Wharton
& Co.

at Greyfriars

BY

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. No Chance for Coker.

FOUR juniors came downstairs at Greyfriars, looking as clean and neat as new pins. All four were clad in nicely-fitting frocks, and all four put on silk hats in the hall, which gave their appearance the finishing touch of elegance. Three of their faces were of a healthy pink-and-white; the fourth was the colour of nicely-polished mahogany. That was the face of Hurroo Janset Rain Singh, the Nabob

of Bhanipur. Harry Wharton & Co. were evidently bound upon an important visit. It was not often that they arrayed themselves in such splendour.

Of the four, Harry Wharton himself looked perhaps the most elegant. But Frank Nugent ran him very close. Bob Cherry was unusually trim, but he was afflicted, as, usual, with a difficulty about keeping his necktie in its place. Bob's necktie had an obstinate and determined way of running up towards his left ear. If he persuaded it to keep off the grass,

so to speak, in that direction, it was pretty certain to run up under his right ear. Bob's waistcoat was a little ruffled, too, and his trousers showed a slight disposition to bag at the knees. Still, every fellow who saw Bob Cherry that Saturday afternoon had to admit that he was looking extraordinarily dresy—for Bob.

As they donned their silk toppers, and Nugent took up a cane with a gold head, there was a chorus of remarks from other fellows belonging to their Form—the Remove, or Lower Fourth.

"My hat!" said Bulstrode. "There's a picture for you!"

"Gorgeous!" said Hazeldene. "Which ear is your tie supposed to belong to, Bob?"

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry, giving the offending necktie a jerk that unfasted it, and then he had to attempt to fasten it again, always a matter of difficulty with Bob Cherry, whose fingers were all thumbs in matters of this sort. By the sweat of his brow, so to speak, did Bob Cherry fasten his neckties.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bulstrode. "Go it, Cherry!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "I suppose you're going over to Cliff House? I'll come with you if you like."

To which kind offer four voices replied, with singular unanimity:

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Rats!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly through his big spectacles.

"Come on, you chaps!" said Harry Wharton. "We're going to walk, you know, and we don't want to be late."

"Hold on a minute!" said Bob Cherry. "My tie's undone."

"Come without it," suggested Nugent.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"The assfulness of the esteemed Nugent is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "May I have the esteemed honour of assisting you with your honourable tie, my worthy chum?"

"Yes, do, Inky, old chap," said Bob, who was already beginning to breathe very heavily over the task.

"Certainly!" said the nabob.

And with deft fingers he arranged the tie. There was a howl of warning from a dozen of the Removites.

"Mind the black doesn't come off on the tie, Inky!"

Hurree Singh only grinned serenely. He was accustomed to the little jokes of the Greyfriars fellows on the subject of his complexion.

"Oh, shut up, you asses!" growled Bob Cherry, who was getting red in the face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There, it is finishfully done," said Hurree Singh. "It is in the middle, too, which is really a great improvement."

"Thanks! I'm ready, Wharton."

"Come on, then! Are you coming, Hazeldene?"

Hazeldene shook his head.

"No; tell my sister I can't come, will you? You needn't mention that I'm going out with Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, all right!" said Harry shortly.

The four Removites stepped out of the School House, followed by envious glances. They were going to visit Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends at Cliff House School; hence their unaccustomed splendour.

Hazeldene was very fond of his sister, as, indeed, he could hardly help being, for Marjorie was one of the sweetest of girls; but, at the same time, he wasn't enthusiastic about having tea at Cliff House. Other fellows marvelled that a chap who could go and see Marjorie every day if he liked shouldn't care whether he went or not.

As a matter of fact, Hazeldene would have been better occupied at Cliff House than in knocking about with Vernon-Smith—the "Bouncer." But Hazeldene didn't think so, and that was an end of it.

Billy Bunter rolled after the Famous Four as they went out. Billy Bunter never could get the idea out of his head that the girls at Cliff House would be glad to see him. Their evident dislike for him set down to coyness; Bunter prided himself that he understood girls.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed, his fat little legs going like clockwork to keep pace with the stride of the juniors.

"I say, you know, I'd better come. Marjorie will be disappointed if I don't, and it's rotten to disappoint a girl."

"I dare say Marjorie will survive it," said Wharton.

"Well, you see, it's rotten for her—spoils the afternoon for her and Clara if I don't come," said Bunter. "Of course, she can't say openly that she wants me, but you might really be a little tactful in the matter, Wharton."

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here, I'm coming! I— Oh!"

Bunter uttered that exclamation as Bob Cherry's mighty arm rose and fell. Bunter found himself suddenly sitting

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down in the Close, without any clear idea as to how he got there.

"Oh!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Yow!"

The Famous Four chuckled, and walked on, leaving him stranded.

Billy Bunter blinked after them through his big spectacles, in great wrath, but he did not follow them any further.

As the four juniors reached the gates a big fellow who was lounging there turned and looked at them. It was Coker of the Fifth.

Coker had lately had his remove from the Shell, a Form in which he had stayed so long that his stay there had become a standing joke in the school. Coker's Aunt Judith had come down handsome on that occasion, and Coker was still rolling in money. Coker was a great man just now, and he cast the eyes of condescension upon the four Removites as they came up.

"Hallo!" he said.

"Hallo!" said Harry.

"Going out, I suppose?"

"No," said Nugent sarcastically. "We've put on our toppers to go and do our prep. in the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker turned pink.

"Oh, none of your rot!" he exclaimed. "I happen to know that you're going to Cliff House."

"Right!" said Wharton.

"The rightfulness is terrific!"

"Look here," said Coker, "I'll come with you."

The chums of the Remove stared. They could see that Coker, a Fifth-Form fellow, was condescending immensely. At the same time, they had not the slightest intention of taking Coker to Cliff House with them. To have an overbearing Fifth-Former in the party would spoil everything. Besides, Coker hadn't been invited.

"Sorry!" said Wharton. "Can't be done!"

"What?"

"Getting deaf?" asked Harry pleasantly, and he raised his voice and shouted, "Sorry, Coker! It can't be done!"

"Look here, young Wharton—"

"My hat!" said Harry. "Deaf as ever. Give it to him in a chorus."

"Ha, ha! Good!"

And raising their voices in unison, the chums roared:

"Sorry, Coker! It can't be done!"

Coker glared.

"You young asses—"

"Good-bye!" said Harry.

Coker dashed after them as they strode through the gates. His face was red with anger. To have his company declined by Removites was too great an insult.

"Look here—" he roared.

"Oh, go home!"

"By George! I'll—I'll squash you! I'll—"

"Hands off, you ass!"

The four Removites faced Coker. If Coker had been cooler he would have known that, in spite of his great size, he was no match for the four of them. But he was too excited and angry to think of that now.

He rushed right at the Removites.

"Shoulder to shoulder!" sang out Harry Wharton.

"The shoulder-to-shoulderfulness is terrific!"

Coker charged at them like a bull. They met him like a wall of rock. Down went Coker in the grip of four strong pairs of hands, and he was bumped heavily into the road, raising a cloud of dust.

Bump!

"Oh!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump him!"

"Hurrah!"

Bump!

"Yow!" yelled Coker.

The Removites, laughing loudly, strode on, leaving Coker in the dust. Horace Coker staggered to his feet. He was dusty, and he was aching. The four Removites disappeared up the lane.

"Ow!" said Coker.

He did not go to Cliff House that afternoon.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Rivals.

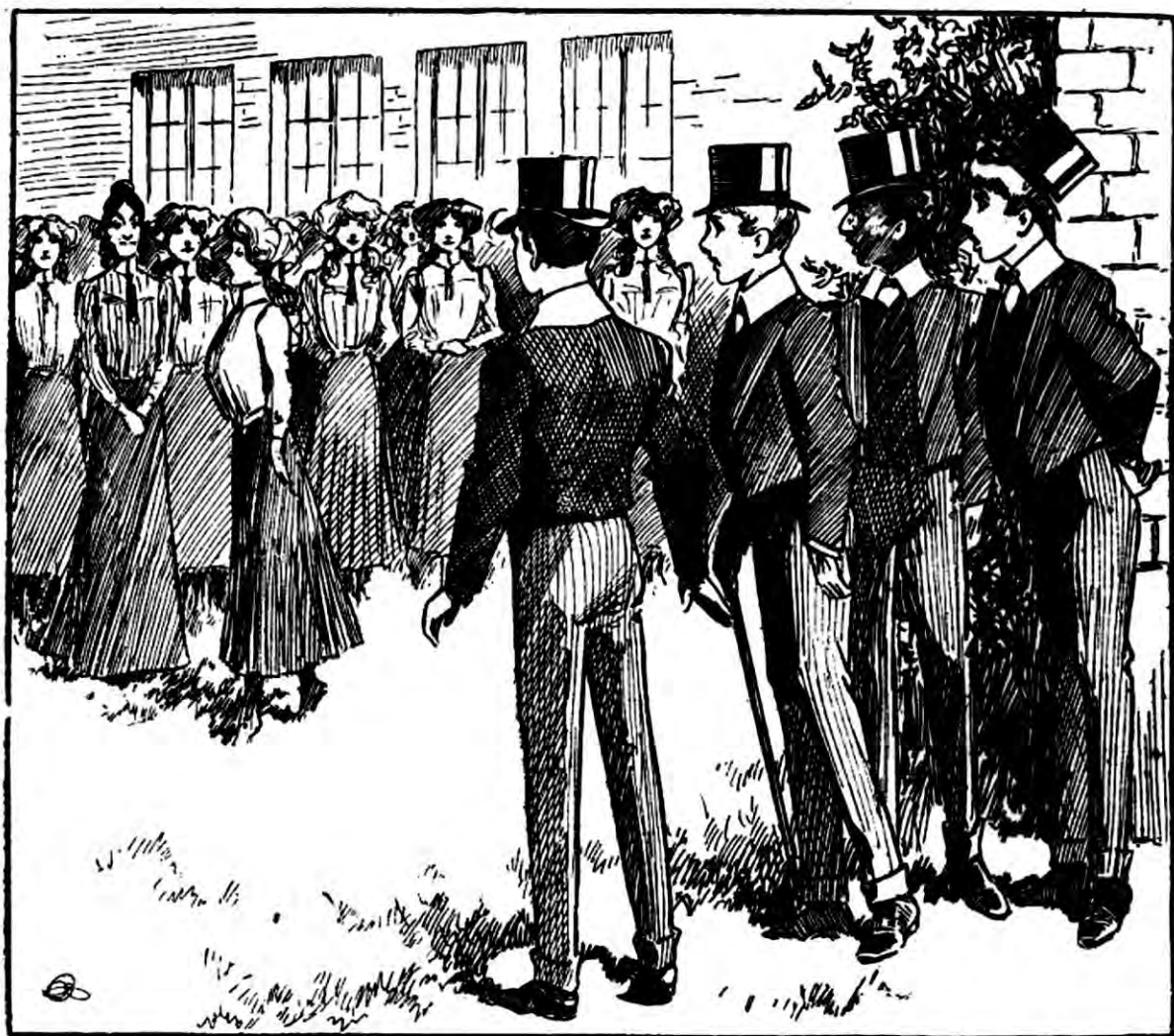
"COLLEGE cads!"

"Here they are!"

"Stop 'em!"

Four youths came from the Courtfield lane, at the cross-roads, and met the Greyfriars chums face to face.

They were four lads younger than Harry Wharton & Co., and much more plainly dressed, yet with much cleanliness



As the juniors reached the gate of Cliff House, a singular sight met their gaze. "My only hat!" gasped Harry Wharton. "What on earth does it mean!" (See page 4.)

and neatness. They had four very good-looking faces—faces quite familiar to the Greyfriars fellows.

Courtfield, by the high road, lay some distance from Greyfriars, but a new road had lately been opened where only a footpath had existed before, and that had brought the two places nearer. And between the Greyfriars juniors and the boys of the County Council school at Courtfield there had been many rows. There were some fellows at Greyfriars—as are there not everywhere?—of snobbish tendencies—fellows like Bunter and Snoop—who affected to look down upon "Board School fellows." They had made bitter blood, and better fellows than themselves had been dragged into the rows. Though to tell the truth, both parties, being young and full of high spirits, were not averse to have a row or two every now and then.

Trumper, whom the Greyfriars fellows had long known as the Boy Scout, was the acknowledged leader of the Courtfield fellows. He belonged to the fishing village of Peggs, on the bay near Greyfriars. Porter and Grahame, his best chums, belonged to Courtfield village. The fourth fellow in the Courtfield party was Barney O'Neil, an Irish lad who would have had a row with Trumper himself if there had been nobody else to have a row with sometimes.

The four Courtfield School fellows lined up in front of Harry Wharton & Co., with the evident intention of disputing their advance.

The Removites halted.

"College cads!" said Trumper, once more.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE SCHOOLBOY TRAITOR."

Bunter or Snoop would have replied with "Board School bouders!" or some expression of that sort, but not so Harry Wharton. It would never have occurred to Harry to taunt anybody with being less fortunately placed in the world than himself.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry. "We're not looking for a row to-day."

"Faith, and ye've found one without looking for it, intirely!" exclaimed Barney O'Neil.

And the Courtfield fellows laughed.

"Four to four," said Trumper. "It's only fair. Come on!"

"Look here," exclaimed Harry, "we're going on a special visit. We'll fight you any other day you please."

"And we'll be jolly willing!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"The willingness would be terrific!"

Trumper snorted.

"Rats!" he said tersely. "Come on!"

"But I tell you—"

"Come on!"

"We want—"

"Come on!"

The Courtfield quartette advanced with their fists up. Harry Wharton & Co. backed away.

It was not their way to avoid a tussle when they were challenged. But the circumstances were peculiar to-day.

They had dressed themselves in their best, to do honour to the Cliff House girls on the occasion of their visit.

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

To arrive at Cliff House with dishevelled garments and torn collars, and black eyes and swollen noses, would be too bad.

The juniors remembered only too keenly how it had happened once before, when they had got into trouble with a party of seaside bounders on their way to Miss Primrose's school, and they had no desire to repeat the experience.

As fast as the Greyfriars chums backed away, the Courtfield fellows followed them up. They were grinning hugely now, evidently under the impression that Harry Wharton & Co. were afraid to come to blows.

"Look here!" exclaimed Harry angrily. "Will you chuck it now, and we'll meet you as we come back from Cliff House—we give them an appointment?"

"Rats!"

"I'll give you my word!" said Harry sharply.

Trumper hesitated. He was a generous fellow at heart.

"Well, what do you say, chaps?" he asked, halting. "Shall we give them a chance?"

Grahame nodded.

"Yes," he said. "When will they be back, though?"

"We'll pass this same spot at six o'clock," said Harry.

"Honour bright?"

"Yes, honour bright."

"Right-ho!" said Trumper.

And the Courtfield fellows stood aside to let the chums pass. They grinned at them as they went, and the juniors were greatly inclined to pile on them at once, forgetful of the visit to Cliff House. But they refrained. They hurried up the lane with burning cheeks, leaving the Courtfielders laughing.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"The confounded bounders!" he exclaimed. "We'll jolly well meet them and knock some of the conceit out of them."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"They think we've shown the white feather," said Harry wrathfully. "But it can't be helped—we can't go to Cliff House like a lot of prizefighters. Come on, and hang them!"

And the Greyfriars juniors hurried on their way, but with less cheerful faces.

It was irritating enough to them to refuse a fight when they were challenged, and the mocking laughter of the Courtfielders rang in their ears.

But there was, as Harry said, no help for it. It was a thing that had to be stood.

They reached Cliff House a few minutes later.

As Harry opened the gate of the school grounds, he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"My hat!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ejaculated that the hatfulness was terrific.

A singular sight met their gaze on the lawn.

Miss Penelope Primrose, a lady of uncertain years, with a kind old face, and a beaming smile, was exercising her youthful charges there.

Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn, and a crowd of other girls were there, and their movements astonished the juniors.

It was not a common drill.

Miss Primrose moved with a slow and stately motion, her nose in the air, her thoughts apparently in the clouds.

Then one of the girls detached herself from the crowd, and imitated the motions of Miss Penelope.

One after another the girls did this, Miss Primrose watching them with a careful eye, and now and then calling to a girl to go through the performance again.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"What on earth does it mean?" said Nugent.

Wharton shook his head. He was puzzled.

"Blessed if I can make it out," he said. "It's not drill."

"What the dickens is it, then?"

"We'll ask Marjorie."

"The oddfulness of the esteemed performance is terrific," the Nabob of Bhanipur remarked.

A bell rang from the house, and the mysterious evolutions of the Cliff House girls ceased.

All of them had seen the group of puzzled juniors standing at the gate, and some of them were smiling, and some were blushing.

As the bell rang, it was over.

"The class is dismissed," said Miss Primrose.

Then she caught sight of the juniors. She gave them a stately bow, and the boys took off their hats.

Then she swept into the house, and many of the girls followed her; but Marjorie and Clara and Wilhelmine and Grace Williams joined the juniors.

Marjorie's eyes were sparkling with fun.

"So sorry we couldn't speak to you before," she exclaimed.

"but we couldn't leave the squad, you know."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"What is it?" he asked.

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"Can't you guess?" said Marjorie demurely.

"Drill?"

"Oh, no!"

"Some new exercise, I suppose?"

"Not exactly."

"What then?"

"Deportment," said Marjorie.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

A Really Kind Offer.

DEPORTMENT!"

The juniors repeated the word in surprise.

Marjorie and Clara laughed merrily.

"Yes, deportment. Miss Primrose has lately started a new class for deportment."

"Oh!"

"You see, Miss Primrose thinks that the grace of manner which—What is that word, Clara?"

"Characterised," said Miss Clara.

"Yes, characterised," agreed Marjorie. "That the grace of manner which characterised the women of her youth is gone—has vanished in modern times. She says that the girls are no longer what they were in the early Victorian era."

"And a jolly good thing, too!" Wharton remarked.

"Miss Primrose doesn't think so," said Marjorie, laughing, "and she has started a special training in deportment. We have to watch her deport. I don't know whether that is a verb or not—"

"It will do," said Grace, laughing.

"Well, we have to watch her deport, and then deport ourselves in the same manner," said Marjorie. "You caught us doing it."

"Oh, good!"

"I know you think it's awfully funny," said Clara. "So it is; but it can't be helped. The worst of it is—or the best of it, just as you like—that Miss Penelope is thinking of a class for boys."

"Phew!"

"She thinks that the boys of the present day haven't the—graceful manners, and so on, that they had in her youth—just the same as the girls," said Marjorie. "She is going to start a class for boys, and suggest to Dr. Locke that he should let Greyfriars juniors come over here and learn."

"My hat!"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"You like the idea?"

Bob Cherry blushed.

"Well, we shall come over, if the Head accepts," he said. "We can stand the deportment, I dare say."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Marjorie laughed merrily.

"Well, it will be fun," she said. "Of course, we shouldn't think of making fun of Miss Primrose. She is far too good and kind for that. But the deportment is very funny."

"The funnyfulness is terrific."

"And now it is teatime," said Miss Clara. "We have a nice tea in the small school-room, and a fire there, and it will be ripping."

"Oh, Clara!"

"Ripping," repeated Miss Clara firmly. "In fact, stunning!"

The juniors laughed. Miss Clara had picked up many of their expressions, and used them sometimes with startling effect in Cliff House.

Harry Wharton & Co. found the little school-room very cosy. Some more of Marjorie's friends came in, and the table was laid before the fire, and Marjorie herself made the

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tea. The early winter dusk was falling outside, and the lighted room and the fire looked very cheerful and comfortable.

Miss Primrose was a firm believer in the theory that boys and girls both benefit by each other's society, and the Cliff House girls were allowed many freedoms in this respect. More than once Marjorie & Co. had been to a study tea in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

There was a merry chatter round the tea-table in the little school-room. It ceased as Miss Primrose looked in at the door.

"Pray come in, Miss Primrose," said Marjorie, jumping up at once.

Miss Primrose came in, and was accommodated with the most comfortable chair at the fireside, and Harry Wharton handed her a cup of tea in a way that made the old lady think that graceful manners were not, after all, quite dead in the twentieth century. Nugent handed her the cake, and Marjorie arranged a footstool for her feet. Miss Primrose was far from thinking, among all those kindly attentions, that her arrival had broken up the cheerfulness of the youthful company—as the entrance of an elder, however liked, usually does.

"My dear children," she exclaimed, beaming upon them, "this is a great opportunity, while the dear boys are here."

"Yes?" said Marjorie.

"After you have had your tea," said Miss Primrose, "I will give the dear boys their first instruction in deportment."

"Oh?" said the dear boys, all together.

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Primrose, "and I shall hope to see you join my class regularly. Deportment is a most important subject."

"A little more sugar, dear Miss Primrose?"

"Yes, one lump, please. Deportment—"

"And milk?"

"Thank you, no. Deportment—"

"Would you like to be a little nearer the fire, Miss Primrose?"

"Not at all. As I was saying," went on Miss Primrose, "deportment is a most important matter. In my young days, deportment was everything. Every gentleman had so much grace—it is quite gone now."

"Is it, indeed, Miss Primrose?"

"Yes, indeed, my dears. Quite gone—quite lost!" said Miss Primrose, with a shake of the head.

Frank Nugent was thinking of asking if it couldn't be advertised for in "The Evening News," but he refrained.

"Modern times," said Miss Primrose, "are so hurrying—so very rapid. In my day we lived more slowly, and gentlemen had time to cultivate a proper deportment."

"I suppose things were very slow then," Nugent suggested.

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Primrose. "Very slow and stately. Young gentlemen would spend an afternoon reading poetry to the ladies, instead of racing about in motors, or playing golf."

"How—how nice!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"It was very nice indeed. When shall we see such times again?" said Miss Primrose. "Never, I am afraid. But it is our duty to restore to the present rough and degenerate age what can be imparted of the grace of a former day."

"How—how good!"

"That is my intention," said Miss Primrose. "For that purpose, I am instituting a class in deportment, and I am going to call upon Dr. Locke this afternoon to point out to him the advantages of its being taken up by the juniors. The seniors, I fear, would not care for it."

Wharton doubted very much whether the juniors would care for it either, but he was careful not to say so.

"And as soon as you have finished your tea," said Miss Primrose brightly, "I will give you dear boys your first lesson."

"Thank you s-s-so much, Miss Primrose."

"Not at all," said Miss Primrose. "It will be both a pleasure and a duty. If you are finished now—"

The juniors rose regretfully. Without the presence of Miss Primrose, the tea might have gone on with merry chatter for a long time. But it was finished now.

"Kindly follow me into the large school-room," said Miss Primrose. "It is too dark in the garden."

"Certainly, Miss Primrose."

The Head of Cliff House led the way. Marjorie pressed Harry's arm as they followed.

"I'm so sorry for this," she said—"it spoils your visit. But—but Miss Primrose is so full of her new idea at present."

"It's all right," he said. "We don't mind a bit. It's jolly good fun."

"But you mustn't laugh," said Marjorie anxiously.

"Oh, we won't do that, of course!"

The big school-room was lighted up, and most of the girls, learning what was going forward, had gathered to see the Greyfriars juniors deport.

The boys coloured up as they saw the crowd, and detected suppressed giggles among the fair pupils of Cliff House.

But they put a bold face on the matter, and prepared to follow the instructions of Miss Penelope Primrose.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE SCHOOLBOY TRAITOR."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Deportment.

"RAY come forward!" said Miss Primrose.

The juniors came forward. "Now, kindly watch me," said the principal of Cliff House. "You will see me walk with the grace of the Victorian era, and you will imitate it exactly. Cherry first."

"Ye-es," said Bob Cherry.

Bob always felt shy in the presence of a number of girls—indeed, a harmless glance from one girl was sufficient to render him speechless sometimes.

To perform deportment before an onlooking crowd of those dangerous beings seemed to Bob Cherry a task that threw the twelve celebrated jobs of Hercules completely into the shade. But he made up his mind to go through it like a Briton.

Bob Cherry was not the likeliest pupil. He was always clumsy—everywhere but on the football field; there he was in his element. But in a drawing-room Bob was very like a bull in a china-shop. In a dancing-class he was the despair of his instructor and the terror of his partners. In the deportment-class he was not likely to make a distinguished figure—and the fact that all the blood in his body seemed to have been freshly pumped into his face, and that he dared not raise his eyes towards the girls, did not make the task any more hopeful for him.

Miss Primrose, quite unconscious of Bob's bashfulness, swept slowly along to impress upon him the grace of movement that was requisite.

Now, Miss Primrose may have been, in the far-off times of the early Victorian era, a model of grace. In those days, when young ladies fainted three or four times a week as a matter of course, and a girl who did not faint sometimes was regarded as a militant Suffragette is now, an affected delicacy was the universal fashion. Miss Primrose was no doubt distinguished then by grace of movement, but her kindest critic must have admitted, as he watched her, that that grace had departed with her youth.

The old lady, as she gyrated before the juniors, was not an impressive figure of dignity—far from that!

Some of the Cliff House girls, respectful as they naturally wished to be to their head-mistress, were driven to stuffing their handkerchiefs into their mouths, or coughing violently.

Miss Primrose was unconscious of it all.

She went on gyrating.

She paused, and glanced kindly at Bob Cherry.

"Do you think you can do that, Cherry?" she asked.

"I—I don't know," stammered Bob.

"Try," said Miss Primrose encouragingly.

"Oh!"

"Try, my dear boy."

There was no help for it. Bob had to try. He slid his great feet forward with a clatter, and gyrated.

Then the girls could not suppress their merriment any longer. Painful shrieks were heard from various corners.

Bob was perfectly scarlet by this time.

He paused, panting.

"Is—is that right?" he gasped.

Miss Primrose smiled.

Bob had put up an appearance a great deal like that of a badly-trained performing elephant, and it was evident that he had much to learn yet in the noble art of deportment.

"Not quite," said Miss Penelope good-humouredly. "Watch me again."

And Miss Penelope gyrated once more.

"Oh, my only Aunt Sempronia Jane!" groaned Nugent.

"Hold me, somebody!"

"The holdfulness is terrific!"

"Quiet, you chaps."

"I—I can't stand it!" gasped Nugent.

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Now, try again, Cherry," said Miss Penelope.

She was trying to instruct Bob in the art of a graceful, sweeping walk. It did not suit a modern boy in boots so well as it may have suited one of those perfect young creatures of the Victorian era.

Bob clattered round on the floor.

"Ahem!" said Miss Primrose. "Pray follow me, Cherry, as I move, and imitate all my motions. You may find that more easy."

"Certainly, ma'am," said Bob.

Miss Penelope gyrated again. Bob gyrated after her—and trampled on the long train of her dress.

It was quite an accident, though anybody who knew Bob Cherry could easily have foretold that it would happen. Bob Cherry had seldom been near a long train without treading on it.

In this case the result was disastrous.

For Miss Primrose was still gyrating, and Bob was standing on her train—and there was an ominous rending sound.

"Oh!" gasped Marjorie.

"Oh!" gasped Miss Primrose.

She ceased to gyrate. Some yards of dress material lay on the floor under Bob Cherry's boots, and Miss Penelope Primrose was suddenly reduced to a short walking skirt.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Miss Primrose faintly. "Pins!"

None of the boys, of course, had any pins about him. When ever had any boy any pins about him when they were wanted in an emergency?

But the girls had.

Marjorie and Clara flew to the rescue. Bob Cherry was still standing dazedly upon the train so cruelly rent from Miss Primrose's dress, and Harry Wharton jerked him off, choking with suppressed laughter.

"W-w-what have I done?" gasped the unfortunate Bob.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton. "Get off the dress!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pins in dozens were forthcoming from all places. The Cliff House girls might have been barbed all over like fish-hooks, judging by the way they produced quantities of pins the moment they were required.

Marjorie and Clara, with deft hands, pinned up the rent.

"I—I'm awfully sorry!" gasped poor Bob.

Miss Primrose tried to smile.

"It—it is nothing," she said.

"I know I'm a clumsy ass," said Bob. "It's no good trying to teach a fellow like me deportment. You had better try Nugent."

"I'm no good," said Nugent hurriedly. "Try Wharton."

Wharton gave him a wrathful look out of one eye. The other was turned towards Miss Primrose, and he dared not look wrathful with it.

"I—I think Inky would be about the best," he remarked.

The nabob shook his head.

"The clumsiness of the honourable Cherry is great," he remarked, "but the clumsiness of my esteemed and venerated self is terrific."

"You shall all be instructed," said Miss Primrose, with a beaming smile. "I shall not neglect one of you. You shall all deport yourselves ensemble."

"Oh!" murmured the Greyfriars juniors in dismay.

There was no escape for them.

The dress, having been pinned into some state of repair, Miss Primrose resumed her instructions, taking care to keep at a safe distance from Bob Cherry.

The four juniors, with crimson faces, went through the evolutions which were supposed to impart to them the grace of the early Victorian days, when deportment was a science, and men deputed themselves gracefully instead of playing forter, or hockey, or any of those rough games.

The Cliff House girls looked on in great enjoyment.

"There!" exclaimed Miss Primrose at last. "I am sure that there is a great—a very great improvement already! You encourage me very much in my plan of taking up a class for boys!"

"Ye-es," said Harry Wharton.

"Ripping!" said Nugent.

"Very ripping when Bob gets on a dress!" grinned Harry.

And the lesson being over, the Greyfriars juniors bade farewell to their kind entertainers. Marjorie and Clara accompanied them to the gate.

"Do you think you will join the deportment class?" asked Marjorie.

"Yes, rather!" said Harry.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"It will be fun!"

"Yes," agreed Miss Clara demurely. "It is very funny."

And the Greyfriars juniors laughed and took their leave. Harry Wharton glanced at his watch in the lane.

"Just six!" he exclaimed. "My hat! We shall have to buck up to meet the Courtfield fellows."

And they bucked up accordingly.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Battle Royal.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. hurried along the lane towards the cross-roads, where they had agreed to meet the Courtfield fellows. The gleaming lights of a carriage passed them in the road, and died away ahead.

Nugent uttered an exclamation.

"That's Miss Primrose's carriage," he said. "She's gone to Greyfriars."

The juniors grinned.

"To see the Head about the giddy deportment," said Wharton. "Well, I don't care if it's taken up, for one. After all, we shall come over to Cliff House for lessons, instead of grinding Latin in the Form-room."

"Ha, ha! That will be an improvement."

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"The improvement will be terrific."

"And Bob takes to it like a duck to water," grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" growled Bob.

"College cads!"

It was a call from the dusk of the road. Four figures came into sight. Harry Wharton & Co. halted.

There was a signpost in the middle of the cross-roads, and lamp. In the glimmer of the lamp through the dusk, the four fellows of Courtfield County Council School could be seen.

Trumper grinned at the Greyfriars' juniors.

"You're late," he said. "We've been here ten minutes."

"Sorry!" said Wharton. "But we're only a few minutes late."

"Ready for business?" asked Porter.

"Quite."

"Faith, and so are we!" said Barney O'Neil.

Wharton paused for a moment. The Courtfield fellows were taking off their jackets and laying them in a little heap on the ground at the foot of the signpost.

"Look here," said Wharton, "we arranged to meet you, and we're here. But I'm blessed if I can see why we should fight. We've got no quarrel with you, or you with us. Don't play the giddy ox for nothing."

"Faith, and he's crying off already!"

"I'm not crying off!" said Harry angrily. "It's not that at all. But—but it's no good talking, I suppose. I'm ready, then."

He threw off his jacket, and placed his hat on it, and pushed back his cuffs. The others followed his example.

Then the juniors selected their foes.

Bob Cherry was the biggest of the Greyfriars party, but Wharton was the most dangerous to tackle, for he was as strong as Bob, and a much better boxer, and he was always coolest when things were at their hardest, while Bob was given to getting excited at such times.

Wharton selected Trumper as his foe. Trumper was younger than Wharton, but he was half a head taller, being a very big fellow for his age. His arms and legs were simply masses of muscle.

Nugent squared up to Porter, who was about his own size and weight, while Bob Cherry faced O'Neil. This left Grahame and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh opposed to one another. Upon the whole, the two parties were very well matched; but in the uncertain light of the stars and the road lamp, the fight was likely to be a rough and scrambling one, and not at all a scientific affair.

"Ready?" grinned Trumper.

"Quite."

"Here goes, then!"

And they went at it hammer and tongs.

For some moments there was nothing heard but quick breathing and the irregular tramp of feet, and the dull thud of fists on noses or chests, and an occasional gasp of pain. The juniors were saving their breath for the fight.

But soon the big, burly Trumper began to give ground before Wharton's steady and skilful attacks, and he retreated more and more, till he had completely circled the lamp-post, Wharton following him up with a rain of blows.

At the same time, Grahame was hopelessly beating Hurree Singh. The Indian was quick and light and a fair boxer, but Grahame was the better man physically of the two. He drove Hurree Jamset Ram Singh back and back till the nabob was backing on the ditch, and another step backwards meant that he would go headlong into muddy water.

There Grahame dropped his hands chivalrously and stepped back.

"Will you have a rest?" he asked good-naturedly.

The nabob smiled.

"My friend is extremely courteous and venerably polite," he exclaimed. "I shall be glad of the honourable breather."

Grahame grinned. He was not so accustomed to the nabob's peculiar diction as the Greyfriars fellows, and he thought it funny.

"Suppose we chuck it and look on?" he exclaimed. "No good my pounding you—you know you can't stand up to me, kid!"

"My worthy friend is quite right; but a Nabob of Bhanipur cannot surrender," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gracefully. "He can only conquer or fall with honour."

"Oh, rats!" said Grahame. "Let's chuck it!"

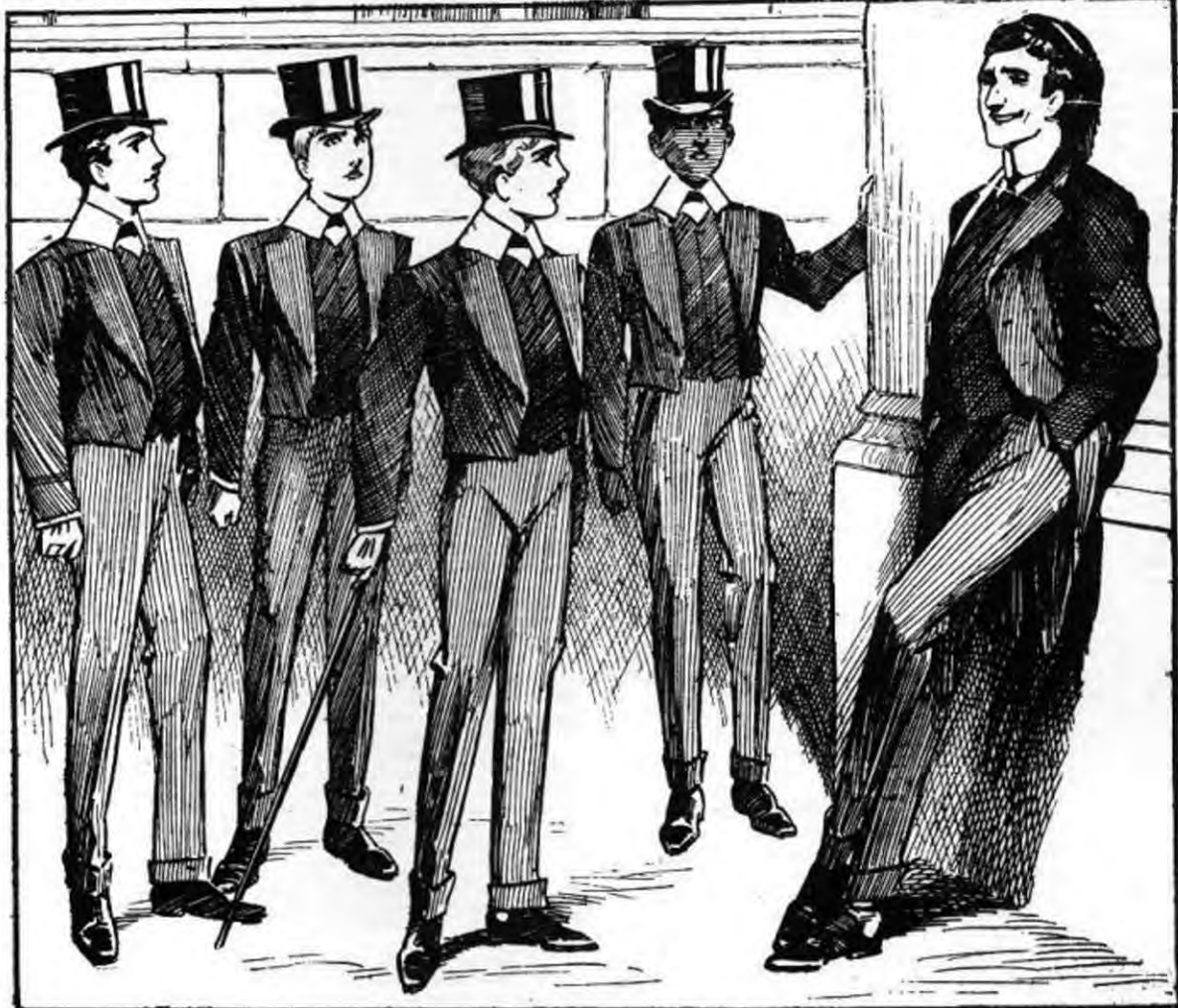
And he put his hands in his pockets.

The nabob inclined his head.

"I am overcome by the courteous and ludicrous kindness of my esteemed foe," he remarked. "I am at your honourable orders."

"Good!" grinned Grahame.

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"Going out?" asked Coker. "No," said Nugent, sarcastically. "We've put on our toppers to go and do our prep. in the study. (See page 2.)

And he leaned against the signpost with his hands in his pockets to watch the combat.

Porter and Nugent were in close fight now, reeling to and fro in the dusty road and pommelling one another fiercely.

Neither seemed to be getting any special advantage, but both of them were getting plenty of punishment, and if one of Nugent's eyes was closing, Porter had a crimson streaming nose to match.

Bob Cherry and O'Neil were standing valiantly up to one another, punching away merrily, and both getting considerably hurt.

Trumper was on his back in the lane. Harry Wharton was standing and waiting for him to get up, but Trumper couldn't. He had had a thumping such as he had seldom experienced before, and he did not seem to have an ounce of breath left in his big body.

"Done?" asked Wharton.

"I don't give you best!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I don't want you to," he said. "If you've had enough, it's all right; we're only playing the giddy ox, anyway."

Trumper grinned breathlessly.

"Well if you put it like that, I'm willing to chuck it," he said. "You've got the better of me, I suppose, as a matter of fact."

"Not much doubt about that," said Grahame, coming forward and helping his leader to rise. "But I've done one of them, so it's honours divided."

"Hallo, there's Cherry down!"

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Bob Cherry dropped under a terrific drive from Barney O'Neil. At the same time Nugent and Porter, still closely gripped, rolled over in the dust.

"Go it!" shouted Trumper.

"Stick to it, Nugent!" said Harry Wharton.

A form loomed up in the gloom of the lane—a stout gentleman in a silk hat, with a brown beard and gold-rimmed spectacles. He stopped and stared at the scene in the light of the lamp.

"What does this mean?" he asked sternly.

"My word!" gasped Trumper. "Mr. Legge!"

Wharton gave a low whistle. He knew that Mr. Legge was head-master of Courtfield School. Though he had, strictly speaking, no jurisdiction over the boys out of school hours, the Courtfielders were dismayed at being caught by him in such a state.

Mr. Legge looked at them very severely.

"Stop this at once!" he commanded.

Nugent and Porter separated, and both of them rose to their feet, looking very sheepish and dusty. Bob Cherry sat up and looked at Mr. Legge. Barney O'Neil dropped his hands at once.

"I am ashamed of you," said Mr. Legge. "If these boys from Greyfriars do not know how to behave themselves, I should think that you, Trumper, at least, would know better than to be drawn into this hooliganism."

The Greyfriars fellows flushed red. After Harry Wharton's efforts to avoid the encounter, it was hard that all the blame should be laid upon him and his chums.

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But Trumper spoke up at once. "It wasn't their fault, sir!" he exclaimed. "We challenged them."

"Indeed! And why?"

"Because—because—"

"I shall speak to you about this on Monday, Trumper. Go home at once, and you Greyfriars' boys had better go your way."

It was upon Harry Wharton's lips to say that he would please himself about that; but he remembered the respect due to an elder, even when unreasonable, and held his tongue.

The Courtfield fellows grinned rather ruefully at their late opponents, and donned their jackets and caps.

The Greyfriars' chums put on hats and jackets, and with nods to Trumper & Co., walked off. They left the Courtfield fellows with Mr. Legge, who evidently meant to keep them under his wing for the present, to make sure that there was no renewal of the encounter.

"Cheeky old beggar!" Nugent remarked, as the chums walked homeward thoughtfully. "Well, if it pleases the old gentleman to slang us a little, it won't hurt us, and we can stand it. But—what a precious sight we shall be when we get to Greyfriars!"

"My hat! We shall!"

"And Miss Primrose is there to see us, too!"

"It's rotten!"

"The rottenness is terrific."

The juniors tramped on. The excitement of the fight once over, they were feeling the reaction. They were considerably damaged. Wharton had come off best, but he was bruised and dusty. Nugent was a shocking sight, with a closed eye and a swollen nose, and Hurree Singh and Bob Cherry were not much better off.

But they had to go in, only hoping fervently that they would be able to slip into the House unnoticed.

But as they came up to the lighted School House, Coker was standing in the doorway, and Coker set up a roar at the sight of them.

"Hallo! Ha, ha, ha!"

And then fellows gathered round to stare.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. A Great Change!

NUGENT had been right in guessing that it was Miss Penelope Primrose who passed them in the lane, before the meeting with the Courtfield fellows. Miss Primrose, full of her new scheme for improving the manners of the twentieth century, had gone over to Greyfriars to speak to Dr. Locke on the subject, and strike the iron while it was hot. Her success with Harry Wharton & Co., as she deemed it, made her feel that the idea of deportment for the Greyfriars boys was a great one.

Miss Primrose had been in communication with Dr. Locke on more than one matter in connection with the two schools. Miss Locke, the Head's younger sister, was second mistress at Cliff House. The two were old acquaintances, and on very friendly footing, though it must be said that the Head generally regarded a promised call from Miss Primrose with something like apprehension.

When the good lady was shown into his study, the Head was all politeness and courtesy, but there was something in his manner which was suggestive of a snail drawing in its horns. But Miss Primrose did not observe that.

She broached the subject with great keenness, and the Head had no chance of saying what he thought of it for at least a quarter of an hour, during which a continuous stream of eloquence poured from the good lady's lips.

"Now, is it not an excellent plan?" asked Miss Primrose, at last.

"Excellent, indeed!" said Dr. Locke resignedly.

"I am forming a class for boys—"

"But—"

"And in order that the scheme may have a fair trial, I shall charge no fees for the first term," said Miss Penelope. "My object is not to obtain fees, but to improve the manners of the degenerate youth of the present day."

"A most worthy object," said the Head; "but—"

"In my youthful days," said Miss Penelope, with a slight toss of the head, to hint that those days were not, after all, so very far back—"in my youthful days, doctor, boys were trained in the graces of society. The manners were very sweet. A lad of, say, fifteen or sixteen, would read out lovely poetry from the 'Keepsake' or the 'Hyacinth,' in such beautiful modulated tones, to a circle of his sisters, his aunts, and his parents. Now, you know that such lads rush off to the football-field as soon as they escape from lessons. There has been a great change."

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"There has," agreed the Head, thinking that it was greatly a change for the better, too. But he did not say that.

"Young men," said Miss Penelope, "would talk to young ladies by the hour, the most interesting and elevating conversation, not at all exciting or controversial—in fact, after hours of talk, it was really the case that nothing more had been said than at the beginning of the conversation. How tranquil!"

"It must have been very tranquil."

"Grave of movement was a special study on the part of young men. They would sometimes practise a certain step, a certain turn of the figure, before the glass, for hours every day until they had it perfectly. How sweet!"

"Extremely sweet, no doubt."

"Nowadays, such young men play golf and Rugby football, and wear heavy boots that clump about the house, and use such words as 'ripping' and 'jolly,'" said Miss Primrose, with a shudder.

"I believe they do," assented the doctor.

"My aim is to restore, so far as lies in my power, the sweet manners of the early Victorian era."

"Ahem!"

"Therefore, I shall take all the pupils you are inclined to send me, without allowing any question of fees to be raised."

"You are too good, Miss Primrose!"

"Not at all. I merely desire your approval and moral support for the scheme."

"Yes—er—indeed!"

"Let it be known to the younger boys here that such a class is open to them, and I am sure there will be many offers to take instruction," said Miss Primrose. "You will find a vast difference in the boys in a short time, doctor."

"I—I suppose so."

"As a matter of fact, I have already given some instruction in deportment to some of your juniors," said Miss Primrose, beaming.

"Indeed!"

"Yes. Harry Wharton—a very nice boy—and some of his friends came over to Cliff House to tea, and they were delighted to study deportment."

"Were they, indeed?"

"Very delighted," said Miss Primrose. "Their enthusiasm in the matter was a very promising sign. I deduce from that that the modern rough manners of boys and younger men are only, as it were, an incrustation, which could be rubbed off by a proper attention to the important art of deportment."

"Indeed!"

"When those dear boys return to the school, I am sure you will see a difference in their appearance, even after one lesson only," said Miss Primrose.

"Dear me!"

"I am sure of it. Ah, I think I hear Wharton's voice now," said Miss Primrose, as a sound of a laugh floated in at the open window of the study. Wharton's voice followed, but what he said did not say much for the benefits he had received from the instruction in deportment at Cliff House. For his words were:

"Oh, cheese it, Coker! Go and eat toffee, you ass."

The Head smiled.

"Of course, I shall add some instruction in a careful selection of expressions," said Miss Primrose. "But pray, doctor, step out into the hall, and look at the dear boys as they come in, and mark what a change has taken place in them."

The Head sighed, and rose.

He conducted Miss Primrose into the lighted hall, where a crowd of juniors was gathered, all of them laughing.

Harry Wharton & Co. came up the steps with flushed faces. The juniors grinned as they watched them, but as the doctor appeared with Miss Primrose, the loud laughter died away into soft chuckles.

The Famous Four came in—into the bright light, and into the view of the Head and Miss Primrose.

Dr. Locke started.

There was, indeed, a change in the appearance of Harry Wharton & Co. since they had left Greyfriars that afternoon to visit Cliff House.

Harry Wharton was very dusty, and his face was marked. Nugent had a black eye, and his nose was swollen to nearly twice its usual size. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh was blinking painfully out of one eye; the other was past blinking with. Bob Cherry was holding a handkerchief to his nose, and that handkerchief looked as if he had been wiping up a spilt bottle of red ink with it.

The Head stared at them, and murmured something.

Miss Primrose gasped.

"Bless my soul!"

"Ahem!" said the Head. "I—I certainly do notice a great change in these juniors, Miss Primrose. But surely this is not wholly due to instruction in deportment."

"Dear me!"
 "If it is, Miss Primrose, I must say that I consider the exercises you give them are altogether too violent," said the Head.

"Really—"
 "It really appears that they are deporting themselves more like prizefighters than like anything else," said Dr. Locke.

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped as they saw the Head. There was no escape for them now. They stood ready to meet their fate.

"Dear me!" gasped Miss Primrose again. "Oh, dear! What has happened? Oh, dear! Have you had a terrible accident, my dear boys?"

"No!" stammered Harry. "Only—only a little scrap!"

"Oh!"
 The Head's face broke into a smile.
 "Then—then this is not the result of the deportment exercises?" he exclaimed.

The juniors could not help grinning.
 "No, no, sir," said Wharton. "We—we got into a row with some fellows on the road, sir. It really wasn't our fault."

"Go and make yourselves a little more presentable, please," said the Head. "I shall leave this matter for your Form-master to deal with."

And the juniors, glad to get away, hurried off the scene.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Recruits.

ON Monday all Greyfriars knew what the object of Miss Penelope Primrose's visit had been. The deportment scheme was considered with mixed feelings. Some of the fellows grinned, and some of them sniffed.

That the seniors would condescend to attend Miss Primrose's class was out of the question. The mere fact that it was open to juniors would keep the elders off the grass.

And there was no keen enthusiasm among the juniors. Harry Wharton and his immediate chums took to the idea, because each visit to the deportment class meant a visit to Marjorie & Co., and a pleasant hour or two at Cliff House. Even so, they were doubtful how long they could stand it. But after school Billy Bunter rolled into his Form-master's study, with a new idea in his mind.

"I think I'd like to put my name down for the deportment class, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch.
 "I suppose there will be some sort of a conveyance to take us over to Cliff House, sir?" Bunter ventured.

"Not unless you engage it yourself."
 "Oh, the lessons are in the afternoon, I understand, sir?"

"They are in the afternoon, certainly," said Mr. Quelch grimly; "but they do not commence until after school hours here."

"Oh!"
 "The Head has decided that ordinary lessons here are not to be interfered with."

"Oh!" said Bunter, again.
 "Shall I put your name down, Bunter?"

"N-n-no, thanks, sir! I—I think, perhaps, lessons in deportment wouldn't be any good to me."

And the fat junior retired.
 If the deportment class had taken them away from Latin-grinding in the Form-room, many of the juniors would have jumped at the chance.

But the Head had taken care of that. The deportment class was to be taken out of the leisure hours.

That was almost sufficient to kill it at birth. For a long time the names of Harry Wharton & Co. were the only ones sent in.

But Coker of the Fifth was thinking it over, too. Coker wanted very much to get an entry into Cliff House, and he wondered whether he could stand the deportment lessons as a kind of entrance fee. Coker cared not two straws for deportment, and he was a senior. But he very much wanted to have a chance of getting on friendly terms with Marjorie & Co.

Coker's accession of wealth, on his remove into the Fifth, had made him a great man, for the time, at Greyfriars. The Fifth had received him with open arms, and had even gone to the extent of making him captain of the Fifth Form football eleven. They had played him as captain in a match with the juniors, thinking that quite a safe game, even under Coker's leadership; but the unexpected had happened, and the Fifth had been licked. And then the Fifth-Formers, losing their tempers, had bumped Coker severely on the field of play, and thus undone all they had effected in getting into his good graces.

Coker was very stand-offish to the Fifth, after that. And he could not chum up with his old Form, the Shell. They were below him now, and he had mortally offended them by his loftiness after getting into the Fifth. Coker felt a

little bit stranded, and though he was not likely to want friends so long as Aunt Judith's liberal donations lasted, he was no longer monarch of all he surveyed, as he had been. Coker thought it would be an excellent idea to cut the Romovites out, at Cliff House, and he had little doubt of his powers to do so, if once he obtained a footing there.

This deportment scheme seemed to give him a chance, and after some deliberations on the matter, he went to his Form-master.

"I want to send my name in for the deportment class, sir," he said.

Mr. Prout looked at him.
 "What class, Coker?" he asked.

"Deportment, sir."
 "There is no such class at Greyfriars."

"I mean at Cliff House, sir."
 Mr. Prout rubbed his chin.

"Oh, I see," he remarked, remembering. "Nonsense, Coker!"

"I want to, sir."
 "Only juniors are entering."

"But I may if I like, sir, I think."
 "Nonsense, Coker!"

Most boys would have retired at such very pronounced discouragement from their Form-master, but Coker stuck to his guns. He could be very obstinate when he chose. He did not budge an inch.

"I want to study deportment, sir," he said. "It's a most—most valuable study, sir. I have heard that people used to—to deport themselves much better than they do now."

Mr. Prout sniffed.
 "Of course, I will send your name in if you wish, Coker," he said.

"Thank you so much, sir, I wish you would."
 "Oh, very well!" snapped Mr. Prout.

And Coker's name was sent in accordingly. As he retired from the Fifth Form-master's study, he met Harry Wharton & Co. coming in from the playing-fields. He grinned at them cheerfully.

"Going down to Cliff House this evening?" he asked.
 "No," said Wharton.

"But the deportment—"
 "First lesson on Tuesday."

"Oh," said Coker, "what time do you go?"
 "Leave here at five."

"Good! I'll come with you."
 "You!" said the four juniors together, staring very hard at Coker.

Coker nodded coolly.
 "Certainly! I have joined the deportment class."

"You've joined the deportment class!" shouted the juniors.
 "Yes. Why not?"

"Well, you cheeky beggar!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's only meant for juniors."

"Stuff!"
 "You don't want to learn deportment; you only want to poke your apology for a chivvy into Cliff House!" exclaimed Nugent excitedly.

Coker grinned.
 "Well, I'm coming," he remarked, and he walked away.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another in great disgust.
 "Well, this is a go!" exclaimed Wharton. "It would serve the boulder right to plump him in a ditch on the way to Cliff House."

"The rightfulness would be terrific," murmured the Nabob of Banipur.
 "But Miss Primrose will have his name down, and she'll be expecting him. Hang it all! It isn't playing the game."

Hallo, Alonzo, what do you want?"
 Alonzo Todd had just poked Wharton in the ribs with a bony knuckle—a way he had of attracting people's attention.

He blinked at the captain of the Remove in a deprecating way.
 "My dear Wharton—"

"What is it, ass?" asked Harry, rubbing his damaged rib. "Don't puncture me, you fearful chump!"

"I'm so sorry, Wharton, but—"
 "Oh, come to bizney!"

"You see, my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to let slip any opportunity of gaining knowledge," said Alonzo. "I—"

"Blessed if I can see what knowledge you get by puncturing a fellow's ribs," growled Wharton. "You might get the experience of what it's like to have a thick ear, certainly."

"I was not referring to that, Wharton. I was speaking of the deportment class at Cliff House."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I thought I would mention to you fellows that I had sent in my name, so that we could all go down together," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile. "That will be very nice, won't it?"

"The niceness will be terrific!"

"You see," said the Duffer of Greyfriars. "Lots of the fellows have called me a clumsy chap, you know, because little accidents sometimes happen where I am. My Uncle Benjamin always told me that I should ever be on the look-out for a chance to improve myself, and so I think I shall take up these deportment lessons, and perhaps they will cure that infinitesimal tendency to clumsiness to which a majority of my schoolfellows have taken exception."

"Good old dictionary!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I beg your pardon, Cherry."

"Granted," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, Toddy. What you say is enough."

"My dear Cherry—"

"So you're coming to the deportment class," said Harry Wharton.

"Precisely. My Uncle Benjamin says—"

"Well, I suppose you'll smash a few vases and chairs, and put your elbow through a window, and tread on Miss Primrose's favourite corn," said Harry. "But people run those risks when they start deportment classes, I suppose."

"My dear Wharton—"

"But wouldn't it be better to write to Uncle Benjamin and ask his approval," Nugent suggested, "and—wait for his answer?"

Toddy shook his head.

"My Uncle Benjamin is away, abroad, at present."

"Never mind; write, and wait for his answer, all the same."

"I think upon the whole I am entitled to act in this matter upon my own initiative," said Alonzo, with that beautiful flow of language which was all his own. "Under ordinary circumstances, of course, I should never neglect the preliminary precaution of seeking and obtaining the advice of my avuncular relative, but as at the present moment my uncle is at a considerable distance, and I have no precise information as to his temporary abode, I think that upon the whole I shall be justified in sending in my name to Miss Primrose incontinently."

The four juniors waited for no more. They staggered away, holding on to one another, as if overcome; and Alonzo Todd gazed after them in considerable surprise.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo in a Harry.

AFTER classes at Greyfriars the next day, Harry Wharton & Co. prepared for the visit to Cliff House. They were not looking forward to the deportment lesson with anything like enthusiasm. Bob Cherry, remembering his previous experience, was feeling something akin to dread. Bob wanted to see his Cliff House chums again, and was not averse from having a cosy little tea in the little school-room; but the idea of deportment exercises before an array of smiling girls filled him with terror. But he would not stay behind.

"It's rotten," he remarked, as he came into No. 1 Study for the others. "Why couldn't Miss Primrose get a wheeze of teaching something else. I shouldn't mind learning French from her, or amateur carpentry, or something of that sort."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Deportment will do you good, Bob. Stick to it, and—"

"Oh, rats! You fellows ready?"

"The readiness is terrific."

"Where's that ass Todd?" asked Nugent. "I know he'll only cause trouble, but we can't leave him behind."

"We'll look in his study as we pass."

The juniors left No. 1, and went down the Remove passage. Alonzo Todd's door was open, and he was sitting at a table writing. He looked up with a pleasant smile as the chums stared in. Alonzo Todd was always in a good temper.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's time to get off to Cliff House, Toddy. Get your cap."

Toddy shook his head.

"I'm so sorry, Cherry, but I cannot come just yet. Would you fellows mind waiting for a quarter of an hour?"

"Can't be did. We should be late for the deportment lesson."

"You could then run all the way, to make up time."

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"Bosh! Is that an imposition?"

"Yes, and it has to be shown up before tea."

"Ass! What did you get an impot. for?"

"I didn't; it's Bulstrode's."

"You—you fabrious chump! Do you mean to say that you're letting Bulstrode bully you into doing his impositions?" roared Bob Cherry.

"My dear Cherry—"

"Chuck it away—"

"Bulstrode asked it as a favour, my dear Cherry. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be obliging—"

"Well, if your Uncle Benjamin thinks it's obliging to keep four chaps waiting while you write out another fellow's impot., your Uncle Ben is several sorts of an ass," said Frank Nugent.

"My dear Nugent—"

"We're off!"

"My dear fellows—"

But the dear fellows were gone. The door slammed, and Alonzo Todd was alone. The Duffer of Greyfriars gave a gentle sigh, and settled down to his work—or, rather, Bulstrode's work—again.

Horace Coker was waiting for the Removites when they came out of the house. He joined them with a genial nod.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!" was the polite reply.

And Coker laughed, and walked away with them. Alonzo Todd glanced from his study window and saw them go. He sighed, and went back to his task. He wrote away most industriously, transcribing Virgil at a great rate, and presently Bulstrode looked into the study.

He grinned at the sight of Alonzo's busy appearance.

"Hallo! Nearly finished?" he asked.

"Almost, Bulstrode! Perhaps you would like to do the last few lines."

"Not a bit of it. You're obliging me, Todd, and I'm not going to spoil the effect of it," said Bulstrode genially. "My Uncle William always impressed upon me never to spoil a good action."

"Dear me!"

"You keep on," said Bulstrode, sitting on the window-ledge. "I'll watch you, and I'll wait till you're done."

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"Keep on, my son; don't waste time."

Toddy laboured on. The lines were finished at last, and he rose from the table.

Bulstrode took up the imposition with a grin.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "That will pass for my hand any time, as you've been careful to cross the 't's' my way. That was really very sensible of you, Todd."

"My Uncle Benjamin always told me—"

"Exactly! Good-bye!"

And Bulstrode took the papers and went.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo. "I think I shall be very pleased to get a little exercise after this. It will do me good. And my Uncle Benjamin always recommended a gentle exercise after sedentary occupations. Perhaps I shall be able to overtake Wharton on the road if I run very fast."

It did not seem very likely, as Wharton had been gone a quarter of an hour. But Todd was of a hopeful turn of mind.

He donned his coat and cap, and left the School House. With the idea of covering the ground as quickly as possible, he started at a run as soon as he was outside. Naturally, for Alonzo, he ran into Billy Bunter first, and sent the fat junior sprawling in the Close. Billy Bunter was bringing a jar of jam into the house, and keeping it concealed under his jacket lest it should be seen and raided by someone else. There was a crash as Bunter fell.

"Dear me!" gasped Alonzo. "I'm so sorry!"

"Oh!" roared Bunter.

"I'm so sorry—"

"You ass! You chump! You've busted my jam!" roared Bunter, feeling under his coat, and drawing out a fat hand plastered over with jam. "Groo! Look here! Yah!"

"I'm so sorry," said Alonzo. "You see, I am in a hurry. I'm really and sincerely regretful of this untoward happening, my dear Bunter."

"You chump! You'll have to pay for that jam!"

"Certainly. Unfortunately, I have no money," said Alonzo. "But you can keep the amount out of the ten shillings you owe me, Bunter. You remember, the ten shillings of mine you used by mistake. I think you told me you were expecting a postal-order shortly, with which you intended to reimburse me. That will be all right."

And Alonzo ran on, leaving Bunter speechless.

Toddy was half-way across the Close before the Owl of the Remove recovered his voice. Then he yelled:

"Hi! Stop! Todd—stop!"

Alonzo turned his head, still running on at top speed.

GRAND XMAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF THE NEW PAPER (The Enlarged EMPIRE LIBRARY) NOW ON SALE!



"Ahem!" said the Head of Greyfriars. "I—I certainly do notice a great change in these juniors, Miss Primrose. But surely this is not wholly due to instruction in deportment!" (See page 8.)

"I'm so sorry, Bunter, but I'm in a hurry, and— Oh!"

"Yow!"

Wingate of the Sixth sat down as Alonzo butted into him. Alonzo staggered back. The captain of Greyfriars glared at him.

"You fearful idiot!" he roared. "Why don't you look where you are going!"

"I—I was looking back at Bunter—"

"I'll teach you—" Wingate gasped, and he scrambled to his feet with a deadly expression.

Alonzo Todd was not the brightest youth at Greyfriars, but he was too sensible to remain there for the teaching Wingate promised him. He dashed off towards the gates in a greater hurry than ever.

By the time Wingate was fairly upon his feet, Todd was out of the gate, and speeding down the lane towards Friar-dale.

He had covered nearly the distance to the cross-roads before he ventured to look back. To his great relief Wingate was not pursuing him. He slackened down a little, but still ran on at a good speed. He was still not without hope of overtaking Harry Wharton & Co.

"Hallo, college cad!"

Two youths stopped directly in front of Todd. They were Trumper and Grahame, of Courtfield School. They expected Todd to stop, but Todd was in a hurry. He rushed right on, and before Trumper and Grahame could get out of the way, Todd had charged them over.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE SCHOOLBOY TRAITOR."

The Duffer of Greyfriars threw out his arms to save himself in the collision. He threw one arm round Grahame's neck and the other round Trumper's. The three of them rolled in the lane together.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Alonzo.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

More Deportment!

TRUMPER was the first to recover. He hurled Alonzo Todd off him, and sat up. "You chump!" he roared.

"Oh!" gasped Grahame.

Grahame was lying on his back, and Todd was sprawling over him. Every ounce of wind had been knocked out of the Courtfield fellow, and he could only gasp and groan painfully. Todd still sprawled over him.

"My dear fellow," said Alonzo, without thinking for the moment of removing his weight from the sufferer's chest. "you seem to be in pain."

"Groo! Oh!"

Trumper reaching out grasped Alonzo by the back of the collar, and jerked him off Grahame. Alonzo rolled in the road.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh, really—"

"The—the blessed cad!" murmured Grahame. "Collar him! He's winded me!"

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

Trumper dragged Alonzo Todd to his feet. The Duffer of Greyfriars was too winded to resist.

"Now then!" said Trumper. "What did you do that for?"

"Do that for?" said Alonzo, repeating Trumper's words—a curious trick he had when he was confused.

"Yes!" roared Trumper. "You charged me over!"

"Charged you over?"

"Yes. What's your little game?"

"Little game?"

"My hat! He's a giddy parrot."

"Giddy parrot?"

"Oh, this is a little joke of his!" said Grahame, slowly picking himself up. "We'll give him a jolly good bumping for his little joke."

"Little joke?"

"Off his rocker!" said Trumper, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Rocker?" murmured Alonzo.

Trumper shook him by the shoulder. Alonzo blinked at him dazedly.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I am somewhat startled. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to avoid sudden shocks, you know. They disturb the serenity of the reflecting faculties, and—"

"Oh, switch off!" said Trumper. "Look here, you ran into us—"

"Pray excuse me. I was in a hurry. In fact, I am in a hurry now, only I had forgotten it for the moment."

"Not so fast," said Trumper, catching hold of Todd, as he made a movement to depart. "We're not done with you yet."

"My dear person—"

"I'll dear person you!" groaned Grahame. "I shall never get my mind back—never!"

"I'm so sorry," said Todd. "But it was really somewhat incautious of you to stand in my path, you know, when I was running. That was really the first cause of the disaster. Pray do not detain me now, as I am in a great hurry to reach Cliff House."

"Cliff House?" said Grahame.

"Yes, I am going to the deportment class, and the lesson must have already commenced!" Todd explained.

"Deportment class?"

The two Courtfield fellows stared at Alonzo. He was not of the usual run of Greyfriars boys, and they could not quite make him out.

"Precisely," said Todd. "If you are curious upon the subject, I will explain it to you; but pray walk with me towards Cliff House, so that I shall lose no time."

Trumper and Grahame looked at one another, and burst into a chuckle. They were mentally debating whether they should duck Alonzo in the ditch, or merely bump him on the hard road. His polite invitation to them to stroll to Cliff House with him struck them as comical under the circumstances. But the Courtfield fellows were sportsmen.

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Trumper, giving Alonzo a slap on the back that made him stagger. "Come on, Grahame."

"Look here—"

"Come on, old son! After all, it was our fault he bumped us over."

"Oh, all right!" said Grahame.

They tramped on to Cliff House with Alonzo Todd. Todd was never averse from talking, when he could find a listener. He explained about the deportment class to the two Courtfield lads, and they grinned hugely at the idea.

"In fact," said Todd, blinking at them, "I think you fellows might join, you know. Miss Primrose would be quite willing, I am sure, and it would do you good."

"Do us good?" said Trumper.

"Yes, you know. It would improve your manners and your appearance; and my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to neglect no opportunity of improving my manners," said Alonzo.

Trumper and Grahame looked at him.

"So you think my manners want improving?" Trumper asked, in an ominously quiet tone.

Todd nodded.

"Oh, certainly!" he said. "You see, you are a little rough and clumsy. I should not call you exactly rude, because my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be very polite. But—"

Trumper exchanged a glance with Grahame.

They were at the gate of Cliff House now, and the lights of the house gleamed through the dusk of the garden. Moving shadows could be seen upon the blinds of the large school-room.

"Shall we bump the cheeky cad?" murmured Trumper.

Grahame laughed goodnaturedly.

"No, he ain't worth it. Let him go."

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GRAND XMAS DOUBLE NUMBER OF THE NEW PAPER (The Enlarged EMPIRE Library) NOW ON SALE!

"Good-night, fathead!"

"My dear fellows—"

"Good-night, chump!"

And the Courtfield fellows moved off. Alonzo Todd blinked after them in the gloom of the evening.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "I suppose I had better go in. I am late; but my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that late was better than never. I shall have to apologise to Miss Primrose."

Alonzo went in.

He opened the door of the big school-room and found it full of light, and crowded with the pupils of Cliff House, who were much interested in the deportment lesson that was going forward.

Miss Primrose was moving round in a graceful sweep, displaying the lost art of elegance that belonged to the Victorian era, and the Greyfriars juniors were doing their best to imitate her graceful motions. The girls were doing their best not to laugh.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo.

"There," said Miss Primrose, "that will do! You are really getting on very nicely. It is very pleasant to have such enthusiastic pupils."

"It's very kind of you to instruct us, ma'am," said Coker, of the Fifth.

"Not at all! It is a pleasure, my dear boy. Ah, here is my other pupil!"

"I'm so sorry I'm late, Miss Primrose," said Alonzo. "I stayed behind, to perform a little service for a schoolfellow, which my Uncle Benjamin has often told me I should never neglect to do when the opportunity occurs—"

"Oh, ring off, Toddy!" murmured Nugent aside.

"My dear Nugent—"

"Never mind," said Miss Primrose, "you are in time for the exercises. Pray join your comrades, and all of you stand in a row."

The juniors stood in a row.

Then Miss Primrose gave them instructions for an exercise designed to increase the flexibility of the limbs, an important step in the search for the lost grace of the Victorian era.

Each of the juniors stood upon one leg, and slowly raised the other to a horizontal position.

They had assumed this position when a maid came in with a message to Miss Primrose, who turned away to speak to her.

The Greyfriars juniors remained standing on one leg, a great deal like a row of storks by a river. Miss Primrose had, apparently, forgotten them; and the Cliff House girls could hardly suppress their giggles. Even Marjorie was smiling.

"My hat!" murmured Harry Wharton. "How long is this going to last?"

"Blessed if I shall keep it up much longer!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The blessedness is terrific."

Miss Primrose did not turn back.

The juniors' legs were beginning to ache considerably.

"I'm jolly well going to chuck it!" murmured Wharton desperately.

Miss Primrose looked back at last.

"Dear me," she exclaimed, "have you really been standing like that all the time? I had forgotten. Dear me! Pray rest yourselves at once. The lesson is now concluded, my dear boys; we will recommence to-morrow at the same hour."

"Will we?" murmured Bob Cherry dubiously.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Pupils from Courtfield.

"THE cads!"

"The rotters!"

"The outsiders!"

The strong expressions dropped from the lips of Trumper & Co.

Trumper held a letter in his hand. Trumper's big, ruddy face was very red, and Porter looked almost crimson, while Grahame was pale with anger.

The three boys were standing in the vestibule of the County Council School at Courtfield.

It was evening—the evening after the meeting of Trumper and Grahame with Alonzo Todd on his way to Cliff House.

At Courtfield, the evening classes were held in the day school, and on this particular evening, Trumper, Porter, and Grahame were all there, for one class or another.

ANSWERS

While the Greyfriars fellows did preparation in their studies, the Courtfield boys did evening lessons in the class-rooms of the big, commodious, hideous County Council school building, an edifice that was very useful, but not at all handsome to look at. But there may come a time—some day—when even Government buildings will not offend the eyes.

Trumper had brought a letter with him, which he showed to Grahame and Porter as he met them in the vestibule after the lessons were over.

The letter was the cause of the angry words the Courtfield fellows had uttered.

It was a short letter, but very much to the point. It was written in the form of a notice.

"NOTICE!

"To all Board School bounders,—
"Any of the above found near Greyfriars in future will be licked."

"BY ORDER."

That was all.

The three lads looked at one another.

"I suppose this comes from the chaps we rowed with the other day," Trumper remarked, between his teeth. Grahame nodded.

"I suppose so."

"Yet, I should hardly have thought that Wharton would be such a rotter as that," said Porter. "I rather like that chap, though he does hit hard, and no mistake."

"It must be from some chap we've had a row with."

"Yes, and someone who fancies himself in the boxing line," said Grahame; "perhaps from a lot of them together. After all, it's safe enough to write a letter like that if you don't sign your name."

"Well, we can send back one as good as this," said Porter. Grahame shook his head.

"No good slanging them by post; it's low down. Let's go up to the school to-morrow and see Wharton about it. If there's any licking to be done, we can give them a chance to go ahead with it."

"Good egg!"

"What about that deportment class at Cliff House?" Trumper asked, with a grin, as he thrust the letter into his pocket. "Of course, the deportment is all rot, but I'd like to go."

"If it can be fixed."

"I think that is all right. It would show those rotters that we can get into the place, if we like, for one thing," said Trumper, "and it would be fun."

Grahame hesitated a moment.

"You don't care to go?" said Trumper.

"Yes, I'd like to, but—"

"But what?"

"Well," said Grahame slowly, "I don't know whether it's good taste for us to rub shoulders with fellows who are better off than we are. Of course, they're no better personally. But there's no denying that they've got more tin, and put up a better appearance than we do."

Trumper nodded.

"I understand that, Grahame, old man. But I don't think we ought to take a back seat before a lot of swanking cads!"

"Oh, no, I don't think so, either."

"Well, then, let's go to the deportment class. As that ass Todd said, it may do us good, and, anyway, it will be fun."

"Let's ask Solly," said Porter. "Ikey will tell us. He's in the silversmith's room; he'll be out in a minute. It's just on nine."

"Good. Let's wait for him."

In a few minutes "Solly" came into view. He was a youth whose age might have been anywhere between twelve and sixteen; evidently undersized, but well-knit, and very strong. He had a dark face, with dark, keen eyes, and an extremely aquiline nose, which showed that he traced his descent from a Semitic race. His full name was Solomon Lazarus, but his friends always called him Solly. Solly was a very sharp lad, having all the keenness of his race in money and other matters; as honest as the day, and as true a chum as a fellow could wish to have. Although Trumper was the acknowledged leader of the Courtfield fellows, he generally had recourse to Solly for advice in any matters of difficulty.

"Here you are, Solly!" he exclaimed, greeting the Jew lad with a slap on the back. "We want to ask your advice."

"All there," said Solly, who was afflicted with a slight lisp. It was not always noticeable in his speech; but the initial S was always a stumbling-block to Solly. "Go ahead, and don't dithocate my shoulder."

Trumper explained.

Solly Lazarus's black eyes gleamed.

"Jolly good idea!" he exclaimed.

"You think we ought to join the class, if we can?" asked Trumper.

"Yes, rather," said Solly. "It's getting thumthing for nothing, isn't it, fathead?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blethod if I can see anything to thnigger at," said Solly. "It's always a good idea to get thumthing for nothing."

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NEXT WEEK: "THE SCHOOLBOY TRAITOR."

"Oh, all right!" said Trumper, grinning. "Then we'll join if Miss Primrose will have us—eh?"

"Thertainly," said Solly. "I'll join, too. Let's write to her. Come into the office here, and we'll write the letter."

"Jolly good."

The four lads gathered round the table, and Solly took up the pen. Solly, as the business man of the party, was left the task of writing the letter without discussion.

Solly chewed the end of the pen for a minute or two, and then wrote:

"Dear Madam,—Hearing that you are holding a class for the instruction of youth in the valuable art of deportment, I beg to inquire what are your terms for admission to the class. Three friends and myself are anxious to attend, if the fees are within our means."

"Yours faithfully, "R. TRUMPER."

"But there ain't any fees," said Trumper. "That duffer Todd told us that there weren't any."

Solly gave him a pitying look.

"That's all there," he said. "If there ain't any fees, Miss Primrose will say so, but it looks better to mention 'em. Looks as if we could plank down bagfuls of guineas if we liked; besides, it's more respectful."

Trumper laughed.

"What have you put my name to the letter for?" he asked.

"Because it thounds better than Tholly Lazarus," said Solly coolly. "You will write the letter, old thon."

"Oh, all serene."

Trumper wrote out the letter, and it was duly posted. The Courtfield lads waited with some anxiety for the reply next day. When Trumper went home from school the next afternoon, he found Miss Primrose's answer awaiting him. He rushed off with it at once to his friends.

"Dear Master Trumper,—I shall be very glad to welcome you and your friends to my deportment class, beginning this evening at 5.30. There will be no fees, for this term, at least."

"Yours sincerely,

"PENELOPE PRIMROSE, Head-mistress."

The chums of Courtfield School grinned with satisfaction over the letter. It was as good a reply as they could have wished for.

"We're going, then?" said Porter.

"Yes, rather."

"It will be rather a surprise for the Greyfriars chaps to find us there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Solly grinned, and said that it would be "all there."

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Alonso Sits Down.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "This looks like another row!"

The Greyfriars chums stopped.

They had reached the cross-roads, the scene of their encounter with the Courtfield fellows on Saturday.

From the direction of Courtfield four fellows came.

They were Trumper, the leader of the new school, and his chums, Porter and Grahame and Solly Lazarus.

The Greyfriars chums were on route for Cliff House for the deportment lessons, and it looked, for the moment, as if the Courtfield fellows had waylaid them at that spot.

Harry Wharton & Co. were ready for war. But their alarm was groundless. The four Courtfield fellows did not even look at them.

They must have seen the juniors, of course, but they did not look at them openly; and they walked on their way as if the Greyfriars fellows were not there.

Harry Wharton & Co. were puzzled.

It seemed unlikely that Trumper & Co. were there by chance, and yet they showed no disposition to provoke a row.

"There's something in the wind, anyway," said Bob Cherry.

"The somethingfulness is terrific."

"Yes, rather."

"Well, they don't seem to be looking for trouble," said Harry Wharton, "that's one comfort. As we come back they can have as much trouble as they like; but we don't want to show up at Cliff House as we showed up at Greyfriars the other night."

The Greyfriars juniors tramped on.

So did the Courtfield fellows.

Harry Wharton and his friends were on one side of the lane, and Trumper & Co. were on the other, and they kept about

level, but never looking towards each other or exchanging a word.

The perplexity of the juniors increased.

Trumper & Co. might be going to Pegg, but it was curious that they should be going just at this time, and that they should seem as anxious as the Greyfriars fellows to avoid a collision.

In mutual silence the two parties tramped on, till they reached the gates of Cliff House, in sight of the bay and the fishing village of Pegg.

There the Greyfriars party halted. The fellows from Courtfield halted, too.

"Now look out for squalls," said Bob Cherry, in an undertone. "The bounders have left it till we got here on purpose."

But Bob Cherry was mistaken.

The Courtfielders did not interfere with them in any way as they opened the gate and went up the gravel walk towards the house.

But Nugent, glancing back, saw Trumper opening the gate in his turn, and saw the Courtfielders enter, and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"They're coming in!"

The juniors faced round in a body. There were five of them, Coker not being in the party at this time. But Alonzo Todd, the fifth of the party, was of no use in a fight, and the forces were equal on either side.

"Hang it all, this won't do!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It's too bad to think of making a row in Miss Primrose's grounds."

"The badfulness is terrific."

Wharton strode back towards the Courtfielders.

"Look here," he said, "you'd better be off."

They stared at him.

"I mean it!" exclaimed Wharton sharply. "It's too rotten to think of rowing in these grounds, in sight of the house windows."

"Who's rowing?" asked Trumper.

"I suppose that's what you've come here for," said Harry.

"Then your thupposer is out of order, dear boy," said Solly.

"Look here—"

"There won't be a row here unless you make it," said Trumper coolly. "I suppose we're at liberty to use the path to get to the house, ain't we?"

"Yes, but—"

"Then ring off, and don't bother!"

"Look here, are you going to Cliff House?"

"Well, we ain't using this path as a short cut to London."

And the Courtfield fellows laughed.

Harry Wharton, considerably puzzled, rejoined his chums, and then went on up to the house, and rang for admission. They entered, and the door closed behind them. Miss Primrose met them in the hall, with her usual beaming smile.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear boys," she said.

"You are quite punctual for your lesson."

There was another ring at the bell.

"Ah, that must be my other pupils!"

The Greyfriars fellows stared at one another.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo.

"Then it will be a larger class to-night?"

"Yes," said Miss Primrose; "I have some more pupils coming from Courtfield."

The door was opened.

Trumper & Co. marched in.

They presented themselves to Miss Primrose, who greeted them with her usual kindness.

The Greyfriars chaps simply gasped. They had never suspected that the Courtfield fellows would join the class at Cliff House. Such a thought had never crossed their minds.

"My only hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "What next?"

"The what-next-fulness is terrific."

Trumper grinned at Harry Wharton as Miss Primrose went into the school-room.

"You're surprised to see us here?" he remarked.

"The what-next-fulness is terrific."

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"You're surprised to see us here?" he remarked.

"The what-next-fulness is terrific."

"Yes," said Harry.

"And not pleased?"

"I don't know that it makes any difference."

Trumper shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose you will consider that we are hardly sufficient 'class' to meet you on the same terms," he remarked.

Wharton coloured.

"I don't think you need say that," he replied. "I don't know that I've given you any reason to suppose that I am a snob."

"I'm sorry," said Trumper quickly. "But—but there are some of the fellows at your school who would say so."

"That's not my fault. No friend of mine would talk any rot of the sort, I'm sure of that."

"Look at this letter, then."

Trumper passed the letter into Wharton's hand. There was no time to read it then, for Miss Primrose was signing to them to come into the school-room. Wharton put the letter in his pocket, and the juniors followed the kind lady in.

"I am so pleased to see all you dear boys here," Miss Primrose said graciously. "It shows me that the love of a graceful deportment is not wholly dead even in these practical and manufacturing times. I hope, my dears, that you may be the means of bringing others to the fold, so to speak, and that deportment may spread through the length and breadth of the land."

"Yes, rather!" said Trumper.

"How joyous would be the day," continued Miss Primrose, "when young men considered carefully how they should deport, and when deportment became as common as bad manners now are. We may again see the time when a group of young men and women, deporting themselves in the most graceful way, will spend an afternoon listening to some sweet poem read out to them—some sweet poem dealing with sheep on a hillside, or something pastoral of that sort, and will say 'Graceful!' and 'Charming!' instead of 'Ripping!' and 'How jolly!'"

"It will be thimply thimledid!" murmured Solly.

"And now for our instructions," said Miss Primrose.

And the increased class went through the calisthenic instructions, and looked exceedingly sheepishly at one another as they did so.

Miss Primrose kept them hard at it.

Alonzo Todd was as keen about it as anybody. His Uncle Benjamin had always impressed upon him never to let slip an opportunity of gaining knowledge, and so he was studying deportment with all his energy. But it was doubtful if the angular Alonzo would ever learn to deport in anything like a satisfactory way.

Alonzo's fingers, to use an old saying, were all thumbs; and his feet seemed to have a volition of their own, and to go where they liked, without consulting him in the matter at all.

Bob Cherry might be clumsy, a little, now and then; but Alonzo Todd was exceedingly clumsy, and all the time.

He trod on Miss Primrose's dress, and he could not go through the simplest evolution without cannoning into somebody.

"That chap's a thilly ass," Solly murmured to his comrades. "I believe he's doing thith on purpose, you know."

Trumper grinned, and shook his head.

"No, he isn't; it's the nature of the beast," he said.

"Then he's a thilly beast," said Solly.

"No doubt on that point."

"Ow!" murmured Grahame, as Alonzo cannoned into him and stamped on his foot.

"Oh, you dangerous ass!"

Todd blinked round at him.

"I'm so sorry!"

"Ass!"

"My dear person—"

"Chump!"

"I'm really sorry," said Todd; "it was quite an accident. My Uncle Benjamin says that accidents will happen, you know."

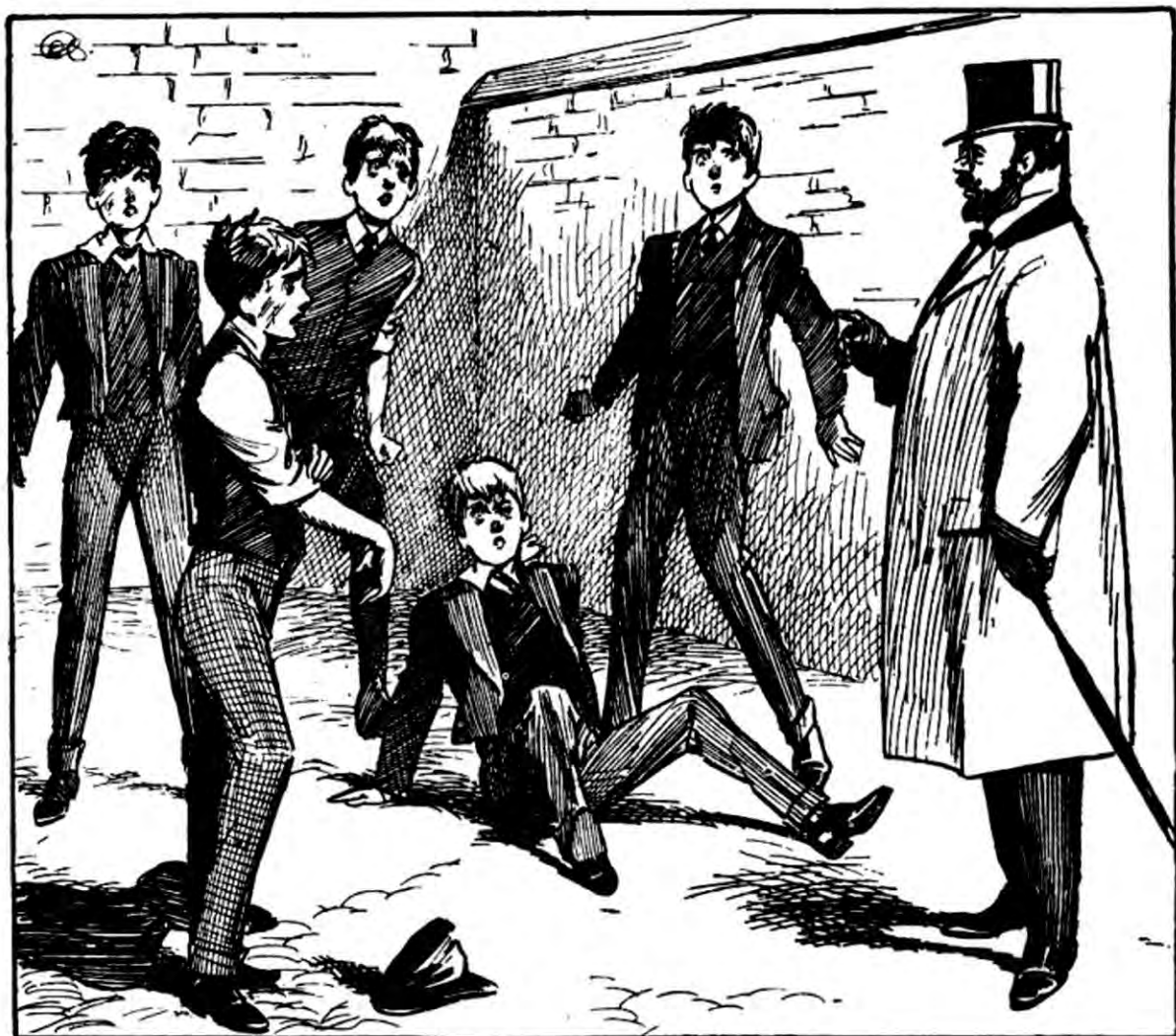
"Well, your Uncle Benjamin must have had experience of some with you in the family," grinned Nugent.

"My dear Nugent—"

IT MUST BE!



VERY INTERESTING!



"I am ashamed of you," said Mr. Logan. "If these boys from Greyfriars do not know how to behave themselves, I should think that you Trumper, at least, would know better than to be drawn into this hooliganism. (See page 7.)

"Thilly ass!" said Solly. "Next time he thtumbles on you, thtamp on his hoof."

"And I jolly well will!" murmured Grahame.

Alonzo was not long before he sinned again.

The juniors were standing in a row, curling round on one foot, an exercise which was supposed to impart much grace to them.

Alonzo swung round a little too fast, and brought his elevated foot with a crash against Grahame's ribs.

Without stopping to think, Grahame caught hold of his ankle, and gave it a violent jerk. It was like a particularly deadly tackle in the Rugger field.

Alonzo's other leg flew from under him, and Alonzo sat down with a bump that shook the school-room.

"Oh!" roared Alonzo. "Ow!"

"Phew!" murmured Trumper.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Primrose, coming up. "Dear me! How did you manage to fall down, Todd? How very unfortunate. Are you hurt?"

"He looks as if he was hurt," murmured Porter.

And the Courtfield fellows grinned, excepting Grahame. He was looking repentant. He had acted without thinking, and he was immediately sorry that he had hurt Alonzo.

"I say, I'm sorry!" he exclaimed. "I—I caught hold of his ankle, Miss Primrose. I'm very sorry."

"Bless my soul!"

"Ow!" said Alonzo. "I kicked this person, unfortunately, but it was quite an accident. My Uncle Benjamin says that accidents will happen. Ow! But if the person is sorry, it

is all right. My Uncle Benjamin says that a handsome apology sets any matter right. Ow! It hurts, all the same. Ow! That is very unfortunate. Ow!"

Alonzo was helped up. Miss Primrose looked at the clock.

"The lesson is over," she announced. "I trust that you dear boys feel some slight improvement has taken place."

"Oh, yes, Miss Primrose!" chorused the dear boys.

"We will have another lesson at the same hour to-morrow."

"Thank you so much, ma'am!"

And Miss Primrose retired. Marjorie and Clara came up as soon as she was gone. It had been arranged that the Greyfriars juniors were to stay to tea in the little school-room with the Cliff House girls, and Marjorie had been a little puzzled at first by the addition to the numbers of the class. She had included Alonzo in the invitation because he was with Harry Wharton & Co., but the Courtfield fellows made the party so large a one that it was doubtful if the resources of the tea-table would be ample enough.

But Marjorie was a tactful girl, and very courteous. She did not like to let the Courtfield fellows go unasked to tea, especially as she fancied they might be touchy, owing to the fact that they were not public schoolboys like the others. She knew them only by sight, excepting Trumper, whom she had sometimes spoken to in Pegg, where his father let out boats for hire.

And so Marjorie had sent Grace and Wilhelmina to get further supplies for the tea-table, and now she asked the whole of the department class to tea, with her winning smile.

Trumper & Co. looked at one another for a moment. They were very pleased, but they had a natural hesitation in accepting an invitation which might have been made only from politeness. But Harry Wharton chimed in:

"Yes, that's jolly!"

And then Trumper replied for his friends.

"Thank you very much, Miss Hazeldene; we shall be glad."

"Come into the school-room, then," said Marjorie brightly.

And the Greyfriars fellows and the Courtfielders followed her together, and it was observable that neither party showed the slightest hostility of manner, mutual hostility having been replaced by an almost painful politeness.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Coker's Check.

MARJORIE made the tea, and the juniors brought up the chairs to place them round the tea-table before the fire. Marjorie, and Clara, and Wilhelmina Limburger, and Grace, were of the party. The tea-table looked very bright and cheerful. Alonzo Todd bent down for the teapot as Marjorie made a motion towards it, after the tea had "drawn."

"Pray allow me!" he said.

"Thank you."

Alonzo beamed upon the girls with his good-natured smile. "My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to be useful," he said. "I trust you will allow me to oblige you in this, Miss Hazeldene. I should be very glad to pour out the tea."

"Oh, boys can't pour out tea!" said Miss Clara.

"My dear young lady, I assure you that my Uncle Benjamin has instructed me in that, and in many other useful matters," said Alonzo Todd. "I assure you that I am quite equal to the task. I—"

"Oh!" roared Trumper.

Alonzo Todd was holding the teapot by the handle, and as he turned his head to address Miss Clara, the spout slanted down, and a stream of hot tea poured over the knees of the New School leader.

Trumper jumped up.

"Oh! Yaroo!" he roared.

Alonzo blinked at him.

"I'm so sorry, Trumper—"

"You are! Oh!"

"I'm so sorry—"

Trumper recovered himself with an effort. He would not appear to be "soft" before the girls; but it was hard to bear the pain without flinching.

"Oh, it's nothing!" he said, mentally promising Todd all sorts of things at a later date. "Never mind."

"But I am really sorry," said Todd, still holding the teapot at a dangerous angle, while the juniors watched him warily, ready to dodge. "I am sincerely sorry. My Uncle Benjamin told me—"

"Did your Uncle Benjamin tell you to swamp the cake with tea?" asked Grahame politely.

"Dear me, no!"

"Then you might as well stop," said Porter.

Alonzo blinked round, and awoke to the fact that he was sending a stream of tea from the teapot-spout upon the cake.

"Oh, dear!" he ejaculated.

He jerked the teapot back, and a hiss of hot liquid went over Solly Lazarus. Solly squirmed out of the way, but never a sound of pain did he utter. He saw that Marjorie was looking distressed, and he would not add to the general discomfort by admitting that he was hurt.

"I'm sorry," said Alonzo—"so sorry. Perhaps I had better put the teapot down."

"That might have occurred to you a little earlier," snapped Bob Cherry.

"What did you say, Cherry?" asked Alonzo, swinging towards him.

Bob jumped back just in time to escape a steaming stream.

"Oh, you ass!"

"Put that teapot down!" shouted Wharton.

"But—"

"Put it down, you ass!"

"Yes, please put it down," said Marjorie.

"Certainly," said Todd. "I really only wanted to be useful, you know. I will put the teapot down if you wish it."

He put it down, knocking over the milk-jug with it, and sending the milk in a stream over the table-cloth.

"Oh, dear!" said Alonzo. "I'm so sorry!"

"Mop it up, you ass!" said Nugent.

Alonzo looked round for something to mop it up with. "Run and get the cloth that's hanging on the line in the garden," said Nugent.

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"Oh, certainly!"

And Todd rushed out of the room.

Marjorie looked at Nugent.

"There isn't any line in the garden," she exclaimed.

"No? Well, it will keep Toddy out of mischief till the tea's poured out, anyway," said Frank coolly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Marjorie smiled, and poured out the tea. The juniors started; and it was some time before Alonzo came in, without a cloth, and looking somewhat distressed.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I cannot find the cloth. There does not appear to be a line in the garden at all. It is very odd!"

"Go on!" said Nugent.

"I asked the gardener, and he said the nearest line was in Priardale," said Alonzo. "He further explained that it was the railway-line, and I am afraid he was attempting to be humorous, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I asked him if there were a cloth in the garden, and he said I could have the one he rubbed the flower-pots with, but I thought that would be too soiled. I'm so sorry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows—"

"Oh, sit down, Toddy, and have your tea!"

"But the cloth—"

"Never mind that," said Marjorie, laughing. "Will you have some cake?"

"Oh, certainly!" Alonzo beamed upon the company.

"I'm so sorry for these little accidents!" he said. "My Uncle Benjamin says that accidents will happen, you know. May I pass you the jam, Trumper?"

"Thanks, yes!"

Crash!

"Dear me! I certainly never intended to let the jam-dish fall in your tea-cup, Trumper. How very odd!"

"You—you—"

"I'm so sorry—"

Trumper's feelings were too deep for words.

He could only look at Alonzo; but his look spoke volumes.

Todd looked quite distressed.

"How very odd!" he said.

"Very," said Miss Clara.

"I think that tat shap is a fathead," Miss Wilhelmina Limburger remarked, in a perfectly audible tone.

Whereupon the juniors grinned, and Alonzo turned the colour of a beetroot. Fortunately for Alonzo, there was a diversion just then.

The door opened, and Horace Coker entered.

The juniors stared at him.

Coker had not turned up for the deportment lesson, and it seemed almost incredible to them that he should have the cheek to come to tea without having appeared for the ordeal of the deportment.

But that was Coker's little game. He came in with perfect coolness.

"Good-evening, Miss Hazeldene!" he said. "Good-evening, ladies! Hallo, you fellows! I'm sorry I'm late—detained at the last minute—football matters, you know. I hope I'm not too late for some tea."

"Oh, not at all!" said Marjorie.

A cup was filled for Coker. He sat down at the table with perfect coolness and satisfaction.

The juniors glared at him as openly as they could venture to do in the presence of the girls.

"The cheek!" Nugent murmured to Wharton. "The frabjous cheek! Turning up to tea after we've had the rotten deportment without him!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific!"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll take him down a peg for it, anyway," murmured Harry Wharton. "We're used to cheek from Coker, but I think this is the limit."

"Get Alonzo to pass him some tea," grinned Nugent.

"Good!"

Coker was getting on nicely with his tea. He appeared to be perfectly satisfied with himself.

"Look after Coker, Todd!" said Wharton. "Don't let him want for anything! Why don't you fill his cup?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Todd.

Marjorie's eyes glimmered for a moment. Todd took up the teapot, and stepped beside Coker to fill his cup.

"Plenty of milk, please," said Coker, "and two lumps of sugar. Don't run it over; you know what an ass you are."

The juniors sniffed. Coker was treating Todd as if he were a fag, instead of an obliging duffer; treating all the Removites, in fact, like fags.

But Todd was going to avenge them.

The Duffer of Greyfriars began to pour out the tea, and Nugent jolted his arm. The stream of tea, instead of entering the tea-cup, went down the back of Horace Coker's neck.

It was not very hot, or Nugent would not have done it. It was just warm enough to make itself felt.

But a stream of water down the back, warm or cold, is not comforting.

Coker jumped up with a yell.

His head knocked against the teapot in Todd's hand, and he received a shower in the face, and then the teapot went crashing upon the floor.

"Dear me!" gasped Todd. "I'm so sorry!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Is Not Respected.

COKER glared at Alonzo Todd. It was on his tongue to say things of an exceedingly emphatic nature, but he restrained himself just in time.

"Ow!" he said instead. "I'm wet to the skin! That howling ass ought to be chained up! Ow—oh!"

"I—I think somebody must have touched my arm," said Todd dazedly.

"Oh, accidents will happen!" said Bob Cherry. "We have your Uncle Benjamin's authority for that, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry—"

Coker was twisting most uncomfortably. His collar was sticking to his neck, and he was soaked with tea.

"If—if you don't mind, I'll cut off and—borrow a towel!" he gasped. "I'm feeling rather rotten like this."

And Coker dashed out of the room. A smiling maid showed him to a bath-room, where he was able to strip off jacket and shirt and rub down with a towel, and in ten minutes' time Coker emerged a dryer person, to find the juniors about to take their departure.

Tea was over, and it was time to go, and Harry Wharton & Co. were not in the least inclined to wait for Coker.

The Fifth-Former tried to appear good-tempered and cheerful to Marjorie & Co., but it required an effort on his part.

Good-byes were said, and the boys left Cliff House, and as soon as they were in the road, Coker broke out:

"You rotten young cads—"

A yell of laughter, from Greyfriars and Courtfield boys alike, interrupted him.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe one of you jolted that idiot on purpose, to make him buzz that tea over me!" Coker roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you shouldn't have the blessed cheek to come into tea, after cutting the deportment," said Harry Wharton indignantly. "Hang it all! Do you think we're going to have all the deportment, and let you score at tea-time just the same?"

"Play the game!" said Nugent.

"You cheeky fags—"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Look here—"

"Rats!"

Horace Coker snorted with wrath. New as he was in the Fifth Form, he was one of the biggest fellows in the Fifth. He was head and shoulders over the biggest of the Removites.

He glared at Wharton, and seemed greatly inclined to go for him on the spot. The juniors drew a little together, with the evident intention of tackling Coker in a body if he should begin an attack. And so Coker paused.

The Courtfield boys seemed to offer a safer object for his wrath, and he turned upon Trumper, who was laughing heartily.

"What are you cackling at, you young rotter?"

"You!" he said, with great frankness.

"Look here—"

"Can't!"

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"Can't!" repeated Trumper, affecting to shade his eyes with his hand. "Your face worries me, you know."

"Thame thing with me," said Solly, in his quiet, silky tones. "Pleathe turn your chivvy away, my thon."

"The worryfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"You—you young rotters—"

"Oh, better language, please!" said Grahame sharply.

"Why, I'll—I'll larrup you!" gasped Coker, astonished at being addressed in this tone. "You Board School bouncer—"

"Shut up!" said Harry Wharton.

"Cad!" said Bob Cherry.

"I'll—I'll—Hands off!"

Trumper & Co. had fastened upon Coker.

The Fifth-Former hit out fiercely, and Trumper dropped as if a cannon-ball had struck him, and Grahame fell across him with a swimming head.

But Porter and Solly clung upon Coker, hanging to his arms, and they held on while Trumper and Grahame jumped up and tackled him again.

Then, in the grasp of the four of them, Coker went crashing down upon the hard road.

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NEXT WEEK, "THE SCHOOLBOY TRAITOR."

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"Oh!" he roared.

"Hold him!" gasped Trumper.

"Yow! Rescue, Greyfriars!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stood back. They were not disposed to interfere; unless it was to lend Trumper a hand in bumping the bumptious Fifth-Former of Greyfriars.

"Bump the cad!" said Trumper.

"Hear, hear!"

Bump! Coker went down heavily upon the road.

"Oh!" he roared. "Rescue! Wharton! Are you going to see a Greyfriars chap bumped by these rotten Board School bouncers?"

Wharton did not stir.

"Serve you jolly well right," he said. "If you talk like a cad, and act like a cad, you must expect to be bumped."

"Ow!"

Bump!

"Yaroo!"

Coker struggled desperately in the grasp of the Courtfield fellows. But Trumper and Grahame, Porter and Solly Lazarus, had an arm or a leg each, and Coker was powerless to release himself.

He was swung into the air again, and bumped in the road.

He gave a fresh roar.

"Ow! Yow! Help!"

"One more," grinned Trumper.

Bump!

"Yaroo!"

"Now, are you going to keep the peace?" asked Trumper. "If we let you go, will you cut off without playing the giddy goat again?"

"I'll thrash you within an inch of your life!" roared Coker.

"You mean that?"

"Yes, confound you!"

"Then give him another one!"

Bump!

"Yaroo!"

"Are you going to keep the peace now?"

"Yow! No!"

Bump! Bump

"Yaroo! Help! Yaroo!"

"What do you say now? Going to keep the peace?"

"Yes! Yow! Ow! Yes."

"Are you sorry for your bad behaviour?"

"No—yes."

"Awfully sorry?"

"Yaroo! Yes."

"Let him go, then!"

Coker was dropped, sprawling in the road. He scrambled up, covered with dust, and crimson with wrath. He was simply snorting with fury.

"You young scoundrels, I'll thrash you—"

"No, you won't," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You've made it pax, and you won't touch them, Coker. If you lay a finger on them, you'll have the lot of us to tackle."

"Indeed, I should regard it as dishonourable of you to break your word, Coker," said Alonzo, in a tone of remonstrance. "My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, nay, disgusted, at the idea of such a thing!"

It was not the disgust of Uncle Benjamin, however, that changed Coker's intention. But he had been bumped hard, and he knew the bumping would be harder if he was tackled by the whole party. Discretion was the better part of valour.

He grunted and turned away.

Trumper grinned.

"Thank you, Wharton!" he said. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, kids!"

And the Courtfield fellows went their way, and Harry Wharton & Co. tramped on to Greyfriars. Occasionally, out of the darkness of the lane, they could hear a grunt, and they grinned. It was Coker grunting over his injuries. When they reached Greyfriars, Coker gave them a glare, but he did not feel equal to any more hostile demonstration than that at present.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

"Some Cad or Cads Unknown."

HARRY WHARTON had forgotten all about the letter Trumper had passed to him, and Trumper had not reminded him of it. It was not till the juniors were in the dormitory that night, and Harry was taking his jacket off, that he thought of it, and he uttered an exclamation as he felt in his pocket for it.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "There's Trumper's letter!"

"What the dickens did he give you a letter for?" Tom Brown asked.

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

"I think it was one he received from Greyfriars."
 "I suppose some cad has been slanging him by post," said Nugent. "Some fellow who wouldn't stand up to him, I expect. Have you been writing to Courtfield, Bunter?"
 Billy Bunter blinked at him.
 "Oh, really, Nugent?"
 "Have you, Snoop?"
 "No, I haven't!" snapped Snoop.
 "Let's have the letter," suggested Mark Linley.
 "Well, here it is."

Harry Wharton, with a darkening brow, read the letter aloud.

There was a general grunt of condemnation from the Removites as it was read out. Most of them did not care anything about Trumper & Co. one way or another. But all of them felt that, though there might be rivalry between the two schools, and any amount of rowing, still this was hitting below the belt.

"Some dirty cad wrote that letter, and wasn't plucky enough to sign his name," said Harry Wharton, frowning.

"The cadfulness must have been terrific."

"Was it a chap in the Remove?"

There was no reply.

If a fellow in the Remove had written the letter, he was evidently disinclined to own up to it.

"I expect it was a Remove chap," Bob Cherry remarked quietly. "The Remove have had more rows with the Courtfield fellows than any other Form."

"Yes, that's so."

"It was a cowardly and caddish letter to write," said Harry. "The fellow who wrote it ought to own up."

Silence!

"Who wrote it?"

Still silence.

"Well, what I think is, that it's a disgrace to Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton. "If I knew who had written it, I'd make him apologise to Trumper. It's all very well to have rows with the Courtfield fellows—that's all right—but this kind of thing isn't playing the game."

"Quite right," said Linley.

"Oh, Linley would stand up for the Courtfield fellows, anyway!" Snoop remarked, with a sneer.

The Lancashire lad looked towards him.

"I stand up for fair play," he said. "There is nothing more in it than that, Snoop. If you mean that I should back up another school against my own, you're wrong, and you know it."

"I didn't mean that."

"What did you mean, then?"

"I meant that you would back them up naturally, because—"

Snoop paused. He did not quite like the look on Mark Linley's face.

"Because what?"

"Oh, never mind!"

"You'd better finish, Snoop, I think," said Mark, with a gleam in his eyes which made the cad of the Remove wish he had let the subject alone.

"Well, of course, you're a Board School chap yourself, that's what I mean," said Snoop, half nervously and half defiantly.

Mark Linley nodded.

"I certainly was at a Board School before I came to Greyfriars with a scholarship," he said. "If I hadn't won that scholarship, I should be attending Board School evening classes now. I am not ashamed of it. There is nothing to be either ashamed of or proud of in attending any particular school. You are a fool, Snoop, and a cad too!"

"Go for him, Snoop!" said Stott. "Don't let a Board School bouncer slang you like that!"

Snoop shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, he's not worth going for!" he said.

"You might get hurt, too," Bob Cherry remarked facetiously. "No good going for a chap who could knock you into a cocked hat with one hand, is it, Snoop?"

Snoop affected not to hear that question.

The Removites turned in, rather disappointed that Mark Linley did not box Snoop's ears and so force him to put up his fists.

But Mark was the reverse of quarrelsome; and more than one mean-natured fellow, of Snoop's kidney, took advantage of his easiness in that respect.

"Letter for you, Wharton," Tom Brown remarked the next morning, as Wharton came in for breakfast.

Harry took the letter.

It was in a strange handwriting, but as the postmark was Courtfield, he guessed that it came from someone of Trumper & Co.

He opened it, and whistled as he glanced over the contents.

"Any news?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes; it's a challenge."

"Footer?"

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"No; fists."

"Phew! Read it out."

Harry Wharton, with a rather grim expression upon his face, read out the letter. It was from Trumper of Courtfield.

"Dear Wharton,—You have read the letter I handed to you, I suppose? I don't suppose you wrote it, or any friend of yours. But it was written by a Greyfriars fellow, and we look on it as a challenge."

"And in reply, we're ready to put a man in the field against any man you choose to put forward. I believe you are the great fighting-man of your Form. My friends think I'm most suitable to represent Courtfield. We will be at the old barn at one o'clock to-day. Come there and bring your champion, whoever he is—I don't care whom. And let the best man win.—Yours, ARTHUR TRUMPER."

The chums of the Remove looked at one another.

"Well, I suppose that was to be expected, after the letter Trumper got from Greyfriars," Tom Brown remarked.

"I suppose so."

"But the chap who wrote the letter ought to meet him," Nugent said.

Wharton laughed.

"He's not likely to own up, for the purpose of meeting Trumper and getting his head punched," he said.

"Ha, ha! I suppose not."

"I suppose we can't very well refuse," said Harry. "I've got no quarrel with Trumper. In fact, I rather like the chap. But when Greyfriars is challenged, we can't think of refusing a challenge?"

"Certainly not."

"Somebody will have to meet Trumper."

"You're the best man," said Nugent.

"What's that?" asked Bulstrode, stopping as he passed.

"A challenge from the Board School?"

"A challenge from the County Council School," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Trumper is going to represent Courtfield, and he challenges anybody in the Remove to meet him."

Bulstrode sniffed.

"Plenty of fellows here who can do that," he said. "I don't suppose the chap knows how to box at all."

"I believe he does."

"Pooh! Where's he to have learned?" said Bulstrode, with a sneer. "I'd undertake to knock him into a cocked hat."

Wharton looked at him doubtfully.

"Could you do it?" he said.

"Rats! Of course I could."

"We want Greyfriars to win," said Bob Cherry. "We don't want the old school to score a defeat from Courtfield or anybody else."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific," said Hurrey Singh. "We must put our best man in the field, and the best man in the Remove is the honourable and ludicrous Wharton!"

Bulstrode grunted.

"Oh, of course, Wharton's picked the thing out for himself," he sneered. "Trust Wharton to cover himself with glory over a cheap victory!"

Wharton coloured angrily.

"It won't be a cheap victory," he exclaimed. "Trumper will put up a jolly good fight, I know that, and I'd leave it to you willingly enough if I were anything like sure that you'd pull it off."

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, we'll leave it to the fellows," said Harry Wharton. "We'll call a meeting of the Form in the recess at eleven o'clock, and put it to them, and the chap who's selected by the Form to meet Trumper will have to do it."

"Good egg!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bulstrode.

And the matter was left at that. Word was passed round before the Form-room was entered, that the Remove were to meet in the recess during morning lessons, to discuss the challenge from Courtfield; and there was no doubt that the whole Form would turn up. All the juniors were keenly interested in the coming contest. For, in spite of Bulstrode's sneers, there was no doubt that Trumper of Courtfield would prove a redoubtable antagonist, and the fellows were looking forward to a really keen fight.

We are informed that Messrs. Rudge-Whitworth, Ltd., the well-known cycle makers of Coventry, have received the Royal Warrant of appointment as bicycle manufacturers to H. M. King George.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo's Kind Offer.

"ROLL up, you chaps!"

"This way for the meeting!"

"Now then, come on!"

Bob, Cherry, Nugent, and Tom Brown were gathering in the Remove to the green beside the chapel, where it was possible to hold the Form meeting without interruption.

Nearly all the Remove were there.

The juniors were all keen upon the subject. Bulstrode was swaggering considerably. As the biggest fellow in the Remove, and a boxer of considerable skill, he had been the head of the Form before Harry Wharton's appearance at Greyfriars. There had been several encounters between the two, and the advantage had very generally been with Harry Wharton. Wharton was captain of the Form, and head of the sports. But Bulstrode never lost a hope of regaining his former position. If he met Trumper in this fight and vanquished him, there was no doubt that it would strengthen his position in the Form. And of his ability to vanquish the Courtfield champion he had no doubt whatever.

Harry Wharton felt that he was better able to take on the task; but he was quite willing to leave that to the Remove. There was no swank about Harry; and besides, he was not anxious to fight Trumper. His feelings towards the County Council School leader were friendly rather than otherwise.

"Who's chairman of this giddy meeting?" Bob Cherry inquired.

As there was no reply, Bob appointed himself chairman on the spot, and forthwith proceeded to call for order.

"Silence!" he shouted. "Don't jaw so much! Now then—"

"Order!"

"Silence!"

"Shut up, Lacy!"

"Dry up, there!"

"Order!"

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode. "Get on with the washing! The matter's simple enough, I suppose!"

"Order!"

"Shut up, Bulstrode!"

"Oh, look here—"

"Order!"

"The proceedings can't proceed until Bulstrode shuts up!" said Bob Cherry. "If Bulstrode does not shut up till we're called in for lessons, the proceedings will not be able to proceed at all!"

"The honourable proceedfulness is terrific!"

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode.

"Throw that heckler out!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This isn't a giddy political meeting!" grinned Skinner.

"Go on, Cherry! Come to the business, you know."

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, Gentlemen of the Remove—"

"Where are you running to?" roared Skinner, as Alonzo Todd came dashing up, nearly knocking Skinner over, and causing a fresh interruption.

"I'm so sorry, Skinner—"

"Ass!"

"But I'm so sorry," said Alonzo. "Stott told me that you fellows were holding a meeting to present a testimonial to the Head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Toddy. It's nothing of the kind," said Bob Cherry. "Stott was only pulling your silly leg. Order!"

"Go ahead, Mr. Chairman!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo. "Stott must have been deceiving me, my dear Skinner. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted, at such prevarication! Will you tell me what the meeting is about?"

"Certainly," said Skinner blandly. "We're going to send a birthday present to Arthur Trumper—that Board School chap, you know. It's a question whether Bulstrode goes with it, or whether we send Wharton. We want a really polite and tactful chap, you know."

"Dear me! It is a very good idea to send Trumper a present. It is like the soft answer that turns away wrath," said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin would be very pleased, I am sure. I should be quite willing to take the present."

"Good! You'd better volunteer, then."

"Oh, certainly!"

"Order!" roared Bob Cherry. "Now, listen, you duffers! Is Bulstrode to meet Trumper, or Harry Wharton? It's got to be put to the vote. Any more candidates?"

"Yes, here's one," said Skinner.

"Skinner? Rats! You're no good!"

"Not me!" said Skinner, promptly and ungrammatically.

"Alonzo!"

There was a roar of laughter. Alonzo came forward, blinking round him, and apparently greatly surprised by the sounds of merriment on all sides.

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"My dear fellow—" he began.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Todd, you ass—get off the grass!"

"Stand back!"

"Outside!"

"Buzz off!"

"My dear fellows," exclaimed Todd, in surprise, "I assure you that my only desire is to be useful. I want to oblige—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out!"

"My dear—"

"Look here, you ass, you're no good, and we shan't put you to the vote," said Bob Cherry. "You can buzz off, and the sooner the quicker!"

"Pardon me, Cherry! I think I am almost the most suitable person in the Remove to meet Trumper on this occasion," said Todd firmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites, who, of course, thought that Todd was offering himself as a champion to meet Trumper on the field of battle.

"I see no cause for mirth in my remark. I shall be very happy to undertake this delicate mission, and trust that I shall display sufficient tact in bringing it to a happy conclusion," said Todd.

"He's off his rocker!"

"Turn him out!"

"My dear fellows—"

"Order! Order!"

"I really think that I am the most suitable person. I have no desire to appear forward in any way. My Uncle Benjamin always cautioned me against assuming a swankish manner, such as renders Bulstrode so absurd, for instance—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"What's that?" yelled Bulstrode.

Todd looked at him innocently.

"My dear Bulstrode, I had no intention of offending you. I was merely stating a fact, which I am assured will be attested by all the Form."

The juniors simply yelled.

"But although, according to my Uncle Benjamin's repeated injunctions, I strive to avoid any appearance of swank," continued Todd, "at the same time I have also been cautioned by my Uncle Benjamin never to stand back when I consider that my services are likely to be of real use to my friends."

"Is he wound up?" asked Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Therefore," went on Alonzo, unheeding, "I offer my services in this case. I shall be very pleased indeed to meet Arthur Trumper on this occasion."

"You ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "You can't fight for toffee!"

"Fight?" gasped Alonzo.

"Yes, fathead!"

"But—but why should I fight Trumper?" asked Todd dazedly. "Surely it is not a custom here to fight a person when you take him a birthday present?"

"A—a—a birthday present?"

"Yes, I understand from Skinner that this meeting is held to decide who shall take a birthday present to Arthur Trumper."

The Remove shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Good old Alonzo!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "You ass! You cheerful chump! This meeting is called to decide who shall fight Trumper this afternoon."

"Oh!" stammered Alonzo.

"Do you want to fight him?"

"Dear me! Certainly not!"

"Then stand back, and shut up!"

Alonzo retired amid yells of laughter. He gave Skinner a deeply reproachful and indignant look.

"My dear Skinner," he said, "I presume that this is your idea of a joke, but I regard provarication as reprehensible under all circumstances. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted!"

To which the hardened Skinner responded only with a chuckle.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Greyfriars Man.

BOB CHERRY waved his hand for silence, but it was some time before the laughter died away. But order was restored at last.

"Now, Todd, having done his turn, we'll get down to bizney," said Bob Cherry, and there was a fresh roar of laughter. "As you are aware, we have received a challenge from Courtfield School!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It was provoked by a letter written from Greyfriars—written by some cad or cads unknown—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But that is neither here nor there!"

"Then where is it?" demanded Skinner.

"Order!"

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"The business in hand, is that a challenge has been received from Courtfield, and a chap named Trumper has offered himself as a giddy champion to meet any champion the Remove cares to put into the field. Now, this chap Trumper is younger than most of you, but he's a big chap, bigger than anybody in the Remove excepting Bulstrode, and quite as big as Bulstrode. The question is, who's going to meet him? If Wharton meets him, he'll have the advantage of size; but Wharton's a first-class boxer. If Bulstrode meets him, they'll be about level in size, but as for boxing, that's another matter."

"Rot!" said Bulstrode. "I can box as well as Wharton any day in the week."

"That's for the Form to settle," said Bob Cherry. "Hands up for Wharton to meet the Courtfield chap."

A score or more of hands went up.

"Count," said Bulstrode.

"Twenty-three," said Nugent, counting. "That right, Bulstrode?"

"Yes," growled the bully of the Remove, beginning to see that the count would go against him, for he did not think that there were more than forty fellows in the crowd.

"Now, hands up for Bulstrode."

There were fourteen or fifteen hands put up.

"Do you want to count, Bulstrode?" asked Nugent, with a grin.

"Yes!" said Bulstrode angrily.

"Count away, then."

"Fifteen."

"Wharton has it!"

"Hurrah for Wharton!"

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton modestly. "If you fellows think I'd better meet the Courtfield man I'll do my level best, and if he likes me it won't be an easy job for him. That's all I've got to say."

"Hear, hear!"

"And quite enough, too," sneered Bulstrode. "I expect he will lick you, as a matter of fact, and the Board School bouncers will crow over us until another chap takes them down."

Harry vouchsafed no reply to that remark. He turned away, and Bulstrode was left with a knot of his own cronies to growl and discuss the affair.

"I'm glad it's you, Harry," Nugent remarked, as he walked away with his chum. "Of course, you'll get a jolly good knocking about—"

"Thank you!" said Harry, laughing.

"I mean, I'm glad it's you, because I think you're the chap to lick Trumper," said Frank, laughing, too. "Bulstrode is as big as he is, but he's too cocksure, and he's not so much of a boxer as he thinks he is. You'll keep up the colours for Greyfriars."

"Well, I shall try to."

"You'll win."

Harry Wharton did not feel so sure of it as his friends did, but he looked forward to the contest with his usual coolness.

He filled up the remainder of the morning recess with a round or two with the gloves with Nugent, and found that he was in very good form.

The fellows were discussing the coming combat when they returned to the rest of the morning lessons, and Mr. Quelch came down heavily upon one or two who found it difficult to concentrate their minds upon the morning's work.

Lessons, however, were over at last, and the Greyfriars juniors were free for the rest of the day, unlike the Courtfield boys, who had to return to school on Wednesday afternoon. Trumper had fixed the meeting at the old barn for the interval midway between morning and afternoon lessons at Courtfield, allowing time for the combat, and for the return to Courtfield to school. The barn was nearer to Courtfield than to Greyfriars, but this was a fair arrangement, as the Greyfriars juniors would not be pressed for time after the combat.

Alonzo Todd poked Wharton in the ribs as they left the Form-room when morning classes were over.

"My dear Wharton—"

"Ow!" ejaculated Harry. "What is it, fathead?"

"I have been turning the matter over in my mind—"

"Plenty of room there," grinned Bob Cherry.

"My dear Cherry—"

"Oh, come to the point, Toddy; life's short."

"Turning the matter over in my mind, my dear Wharton,

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it occurs to me that it would be better to extend the olive-branch of peace to Trumper, and endeavour to establish a basis of friendship," said Todd. "That, I am sure, is the step which my Uncle Benjamin would advise."

"Rats!"

"My dear Nugent—"

"My dear ass—"

"But I assure you I have thought it over, and if you asked my Uncle Benjamin's advice he would suggest that you should go to Trumper, and take him gently by the hand, and say, 'My dear Trumper—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, my dear fellows—"

"Toddy, old man, you ought to be on the cinematograph," said Harry, laughing. "You see, the matter isn't so serious as all that. Trumper and I are going to slog one another, but we shall finish up jolly good friends, I expect. Nothing like punching a chap's head to make him like you."

"My dear—"

"Nuff said!"

The chums strolled off, leaving Todd shaking his head seriously. As they sat down to dinner Harry Wharton remarked:

"I think we'll take the gloves along with us, Franky, and we'll have them on if the Courtfield chaps are agreeable."

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

Wharton ate a light dinner. Then Nugent fetched two pairs of boxing-gloves from the gym., and they put on their coats and caps to go out.

As they came downstairs Alonzo met them on the first landing. The Duffer of Greyfriars was looking very serious.

"My dear Wharton—" he began.

"Hallo! Do you want to be my second?" asked Harry cheerfully.

Todd blinked at him.

"Certainly not, Wharton. I disapprove of these proceedings entirely. I am very much inclined to say—Ow!"

Todd did not mean to say "Ow!" but he did say "Ow!" Bob Cherry had pinched him to cut short his flow of eloquence, and he had succeeded. But it was not safe to play any sort of a prank upon Alonzo Todd. One could never foresee the full results. Todd staggered, and made a wild clutch at the juniors as his feet slipped on the stairs. He caught Harry Wharton round the neck, and they rolled on the stairs together.

"Oh!" gasped Harry.

"Help!" stammered Todd, in a muffled voice.

Harry made a grasp at the banisters, and stopped himself. Todd clung to him, gasping. The juniors rushed to the rescue, and dragged them up.

Harry's face was very white, and he was compressing his lips to keep back a sound of pain. Nugent looked at him anxiously.

"Not hurt, Harry?"

"My wrist!" said Harry quietly.

"Great Scott! What's the matter with it?"

Wharton held up his hand. The wrist had struck against the banister with great force, and there was a big bruise already forming there. The skin was blackening over the joint. Wharton's lips set harder.

"Hang it!" he said. "It hurts like thunder! I sha'n't be able to do any punching to-day, old man."

"My hat!"

"Dear me!" gasped Todd. "I'm so sorry!"

"Oh, get out, you chump!" exclaimed Harry crossly.

"You've mucked up my wrist for a day or two, and I can't meet Trumper."

"My dear, Wharton, I'm sure that my Uncle Benjamin would declare that that was a blessing in disguise—Ow!"

Todd broke off with a roar as Bob Cherry applied a heavy boot to him.

"Ow! My dear Cherry! Ow! Yow!"

Bob Cherry did not speak—he merely kicked. And after two or three goal kicks Alonzo ran. He disappeared at top speed, in a state of considerable pain and great astonishment.

"There!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We're rid of that ass and his Uncle Benjamin now! You won't be able to use that wrist, Harry?"

Wharton made a rueful grimace.

"Not to-day, Bob. I couldn't hit a fly with it."

"What about the fight?"

"It will have to be put off," said Nugent.

Wharton shook his head.

"Can't be did! Why, half Courtfield will be on the ground by this time. It can't be put off. There will have to be another champion, that's all."

"Bulstrode?"

"I suppose so."

"Rotten!" said Nugent.

But there was no alternative.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Champions.

BULSTRODE tried not to look pleased when he heard of the accident to Harry Wharton's wrist, but he could not quite succeed.

He keenly desired to be the champion selected to meet the Courtfield man. He was sure that he could lick Trumper. Bulstrode knew himself to be a good fighting-man, and he certainly had plenty of pluck, especially when he was combating in public with the general eye upon him. He wanted to reap the kudos of the victory over Trumper, and although he tried to look sympathetic when he saw Wharton's bruised and useless wrist, he could hardly keep a grin of satisfaction from his face.

"I'm the man, I suppose, then?" said Bulstrode.

"If you choose to take it on, yes," said Harry.

"Good! I'll take the job."

And so it was settled.

More than half the Greyfriars Remove had resolved to be on the scene to view the combat between the champions of the two schools. Quite a little crowd poured out of the college gates when Bulstrode started.

"We shan't want the gloves," he said loftily, as he noticed the leather bag in Nugent's hand. "I'm going to give the Courtfield chap a jolly good hammering for his cheek."

"You're not!" said Harry Wharton sharply. "There's no need to turn the affair into a beastly prize-fight. If Trumper's willing to have the gloves on, our man ought to have the gloves on."

"Quite right!" said half a dozen voices.

"Rot!" said Bulstrode.

"I leave it to the fellows," said Harry. And the fellows agreed with him, and the gloves were decided on.

Bulstrode grunted a reluctant assent. He believed that he was certain to be the victor, and he was looking forward to seeing the Courtfield champion wallowing, so to speak, in his gore.

Alonzo Todd did not accompany the party. Upon reflection, he had decided that his Uncle Benjamin would not wholly approve of the transaction, and he therefore remained away, shaking his head very gravely over the whole affair.

The juniors were not long in reaching the barn. The barn was in the corner of a field, shaded by several big trees, and though most of the leaves were off them now, they screened the spot from the road, and made it quite secluded and suitable for a little affair of honour of this sort.

Half Courtfield, as Wharton had said, was already on the ground. The expected combat had aroused as much interest at Courtfield as at Greyfriars. Youths from the age of eight upwards were there, from the "kids" of the First and Second Standards to the big fellows of the Sixth and Seventh.

Trumper, Porter, Grahame, and Solly Lazarus came at once to meet the crowd of Greyfriars fellows as they appeared.

"Good-afternoon!" said Trumper, with a grin. "So you've accepted the challenge, eh?"

"Yes, rather!" said Wharton.

"And you're the champion?"

Harry shook his head.

"I was to have been, but I've hurt my wrist," he said. "Bulstrode is going to meet you, and we've brought the gloves."

"Gloves?" said Trumper, with a grin.

"Oh, I didn't want gloves!" said Bulstrode angrily. "I've been overruled."

"Blessed if I care one way or the other," said Trumper. "But if you've got the gloves here, we may as well use them. After all, it's more or less of a friendly contest, not a giddy prize-fight."

"Just so," said Wharton.

Bulstrode sniffed.

"Oh, have your own way," he said. "I dare say the Courtfield bouncer will be glad enough the gloves are on before I've done with him."

Trumper only grinned. Bulstrode's blustering manner did not seem to irritate him, and his quietness showed a confidence in himself which looked bad for the Greyfriars champion.

"Oh, ring off, Bulstrode!" said Bob Cherry in disgust. "It's no good swanking, you know, and it will make you look an ass, too, if you get licked, after all."

"Oh, rats! Do you think that Board School bouncer could lick me?"

"Shut up!" said Wharton. "Enough of that, Bulstrode. If you say anything like that again, I'll wash my hands of the whole affair, for one."

"Oh, let him keep on," said Grahame, with a glance of scorn at the Remove bully. "He will be singing smaller soon."

"Yeth, rather," remarked Solly, in his placid way. "It seems to me that he will be thinging considerably thinnaller thoon."

"Here are the gloves," said Nugent, opening his bag.

The gloves were handed to Trumper and Bulstrode. They fitted very well. Trumper pulled his on, with Grahame's

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assistance. Grahame was seconding his chief in the encounter, while Wharton acted for Bulstrode.

Nugent also took a sponge and a towel from the bag, and a tin basin, which was filled at the little stream which ran at the end of the field.

"You've come all prepared, I see," Trumper remarked, with a grin.

"The preparedness is terrific."

"Well, I suppose it's going to be a good fight, and not a rough-and-rumble scramble," said Harry Wharton. "I suggest two-minute rounds, and one minute rests."

"Just as you like."

"Certainly!" said Bulstrode.

"Who's got a watch to keep time?"

Bob Cherry produced a big silver watch.

"I'm the man!" he announced.

"Right-ho!"

"Now, then, are you ready?"

Trumper and Bulstrode had stripped off jacket and vests, and stood in their shirt-sleeves, ready for the encounter, the gloves on their hands.

They looked a very sturdy pair as they faced one another, and the crowd joyously anticipated a good struggle between the two.

Trumper was slightly taller than Bulstrode, but he was younger, and upon the whole they seemed to be very fairly matched physically.

To a great extent, the tussle would be one of boxing skill and endurance, and it remained to be seen which had the advantage in that respect.

"Time!" said Bob Cherry.

Bulstrode did not offer to shake hands with his opponent. The fight commenced at once.

The juniors stood round in a circle, looking on, with the Courtfield fellows. There was no chipping or shoving among the rivals now. All were too keenly interested in the result of the tussle to think of anything else.

The first round started with a vigorous and vaunting attack by Bulstrode, as if he would sweep his opponent off the earth by sheer force and determination.

Trumper gave ground before him, retreating till Bulstrode had driven him half round the ring, and then he was driven to a stand, and had to back up.

But then he stopped Bulstrode's attack without much apparent effort.

The Remove bully was stopped, and he hurled himself upon the Courtfield champion again and again, in vain.

Trumper's guard was splendid.

"My hat!" Skinner remarked to Harry Wharton. "That chap knows how to box. I wonder if he learned it in a blessed County Council night school."

"He's learned it somewhere, anyway," said Harry.

"By George, yes!"

"The learnfulness of the honourable box is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "It is the cause of great surprisefulness to the esteemed Bulstrode."

"Time!"

The combat ceased, and the two champions retired for the brief rest, Bulstrode breathing very hard, and looking red and angry.

Wharton fanned his heated face, and Skinner gave him a knee to rest on. Bulstrode was decidedly exasperated, and ready to snap at anybody.

"He can box," Skinner remarked.

"Oh, a little bit," said Bulstrode; "but I'll handle him all right shortly, you'll see."

"Better look out for his left."

"Rats!"

"Skinner's right there," said Harry Wharton. "Trumper has a left-hander that needs looking out for. I've had it myself from him."

"Oh, you may have," said Bulstrode scornfully. "He won't get it in on me so easily, I promise you."

Wharton bit his lip.

"Very well," he said quietly. "I don't think you ought to be careless, though, considering that you're standing up for Greyfriars against an outside school."

"I shall lick him."

"I hope you will."

"But you don't think so!" exclaimed Bulstrode angrily.

"Is that it, Wharton?"

"Perhaps you'd better save your breath for the tussle," said Harry Wharton, drily. "No good our slanging one another now, that I can see."

"Time!"

Bulstrode stepped up to face Trumper again, but in spite of his reply to Harry Wharton, he was profiting by his warning, and he looked out very carefully for Trumper's left-hander. There was a deep silence round the ring as the rival champions closed in the second round.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Fight.

QUICK, sharp breathing, gleaming, watchful eyes, steady, tramping feet. For a minute or more the contest went on, hard and fast, but with little advantage to either side. Then came a sudden change.

Trumper, feinting with his right, let out his left, and but for the warning Bulstrode had received, he would certainly have been caught napping.

As it was, it nearly came off. But Bulstrode saved himself just in time, and countered heavily, bringing home his right full on Trumper's jaw.

The Courtfield fellow staggered back, and his hands dropped for a moment under the force of the blow.

Had Bulstrode been quicker, he might have secured a tremendous advantage just then; but he was slow, and by the time he drove his right and left in, Trumper had partially recovered his guard; but not wholly, and the blows were only partly warded, and Bulstrode's right came home in his eye.

Trumper staggered again, and fell.

He was up in a second, and Bulstrode was quick enough now, hitting at him hard and heavy as he tried to keep up, and Trumper went down again, and only the call of time saved him from a very near defeat.

Bulstrode's advantage at this moment was so great, that he seemed reluctant to obey the call of time; but a roar from Bob Cherry left no doubt on the subject.

"Time, I say! Bulstrode, get off, or I'll kick you off."

"Oh, all serene," said Bulstrode, and he walked to his corner.

"Is it all there, you cad?" muttered Solly Lazarus. "You'd take any rotten advantage you could; I jolly well know that."

"You bet!" said Porter. "But Trumper's going to lick him, that's one comfort."

Solly looked a little bit dubious. Trumper's experience in the second round certainly did not look as if he was going to lick Bulstrode.

Trumper sank rather heavily on the knee Grahame made for him, and Solly fanned him with his cap.

"How are you feeling, old chap?" asked Porter.

"Bad!" said Trumper laconically.

"Faith, and it's no wonder intirely!" said Barney O'Neil. "Sure, and you've had a rough time of it this journey, Trumper darling!"

"All there, Solly," said Solly. "Thtand up to him, old thon, and thow him what thtuff the Courtfield chaps are made of, you know."

"All right, Solly. I'm not giving in."

"Time!"

The two lads came up to the scratch again.

Trumper was a little more quiet, and a little more determined, if possible. But Bulstrode showed in his manner that success was not good for him. He was swanking openly and blatantly, and nodding confidently to his friends in the crowd. Harry Wharton's lip curled in disgust.

"That's not the way to win!" he muttered to Nugent.

"The swanking ass thinks it's all cut and dried for him now, but Trumper's only begun."

"I think so," assented Nugent.

Wharton's brows contracted.

"It would serve him right to get a jolly good licking," he said. "But we want Greyfriars to win. I wish we had put up Tom Brown or Linley instead of Bulstrode now. Blessed if I know why we allowed him to swank himself into the job."

"Well, he's in for it now," Hazeldene remarked, philosophically. "Let's hope for the best."

"Two to one on Trumper!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Rats!"

"In half-crowns or sovs., if you like," said the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Hazeldene hesitated.

"Three to one!" said Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton swung round upon the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"You won't do any of your dirty betting here!" he exclaimed. "Hold your tongue, Smith!"

The Bounder gave him an unpleasant look.

"I suppose I shall please myself," he said.

"Your mistake; you won't!"

Vernon-Smith looked defiantly at the Remove captain.

"Three to one on Trumper!" he said, raising his voice.

"Any takers?"

"Yes," said Nugent, "I'll take you—by the collar."

And he did.

The Bounder of Greyfriars was swung round, and Nugent applied a boot behind him, and Vernon-Smith travelled at a great speed out of the ring. He turned fiercely on

Nugent as he got loose, his hands clenched; but Wharton strode towards him.

"Get off the ground!" he exclaimed sharply.

"I won't!"

"I can't throw you off!" said Harry. "My wrist is too rocky for me to tackle you; but one of these chaps will. Will you oblige me by throwing that cad out, Linley?"

The Lancashire lad smiled.

"Certainly!" he said.

"Hands off, you factory cad!" shouted Vernon-Smith, as Mark came towards him.

Mark did not reply.

But he came on steadily, with his hands up, and Vernon-Smith had either to meet him or to go. He decided to go. Mark turned quietly back as Vernon-Smith hurriedly walked out of the field.

The third round of the Greyfriars-Courtfield contest was ending now.

Neither side had gained any advantage.

Trumper seemed to be recovering from the effects of his hard usage, and Bulstrode was unable to push his advantage any further, and the round ended with neither of them much the worse.

The crowd, who expected fireworks all the time, so to speak, had begun to growl. Advice was thrown to the players to play up, to go for one another, and not to keep fellows waiting all the afternoon for something to happen.

Trumper only grinned, taking no further notice than that of the advice. But Bulstrode flushed angrily, and it was noticeable that he was becoming more reckless in his attack.

"You want to be a bit more careful, old man," Wharton cautioned him; "Trumper is only waiting for a chance to drive in at you."

"Oh, rats!" was Bulstrode's gracious reply.

"Keep an eye on his left," said Skinner.

"Rubbish!"

"You'll get his left on your eye if you don't."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Nice chap to second, I don't think!" Nugent grinned.

"The sooner he gets his licking and chucks it the better."

Bulstrode scowled, and went up to the scratch again as Bob Cherry called time. The fourth round opened very cautiously on Trumper's part. But Bulstrode was determined to bring matters to a climax, and he slogged on for all he was worth.

Trumper let him gain ground, falling back step after step, to lead the Remove bully more recklessly on.

Bulstrode fell blindly into the trap.

Then came a climax, though not exactly of the sort that the Greyfriars champion wanted and expected.

Trumper drew Bulstrode into a reckless attack, and then got in with his left. Bulstrode's guard was nowhere, and Trumper's glove came crashing on the point of his jaw.

Bulstrode reeled back, his hands going blindly up—and then came Trumper's right and left, left and right, crash, crash, upon his face.

The Removeite dropped like a log.

Trumper stood over him, panting a little.

Bulstrode lay dazed.

"Licked!" roared the Courtfield crowd.

"Rot!" said Nugent. "He'll come up to time."

"Count! Count!"

Bulstrode struggled up.

Trumper would have been quite within his rights in knocking him down again as he did so, but the Courtfield leader was too chivalrous for that.

He stepped back, lowering his hands.

There was a shout from the Courtfield crowd.

"Go for him!"

"Knock him down!"

"Lay him out!"

"Go for him, you ass, Trumper!"

Trumper only grinned, and stood back. It was not in accordance with his ideas of playing the game to "go for" an enemy who was not in a fit state to defend himself, whatever the rules of the ring might allow. That Bulstrode would not have spared him under similar circumstances he knew; but that made no difference to him. He was acting according to his own ideas of the "game"—not Bulstrode's.

"Good man, Trumper!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "He deserves to win; he's better than our man all the way round, and that's the truth!"

"The betterfulness is terrific!"

Bulstrode stood dazedly, blinking at Trumper. He was almost defenceless for the moment. And if the round had been prolonged he could hardly have stood up to the Courtfield champion for a moment.

But Bob Cherry called time in a few seconds more.

Bulstrode staggered back to his corner, and dropped upon Skinner's knee with a thud, his hands hanging down, his head swimming.

"He's done!" said Snoop.
Bulstrode gave him a fierce glance.
"You fool! I'm all right!"
"You don't look it!"
Bulstrode raised his fist, and Snoop promptly retreated.
Nugent bathed Bulstrode's face without a word. Neither had the Remove bully anything to say. He had been very hard hit, but he was not beaten yet.
When time was called he stepped up to his antagonist, looking a little groggy, but savage and determined.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER. Hammer and Tongs.

"GO it, Trumper!"
"Squash him, Trumpy!"
"Pile it on!"
"Shut up, you fellows!" said Grahame, looking round. "Order there!"
"Oh, you go and eat coke, Grahame!"
"Shut up, I tell you!"
The Scottish lad had his way. All the crowd could see now that Bulstrode was getting the worst of it, and Grahame would not have anything that looked like triumphing over a fallen enemy.

The shouts died away, and the crowd looked on in silence, with tense interest.

The turn of the fight seemed to have come at last. Bulstrode attacked, but his attack was met with steady defence and counter-attack, and he received far more punishment than he gave.

Again and again Trumper's heavy blows came home, and throughout that round Bulstrode was driven round the ring under blow on blow.

By the time a rest came he was staggering and breathless.

"Time!"
Bulstrode reeled to his corner.
Wharton met him with an anxious look.
"Better chuck it now, Bulstrode," he said.
"Shut up!"
"Look here—"
"I'm not licked yet!"
"You're so near it as makes no difference. It's a confounded disappointment for us," said Harry sharply. "But it's no good going on, and playing the giddy ox. Chuck it!"
"I won't!"
"I tell you you're done!"
"And I tell you I'm not!" said Bulstrode, between his teeth. "I'll go on while I can stand. It's these confounded things that are bothering me!" He tore off the boxing-gloves. "Now I shall lick the hound!"
"Put those gloves on!"
"I'm going to finish without them!"
"You fool!" said Harry, in a low tone. "If you chuck the gloves, Trumper will do the same, and you'll get the worst of the bargain."

"I don't care what he does!"
"Will you put those gloves on?"
"No, I won't!" said Bulstrode flatly.

Wharton called across to the group round Trumper. Grahame was fanning Trumper, who was looking very fresh, considering what he had been through.

"Our man wants to chuck off the gloves," Wharton said. "Any objection on your side?"

"Better stick to them!" said Trumper good-naturedly. "I don't want to hammer the chap with my knuckles."

"Mind your own business about me!" roared Bulstrode. "I'll take the risk. I won't fight in gloves, and I didn't want them from the start. If you refuse to meet me with the bare hands you're a coward."

"Hold your tongue, confound you!" said Wharton roughly.

"I won't!"
Trumper laughed.

"Oh, I'll meet you with bare knuckles if you like!" he said. "You'll be sorry for it; but, as you say, that's your business. I'll take them off."

Trumper peeled off the gloves.
"My word!" said Solly Lazarus. "The thilly ath will be thorry for that before the next round is over, my thon!"

"Yes, rather!" said Porter. "But it's his own look-out."
"Oh, yeth, it's his own bithneth!" assented Solly. "I rather think that the nexth round will thettle him."

"Faith, and ye're right!"
"Time!"

"Now look out for fireworks!" grinned Porter.

Hammer and tongs the two combatants went at it now. Damage had been done before with the gloves on; but with the bare, hard knuckles infinitely more damage was done.

Trumper had it all his own way.
When he defended Bulstrode could not get through his guard, and when he attacked the Remove's defence was useless, and his blows came home again and again.

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Bulstrode was reeling all through the round, and by the end of it his nose was red and swollen, and one of his eyes was closed.

The crowd looked on in silence.
Bulstrode's folly in discarding the gloves was apparent to all—and to himself, too—though he would not have admitted it for a moment.

He was receiving a terrible punishment, and that round added more to his injuries than the sum total of the previous rounds.

But there was admiration for his dogged pluck in the crowd. He was sticking to his guns with dogged tenacity.

Defeated he certainly was, and yet he fought on grimly, as if determined to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

"Time!" said Bob Cherry.
Bulstrode was glad enough to leave off now. He reeled to the corner, and sank down on Wharton's knee.

Nugent bathed his face.
"Better chuck it now," said his second.
Bulstrode rapped out a curse.

"I won't, I tell you! Mind your own business!"
Harry Wharton compressed his lips. He had spoken for Bulstrode's sake. There was no longer the slightest hope that the Greyfriars champion would win.

"Very well!" said Wharton quietly.
"I'll lick him yet!" muttered Bulstrode thickly.

"The rattfulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Time!"
Bulstrode almost staggered up to toe the line.

Trumper met him, but did not put his hands up.
"Look here," he exclaimed abruptly, "you're not fit to go on! You can't stand up to me this time, at any rate. Chuck it, like a sensible fellow!"

"Mind your own business, you Board School hound!"
Trumper looked at him steadily.

"You can call me any names you please while you're in that state," he said. "I won't hit you again unless you force me to."

"Come on, you cad!"
Bulstrode struck furiously at the Courtfield fellow's face.

Trumper easily guarded the blow.
"You see, you're not fit," he remarked.

"Hang you! You low hound!" panted Bulstrode. "I'll finish you yet! Come on! Come on, if you're not a coward!"

And he rushed furiously at the Courtfield champion.

At it they went again hammer and tongs. But Trumper was sparing his enemy now. The generous lad could not bring himself to treat Bulstrode as the Remove bully fully deserved. He contented himself with defence and with putting in a light drive now and then when Bulstrode got too close.

The Removeite was exhausting himself by his tremendous efforts, and it was pretty clear that the fight would soon be over without another effort on the Courtfield fellow's part.

Bulstrode could see that Trumper was sparing him, and it made him mad with rage. He piled on the attack desperately, but he hardly touched Trumper.

"Time!" sang out Bob Cherry.
Bulstrode paused, gasping.

"I'll lick you yet!" he panted.

Trumper smiled. He did not believe that Bulstrode had another round left in him. But he underrated the obstinacy of the Remove bully. Bulstrode was blind to what was obvious to everybody else, and he never would admit defeat so long as he could stand. When Bob Cherry called time again, the Remove bully came up to the scratch.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER. The Culprit.

"MY hat!" murmured Grahame, as Bulstrode toed the line again for the eighth round of that historic battle. "My only hat! The beggar's got pluck!"

"But not very much then," said Solly. "I think he's a thilly ath! He's licked, and everybody can thee it but himsell!"

"Faith, and ye're right."
"There's life in him yet," said Porter, watching the combat closely. "My word, he does stick to it! He's got another round in him yet."

"Thilly ath!"
The Courtfield fellows watched anxiously. The stress of the obstinate fight was telling upon Trumper, though not to nearly the same extent as upon Bulstrode. There was a sporting chance that Bulstrode might pull it off yet.

The Remove bully seemed to have learned caution at last.

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He was standing chiefly on the defensive, his object being evidently to gain time and rest himself for fresh efforts.

Trumper was content to spare him.

The round resolved itself into light sparring, and neither of the two combatants seemed to receive much damage. The sting had gone out of it all.

"I say, you fellows—"

Nobody took any notice of Billy Bunter. All were too busy in watching the fight. The Owl of the Remove plucked at Harry Wharton's sleeve, and the Remove captain shook him off impatiently.

"But I say, Wharton—"

"Get away!"

"It's important."

Harry Wharton looked round, exasperated. Billy Bunter blinked at him deprecatingly through his big spectacles.

"What do you want, you fat young bounder?" demanded Wharton.

"I only want to do the decent thing," said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I've been thinking that Bulstrode and Trumper will both be jolly well knocked up by the time they've finished that tussle, and I think they ought to be looked after a bit. I was going to make a suggestion."

"Well, what is it—sharp?"

"Suppose we had some light refreshments ready for them?" the fat junior suggested. "I should be perfectly willing to walk all the way to the village and fetch them. I'd get some ginger-pop and jam-tarts, and so on—in fact, anything you like, if you say the word, Wharton."

"Not a bad idea," grinned Nugent. "Cut off, Billy!"

"Shall I, Wharton?"

"Oh, if you like!" said Harry. "Don't bother!"

"I'll go with pleasure to oblige you, Wharton. I hope you won't object to my standing treat on this occasion?" said Bunter. "Lots of the fellows say that I'm always getting treated, and never stand anything myself, so I really want you to let me pay this time."

Harry Wharton stared at him blankly.

"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"You're spoofing again, you fat fraud!"

"Look here—"

"Well, if you want to stand a feed, and pay for it, you're welcome," said Harry. "Cut off, and don't jaw."

"Very well. Shall I bring the grub here?"

"Oh, yes!"

"There's another little circumstance—"

"Time!"

The eighth round was over, and Bulstrode was not beaten yet. Wharton turned away from Bunter to look after him. The Remove bully seemed to have picked up a little, in fact. He was breathing more regularly, and seemed more steady. He looked at Wharton with a sneer through the water streaming on his face, after Frank Nugent had sponged him.

"Well, I'm not licked yet," he said.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"If you don't know when you're licked, I suppose it's no business of mine," he said. "You can keep it up as long as you like. Any sensible fellow would have chucked it after the last round."

"So you think Trumper's the better man of the two?"

"I think he's got the better of you this time."

"We'll see."

"Time!"

Bulstrode stepped up more keenly than ever to his adversary. Trumper was looking more grim now. His friends had been urging him to "wade in," and finish the obstinate Greyfriars champion, and Trumper had determined to do it.

It was the ninth round, and it was more lively than the previous one had been. The hammering on both sides was, as Hurree Jamset Rain Singh would have said, terrific.

Bunter plucked at Wharton's sleeve again. Harry turned round impatiently.

"Aren't you gone?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Cut off."

"But I'm waiting. I—I mentioned there was another little circumstance," explained Billy Bunter. "I want you fellows to let me stand treat this time—"

"Yes, that's settled."

"Er—but not quite, you know. The fact is," said Bunter, with an air of great frankness, "I'm short of money."

"How remarkable!" said Nugent. "Never been like that before, have you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! You see, I was expecting a postal-order this morning, and there's been some delay in the post," explained Bunter.

The chums of the Remove stared at him.

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"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "You don't mean to say that you're working off that old postal-order wheeze on us again, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Buzz off!"

"But, you see, I've been disappointed about a postal-order, and I really want to stand this little feed," said Bunter. "If Wharton would advance me five shillings, he could have the whole of the postal-order when it comes. What do you say, Wharton?"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really—"

Harry Wharton turned his back on the fat junior. Billy Bunter squirmed round him so as to face him again.

"You see, Wharton, if you advanced me half-a-crown, I could make it do; and, of course, I'd settle up immediately my postal-order comes this afternoon. I really think you might do the decent thing, you know. Ow!"

Wharton reached out, caught Bunter by the shoulder, and sat him down on the ground with considerable force. That was why Billy Bunter said "Ow!"

The Owl of the Remove sat there for some moments gasping. Meanwhile, the fight was going on harder and faster, harder and faster every moment.

Trumper had made up his mind to finish.

Twice Bulstrode had been down, but he had jumped up again and gone on, and now he was still holding his own, defending himself fiercely, fighting to gain time till the end of the round.

Bunter scrambled up.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"But look here, Wharton," said Bunter, in a confidential whisper, "you wanted to know who it was wrote that letter to the Courtfield chaps, didn't you?"

Wharton started.

"Do you know who it was, Billy?" he asked, bending an inquiring look upon the fat junior.

Bunter nodded.

"Yes, I'm awfully keen, you know, and I find out things, and—"

"Anybody could find out things by spying through key-holes, and listening outside doors," said Nugent.

"Oh really, Nugent—"

"Did you find this out that way, Bunter?" asked Wharton. "If you did, you can keep your knowledge to yourself. I don't want it."

"Of course I didn't, Wharton. I hope I'm an honourable chap. In fact, I saw the letter before it was sent from Greyfriars; but I wasn't going to say so, and get a licking from—anybody. If you like to stand by me—"

"I'll see you're not touched, if that's what you mean, if you tell me who wrote that caddish letter," said Harry.

"Honour?"

"Yes, of course, you young ass!"

"Good! I—I suppose you wouldn't mind lending me a couple of bob, would you, Wharton?" said Billy Bunter insinuatingly. "You see, I've been disappointed about a postal-order, and—"

Wharton could not help laughing.

"You young fraud! That's what you want, is it? Well, it's worth a bob to know the name of the cad who wrote that letter, so—"

"I said two bob."

"And I said one," said Harry, fishing a shilling out of his pocket. "You can take it or leave it."

Billy Bunter took it.

"Will you have this back out of my postal-order," he asked, "or shall I put it down to the old account?"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Who was it wrote that caddish letter to the Courtfield fellows?" Wharton asked.

Billy Bunter edged away.

"You really want to know, Wharton?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, I—I—I—"

"Well?"

"I wrote it."

"What!" roared Wharton.

Bunter scuttled off. Harry Wharton made a movement in pursuit, and then he stopped and burst into a laugh.

"The fat fraud!" he exclaimed. "He's caught me!"

"A fair catch!" grinned Nugent. "You ass! You ought to have guessed it! But you have promised now—honour!"

"The young rotter! I suppose I can't lick him now," said Wharton ruefully. "And he's got a bob out of me for giving me his own name! The fraud!"

"Hallo, there goes Bulstrode!"

Bob Cherry called time. The tenth round was over. Bulstrode lay like a log in the grass, seemingly incapable of motion.

HARRY WHARTON ran forward with Nugent, and between them they raised the Greyfriars champion to his feet.

Wharton made a knee for him, and he sat down weakly, and Nugent bathed his swollen, and bruised face, and wiped away the blood from his damaged nose.

Bulstrode blinked at him through one half-closed eye—the other was quite closed. The Remove bully was very groggy now.

"Done?" asked Tom Brown.

Bulstrode gave him a fierce look.

"Not while I can stand," he said savagely.

"Well, if you can stand now, you must be pretty hard," said the New Zealander. "You've got pluck, at any rate, if you haven't got much sense."

Bulstrode made no reply. He needed all his breath.

Bob Cherry looked towards him curiously. His business was only to call time, not to dictate whether Bulstrode should go on or not. The Remove bully was showing a dogged tenacity that surprised those who knew him best. Whether it was out of obstinacy, or for the honour of Greyfriars—whatever his motive was, he was putting up the best fight he had ever put up in his life.

"Time!"

Bulstrode staggered from Harry Wharton's knee.

"You are going on?"

"Yes."

"Good luck!"

Bulstrode went blindly forward. Trumper stepped up to meet him. There was a cheer from the Greyfriars fellows.

"Go it, Bulstrode!"

"Bravo!"

"After all," said Tom Brown, "dogged does it, you know. Bulstrode may pull it off after all."

"The doggedness is certainly terrific."

"And so will the licking be," said Hazeldene drily.

Bulstrode confronted Trumper with a savage look. The Courtfield fellow attacked hotly. He wanted to get it over.

Bulstrode retreated before his attack, many a heavy blow coming home on him, and once he staggered, and Trumper rushed in.

But it was Trumper who was reckless this time.

Bulstrode was fainting.

He guarded well, sending Trumper's hands up, and closed in, and the next moment he had his knuckles in the Courtfield fellow's face.

Crash, crash, crash!

Right and left, and right again, like a battering-ram on Trumper's face, and the Courtfield captain staggered back.

His hands were nowhere, his face was defenceless; and Bulstrode did not remember Trumper's generosity. He dashed in, hitting out with all his force, and both fists came crashing home upon Trumper's mouth.

The Courtfield captain fell like a log.

Bulstrode gasped, triumphant, eager.

"Count!" he yelled.

And the Greyfriars fellows took up the cry. If Trumper did not come up to the scratch in time, the victory was with Greyfriars.

"Count!"

But the timekeeper was already counting.

"One, two, three, four—"

Trumper staggered up. Bulstrode was ready, and he hit out, hard and savagely, as the Courtfield champion strove to rise. Harry Wharton's face was dark with disgust. This was not how Trumper had acted. But there was too much at stake for Bulstrode to think of repaying his foe's generosity in kind. He wanted to win—he meant to win—and he was prepared to go very near foul play to win.

Trumper crashed down again, but he leaped up once more like a jack-in-the-box. He stalled Bulstrode off as he gained his feet, and the Remove bully was too far gone to put the necessary vim into the onslaught. Trumper recovered his footing, and kept Bulstrode at arm's-length till time was called.

"Time!"

Both champions fairly staggered away. Trumper was looking almost as used up as Bulstrode now.

"Pile it on the next round, old fellow," whispered Grahame. "You must lick him!"

Trumper gritted his teeth.

"I'll lick him now, if it kills me," he said.

"Time!"

"Twelfth round!" said Frank Nugent. "My hat! This is a fight!"

"The fightfulness is terrific!"

"Go it, Bulstrode!"

"Pile it on, Trumper!"

The twelfth round looked like being the last. Both combatants were played out, and only kept going by sheer

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obstinacy. Both had received terrible punishment, though Bulstrode's state was much the worse of the two.

Trumper was fighting hard now—his hardest, and Bulstrode had no chance. Round and round the Courtfield fellow drove him, and blow after blow crashed upon Bulstrode's face and chest.

The Greyfriars junior was simply thumping the air now—his attack was too wild to hurt anybody, and his defence was nothing. Trumper did what he liked with him, and the round finished with Bulstrode dropping like a log to the earth.

He gave a great painful gasp as he went down, and did not move again. Nugent and Tom Brown raised him up.

He was sat upon Wharton's knee, and his face was sponged, and he was fanned; but he seemed only half conscious, and it was plain to all that he was beaten.

"Time!" said Bob Cherry crisply.

Trumper came briskly up to time.

Bulstrode did not move. It seemed doubtful if he heard.

"Time!" repeated Bob.

Bulstrode staggered from Wharton's knee.

"I'm ready!" he cried hoarsely.

He staggered towards Trumper. But his senses were reeling, and before he reached his adversary, his knees gave way, and he went to the ground. He dropped thudding on the grass almost at Trumper's feet.

The Courtfield champion waited.

Bulstrode did not move.

"He is done!" said Wharton quietly.

Bulstrode heard the words, and made a frantic endeavour to rise. But it was in vain; he rolled over with a groan.

"The game's up!" said Nugent. "We throw up the sponge. Courtfield wins!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the Courtfield crowd. "Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Bulstrode was lifted up and helped away. He was taken down to the stream, to bathe his face, and recover himself a little before he returned to Greyfriars. The Courtfield crowd were cheering their champion loudly. Trumper was looking very much damaged, but satisfied with himself.

Harry Wharton came towards him. Trumper looked at him rather doubtfully.

"You've won," said Wharton, in his frank way. "I couldn't stand up to you to-day myself, Trumper—my wrist is hurt. But Bulstrode has put up a good fight. You've won, and we own up to it. There's another matter. I've found out who wrote that caddish letter to you. It was a fellow in my Form at Greyfriars. I want to tell you we're sorry for it—to apologise for it in the name of the school."

Trumper flushed.

"You're awfully decent!" he exclaimed; and he held out his hand involuntarily.

Harry Wharton grasped it heartily enough.

"I'll see that the cad does nothing of the kind again," he said. "I dare say we shall have rows enough in the future, but there sha'n't be any hitting below the belt like that if I can help it. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Wharton—you're a good sort."

And the Courtfield fellows went off towards Courtfield, with none too much time to spare to get in to afternoon school. Trumper probably had a very uncomfortable afternoon in his class-room; but he had beaten the Greyfriars champion, and that was enough for him.

Bulstrode was feeling much more uncomfortable. He had been more hurt, and, what was more galling still, he had been beaten by the leader of the New School. Some of the fellows anxious for the honour of Greyfriars, or anxious to see another thrilling encounter, urged Bulstrode to challenge Trumper over again, and have the matter end differently.

Bulstrode said nothing. But he inwardly resolved that he would give a very wide berth in future to the champion of Courtfield County Council School.

THE END.

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STANLEY DARE

The Boy Detective

INTRODUCTION.

Stanley Dare, the Boy Detective, is engaged by a big firm of South African merchants to recover the sum of £500,000, which has been stolen from them. Dare traces the money to Vera Cruz, where he finds that it has been stolen from the original thief by a secret criminal society, one of whose members, an Englishman named Mark Sefton, has absconded with the whole of it. The young detective, disguised as a rancher, is spying on a secret meeting of the society held in a smuggler's hut, when he is discovered. "What brings you spying here? Are you tired of life?" asks Leon Scala, the chief of the assembled miscreants.

(Now go on with the Story.)

On Board the Libertad—A Dastardly Deed.

"By no means," replied Dare coolly. "But I was not aware that this islet was private property."

"How do you mean?"

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"Santissima! There are many bands of these miscreants about!" exclaimed the doctor. "It is not safe to wander too far alone after nightfall. There, the bandages are all on! Take as much rest as possible during the next few days, and in a week's time you will be able to get about again at your ordinary business, whatever it may be."

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He had no intention of attracting undue attention to himself by stating his real profession. As for a rest, it would be possible to take one for twenty-four hours, but no longer. The Libertad was to sail in thirty hours, and on board of that vessel he had learnt that Scala and two others of the gang were going to start in chase of Mark Sefton, who had made his way into Central America. They would probably land either at Chagres or Colon, at both of which ports the steamer called.

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THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

The Victor.

HARRY WHARTON ran forward with Nugent, and between them they raised the Greyfriars champion to his feet.

Wharton made a knee for him, and he sat down weakly, and Nugent bathed his swollen, and bruised face, and wiped away the blood from his damaged nose.

Bulstrode blinked at him through one half-closed eye—the other was quite closed. The Remove bully was very groggy now.

"Done?" asked Tom Brown.

Bulstrode gave him a fierce look.

"Not while I can stand," he said savagely.

"Well, if you can stand now, you must be pretty hard," said the New Zealander. "You've got pluck, at any rate, if you haven't got much sense."

Bulstrode made no reply. He needed all his breath.

Bob Cherry looked towards him curiously. His business was only to call time, not to dictate whether Bulstrode should go on or not. The Remove bully was showing a dogged tenacity that surprised those who knew him best. Whether it was out of obstinacy, or for the honour of Greyfriars—whatever his motive was, he was putting up the best fight he had ever put up in his life.

"Time!"

Bulstrode staggered from Harry Wharton's knee.

"You are going on?"

"Yes."

"Good luck!"

Bulstrode went blindly forward. Trumper stepped up to meet him. There was a cheer from the Greyfriars fellows.

"Go it, Bulstrode!"

"Bravo!"

"After all," said Tom Brown, "dogged does it, you know. Bulstrode may pull it off after all."

"The doggedness is certainly terrific."

"And so will the licking be," said Hazeldene drily.

Bulstrode confronted Trumper with a savage look. The Courtfield fellow attacked hotly. He wanted to get it over.

Bulstrode retreated before his attack, many a heavy blow coming home on him, and once he staggered, and Trumper rushed in.

But it was Trumper who was reckless this time.

Bulstrode was fainting.

He guarded well, sending Trumper's hands up, and closed in, and the next moment he had his knuckles in the Courtfield fellow's face.

"Crash, crash, crash!"

Right and left, and right again, like a battering-ram on Trumper's face, and the Courtfield captain staggered back.

His hands were nowhere, his face was defenceless; and Bulstrode did not remember Trumper's generosity. He dashed in, hitting out with all his force, and both fists came crashing home upon Trumper's mouth.

The Courtfield captain fell like a log.

Bulstrode gasped, triumphant, eager.

"Count!" he yelled.

And the Greyfriars fellows took up the cry. If Trumper did not come up to the scratch in time, the victory was with Greyfriars.

"Count!"

But the timekeeper was already counting.

"One, two, three, four—"

Trumper staggered up. Bulstrode was ready, and he hit out, hard and savagely, as the Courtfield champion strove to rise. Harry Wharton's face was dark with disgust. This was not how Trumper had acted. But there was too much at stake for Bulstrode to think of repaying his foe's generosity in kind. He wanted to win—he meant to win—and he was prepared to go very near foul play to win.

Trumper crashed down again, but he leaped up once more like a jack-in-the-box. He stalled Bulstrode off as he gained his feet, and the Remove bully was too far gone to put the necessary vim into the onslaught. Trumper recovered his footing, and kept Bulstrode at arm's-length till time was called.

"Time!"

Both champions fairly staggered away. Trumper was looking almost as used up as Bulstrode now.

"Pile it on the next round, old fellow," whispered Grahame. "You must lick him!"

Trumper gritted his teeth.

"I'll lick him now, if it kills me," he said.

"Time!"

"Twelfth round!" said Frank Nugent. "My hat! This is a fight!"

"The fightfulness is terrific!"

"Go it, Bulstrode!"

"Pile it on, Trumper!"

The twelfth round looked like being the last. Both combatants were played out, and only kept going by sheer

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NEXT WEEK: "THE SCHOOLBOY TRAITOR."

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obstinacy. Both had received terrible punishment, though Bulstrode's state was much the worse of the two.

Trumper was fighting hard now—his hardest, and Bulstrode had no chance. Round and round the Courtfield fellow drove him, and blow after blow crashed upon Bulstrode's face and chest.

The Greyfriars junior was simply thumping the air now—his attack was too wild to hurt anybody, and his defence was nothing. Trumper did what he liked with him, and the round finished with Bulstrode dropping like a log to the earth.

He gave a great painful gasp as he went down, and did not move again. Nugent and Tom Brown raised him up.

He was sat upon Wharton's knee, and his face was sponged, and he was fanned; but he seemed only half conscious, and it was plain to all that he was beaten.

"Time!" said Bob Cherry crisply.

Trumper came briskly up to time.

Bulstrode did not move. It seemed doubtful if he heard.

"Time!" repeated Bob.

Bulstrode staggered from Wharton's knee.

"I'm ready!" he cried hoarsely.

He staggered towards Trumper. But his senses were reeling, and before he reached his adversary, his knees gave way, and he went to the ground. He dropped thudding on the grass almost at Trumper's feet.

The Courtfield champion waited.

Bulstrode did not move.

"He is done!" said Wharton quietly.

Bulstrode heard the words, and made a frantic endeavour to rise. But it was in vain; he rolled over with a groan.

"The game's up!" said Nugent. "We throw up the sponge. Courtfield wins!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the Courtfield crowd. "Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Bulstrode was lifted up and helped away. He was taken down to the stream, to bathe his face, and recover himself a little before he returned to Greyfriars. The Courtfield crowd were cheering their champion loudly. Trumper was looking very much damaged, but satisfied with himself.

Harry Wharton came towards him. Trumper looked at him rather doubtfully.

"You've won," said Wharton, in his frank way. "I couldn't stand up to you to-day myself, Trumper—my wrist is hurt. But Bulstrode has put up a good fight. You've won, and we own up to it. There's another matter. I've found out who wrote that caddish letter to you. It was a fellow in my Form at Greyfriars. I want to tell you we're sorry for it—to apologise for it in the name of the school."

Trumper flushed.

"You're awfully decent!" he exclaimed; and he held out his hand involuntarily.

Harry Wharton grasped it heartily enough.

"I'll see that the cad does nothing of the kind again," he said. "I dare say we shall have rows enough in the future, but there sha'n't be any hitting below the belt like that if I can help it. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Wharton—you're a good sort."

And the Courtfield fellows went off towards Courtfield, with none too much time to spare to get in to afternoon school. Trumper probably had a very uncomfortable afternoon in his class-room; but he had beaten the Greyfriars champion, and that was enough for him.

Bulstrode was feeling much more uncomfortable. He had been more hurt, and, what was more galling still, he had been beaten by the leader of the New School. Some of the fellows anxious for the honour of Greyfriars, or anxious to see another thrilling encounter, urged Bulstrode to challenge Trumper over again, and have the matter end differently.

Bulstrode said nothing. But he inwardly resolved that he would give a very wide berth in future to the champion of Courtfield County Council School.

THE END.

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STANLEY DARE

The Boy Detective

INTRODUCTION.

Stanley Dare, the Boy Detective, is engaged by a big firm of South African merchants to recover the sum of £200,000, which has been stolen from them. Dare traces the money to Vera Cruz, where he finds that it has been stolen from the original thief by a secret criminal society, one of whose members, an Englishman named Mark Sefton, has absconded with the whole of it. The young detective, disguised as a rancher, is spying on a secret meeting of the society held in a smuggler's hut, when he is discovered. "What brings you spying here? Are you tired of life?" asks Leon Scala, the chief of the assembled miscreants.

(Now go on with the Story.)

On Board the Libertad—A Dastardly Deed.

"By no means," replied Dare coolly. "But I was not aware that this islet was private property."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean," said Dare, "that unless it is private property I have as much right here as you."

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The second night was fine, but with the sky half obscured by scurrying clouds. There was no moon, and the few stars that were visible showed but a wan light. The sea was comparatively smooth, but there was a great deal of phosphorescence in it. Now and again a gust of cold wind came sweeping across the ocean, moaning through the rigging with an unpleasant, hollow sound.

"El Norte will soon be here," observed the Mexican.

"El Norte?" repeated Dare inquiringly.

"In English the Norther," replied the Mexican. "It is a cold wind that they say comes down from the peak of Quizava. There is death in its path, señor. Along the northern horizon the sky suddenly changes from light blue to a dark lead colour. The hot atmosphere is suddenly pierced by a chill breeze that causes one to shiver. In its icy breath there is fever—the dreaded 'vomito.' The breeze becomes a tempest. Sometimes the Norther continues for days, at other times only for hours. Then it departs as suddenly as it came. See yonder on the skyline—the change!"

They were standing together by the low taffrail at the stern of the steamer. There was not another soul on that part of the deck. The dark figure of the officer on the bridge could be seen, with his back to them, and Dare just caught a fleeting glimpse of him before he turned to gaze in the direction in which the Mexican was pointing.

"You see the change?" pursued the Mexican. "The dark line that—"

Stanley Dare had leaned well over the rail, with his eyes fixed on the northern horizon. Suddenly he received a stunning blow on the head, and before he could collect himself to shout out or clutch at anything to save himself, his ankles were seized in a strong grip, and he was flung headlong over into the sea.

"It is thus that we remove those who are in our path!" muttered the old Mexican.

Leon Scala crept out of the shadows.

"That was well done, Pedro Valdez," he said. "Tomorrow they will wonder what has become of the Englishman, and no one will be able to give an answer. His disguise was good, but of the two I think yours is the best, Valdez."

The "Wrecking" Schooner—News of Mark Sefton—Across Panama by Rail—How Leon Scala was Tricked by Dare.

The cap which Stanley Dare had been wearing had, to a certain extent, deadened the force of the blow, and it is possible that to that fact he owed his eventual preservation.

He had been stunned, certainly, by the loaded stick with which the dastardly blow had been inflicted, but the plunge into the cold water had partially revived him.

When he rose to the surface he struck out wildly at first, with the mere instinct of self-preservation, not quite realising where he was or what had happened. Then he steadied himself, and gazed over the waste of waters in search of the ship. She was half a mile away already, and steaming away rapidly. The fact that he was overboard was unknown, then, to the ship's officer on duty or any of the crew. The only men who knew were those who had planned and the one who had carried out the murderous deed.

"Help! Help!"

With all the strength of his lungs he shouted, but the sound of his voice was lost in the wailing notes of the approaching norther. Again he shouted, although he knew now that it was useless. At the distance which now separated him from the Libertad it was not likely that his voice could be heard.

"They have trapped me after all," he muttered. "That old Mexican Hidalgo must have been one of the gang in disguise. But what a splendid disguise it was!"

Even then, with death staring him in the face, his professional instinct rose uppermost. He could always admire the skill or daring of a clever opponent, no matter how black a criminal he might be, and for a few moments the perfection of his enemy's "make-up" held possession of his thoughts. But the increasing roughness of the sea soon brought him back to a realisation of the imminent peril in which he was placed.

Twenty miles from the nearest land, with not another vessel in sight and a storm coming on, what hope was there of escaping death by drowning? It seemed that his was an absolutely hopeless case. To swim to land was, of course, an utter impossibility. He could do three, or even four, miles at a pinch in a calm sea, but twenty miles in a rough sea was beyond the human limit.

Still, he continued to swim on with a slow and regular stroke, for Stanley Dare was not one to give up hope entirely, however hopeless the outlook might appear to be.

A quarter of an hour passed. The cold northerly wind was howling now across the Mexican Gulf, and the rising waves were crested with foam, which sparkled like a shower of gems. Patches and streaks of phosphorescent fire, green and golden in colour, lit up the dark hollows of the waves. The effect was marvellously beautiful, and from the safe altitude of a

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ship's deck it would have been something to admire. But the beautiful effects were scarcely heeded by the young detective until, however, a peculiarity in the manner in which the phosphorescent waves were breaking a short distance from him arrested his attention. There was a regular oblong of luminous water, with a narrow, dark centre. Something was floating towards him. A few swift strokes brought him to it. It was a heavy baulk of timber, which had probably been washed overboard from a Honduras timber-ship. With a cry of thankfulness he threw his arms over it, and drew himself up until he was able to sit astride it, thus keeping his head and shoulders well above water.

Hopo revived in his breast again.

For a matter of five hours the norther howled furiously across the Gulf, and during all that time Stanley Dare was clinging to the piece of timber and being buffeted about by the seas, which over and over again broke clean over him, so that at times he feared he must surely drown even while hanging on to his friendly support.

The long hours of that terrible night, the longest, he believed, that he had ever experienced, passed at length, and the grey light of the coming dawn showed in the eastern sky. With the advent of the day the wind subsided almost as suddenly as it had risen, but a heavy sea continued to run for some time afterwards.

The sun rose in unclouded splendour, and its grateful warmth revived Dare's drooping strength a little. As the timber was carried to the crest of a wave he cast a swift glance round the visible expanse of ocean. A shout of gladness left his lips.

"A sail!"

Not a mile away from him a small schooner was in sight, bearing down towards him. He tore off his soddened jacket and waved it frantically in the air. He shouted, but his voice was too weak to carry any distance. Then across the water there came an answering shout. He was seen.

A few minutes later the schooner came sliding down the steep declivity of a wave close alongside the baulk of timber, which was cleverly "lassoed" and secured by ropes. Kindly hands lifted the young detective on to the schooner's deck; he saw the black, shining faces of negroes bending over him; then everything faded from his vision, and he sank back unconscious.

When he recovered consciousness he was lying on an old sail under a patched awning at the after-end of the schooner. A negro was at the wheel, and, as our hero staggered to his feet, he shouted out:

"Ho, captain! Yo' come hyar! Dis yer buccaman dat we fish up is all right now!"

The "captain," a fat negro, with a round, beaming face that shone as though he had just been polishing it up with an oil-rag, emerged from the cabin. He raddled up to Dare and shook him by the hand.

"You're berry neah a goner dat time, massa, eh?" he exclaimed. "How you git overboard like dat?"

"I fell overboard from the steamer Libertad last night," said Dare, who felt that it was not necessary to enter into full particulars with the worthy skipper of the Mary Evangeline. "I called out for help when I rose to the surface, but apparently no one heard me."

"Foh sure," replied the skipper. "Aboard a steamer dey keep a good look-out ahead, but dey can't bother fo' to look astern."

Having thus delivered his opinion on the manner in which a look-out is kept aboard a steamer, the skipper roared to the cook to "bring along the breakfast," which was served on some dilapidated crockery on the after-deck.

The meal was a fairly good one. There was excellent coffee, plenty of ripe bananas, fried eggs, and the famous West Indian dish known as pepper-pot.

Dare, however, decided to let pepper-pot alone on this particular occasion. It is never possible to guess what the ingredients are, but in a white man's house it is safe to say that there would be nothing in the pot that a white man wouldn't eat.

But the tastes of negroes are in some respects peculiar, and there was considerable uncertainty in Dare's mind as to what the pot contained. So, as he preferred to know what he was eating, he stuck to the bananas and fried eggs. During the meal the fat skipper informed him that the Mary Evangeline hailed from Jamaica, that she was employed in the "wrecking" trade, and that she was now bound for San Juan, Nicaragua. The "wrecking" trade was not quite so bad a business as it sounded. It simply consisted in searching the cays—reefs—and small islands of the West Indian seas for wreckage, of which a fair amount was to be found sometimes after stormy weather. There were a few schooners engaged in this precarious trade, mostly owned by negroes or half-castes.

"We do be having white passengers aboard dis little schooner foh sure," said the skipper. "Bout ten or twelve days ago, I misremember 'zactly, an English gent'man come aboard at Port Limon and went with us down to Colon. He had come down fro' Vera Cruz on the steamer, but he said he wanted to see what it was like fo' a short voyage on a sailing-ship."

"Indeed!" replied Dare, pricking up his ears. "What was he like?"

The skipper described the general appearance of his passenger, which left no doubt in Stanley Dare's mind that it was the very man he was in search of—Mark Sefton.

"I can see what his plan was," thought Dare. "He guessed that Scala and other members of the gang might pick up his trail very soon, so, to throw them off the scent, he landed from the mail steamer at Port Limon, and then took a passage in this schooner to Colon. The question now is, has he crossed the isthmus, or has he made for one of the South American ports on this side?"

The genial old black skipper was quite willing to talk about his late passenger—probably because he was the only white passenger he had ever carried—and by judicious inquiries Dare learnt that Sefton had remained two days in Colon, and then had taken the train across the isthmus to Panama. He knew that, because he—the skipper—happened to be on the platform when the train started, though his late passenger had not noticed him.

In due course the schooner reached San Juan, and Dare bade good-bye to the worthy old skipper. He was not able to make him a present then, but later on the skipper's heart was gladdened by a sum which enabled him to buy a share in a larger vessel engaged in a more legitimate trade.

From San Juan the young detective caught the Royal Mail steamer to Colon, where he was able to obtain an advance of money and some fresh clothes, for he had only the things which he stood up in.

He could not find out anything either about Leon Scala or his associates at Colon. The Libertor had, of course, sailed, and the steamer's agents said that a number of second-class passengers had disembarked there, but he could not give their names. The pretended Mexican hidalgo, however, whose name on the passenger-list was Castello, had quitted the steamer at Port Limon. The agent was able to give this information, as the pretended hidalgo was a first-class passenger.

"They have traced Sefton as far as that port evidently," thought Dare. "But the chances are, they won't pick up the scent again easily, unless one of them crosses over to Panama on the mere chance of running him to earth there."

And this is precisely what one of them had done. Stanley Dare landed at Colon at ten o'clock in the morning, and had transacted all the business he had to get through in that town by two o'clock in the afternoon. A train left Colon at half-past two, and in this the young detective travelled. The isthmus is forty-six miles across, and the train took two hours to do the journey, for they don't believe in too much haste in that part of the world.

At Panama, Stanley Dare drove to a quiet hotel facing the bay. As he was entering his name in the hotel register he became conscious that he was being watched by a man who was standing at the door of the billiard-room. He turned suddenly, and found himself face to face with Leon Scala!

Possibly a more astonished man than Scala at that moment was not to be found in the whole of Panama. His sallow, white-brown complexion turned positively green, for to him Stanley Dare was as a man who had risen from the dead. He had been stunned and flung overboard in the Gulf of Mexico, just as a Norther was coming on, and twenty miles from land. Scala and Valdez had reckoned that he would sink like a stone, but even if he rose to the surface, there did not seem to be the slightest possible chance of his being saved.

And now he was here in Panama, calmly writing his name in a hotel register, and looking as healthy and strong as anyone need wish to.

Stanley Dare "took the bull by the horns" at once, and, stepping close up to Scala, said:

"I have a little account to settle with you, Senor Leon Scala, and I think we will settle it at once. When I have stated my story to the police, I fancy they will provide you with comfortable and permanent quarters in the gaol here."

"You are mistaken," replied Scala coldly. "My name is Murillo. I have not had the honour of your acquaintance."

He would have moved away, but the young detective gripped him by the arm, and detained him.

"I have no doubt you find it convenient to change your name pretty often," said Dare. "The name you bore in Vera Cruz was Leon Scala, and that is good enough for me. Possibly it may be well known to the police here, so that is why you have changed it. I shall soon find out."

The fellow's eyes blazed with fury, and his hand went round to his hip pocket, where he kept his revolver. But Dare wrenched it away again.

"Don't try that game," he said sternly. "Bring your hand back in front of you."

Scala obeyed sullenly. He was in an awkward plight, and, as Dare had guessed, he was by no means anxious that the police should become acquainted with his real name. He knew that Dare could not charge him with having been accessory to his attempted murder in the Gulf of Mexico, because he had no proof—or, at least, no legal proof—that he had any hand in the affair. At the same time, as there was no knowing what card the young detective meant to play, he decided that the best thing he could do was to give him the slip, and shift his quarters.

"Since you persist in your statement," he said, "I will accompany you to the police-office. What punishment the law of this country deals out to a man who makes a false and malicious accusation, I know not; but I assure you, Senor Ingles, you shall have the full benefit of it."

"You waste time in talk," replied Dare. "Come along!" "First," returned Scala, "we will go to the manager of the hotel whom I shall require as a witness."

He crossed the corridor, and, pushing open a small door, disappeared. Dare tried the door immediately afterwards, and found that it was locked on the inside.

"He is going to bolt," he said, "which is precisely what I want him to do. Had he but guessed it, I have as little desire as he has to have anything to do with the police of this city, but for a different reason. They are so open to bribery and corruption that, unless I fell in with their views in this respect, my movements would be so hampered that I should be thrown off the trail altogether. By the way, I should like to see whether Scala does leave the hotel or not. The roof of the building is used as a sort of open-air smoking-room; I can get a view all round from there."

There was only one person on the roof when he got up there—a thin, sallow-faced Spaniard, who was just rousing from his siesta. Stanley Dare walked to the parapet. Down a side street he saw an open conveyance, something like the vehicle called a "fly" in England, being driven rapidly away. It had evidently just come from the side entrance of the hotel. A man was in it. He glanced round as Dare watched, and the light of the setting sun fell upon his face. It was Leon Scala!

The young detective went downstairs again, and, after having given orders for his dinner, went out on to the portico of the hotel, and sat down in one of the lounge-chairs

to consider what his next move should be.

He did not believe that Mark Sefton was still in Panama, but it was more than probable that he remained in the city for a few days. It would be necessary to start inquiries that very evening to try and trace him.

While he sat there a boy came up the steps with a note.

"I have to deliver it to the Senor Murillo," he said, holding it up.

Murillo was the name by which Leon Scala was known at the hotel.

Here was a chance of gaining information of the enemy's movements not to be

missed. He stretched out his hand lazily.

(Another long instalment of this splendid detective story next week.)



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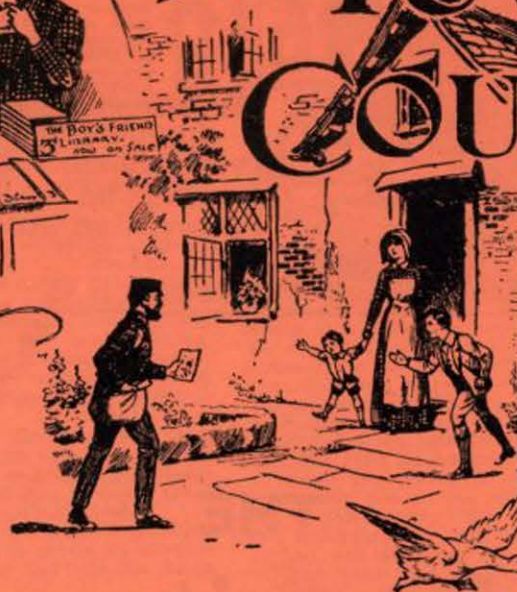


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