

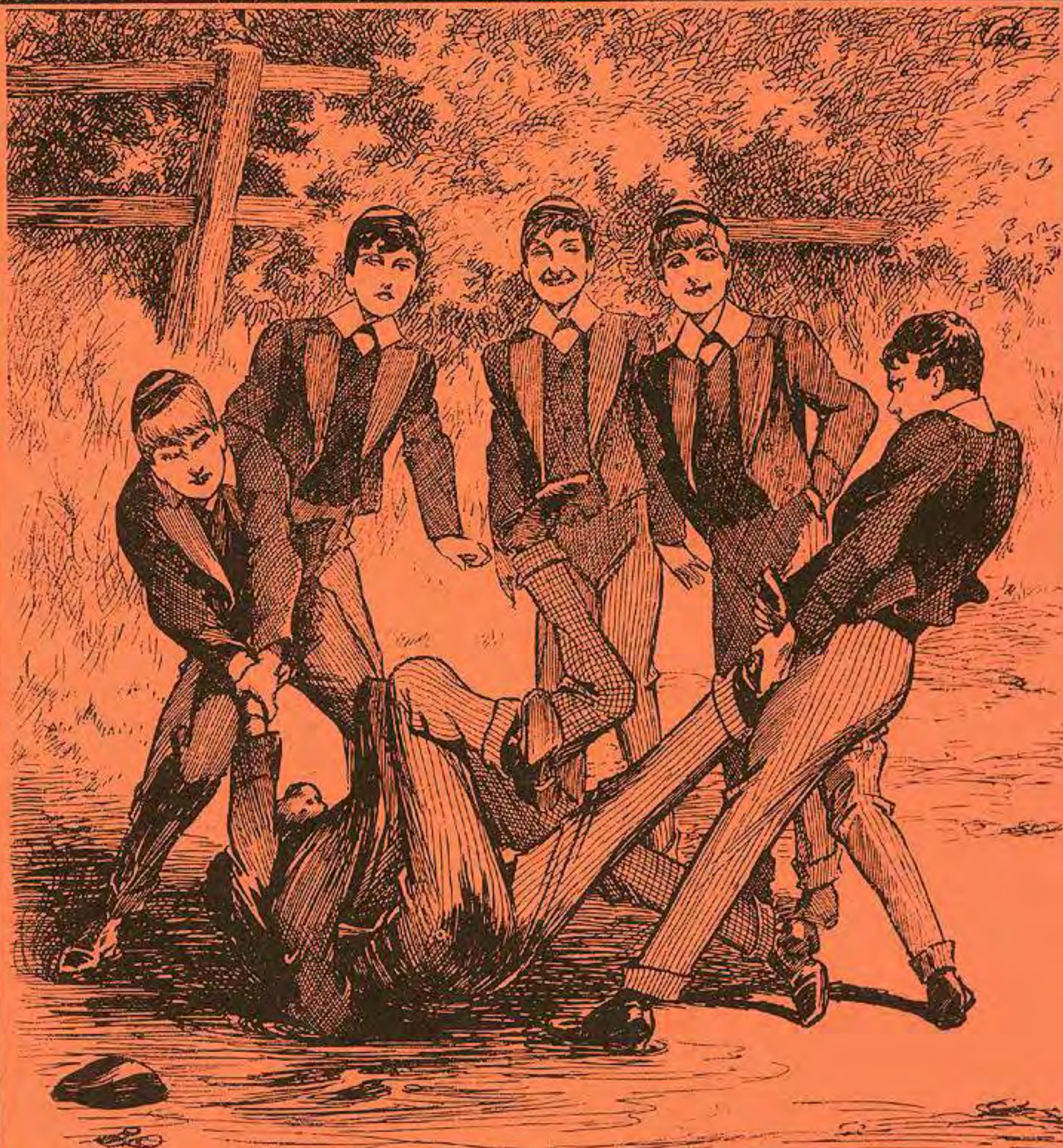
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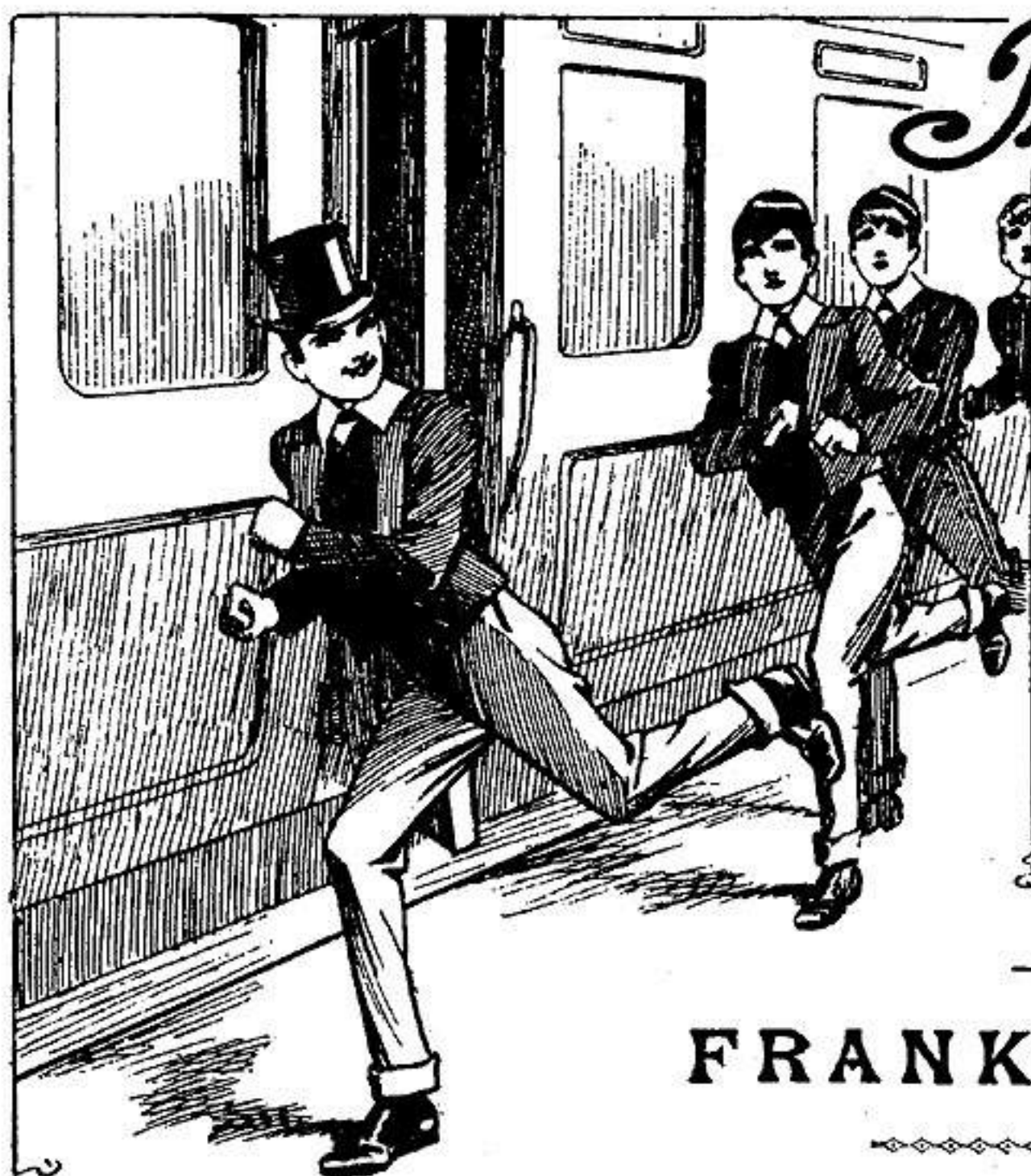
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The New Page.

A Splendid, Long,
Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Strange Letter.

"DEAR me!" Mr. Quelch, Form-master of the Remove at Greyfriars, looked up from his paper in surprise. It was seldom Dr. Locke, the Head, became responsible for thinking aloud, and yet the words appeared to come from him.

"Dear me! Bless my soul!"

Dr. Locke uttered the words in a perfectly audible tone. There could be no doubt on the point at all this time.

Mr. Quelch put his paper down.

"Is anything the matter, sir?" "Ah, I am afraid I have been thinking aloud!" exclaimed the head-master, with a slight start. "But this is very extraordinary! I—I cannot quite understand it!"

Mr. Quelch waited patiently. It was rather a rare occurrence for the Head to find himself at a loss to explain anything.

His face showed that he was very much at a loss indeed this time, though.

"It is about the new boy expected to-day," the Head exclaimed, turning a letter over in his hand. "He is to arrive by the five o'clock train."

"Ah! Sir Edmund Jolly's son?"

"Yes— Oh, of course, I told you about the lad, didn't I?" went on Dr. Locke. "I only consented to allow his being entered at Greyfriars on the condition that the ridiculous boy does his best to—to alter very considerably. I knew he had been to several schools before, but—but I think I should have hesitated if I had known the number of schools was sixteen."

"Sixteen?"

"So his father tells me in this letter," added the Head anxiously. "The letter also explains that the absurd lad left each school for a variation of the same fault—for what his father describes as 'an irresistible inclination for practical joking.'"

Mr. Quelch's mouth closed in rather a grim line. A shadow of a still more grim smile crept for an instant into his face.

The Form-master of the Remove of Greyfriars did not believe in "irresistible inclinations for practical joking." He was conscious of a momentary hope that the lad who was supposed to be so inflicted would be placed in the Remove Form.

Mr. Quelch was, and knew he was, a strong-charactered man in some ways.

The Head was still reading the letter in snatches.

"Dear me, this is certainly an extraordinary letter for a father to write!" he exclaimed, after a short pause. "Sir Edmund says that his son is not altogether to blame for his weakness—that a love of practical joking is in the Jolly family. He then goes on to say that he hopes our firmness here will not become severity, that the lad's unfortunate weakness will be cured by kindness—I am giving you Sir Edmund's words, Quelch."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, isn't it extraordinary?"

"One would almost be led into thinking that the father has the son's weakness as well," said the Form-master drily, "and that that letter is also a practical joke."

"One would indeed! There is a postscript. Quelch, listen to this."

Mr. Quelch listened.

The Head read out the few words very deliberately.

"I would advise someone being sent to the station to meet my son," the doctor was reading. "I have advised this course at all his previous schools, and when it has been disregarded startling consequences have resulted. On one occasion my son stopped on the way from the station to the school in order to paint an inoffensive cow light blue. I should be sorry if anything of this nature should happen to mar the pleasantness of his entry into Greyfriars."

Dr. Locke concluded the long postscript, and looked across at the Form-master over the top of his glasses. There were very curious expressions on the two men's faces, although very different ones.

"It is painful to me that a man of Sir Edmund's position in the world should descend to write such nonsense!" snapped the Form-master. "It is apparent to me that the writing of that postscript has given the writer an immense amount of absurd pleasure."

"I am inclined to agree with you, Quelch."

"What is excusable in a boy may easily become reprehensible in the man," went on the Form-master warmly. "I regret to say that I shall find it difficult to think of Sir Edmund with the same admiration his political work has always induced in the past."

"He certainly fails to appear duly sensible of the disgrace attending his son's many expulsions—"

"From the letter I should say the expulsions have caused him considerable amusement," said Mr. Quelch almost angrily.

"The—the postscript certainly suggests that," admitted Dr. Locke, still turning the letter over in astonishment. "The five o'clock train."

"Shall you send anyone to meet him, sir?"

"Yes, I really think I had better do so," exclaimed the Head, still rather undecided. "Will you ring the bell, please?"

The bell was rung, and Mr. Quelch stood facing the doctor. The Form-master hesitated for a moment.

"May I make a suggestion, sir, before you send for anyone?"

"Certainly."

"Then I would suggest that nothing is said about our reason for sending an escort," exclaimed the Form-master. "I think we should be going a long way towards defeating our own ends if we allowed any of the boys to put this absurd lad on a pedestal because of his reputation. The honour a practical joker receives in the Remove is not always a correct valuation."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 165.

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"Thank you, Mr. Quelch! I appreciate your point of view."

"Thank you, sir!"

Gosling, the school porter, answered the bell. That was one of his duties now that the page-boy had been called home on account of illness there, and it would continue his duty until a lad arrived to take temporary duty.

Page-boy work went a good deal against the grain with Gosling, but his expression of indignation was completely lost upon the Head.

"Ah, Mr. Quelch, will you please tell Gosling which lad you consider most suitable for this undertaking?"

The Form-master looked up.

"A junior, sir?"

"Yes, I think it had better be a junior. A senior would—er—cause considerable comment."

"Yes, of course. I think Wharton is to be trusted, doctor."

"Yes, Wharton. Gosling, please tell Master Wharton that he is to come to this room at once."

Gosling departed with an expression nearly approaching a grin on his rugged face.

"Which is nice goings hon!" he mused. "First a page-boy then a messenger! Wot I says is this 'ere— Master Wharton!"

The last words were uttered in a loud voice, and a well-built, handsome junior stopped on his way along the passage. "Hallo!"

Harry Wharton, of the Remove of Greyfriars, looked at the approaching porter inquiringly. The three juniors who were with him also stared.

Bob Cherry appeared a trifle uneasy.

"He's come from the Head's room, kid—"

"What's the wheeze, anyway?"

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders with a pleasant laugh.

"A mare's nest specially discovered by Gossy, I expect," he exclaimed. "What's up, Gossy?"

"Which is nice goings hon, and no mistake!" breathed the porter, in deep disgust. "I works 'ard as a porter, then I'm supposed to work 'arder still as a page-boy, an' now I'm called to work my fingers to the bone as a messenger. Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Say it, then, ass!" exclaimed Frank Nugent impatiently.

"What's happened, Gossy?"

"Which is nice goings hon, an' no mistake!" snorted the porter. "I don't know wot you've done, but it's found out. You're to go to the 'Ead's room at once, Master Wharton."

"Phew!"

Harry whistled in surprise.

It was very seldom a junior was sent for by Dr. Locke, and on the rare occasions it did happen, unpleasantness was often the result.

Harry Wharton exchanged glances with the other juniors.

Bob Cherry looked more uneasy than ever.

"Sounds rotten, anyway."

"The rotfulness of it is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, softly. "The esteemed Wharton will perhaps discover that the rotfulness is more than terrific."

Harry Wharton looked puzzled for a moment or two, then laughed easily enough.

Of course, there were many minor affairs he would rather had not come to the doctor's ears, but they were minor affairs, after all. It was at such moments as these that a clear conscience was a valuable asset.

"See you kids later," he said cheerily. "Don't suppose I shall be long."

Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and the nabob looked after his retreating figure anxiously.

Harry Wharton might have looked a good deal surprised if he knew with what concern his chums viewed any untoward happenings which might affect the popular captain of the Remove.

They waited in the passage with growing anxiety as the moments slipped by.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

To Meet the New Fellow.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry sang out the greeting loudly. Harry Wharton had just come round the bend in the passage again.

The captain of the Remove looked very puzzled.

The others crowded round him quickly.

"What's the wheeze, kid?"

"Is there a row—?"



Billy Bunter pushed the game-pie from him with a splutter. "Ow-oh! It's beastly—absolutely beastly!" he groaned. (See page 18.)

"What's happened?"

Harry Wharton had his hands in his pockets, and the puzzled expression did not disappear.

"Blest if I can make it out!" he muttered. "What's the time?"

"Twenty to five," said Frank Nugent, in growing surprise. "Why?"

"The whyfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Wharton—"

"Dry up, Inky!" put in Bob Cherry hastily. "Has anything happened, Wharton?"

Harry shook his head.

"No, I can't say that anything has happened really," he admitted, "but it's pretty strange. The Head wants me to meet the new boy at the station."

"My hat!"

Bob Cherry looked as puzzled as the captain of the Remove now.

Very frequently the Famous Four went out of their way to meet new juniors at the station, but it was seldom they were asked to do so by the Head. Bob Cherry began to grin after a moment or two.

"Good egg! It'll be rather a rag, kids—"

"No, that's what it won't be; there's to be no ragging at all," said Harry Wharton, in the same surprised voice.

"The doctor's orders are that we are to meet this new boy—Jolly is his name—and that we are to bring him to Greyfriars direct. The Head made me give my word that not a single jape should be played upon him."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 165.

NEXT
WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

"My hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Explain the whyfulness, my esteemed and pugnacious Wharton."

The captain of the Remove shook his head again.

"Can't be done, Inky. Blessed if I know! Of course, I promised there should be no japes; but that isn't all."

"My aunt!"

"The Head also made me promise that I would not lose sight of the new kid from the moment he got out of the train until he was safe at Greyfriars," added Harry.

"Jolly funny, I call it!"

"The funnyfulness of it is terrific—"

"And—and Mr. Quelch said he thought it would be as well if I caught hold of young Jolly's arm, and kept hold of it all the way!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "He said that quite seriously."

"My only Uncle Bunter!" observed Bob Cherry, who had unwittingly claimed relationship with the Owl of the Remove because of Billy Bunter's approach at that moment.

They were all looking at Billy Bunter, but no one was really thinking of him. Bunter trotted up, his superfluous stoutness shaking on account of the unwonted exertion. He caught Wharton by the arm.

"I'm coming with you, Wharton!" he panted. "I—"

"Eh?"

"I am coming with you to meet the new fellow," explained Billy Bunter. "A new fellow will feel bound to stand a feed on the way from the station, and it will be

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

rotten for him if there is no one there to do justice to his spread—"

"Rats!"

"Really, Wharton—"

Harry turned his back on the greedy Remove junior, and buttoned his coat.

"I suppose you chaps are coming?"

"Rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific," observed the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I think we shall have the esteemed company of the ludicrous Alonzo."

But Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent were already hurrying towards the door. If they were to gain the station in time to meet the five o'clock train there was no time to be lost.

Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, dug Billy Bunter in his ribs with a bony knuckle.

"Oh!" yelled Billy Bunter. "O-ow!"

Alonzo blinked in surprise.

"My dear Bunter—"

"O-oh—"

"My dear Bunter, endeavour to moderate your tones," said Alonzo Todd severely. "My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me—"

"Blow your Uncle Benjamin! Wharton, wait for me! Wharton!"

Billy Bunter ambled on, and Alonzo trotted after him. The Duffer of Greyfriars caught the fat junior by the arm.

"My dear person, why are you hurrying? My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that undue haste, unless for a substantial cause—"

"Well, isn't a feed a substantial cause?" demanded Billy Bunter indignantly. "A new boy is coming in by the five o'clock train, and he's bound to stand a feed. I shall put it to him very firmly. It's up against new kids to stand feeds. Could you land me six bob, Todd?"

"No," said Todd. "So a new boy is coming to Greyfriars? My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me the necessity of making smooth the way of others—"

"Land me half-a-crown, then. I am rather pressed for money until a postal-order I am expecting from some titled friends arrives—"

"No," said Alonzo. "I will suggest to Wharton that he and the others wait outside the station while I meet this new-comer to Greyfriars. He is likely to be flurried by a large concourse of juniors. I rather wished to go for a walk, but my Uncle Benjamin always said that one should go out of one's way to facilitate in solving the life problems of others."

"Make it a shilling, then," said Billy Bunter, who was inclined to play upon one string when that string was money. "A tanner would do."

"No," said Alonzo. "I remember my Uncle Benjamin once said—"

"Blow your Uncle Benjamin!" said Billy Bunter heatedly.

"I believe he was as big an ass as you are, anyway. Yah!"

And the Owl of the Remove ambled on ahead to join Mark Linley and John Bull junior, both of the Remove.

Mark Linley saw Billy Bunter coming, so hurried on at a quiet trot, which was beyond the fat junior's powers, and he hesitated.

He never had succeeded in creating much of an impression with John Bull, junior, the hard-hitting, strong-charactered Removeite, who had surprised Greyfriars so by knocking out Bulstrode on his first day at the old school.

Bunter decided to move cautiously.

"I've been looking all over the place for you, Bull—"

"Good!" said John Bull, junior, in his abrupt way.

"You've found me now. Nothing like being born lucky!"

Billy Bunter gasped a little, and ambled along in silence by the solidly-built junior for a few yards. John Bull was not an easy fellow to "spoof."

The Owl of the Remove adjusted his big spectacles, and tried again.

"I say, Bull—"

"What-ho!"

"I say, Bull, some titled friends of mine are writing to me to-day—"

"Go hon!"

"Yes, really; and, of course, they will send a postal-order."

"Good!" said John Bull pleasantly. "I've come out without any tin. Could you let me have half-a-sovereign until we get back again, Bunter?"

And because Billy Bunter could do nothing but gasp, John Bull decided to walk on. He caught Harry Wharton up, and broke in upon the conversation in the outspoken way which was so pleasant in him, but might easily have been objectionable in another junior.

"Going to meet a new kid, aren't you, chaps?"

"Yes—"

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"Can I come?"

Harry Wharton nodded briskly.

"Glad of your company, kid," the captain of the Remove said heartily. "You coming as well, Linley?"

Mark Linley, the Lancashire junior, nodded.

"Rather! Is it a jape—"

"Is anyone else coming?"

"Yes, I am," panted Billy Bunter. "I was going into the town to see the post-office people about a letter containing a postal-order, which must have gone astray in the post—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Really, Wharton—"

"Anyway, it's about the only thing Bunter doesn't eat," put in Skinner, who rather enjoyed his reputation as the humourist of the Remove. "I'm coming as well, Wharton, and so is Bulstrode."

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry exchanged glances.

They could not very well tell Bulstrode he was not wanted, but he certainly was not.

Even in ordinary circumstances, Bulstrode was not the fellow to take to meet a new boy. Bulstrode was something of a bully by nature, though plucky enough, and it was not in keeping with the views of the Famous Four that a new fellow should be introduced to a bully right at the onset of his life at Greyfriars.

Bulstrode pushed his way through the small crowd heatedly.

"Don't you want me to come, Wharton?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I don't."

"The factfulness of that is terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, in his soft, silky tones.

Bulstrode went red.

"I'm coming, anyway!" he snorted.

Harry Wharton hesitated for a moment. The Head had said he could take some of the juniors with him to meet the new boy, but he had not said how many.

Harry was sorry he had not kept the affair quieter, but it was too late to think of that now.

"Oh, as many of you can come as like!" he said, walking on. "The only thing is, there's to be no japing."

"What rot!"

"It isn't rot at all, Bulstrode," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Head's orders, as it happens. If there's any ragging there'll be a fine old row, I can tell you. Ready, chaps?"

The little party moved on with a swinging stride, the Famous Four leading the way.

Harry Wharton was very silent for once. He could not help thinking over the Head's words.

The old school-master had been very serious when he had extracted the promise from the junior that there should be no tricks played, and the Head had not been the only one serious on this point.

Harry remembered that Mr. Quelch had also laid particular stress on this condition attending the visit to the station—in fact, the Form-master's last words had been to that effect.

Harry Wharton could not help feeling a good deal puzzled about the affair.

Bob Cherry was silent, too, but from a different reason. He was wondering whether fortune was going to favour the Remove once again, and produce a footballer in the latest addition to the school ranks.

"A half, that's what we want," Bob Cherry was musing—"a really sound half."

The same thought was running in Bob's mind as they gained the station, but it was not destined to remain there, though, when once the station barrier was passed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Jolly.

"TRAIN'S in!"

Harry Wharton called out the words quickly, and sprinted forward. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent dashed up the station steps after him.

"Sprint for it!"

"As hard as you can, chaps!"

The station official, waiting to collect tickets, nodded friendly. He allowed the panting juniors to pass him without a word.

With a rush, Harry Wharton dashed along the platform, for the train had come to a standstill a good way down.

"There he is!"

"There's the kid!"

It was almost dark by now, but the twilight was sufficient for the leading juniors to catch sight of the only alighting passenger who could possibly be a new boy for Greyfriars.

A by no means badly built, rather sober-faced youngster was in the act of leaving a first class compartment. Harry Wharton darted forward.

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"Jolly—is your name Jolly?"
 "Yes, the esteemed name is on his equally esteemed bag,"
 breathed the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The correctfulness of our
 guess is terrific."

"Your name Jolly?"
 Bob Cherry repeated his question at the same time the
 Indian made his remark, and a dozen or so yards still separ-
 ated them from the first-class compartment. Then Bob
 Cherry gasped with astonishment.

The new boy did not answer the question; he coolly turned
 round, and entered the train again instead.

It was an instant or two before Bob Cherry recovered from
 the surprise to remember what Harry Wharton's instructions
 were.

He remembered, now, though, and raced on.
 The Head and Mr. Quelch had said that Jolly was to be
 taken direct to the college; that his arm had better be held.
 Dr. Locke was in the enviable position of being obeyed with-
 out question by the great majority of Removites.

"Look out!"
 Frank Nugent breathed the words excitedly.
 The new boy had slammed the door of the first-class com-
 partment to before another step had been taken. Harry
 Wharton dashed up, and seized the handle.

"All change, ass; this is a terminus."
 "The terminusfulness of it is terrific."
 "My only Aunt Jane!"

Harry Wharton had wrenched open the door again, and was
 staring into the compartment in blank amazement. It was
 empty of any sign of the new fellow, except that his hat-box
 was reposing on the hat-rack.

"He's cut—"
 "But—"
 "Look ass, the door!" shouted Frank Nugent. "The
 door's open."
 "My aunt!"

With a violent start, Harry Wharton understood. It was
 the other door Frank Nugent was referring to.

The moment young Jolly had closed the one door, he must
 have opened the opposite one. Harry Wharton and the others
 had no doubt about the matter that he had escaped that way.

The captain of the Remove sprang into the compartment
 hastily.

"He's escaping through the goods' yard. Altogether,
 chaps!"

"Right-ho!"
 "The right-hofulness of it is terrific!" exclaimed the
 Indian chum of the Remove. "My esteemed Bunter, please
 remove your esteemed foot from my toe."

"Come on!"
 The Indian was swept aside, and the juniors filed through
 the compartment in an excited string, jumping out on the
 line at the other side at a great pace.

Bulstrode was one of the last, because he could not squeeze
 past Billy Bunter. There were very few people at Grey-
 friars who could squeeze past the Owl of the Remove when
 the Owl did not wish to be squeezed past.

"Out of the way, ass!"
 "Oh, I say, Bulstrode!"
 "Out of the way! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode gave a violent push. Violent pushes had little
 effect on Billy Bunter, as a rule, but he happened to be on
 one leg at that moment, the other foot feeling for the step.
 The other foot never succeeded in its mission.

With a yell the Owl of the Remove floundered out of the
 compartment, and flung his arms round Skinner's neck.
 Skinner was supposed to have a sense of humour, and very
 likely he had; but there are occasions when a sense of humour
 is out of place.

Had the point been raised, Skinner would have held to it
 that this was one of the occasions.

"Oh!" he yelled. "O oh—o-oh!"
 And he dived gracefully into the small of John Bull's back.
 John Bull junior grinned, and scrambled out of the way,
 and Skinner was under the impression that at least a portion
 of the train was pinning him down.

It was only Billy Bunter, as a matter of fact, but Bunter
 was nothing of a light weight.

"Gerrup—gerrup—"
 Skinner's voice sounded painfully weak, while the only
 answer Billy Bunter gave to the remark was a grunt. He
 was just beginning to recover from his shock, when a voice
 rang out behind him.

"Wharton, here is our esteemed young friend. Wharton
 the assfulness of our esteemed selves is terrific."

The last to leave the compartment, the Nabob of Bhanipur
 cast a parting glance round at the seats, and there were
 few things that escaped his keen eyes.

He had caught a momentary glimpse of someone tucked
 snugly beneath the seat.

"Wharton—"
 But there was no need to call again. Harry was coming
 back across the goods' yard at a fine pace now.

"What's the row? What's up? My hat!"

"He was under the esteemed seat."

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NEXT
 WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

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 PENNY.

"My hat!"
 Harry Wharton understood in a flash, and, junior as he
 was, he could not help feeling conscious of admiration at the
 new fellow's trick.

Of course, Jolly must have got under the seat the moment
 he had shut one door, and opened the other, and the quick-
 ness with which he had worked the plan appealed to the
 captain of the Remove. He felt more interested in the new
 fellow than ever now.

With Bulstrode it was different.
 Bulstrode was conscious of nothing except exasperation that
 the new junior had tricked them, and he made a rush for
 the compartment again.

Harry Wharton made a rush at the same moment, and
 although Harry was a trifle in front, Bulstrode refused to
 give way.

A moment of precious time was lost, as both struggled
 to climb up on the step, and already Jolly had given good
 proof that he was not one to let the grass grow under his
 feet.

He was out on the platform again before either Harry
 Wharton or Bulstrode had gained the compartment.

"Ass—"
 "Get out of the way, you idiot!"
 "Of all the asses, Bulstrode!" gasped Harry, pushing his
 way past the other junior desperately. "He'll get away! Stop
 him—stop him!"

The new fellow was racing along the platform at a tre-
 mendous pace, searching in his pockets all the time. As he
 gained the barrier, he had found what he had been searching
 for, his ticket.

"Stop him—stop him!"
 Harry Wharton's voice rang out loudly as he pounded
 after the new junior, but his words fell on unheeding ears.

The station official at the barrier had been in Friardale for
 a good many years now, and he was used to exciting scenes
 on the arrival of new boys. He was rather a sportsman, too,
 in his own peculiar way.

"Stop him! Why don't you stop him, ass?"
 "Not fair, Master Cherry!" grinned the man. "Give the
 youngster a chance. He can run, an' no mistake!"

"Ass!" yelled Bob Cherry; and he pelted down the steps
 level with Harry Wharton.

The other juniors came racing along after them. Frank
 Nugent and Hurree Singh only a few yards behind. The
 Indian was running beautifully.

"Can you see him, kid?"
 "He's somewhere in front!" shouted back Wharton. "He's
 going up Friardale Lane."

"He is just near the old barn," said the Nabob of
 Bhanipur. "I can see his esteemed figure distinctly."

"Must have the eyes of a cat, then!" panted Bob Cherry.
 "On the ball!"

"Watch for his cutting across the field, Inky."
 "The watchfulness shall be terrific."

"Hooray! We're gaining!"
 A hundred yards were raced out in dead silence, then
 Harry Wharton's voice sounded again.

"There he is—just in front!"
 "Hooray!"

"He's stopped!"
 "The stopfulness is terrific, but—"

Bulstrode had managed to draw up with the others, and
 he dashed in front of Hurree Singh. It was very un-
 fortunate for all concerned that he did so, because his burly
 form completely obstructed the Indian's view.

If that had not been the case, the nabob's keen eyes
 might have stood the chums of the Remove in good stead
 that night.

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As it was, Bulstrode considered that he had very neatly taken the wind out of Harry Wharton's sails, for he managed to get in front by means of a great spurt.

"There he is—"

"Bulstrode has him!"

"Hooray!"

The bully of the Remove had suddenly flung his arms round the neck of the junior in front, and a thud followed as the consequence.

Both captive and captor went to the ground.

Harry Wharton bit his lip as he thudded up. That was the worst of Bulstrode. He was inclined to use his strength brutally.

After all, there was no need to fling young Jolly down in that manner. He had to be caught, of course, but there were other means of effecting a capture than those adopted by Bulstrode.

"Steady, Bulstrode!"

"No need to bump the kid! My only Aunt Jane!"

Bulstrode and his capture were rolling over and over in what must have been the muddiest patch in the whole lane.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Bulstrode's Mistake.

"O—W—oh—yaroo!"

"All right, you rotter!"

"O—oh!"

The cries came from the pair rolling in Friardale Lane in loud shouts. Bulstrode had long since lost his temper.

Harry Wharton dashed up, and seized his arm.

"Don't be a cad, Bulstrode!"

"All right, you rotter!" shouted the bully of the Remove. "I'll teach you to roll me in the mud! Just you wait!"

As Bulstrode had certainly been the cause of their combined fall, his accusation was rather unjust. His opponent, however, did not appear to trouble about the injustice of the words.

His one aim seemed to be to make a good fight of it. And from where Harry Wharton stood, there could be no doubt about his succeeding.

Wharton was still endeavouring to separate them.

"Come on, chaps!" he shouted. "Yank them apart!"

"Right—ho!"

"The right-hofulness of it is terrific!"

"Seize that leg!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Oh, do seize that leg, someone!"

It was difficult to say to whom the leg in question belonged, but it was executing deadly work unwittingly. Mark Linley, the Lancashire junior, was already hopping about, nursing one shin, while Frank Nugent's left arm was numbed from the elbow.

John Bull waited for an instant, then dived in. He seized the offending leg by the ankle.

"Got him!"

"Hooray!"

"Yank the young ass out of it!" cried Harry Wharton. "My only Aunt Jane!"

There was a tremendous amount of determination mixed up in John Bull's character, and the determination had a habit of showing itself at all sorts of odd moments.

When Wharton had given the order to "yank" the owner of the leg from underneath by the leg, he had meant it to be done in favourable circumstances. John Bull had a way of making his own circumstances.

He was wonderfully strong for his age, and hauled at the leg with all his might. He actually pulled the struggling pair along the lane for a few feet.

"Lemme go!" yelled an indistinct voice. "Lemme go, ass!"

"That's Bulstrode," observed John Bull. "Must be Bulstrode's leg."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull tugged away just as energetically as ever. He was a firm believer that what was sauce for the goose ought also to be sauce for the gander. Bob Cherry lent a helping hand.

He was pulling as hard as he could when a stray blow from one of the excited combatants caught him on the nose.

A blow on the nose hurts at all times, and when it is entirely unexpected, and when one receives it in the execution of a good work, the injury is intensified by insult. Bob Cherry did not trouble to think this out in actual words, but the sense of the statement was present all the same.

"Ass!" he gasped, and gripped the arm by the wrist.

Frank Nugent gave vent to a cheer.

"Now we have 'em! Haul away!"

Both Bob Cherry and John Bull took in the situation at a glance, as they thought, and obeyed Nugent's instructions.

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to the letter. No one could say that they failed to haul with a will.

Occasionally John Bull gained a little ground and pulled the combatants down the lane; then Bob Cherry gritted his teeth and won ground back by pulling them up the lane.

It rather puzzled both of them that the combatants could be so tightly locked in each other's arms that they could not be dragged apart.

"Heave—ho!"

"Heave—ho!"

Both shouted together, and both did their best. There was nothing of the shirker in either John Bull or Bob Cherry.

"Lemme go! Lemme go, ass!"

The cries were becoming very mixed until suddenly Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent bent down. A moment after that the topmost combatant was dragged to his feet.

Then a roar of laughter rang out.

It was Bulstrode who still lay on the ground, grasped by the foot by John Bull and firmly gripped by the wrist by Bob Cherry. In attempting to drag the struggling juniors apart the two had been tugging at the same fellow.

It was a moment or two before either John Bull or Bob Cherry recovered from their surprise sufficiently to leave go.

"My—my hat!"

"My—my aunt!"

"All right, you cads!" yelled Bulstrode. "All right, you rotters!"

"Sorry, Bulstrode!" observed John Bull coolly. "My mistake. Got the young ass all right, Wharton?"

Harry nodded.

He had the new boy firmly by the arm at last, according to instructions. Everyone turned from Bulstrode to look at the new fellow who had given them such a chase.

There was not a great deal any of them could see of him in the dusk, nothing at all respecting his face.

The new fellow was plastered with mud from head to toe.

"My hat!"

Frank Nugent stared in amazement at the apparition. It seemed impossible that this could be the spick-and-span junior they had caught sight of leaving the first-class compartment a few minutes before.

Now Nugent came to look closer, it was also surprising that a few seconds rolling in the mud could have made such a difference.

"I—I thought he was in Etons," muttered Frank Nugent. "He—he was!"

"I—I— My aunt!"

Then the new fellow found his voice.

"If 'e wants a fight, why don't he ask for one like a sportsman?" the new fellow demanded heatedly, pointing at Bulstrode. "I reckon I could stan' up to 'is sort any day of the week an' out of it."

Harry Wharton started violently. He forgot all about instructions and let go of the junior's arm.

It was a moment or two before Harry could find his voice.

"Who—who are you?" he said quickly at last.

"Wot's that got to do with you, anyway? What I want to know is—does he want a fight?"

"No," said Skinner; "he wants a bath."

Skinner's effort passed unheeded.

Bulstrode was scraping mud out of his hair with both hands. The junior he had so thoroughly captured appeared to have a liking for sticking to the point.

"Put it to him!" he exclaimed. "Does he want a fight? A straight question, and I want a straight answer. Do you want a fight—you, there, with the face?"

"I'll—I'll half slay you—"

"Set about it, then!" exclaimed the other heartily. "When and where you like. I'm always hon for a scrap—one of my few pleasures, as a matter of fact."

Harry Wharton was still staring blankly at the lad.

"Who—who are you?"

"You asked me that before," returned the other sulkily. "If he wants a fight, why doesn't he say so? Fine sporting thing to jump on a fellow's back, I don't think—"

"Is your name Jolly?" demanded Harry Wharton quickly.

"No, it isn't; and I don't feel remarkably jolly, either."

"It's not Jolly? My only Aunt Jane!"

"But you got out of the train just now," persisted Harry Wharton anxiously.

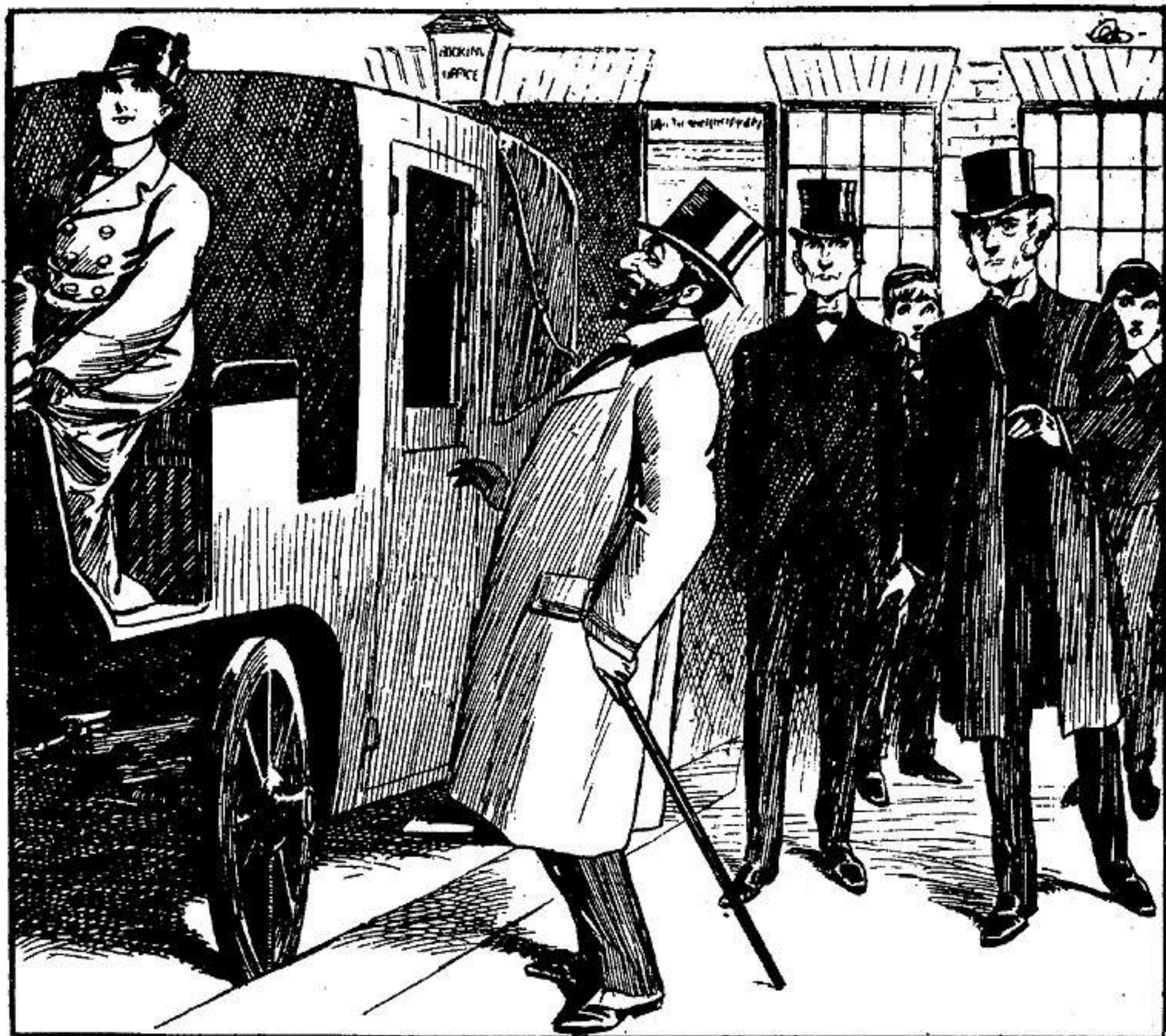
"No, I didn't; haven't been in a train for weeks."

"But—"

"Oh, it's no good pretending to know better about that than me!" snapped the other lad. "You might let me know when you've made up your mind about the fight, you with the ears!"

This was rather absurd in a way, because Bulstrode's ears could not possibly have been seen by the other. They were far too thickly coated with mud.

Harry Wharton faced Bob Cherry wearily.



The new page was seated on the box staring solemnly in front of him, with a perfectly expressionless face. Sir Edmund Jolly glanced at him and burst into a roar of laughter. "Arthur, you young rascal!" he gasped. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Before he had time to speak Bulstrode's late opponent broke in again.

"And what did you all want, come tearing up the lane after me for?" he demanded indignantly. "I haven't done nothing. If it's your idea of a lark——"

"Oh, it seems we've made a mistake——"

"Yes, you have that; and so has he with the 'air, if he's going to fight!" retorted the other lad. "What were you chasing me for?"

"We mistook you for young Jolly——"

"What! The other fellow who flashed past and wouldn't stop to tell me the way to the college——"

Harry Wharton started.

"Did you see another fellow, then?" he exclaimed quickly.

"Of course I did—a fellow running like mad——"

"Where was he going?"

"How do I know——"

"Which way did he go, I mean?" interrupted Harry crisply. "Hurry up, ass!"

"Straight up the lane," answered the other junior. "Here, hold on! If there's going to be a fight——"

"Oh, it is all a mistake! We're sorry!"

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!" said the dusky nabob, dashing on after Harry Wharton.

"Mistakes will happen," said Nugent, as he flashed past.

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the astonished and remarkably muddy junior. "Settle it all with Bulstrode."

"What, him with the eyes? My hat! I will, in 'arf a minute."

And the lad stood looking after the departing Greyfriars fellows in amazement.

Then he turned to Bulstrode, who was still scraping mud from his hair.

"Is it going to be a fight, my son?"

"Rats!"

"You aren't an ass, then," answered the other fellow coolly. "Don't suppose it would be much of an affair; you don't look as if you'd last more'n a couple of rounds."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Bulstrode angrily. "I don't fight with every chawbacon I run across. Get out of the way!"

The other junior looked disappointed. He turned to Bulstrode scornfully.

"Shake 'ands, then——"

"Rats!"

"Well, tell us the way to Greyfriars College," said the junior. "Don't be ikey!"

Bulstrode had just found his cap at the bottom of the ditch. He looked up in surprise at the mention of the name Greyfriars.

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"What do you want with the college, anyway?" he demanded. "It isn't a home for tramps!"

"It's going to be my home, anyway. I'm taking over duty there as page for a week. If I have your boots to black I'll cut the beastly stitches—you see if I don't."

"Pageboy—I sha'n't forget that!" snapped Bulstrode, who really was capable of taking a mean advantage his position as junior at the college would give him over the page. "You'll be sorry for this."

"Go hon!"

"Look here, none of your cheek——"

"Changed your mind about the fight?"

"Rats!" snapped Bulstrode. And he raced on, leaving the new boy to find his way to the college or not, as the case might be.

The bully of the Remove was feeling very much injured, and keener than ever to capture the new fellow, Jolly.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Peter Petts.

HARRY WHARTON led the way up Friardale Lane at a great pace. He was not feeling at all easy about the whole affair—in fact, the captain of the Remove was very uncomfortable.

Dr. Locke had given careful instructions that the new boy was to be brought to the college at once; that his arm was to be taken, even, and that there was to be nothing resembling a practical joke played the whole way. The order had been very precise.

And Harry Wharton had honestly meant to obey the strange commands to the letter. His conscience was perfectly clear on that score.

But he had not obeyed them, all the same.

The new boy had outwitted him, and had placed him in a very false position in the eyes of the doctor. Harry was a little nettled as well as determined as he raced up the lane.

Bob Cherry and Bob Nugent were inclined to treat the matter more lightly. They had not been present when the Head gave the orders.

Still, they could respect Harry's concern easily enough.

"Cheer-ho, kid, we shall collar him all right!" said Bob, as they pelted along. "You'll see!"

"Rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, Nugent, my worthy chum," put in the nabob, running with his beautifully-even stride again. "There is no doubtfulness that we shall capture our esteemed and new comrade."

"There's no doubtfulness that he'll get bumped when we do catch him, anyway," muttered Frank Nugent.

"The bumpfulness shall be terrific."

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton had not joined in the conversation by a single word. This was a very serious matter as he looked at it.

The pace he was setting was making Bob Cherry breathe hard through his nose.

It was practically dark by now, and the moon had not yet risen. It was no easy matter even for the Greyfriars juniors to prevent themselves falling into the ditches.

Bob Cherry wondered what it must be like for the new fellow, who must still be in the lane somewhere.

Another thought flashed across Bob's mind at the same moment.

"Pull up, kids!"

"Not much!"

"Yes, really, Wharton!" panted Bob Cherry. "Suppose the young ass is playing 'possum again like he did under the seat in the train?"

"My hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific!"

"Phew! You mean that perhaps he's hiding in the ditch or in one of the hedges somewhere?"

Bob Cherry nodded, although it was now too dark for the notion to be seen.

"Yes, that's the wheeze. Perhaps we've run past the young duffer already. Let's stop and listen."

The juniors pulled up, but Bob's suggestion that they should listen, proved useless. He had forgotten about the other Greyfriars juniors straggling along in the darkness behind them.

The sound of their footsteps and muttered exclamations could be heard quite distinctly.

Then something else was heard.

One of the most prodigious yells possible, rang out. It was a shout that made each of the juniors jump violently, perhaps not so much on account of its loudness as for the nearness of the sound.

"That's the kid!"

"Hurrah!"

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"He must have fallen into the ditch at last, or come a purler over a loose stone!"

"Run for it!" shouted Wharton. "As hard as you can!"

The four raced on, trusting to luck that they would not share the supposed fate of Jolly, and stumble into the ditch.

But their luck was good. They pelted round the bend without mishap, then the Indian junior's keen eyes stood them in good stead once more.

"Our luckfulness is terrific! There is an esteemed form in front——"

"Good for you, Inky!"

"Hurrah!"

With a ringing cheer, Bob Cherry dashed ahead and seized the form which had obviously come from the ditch.

"His other arm——"

"Collar him low if he attempts to scud for it."

"Oh, dear! I am suffering intense discomfort!"

"Got him, Franky?"

"Rather!"

"My dear fellows, I am in great pain—nay, agony. My Uncle Benjamin——"

Harry Wharton started violently.

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"It's Toddy! It's that ass, Todd!"

"My dear Nugent! Oh, dear, my nose is bleeding!"

The juniors released Alonzo, the duffer of Greyfriars, and stared at him in surprise. It was seldom that Alonzo was seen in such a state of dishevelment.

He was almost as muddy as Bulstrode had been, and, in addition, he certainly had received what looked like rough handling.

Harry Wharton caught him by the arm again.

"What has happened, Toddy?"

"Happened?" repeated Alonzo, who had a habit of repeating portions of the last remark made, when confused.

"What has happened?"

"Yes, ass."

"Who has been going for you?"

"Going for you—me——"

"Shrieking duffer!" yelled Bob Cherry. "What has happened. Don't bleed on me, ass!"

Alonzo dabbed his injured nose with a muddy handkerchief.

Bob Cherry shook him in the hope that that might detract from his confusion. Alonzo gurgled.

"Put a cold key down my back, my dear Wharton," he spluttered. "My Uncle Benjamin always advocated a cold key down the back when the nose was bleeding. My dear schoolfellow, pray aid me in this extremity."

"Who made your nose bleed?" yelled Bob Cherry. "Bump him if he won't answer, kids."

"My dear Cherry——"

"I'll count three. If you haven't answered by then——"

"It's a civil question!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Hadn't Uncle Ben anything to say about civil questions demanding civil replies, ass?"

"Yes; Uncle Benjamin was very precise on that point," began Alonzo. "I remember on one specific occasion——"

Where is the extremely rough person who collided with me?" Harry Wharton wheeled round.

"You collided with someone, then?"

"Certainly not, Wharton; someone collided with me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did it happen?" demanded Harry Wharton, taking no notice of Bob Cherry's laughter. "Wake up, ass!"

"My dear Wharton, I was walking round this corner slowly, meditating, and I was rushed into in the most reckless manner. Dear me, my nose is certainly bleeding in a very rapid and incommensurable manner."

"Who ran into you, ass?"

"Ran into me!"

"Was it a new fellow, Todd?"

"A new fellow!"

"Did you see who it was, duffer?" yelled Bob Cherry. "Did you recognise him?"

Alonzo blinked as Bob shook him, then he recovered to some extent.

"No, I certainly did not recognise him. I was confused—nay, flustered. He asked the way to Greyfriars, I believe, but at the time I was in the ditch, and——"

"It was Jolly all right," breathed Frank Nugent.

"No doubt about that."

"Come on, chaps!"

Harry Wharton started off again, just as Bulstrode, John Bull, and a small crowd of other juniors came panting up the lane.

Alonzo watched them pass in astonishment. Then he, too, commenced to run in the same direction.

"Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to help others," the Duffer of Greyfriars mused as he raced along. "It was one of the many points upon which Uncle Benjamin

was very precise. Dear me, I do wish my nose would cease to bleed, though."

Alonzo had just turned out of the lane when he narrowly escaped another collision.

"Steady, ass."

"Dear me!"

"Humph!" grunted the other fellow. "Do you happen to know the way to the college?"

The new-comer was Bulstrode's late capture, still muddy, and in a less pleasant mood than usual. He stared at Alonzo's muddy form in astonishment.

"My hat, what have you been up to, young 'un?"

"Really, my dear person— However, if you wish to know, an unfortunate accident caused me to fall into a ditch. May I inquire whether you have been in the ditch also?"

"Something like it," growled the other. "A chap with ears did me down."

"Dear me, I have no reason to suppose that my assailant was without ears, either, my dear person; possibly the miscreants are one and the same."

"Humph!"

"My nose is bleeding," said Alonzo, after a pause. "I suppose you haven't got a cold key with you? My Uncle Benjamin always advised a cold key when the nose is bleeding."

"Hard cheese!"

"Hard—hard cheese! I don't think I quite follow you. Is hard cheese good for a nose which refuses to cease bleeding?"

"Oh, rats! I say, do I keep straight on for the college?"

"Yes, certainly. May I inquire whether you are the new boy—Jolly?"

"Oh, rats! Everyone is asking me that! No; I'm Peter Potts, the new page."

"Is that so? My Uncle Benjamin's advice to everyone taking up duties in a new sphere of life was 'Honesty is the best policy,' and 'Be polite.'"

"Go hon!"

"Really, my dear Potts—"

"Oh, rats!" snapped the new page. "Straight on, is it? Try standing on your 'ead if your nose starts bleeding again; nothing like standing on your 'ead for a bleeding nose. So long!"

And the new page marched on, twisting his face into weird contortions on account of the discomfort attending drying mud.

Peter Potts was in a bad temper, and he was conscious of that unpleasant sensation which is consequent upon a lost opportunity.

"I ought to have slogged into him," he mused wrathfully. "I could have slayed him in no time, that I could, the long-eared rotter! Won't I just have a game with his boots, not half!"

And Peter Potts, the new page-boy, marched on with growing indignation as the mud began to cake about his ears and in his hair.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Jolly's Wheeze.

"MY hat!"

Jolly, the new junior for Greyfriars, dashed on along the road at a great pace

He could hear the sound of the other juniors' footsteps behind him, and, for no particular reason, that urged him on to great efforts. He ran rather well, too, as it happened, but in spite of that, he was losing ground.

Jolly realised that grimly.

He was being overhauled in the race for the college in spite of the two stops which had detained Harry Wharton & Co. But the latest addition to Greyfriars was not an easy junior to beat.

He began looking about him for some chance of leaving Friardale Lane.

But the hedges were very tall and thick. He did not think he could break through them in time to escape being seen by the others behind him.

He kept on, trying to puzzle out some means of throwing the others off the scent. It was not an easy puzzle to solve.

"Blest if I won't hide in the ditch!" he suddenly decided. "It worked all right in the train, getting under the seat. Hallo!"

A huge, grey building had suddenly loomed up in the darkness ahead of him. Jolly redoubled his efforts.

The huge, grey building must be the college.

He raced round the bend, then hesitated for a fraction of a second.

There was the high road leading away to the left, and a smaller lane winding away to the right. Which should he take?

Jolly evidently was capable of thinking quickly.

"They'll think I've taken to the road, for a cert.," he

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mused. "College gates bound to be that way. I'll slip down here and scale the wall."

Why he was taking all this trouble to elude Harry Wharton & Co. did not present itself as a question to him. He had no reason to think Harry meant hostile intentions, but it came quite natural to the new junior to act as he was acting. He would have been astonished if anyone had attempted to point out the absurdity of it all.

Running as lightly as he could, Jolly made off down the lane, pulling up suddenly as he turned the corner.

He could hear the other fellows quite distinctly. Everyone was making for the main road.

The little branch lane seemed to have passed unnoticed altogether.

"Good!" said Jolly solemnly. "Hallo, what's this?"

It was a small gate, obviously leading into the college grounds. Jolly tried the latch.

The gate was unlocked all right, and after a moment's hesitation, the junior hurried into the school grounds.

The fine elms, the grand old building, which was thought so much of by Harry Wharton & Co., did not appeal to young Jolly. He scarcely noticed the trees at all.

"My hat! I wonder where that path leads to?"

When Jolly commenced to wonder about anything he usually started on a tour of investigation at once. He crossed the doctor's flower-beds with an absent-minded disregard for the flowers, then found himself at the back of the college buildings.

He saw a light showing through a partially open door, and approached it cautiously. He peered in, his rather solemn eyes taking in every possible detail.

It was one of the kitchens he was looking into.

"May as well go in here for a bit!" the junior muttered to himself. "Hallo!"

He had noticed a large cupboard affair, obviously the pantry. The door was locked, but the key—one of a huge ring of many—had been left in the lock.

Jolly took the key, stepped into the pantry, and discovered, to his joy, that he could lock himself in. Then he sat down on a flower-bin, and chuckled silently to himself.

He sat still for two minutes—almost a record for Jolly—then struck a match.

One or two fellows at Greyfriars would have found a great temptation in some of the eatables on the shelves, and they formed a temptation to Jolly, but not in an orthodox way.

He was a junior who, apparently, never wasted time.

While still thinking over his situation, he emptied the castor sugar from the sprinkler, and replaced it with salt. The salt-cellars he filled with the castor sugar, and he put red pepper into all the jam-pots he could find.

Then he opened a huge game pie, such as would have gladdened the heart of Billy Bunter, poured a considerable amount of treacle into it, and replaced the top again. He did this very skilfully, as if he had had long experience at the art.

For nearly ten minutes he was engaged in this way. Then he stopped his pleasantries, and listened.

Someone had just entered the kitchen.

Jolly placed his ear to the door, but he could not hear anything else. He wondered if it could be one of the servants.

To wonder was to act again with the new junior. He unlocked the door gently, and peered out. Then he started in surprise.

A fellow of about his own age was standing rather disconsolately in the centre of the kitchen, looking about him diamally.

There was nothing very startling in that fact; but the junior's appearance was unusual.

He was literally covered from head to foot with a thick layer of dry mud. There was scarcely an inch of his face to be seen.

In Jolly's eyes this was a promising introduction. He came out of the pantry at once.

"Hallo!"

The muddy junior glared a little, then asked a question in wrathful tones.

"You aren't named Bulstrode, are you?"

"Not much!"

"Lucky for you, my son!" snapped the other. "I'm looking for a chap named Bulstrode. I expect I shall get the sack when I do meet him. I'm going to slog him no end!"

"Why not put some treacle in his bed?" suggested Jolly. "There're heaps in there. I've just put some in a game pie!"

The muddy youth grinned a little, and the mud on his face cracked. That brought back his own plight to mind.

"I say, where can I get a wash, kid?"

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"Blest if I know! I'm a new fellow here. I suppose you are the same?"

"I'm the new page, if that's what you mean," said the other junior gruffly. "My name's Potts, and I've a jolly good mind to hook it. I would if it weren't for a chance of cutting the stitches of Bulstrode's boots. I was too good-hearted to Bulstrode in the lane, too good-hearted by 'arf!"

Jolly chuckled in the silent, rather disturbing way he had. Potts stared at him.

"You aren't laughing at me, are you?" he demanded, in warlike tones. "I never lets fellows laugh at me! I slog 'em no end!"

"Go hon!"

Jolly looked at the other lad in growing interest, a sudden envy showing in his keen eyes.

"I say, you are a lucky beggar, Potts!"

"Rats!"

"Yes, you are. While you are having a ripping time japing about in the kitchen, I shall have to grind Latin. I say, I wish I were going to be the page, and no mistake."

Peter Potts sniffed.

"Better apply for the job after the week," he said sarcastically. "I'm leaving at the end of the week. Going out on a farm in Canada, my son."

"No—really?"

"Rather! I've only took this job to make a few more bebs before the boat sails. I want to get a decent rig-out, you know."

Jolly looked intensely interested, an interest which suddenly turned to great excitement.

"My hat!"

"What's the matter now?"

"N-nothing! I say, has anyone seen you at the college yet?"

Potts looked warlike again.

"If you are referring to that chap they call Bulstrode—"

"Did he see you, to recognise you, I mean?"

"No!" said Potts vindictively. "I had my fist in his eye most of the time."

"And your face is pretty muddy, too."

"Look here—"

"Oh, don't get ratty!" said Jolly hastily. "I say, if you are going out to Canada next week you ought to get all the education you can, you know. A little Latin and some Greek would be no end useful."

"Rats!"

"It would really—"

"Go hon! If you've got a good book on foot and mouth disease, or a decent pair of riding boots you don't want, I'm your man. You can eat your Latin, though!"

"Oh, rot! Education is always useful," said Jolly airily, although still carried away by excitement. "I say, suppose we change places?"

Peter Potts stared.

"You mean me go over there, and you come and stand here?"

Jolly gave vent to his silent chuckle.

"Don't be an ass! I mean, suppose you enter the school as Jolly, and I become the new page? Did you come up here to be interviewed before you got the berth?"

Potts shook his head.

"No, I was recommended!"

"Then it'll be as easy as falling off a form!" exclaimed Jolly. "Look here! I'll stand you a first chop rig-out when you sail if you'll agree, and you can have all my pocket-money for the week. You'll have no end of a time."

Peter Potts opened his mouth, and kept it open. He closed it at last to express his amazement.

"My 'at!"

"You'll agree to do it?"

"You're japing! Look here! I don't take jokes from kids like you!"

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Jolly quickly. "We're about the same size, you know. Don't get ratty! I've got a fiver the pater gave me for pocket-money! You could have that, and I dare say it would last you the week all right."

"Last me a week!" gasped Potts. "Did you say a week?"

"Yes; but I might be able to manage more if you ran through it; and I'll stand you a ripping outfit for Canada. Besides, look what an advantage you'd have over the others on the farm by knowing Latin and Greek and French!"

Potts did not think to raise the point that a week was rather scanty time to learn two dead languages and one live one, nor was he greatly impressed by the advantage which would be his if he could learn them.

The offer of a rig-out for Canada impressed him a good deal more, while the sight of a five-pound note, which Jolly had pulled from his pocket, was not without effect.

Jolly suddenly pushed the note back again.

"But, of course, we should have to change clothes," he exclaimed. "So you would have the use of all the things in my pockets. You'd look no end well in Etons, Potts."

"Rats!"

The new page muttered the expressive monosyllable in anything but an impressive tone of voice. He was staring blankly at young Jolly.

Jolly was grinning quite coolly.

"As easy as falling off a form!" he declared again. "Let's shut ourselves in that room there, and we'll change togs in no time."

"But—"

"There's no 'but' about it. Good! You'll be able to have a wash in here. Get on with it!"

Peter Potts continued to stare for a moment or two longer, then an expansive grin crept into his face.

"You really mean this? No jokes!"

"Of course I mean it!"

"Then blowed if I'm not your man," said Potts, in great excitement. "I'm your man if only to get on terms with the chap they call Bulstrode. I was too kind-hearted in the lane, too kind-hearted by far."

"Mind you don't give the show away, then," grinned Jolly, whipping off his things. "My hat! Yours are beastly muddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, that's all right! I don't care. My aunt! The things fit me to a T."

"Same 'ere!" said Potts.

"I say, we shall have some japes, and no mistake."

"Suppose we get found out?"

"Oh, rats! We shall have a run for our money, any way."

"So you mean I'm to open the boxes?"

"Of course, ass! There's a first-class hamper, too. I'd stand a feed to the fellows if I were you."

"Not to the chap called Bulstrode," said Potts grimly. "I'm only standing him a slogging!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, I shall make a 'ash of it in class, though."

"Not you!" chuckled Jolly. "Remember, you'll probably be in the Remove—that's the Lower Fourth—and if you don't know as much Latin as I do, you must be an ass!"

"Anyway, I guess I don't know more," grinned Potts. "What is Latin?"

"Rot!" said Jolly. "Now we're right! Get my coat on!"

And Potts slipped into the other junior's coat. As he did so, there was a rattle of keys; but both were a lot too excited to notice that minor detail.

They stepped into the better-lighted kitchen, and viewed each other in mutual surprise.

It always is astonishing what a difference a change of clothes will make in two fellows of about the same age and build. Then Jolly's silent, expressive chuckles broke out again.

"See you at the end of the week!" he chuckled loudly.

"Ha, ha, ha! So long, Potts!"

"What do I do now?" asked the ex-page doubtfully.

"Stay 'ere?"

"Not much!"

"What then?"

"Oh, you join the others, of course! I should wander up that staircase, and see what happens. You're bound to meet someone sooner or later."

Peter Potts looked up the staircase in question, and became grim again.

"I hope the someone's Bulstrode, that's all!"

"Oh, you'll see Bulstrode soon enough! Up those stairs, kid!"

"But—"

"Oh, rats! They must lead somewhere."

"I know."

"Good!" said Jolly briefly. "So long!"

And he slammed the door on Peter Potts's heels, and bolted it.

Potts commenced to ascend the stairs in a frame of mind which was rapidly growing more doubtful.

ANSWERS

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This week's "GEM" Library contains: "JOE'S CHAMPION," A Grand Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By Martin Clifford.

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"Pray desist this minute!" said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin says— Ow!" One of Potts' manly blows went astray, and caught Alonzo on the side of the head.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Harry Wharton's Relief.

"MY hat!" Harry Wharton pulled up abruptly and stared at the closed gates of Greyfriars. Bob Cherry whistled. "I say, the kid's got in pretty quickly, Harry." "I suppose he did go in?" There was a note of doubt in Frank Nugent's voice which made Harry Wharton uneasy. The captain of the Remove rang the bell loudly. "Gosling! Gosling!" The porter hurried up, looking alarmed. "Which is nice goings on!" he exclaimed indignantly. "What I ses is this 'ere. Juniors didn't ought to ring the bell as if they were masters, or as if there were a fire." "Gosling, has a new fellow come in?" "No, Master Wharton, he hasn't." "Are you certain?" "In course I'm certain," sniffed the porter. "What I ses is this 'ere. Have you got permits to be hout?" "Oh, that's all right!" "Which it isn't anything of the sort, Master Nugent. Nice goings hon!" "Rats!"

Harry Wharton looked from one to another of the juniors in dismay. He could have been certain they had never been more than a hundred yards behind Jolly ever since the meeting with Alonzo, and now there was not a sign of him. Bob Cherry began looking about.

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"He's playing 'possum somewhere; I vote we scout about in the hedges."

"The 'possumfulness of it is terrific," put in the Nabob of Bhanipur, who had kept somewhat behind the others for the last hundred or so yards. "I watched the esteemed and ludicrous hedges all the way."

"Good old Inky!"

"Don't you think we passed him, then, old chap?" said Harry Wharton anxiously.

The Indian shook his head.

"I feel certainly that we did not pass the esteemed Jolly, my worthy chum. I think he has gone down the other lane."

"My hat!"

"You mean to the side entrance?"

"The meanfulness is terrific, Nugent."

"My aunt, what asses we are!" exclaimed Harry, starting off again. "Come on, chaps!"

They all pelted off towards the side entrance, the Nabob of Bhanipur well to the front this time. His keen eyes were searching the ground with a penetrating glance.

As they gained the gate in the wall, he put up a slender, dusky hand.

"Someone has been here, my worthy chums. Look!"

And he pointed to an obviously fresh footprint in the wet, clay soil by the gate. Harry Wharton flung open the gate.

"See if you can follow the footprints, Inky."

"The seefulness will not be terrific. I think our esteemed comrade went across the doctor's flower-garden."

NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

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

"My only Aunt Jane!"

The lights from the college windows thinned the darkness a good deal now they were once within the grounds, and a trail of deep footprints could be distinctly seen across the flower-beds.

Harry Wharton hesitated for a moment, to Bob Cherry's surprise.

"What's the wheeze, Wharton?"

"Buck up and follow the trail, ass!"

But the captain of the Remove shook his head.

"No; we've hashed this thing up pretty badly," he said, in his downright way. "I don't know what the Head wanted Jolly brought straight to the school for, but he did want it."

"Well, we know all that, ass."

"Yes, and we're going to collar him now."

Harry Wharton went on grimly.

"Yes, you chaps are. I'm going to report to the Head."

"But—"

"There is no 'but' in it, Cherry," said the captain of the Remove quickly. "There was some pretty keen reason why Jolly was to be brought to the college direct, and I'm off to tell the doctor we didn't succeed in doing it. Suppose the kid isn't—isn't quite right, or something like that?"

"My Aunt Jane!"

"The Aunt Janefulness of it is terrific."

"Phew!"

Harry Wharton's words were rather startling, although, now they were uttered, it seemed strange to John Bull that they had not been uttered before by some of them. After all, this new fellow had acted very strangely. There could be no gainsaying that.

"My hat, I believe you are right, Wharton."

But the captain of the Remove had not waited to hear Bob Cherry's remark. He was already scudding for the boys' entrance to the college building to report to Dr. Locke.

It was not a pleasant duty Harry had taken upon himself. In common with most athletic and keen juniors, Wharton did not like having to admit defeat, because he did not like crying best to anyone. Still, he was a thorough sportsman.

He had been beaten by this new fellow, and the thing was to confess his defeat at once; but many another junior would have taken one of the juniors with him.

The idea never occurred to the captain of the Remove.

The orders had been given to him, and him alone. As he looked at things, it was impossible to ask another fellow to share the results of failure.

He raced up the steps, flung his cap up on a peg, and made for the stairs.

He mounted the flight two at a time, and turned the corner in the passage at top speed. He was just round the bend when a yell went up.

"Oh! Ow!"

And Harry joined in the cry.

"Ass!"

"Duffer!"

Harry Wharton had collided with someone, and the compact had been painful. Both juniors stepped back a pace or two, and glared wrathfully at one another.

Then an expression of surprise crept into Harry's face.

"My hat, who are you?"

"Potts."

"What!"

"Jolly!" corrected the other junior hastily. "I'm Jolly, and if you want a fight—"

"Hurrah!" yelled Wharton. "Hurrah, you shrieking ass!"

And to Potts's amazement, the captain of the Remove gripped him by the arm, and refused to be shaken off.

A warlike expression flashed across Peter Potts's well-washed and shiny face.

"Look here, me son—"

"You utter young ass!"

"Look here, if you want a fight—"

"Rats, you burbling ass!" said Harry, who was honestly a great deal relieved. "What on earth have you been goating about for? Given us a fine dance, and no mistake."

"Go hon!"

"You'd get a first-class bumping if it weren't for orders," said Harry indignantly. "As it is, you're coming to the Head at once."

"Oh, I ham, ham I?"

Wharton glanced in surprise at the other, then grinned. He put down the somewhat misplaced aspirates as attempts at humour.

Potts looked uneasy. He had forgotten about a possible interview with the head-master.

He consented to being dragged along the passage without resistance. As they neared the doctor's private room, his uneasiness increased.

"I—I say—"

"What-ho?"

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"I—I say, can't I get out of seeing the 'Ead?" pleaded Potts. "Can't it be worked nohow?"

"My hat!"

"I've got a fine hamper of grub coming up from the station," said the new fellow hastily. "I'll share it with you if you can work it. I'd rather not see the 'ead-master, if it can be managed."

"My only Aunt Jane, what rot!"

"But—"

"Don't be a young ass!" said Wharton, laughing. "The Head's awfully decent with new fellows."

"Oh, his 'e?"

"Of course he is."

Potts subsided, and hoped for the best, and there was silence for the rest of the way to the Head's room.

Harry knocked and entered the room, still holding Potts by the arm. Mr. Quelch glanced at the doctor and smiled.

The doctor looked relieved.

"Ah, Jolly!"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Thank you, Wharton," said the head-master—"thank you very much indeed!"

The thanks were spoken in a very sincere voice, and they would have embarrassed Wharton a little in any case. In the existing circumstances they embarrassed him a very great deal. He went a deep red.

"You can go, Wharton."

"Y-yes, sir."

The junior answered quickly enough, but he did not obey the order. He looked uneasily from Potts to the Head. The Head repeated his remark.

"Wharton, I said you could go."

"Y-yes, sir, but—"

"But what, my lad?"

"I—well, I didn't walk with Jolly all the way from the station, sir."

"You did not walk with him?" exclaimed Dr. Locke, with renewed anxiety. "I trust nothing has happened."

"No, sir; not much, sir."

"Why didn't you obey your instructions, Wharton?" demanded Mr. Quelch briefly.

"It was impossible, sir," answered the captain of the Remove, looking more uncomfortable than ever. "I think Jolly suspected we meant to jape—to play a trick upon him, sir."

"Ah!"

"I mean, I rather rushed on the platform, and it was only likely Jolly would suspect a trick," explained Wharton, who was as determined not to accept unearned thanks as he was not to get a new fellow into trouble. "He escaped me, and— and ran in front to the college."

"Jolly, why did you do this?"

"I—I don't know, sir," gasped Potts.

"He thought I was going to play a trick upon him, sir," put in Wharton hastily. "It was all my fault, sir."

The Head glanced from Mr. Quelch to Peter Potts, then turned to Harry Wharton again.

"I understand," he said quietly. "Thank you for your explanation. You can go."

"Thank you, sir."

The captain of the Remove turned to the door. As he passed Potts, he grinned pleasantly at him.

"Come to Study No. 1 afterwards, kid," he whispered.

"There'll be some tea going."

And he hurried from the room.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In the Head's Room.

"SIT down, Jolly!"

Peter Potts started, looked round the Head's beautifully-furnished room, and sat down on the extreme edge of the nearest chair.

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were both looking at him very severely. Peter turned red, then went pale.

It was quite half a minute before the Head spoke again.

"Jolly, I trust you have decided to turn over a new leaf. I trust you have fully realised the childishness of your previous behaviour," said the doctor very gravely. "You understand, Jolly, that, unless you have altered, you will not be allowed to stay at Greyfriars?"

"Yes, sir," gasped Potts.

"You have decided to alter?"

"Yes, sir—"

Potts gasped out the words. He had quite his share of courage in a rough and not very reasoning way, but there was something remarkably awe-inspiring in the present ordeal to him.

His uneasy conscience caused him to think that the Head must see through the plot. He expected discovery every moment.

Mr. Quelch was staring at the embarrassed junior in open astonishment.

He could scarcely believe this was the lad who had painted a cow a light blue on the way to his last school.

Dr. Locke was becoming more and more relieved. He was convinced now that Jolly's doings had been greatly exaggerated by Sir Edmund. The Head at once became very kindly.

"I am sure you mean to consider your future school life seriously, Jolly," he said, placing a hand on Potts's shoulder. "Practical jokes are to be expected from Third Form boys, but the juniors of older Forms do not behave so absurdly. I intend placing you in the Remove, Jolly."

Mr. Quelch glanced up in surprise.

It was unusual to place a new boy in any particular form until he had undergone a cross-examination as to his previous work. Certainly, Jolly was of the age to be in the Remove, but a lad who had the reputation of having spent all his schooldays playing practical jokes might easily be backward in other matters.

As master of the Remove, Mr. Quelch felt that he was an interested party. Then he exchanged a glance with the Head, and understood.

Jolly was being put into the Remove solely because the juniors of that Form were not in the habit of painting cows a light blue.

Mr. Quelch saw at once that it was the Head's wish that Jolly should still remain under the influence of Harry Wharton & Co.

In his kindly way the Head cut the interview as short as possible.

"I think that is all, Jolly," he said. "I have your word of honour that you intend conducting yourself differently from the way you conducted yourself at your last school."

"Yes, sir," murmured Potts, who could not make head nor tail out of it all. "I mean to halter, sir."

In what way was he to alter was unknown to Potts, but the answer was so obviously the one required by the Head, that he gave it and hoped for the best.

Mr. Quelch was still looking at him curiously.

Every moment the new fellow expected a dramatic announcement of the name "Peter Potts" from the lips of the Remove Master.

With intense relief, Potts saw that he was to go. He darted for the door with a gasp, and disappeared along the corridor without a word, and without closing the door.

The two masters stared after him in amazement.

Both of them had expected almost any type of junior in young Jolly than the one type which had just left the room. Mr. Quelch was the first to break the expressive pause which had fallen between them.

"It's my candid opinion that it is the father who is the practical joker and not the son," the Remove master said crisply. "This is, if I am any judge of a schoolboy."

"Quelch, I am inclined to agree with you," said the Head.

Mr. Quelch moved towards the door.

"Sir Edmund has created a mountain out of a molehill, doctor," he exclaimed; "an absurd mountain out of a very ridiculous molehill! I think you will find that Jolly will give us very little trouble indeed."

"He certainly seemed a very quiet lad——"

"He is a quiet lad," declared Mr. Quelch in a decided manner; "I should say a very quiet lad indeed."

And with that, the Form-master left the room.

Although the Remove-master took the same corridor Potts had taken, he did not overtake the new junior. The reason for this was that Peter Potts wandered a good deal in the vague hope that he might arrive somewhere.

Where that somewhere was he did not mind much, but he rather looked forward to getting out of the awe-inspiring labyrinth of corridors. They were certainly rather confusing to a junior whose home was a neat little four-roomed cottage.

"Blest if it isn't like a maze," muttered Potts. "Worse than the maze they had at Pegg, an' chance it! I wonder where I am."

It was difficult to say.

He was certainly in a passage lined with severely closed doors on each side, but Potts had not the faintest idea in which part of the college he happened to be.

He began glancing at the doors in bewilderment when the sound of pleasant laughter caused him to stop before one of them.

It was marked No. 1.

Potts remembered Harry Wharton's invitation then, and, still hoping for the best, tapped gently.

"Come in——"

"Open the door, ass!"

"But——"

Bob Cherry's voice rang out abruptly.

"Stop out, then!" he exclaimed. "I'm playing chess, and you've made me lose my king's bishop. Look here, you'll get bumped in a minute!"

Peter Potts stared in amazement, and opened his mouth.

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Then a laugh rang out, and Harry Wharton's cheery voice sounded again.

"You are an ass, Cherry; you've locked the door!"

"Check—mate!" yelled Frank Nugent, and heated words followed as Harry unlocked the door.

"Sorry, kid," he said pleasantly to the supposed Jolly. "Come in, we've kept tea back a bit. This is the new chap, kids!"

The heated argument as to whether Frank Nugent was justified in changing his mind after he had moved the queen's castle and taking it back or not, ceased. Every one stopped talking to look at the new fellow.

They were rather more curious glances than were usually directed towards a new fellow, on account of the instructions which had been given to Harry Wharton, and because of the chase they had from the station.

But they were cheery enough glances, all the same.

Peter Potts looked back with rapidly growing confidence. Harry Wharton pushed a chair towards him.

"Sit down, kid! Tea ready, Cherry?"

"Right-ho!"

"Hand the toast up!"

Willing hands took up the three or four plates of well-buttered toast from the fender, and Bob Cherry poured the boiling water on the tea. Peter Potts felt that he had never looked upon such a cosy afternoon tea as was about to take place in the snug study.

"This is the 'igh water mark,'" he said enthusiastically; "no 'arf measures about this, my sons, I'm blowed if there is!"

Harry Wharton started. Bob Cherry stared.

There was something about the new fellow's voice which seemed familiar, although all of them could have been certain they had never seen him before.

The only occasion they had encountered Peter Potts was when that junior's face was a mass of mud. A thorough wash and a change into Etons had worked wonders.

Still, there was something strange about the new fellow's way of speaking. His slang wasn't quite Greyfriars slang, somehow, or the slang of any other public school.

Before any of them could speak again, the door was pushed open, and the fat face of Billy Bunter peered into the room. He glanced at Potts and came in hurriedly.

"How do you do, Jolly?" he exclaimed heartily. "Jolly good thing for Greyfriars a chap like you has turned up——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't make puns, Bunter."

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry shortly. "Have you come in here sponging for tea?"

Bob Cherry knew most of Billy Bunter's failings, and was outspoken about them. It was always a safe guess that Bunter was not thin-skinned.

The Owl of the Remove tried to look indignant.

"Really, Cherry, I hope you don't mean to insinuate that I'm in the habit of sponging——"

"Oh, I don't say it's your fault; I don't believe you can help it."

"Beast!" muttered Billy Bunter. "But you needn't think I've come in for any tea. As a matter of fact, I came in to ask my friend Jolly to tea in No. 14."

Harry Wharton & Co. stared.

Billy Bunter looked loftily at them.

"Will you come, Jolly, old chap?"

"Yes, after I've had tea here," grinned Peter Potts. "I can generally run to two. You look as if you could do your whack, kid."

"Oh, really. As a matter of fact, I am rather off colour as far as appetite is concerned just now," said Billy Bunter loftily. "I say, your things have come."

Potts started.

"Ho!" he said in a non-committal voice.

"Yes; the station people sent them up, of course. I—I say, there's a whopping big hamper as well."

"A hamper?"

"Yes, a whopping big one, Jolly, old man. W-what's in the hamper?"

Potts thought for a moment or two, and remembered the real Jolly having said something about a hamper.

"Grub, I suppose!" he exclaimed, and Billy Bunter's fat face wreathed in smiles.

He advanced upon Peter Potts with outstretched hand.

Peter Potts got up suspiciously.

"What's the game, kid?"

Billy Bunter blinked.

"The game? My dear fellow, I'm your friend!" the Owl of the Remove said anxiously. "I am a friend to all new fellows. I should take it as a pleasure if you would borrow any books of mine you would like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

NEXT
WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

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

"Really, Wharton—"
 "You haven't got any books, Bunter," laughed the captain of the Remove.
 "Beast!" growled the Owl of the Remove. "I say, Jolly, when do you think of opening that hamper?"
 "Blest if I know; to-night, perhaps."
 "I'll open it for you if you like—to save you trouble."
 "Go hon!"
 "I'm jolly good at opening hampers."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Beast!" muttered Billy Bunter, glaring at Harry Wharton & Co. "Shall I mind your hamper for you then, Jolly?"
 "Rats!"
 "Oh, really—"
 Billy Bunter stopped speaking to look towards the door. It had just been pushed open again.
 Harry Wharton & Co. grinned.
 It was Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, who stood in the doorway this time.
 "My dear fellows, have you seen Jolly, the new fellow?" began Alonzo, feeling his nose rather tenderly. "I trust none of my actions have ever conveyed the impression that I am of a pugilistic temperament, but there are occasions upon which one's manhood revolts—"

"Hooray!"
 "Good old Toddy!"
 "My dear Nugent, where was I? Oh, revolts! My Uncle Benjamin— Dear me, who are you?" exclaimed Alonzo, catching sight of Harry Wharton's guest.
 "Peter Potts!" answered Potts, grinning.
 "Who?"
 "Jolly!" corrected Potts, in great alarm. "Jolly!"
 Alonzo came into the room with a determined stride.
 "Jolly, I must ask you to apologise," he said firmly. "My nose is still very painful; I must order you to apologise instantly."
 Peter Potts stared.
 "How much?" he asked.
 "How much? Really, my dear person, I fail to understand you! Are you aware of the painful fact that my nose has only just ceased to bleed? Are you aware that you caused me both great pain of the mind and of the body in the very reckless manner in which you collided with me, Jolly?"
 "Go hon!" said Jolly, in increasing surprise; then a sudden flash lightened up his face.

He jumped to his feet and seized Alonzo by the ear.
 "Oh!" yelled Alonzo. "O-ow—"
 "Are you Bulstrode?" demanded Potts.
 "No, I'm Todd—Alonzo Todd!" gasped the Duffer of Greyfriars.
 Potts grunted.
 "Lucky for you, kid!"
 Harry Wharton & Co. stared.
 "Do you know Bulstrode, then, Jolly?"
 "No fear; but I shall know him before long."
 "Of course you will, ass!" said Bob Cherry politely.
 "He'll probably be in the same dormitory as you. That is, if you're in the Remove."
 "What's the Remove?"
 "The Lower Fourth—"
 "Oh, yes; I remember the 'Ead said I was in the Remove," said Potts. "Is Bulstrode in it, too?"
 "Rather!"
 "The ratherfulness is terrific."
 And Peter Potts smiled cheerily.
 "That's 'ot news," he observed, helping himself to some toast—"very 'ot news. You'll notice a change in Bulstrode when I've 'ad my intro., a regular first-chop change."
 The expressions of surprise on Harry Wharton's and Bob Cherry's face grew. They seemed to have stumbled on some curious mystery, but it was obvious that the new fellow did not mean to explain.
 He turned the conversation rather abruptly.
 "Is he barmy," he asked, in a loud whisper—"im with the 'air?"

Alonzo started.
 "Dear me! Are you referring to me, my dear person?"
 "Well, you said something about a collision," observed Potts. "Thought you must be off your rocker. My mistake if you are not."
 "You are wrong, my dear fellow," said Alonzo heartily. "My Uncle Benjamin always said that my intelligence was of a—er—abnormally high order. In fact—"
 "Then it's your nunky I must have been thinking of," grinned Potts. "He must be fair gone, he must. Have they got him in a 'ome?"
 "Most of the juniors laughed, although there were one or two of the little party who were still looking very curiously at the new fellow.
 That he occasionally dropped an aitch, and sometimes tacked one on to a word in an unorthodox manner, might merely be an attempt at humour. Bob Cherry, personally, thought it was, but apart from that, there was a big difference in his way of speaking, and the ways of other Greyfriars' fellows.
 Neither Bob Cherry nor Harry Wharton could make it out. Still, the new chap did not seem a bad sort in a rough-and-ready style.
 Harry Wharton would have thought him quite a decent sort if he had apologised to Alonzo for what must have been a very painful collision.
 Still, the Duffer of Greyfriars was a genius for getting in other people's way. Ten to one it was Alonzo's fault.

So, taking all things into consideration, Peter Potts was accepted in Study No. 1 as quite up to the standard recognised for new fellows.
 The good things the table boasted of were pressed upon him, and it rapidly became apparent that shyness was not one of the supposed Jolly's failings.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Bulstrode Squares Accounts.

BULSTRODE, the bully of the Remove, looked into the library, and beckoned hastily to Skinner.
 Skinner nudged Hazeldene, and the pair sauntered from the room. They looked at Bulstrode inquiringly.
 "My hat! What's happened?"
 "What have you been doing to yourself, Bulstrode? Has there been a fight?"
 The pair asked the question in amazement. Neither of them had seen Bulstrode since the mistake in Friardale Lane. And now that he had washed, the bully of the Remove presented a very curious appearance.

Most of the skin had been rubbed off his nose, there was an absurd bump in the centre of his forehead, and another one on the top of the head.
 They were only slight bumps, but they gave Bulstrode a very curious appearance.
 "My aunt! Have you been fighting John Bull again?"
 "Rats!"
 "But—"
 "Oh, bother your butts!" snapped Bulstrode. "That beast of a new page-boy did this!"
 "My hat!"
 "The little beast fought like a wildcat when I tackled him in the lane!" muttered Bulstrode. "I'm going to square accounts, though, and no mistake."
 "What are you going to do? We can't go down into the kitchens, you know."
 "Awful row if Gosling saw us!"
 Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.
 "Gosling has gone out, as it happens, Hazeldene," he said, "and the new page is having his supper. I had a look in at the window as I came from the gym."
 Skinner grinned.
 "What are you going to do, anyway?"
 "Get even with the little beast!" muttered Bulstrode.
 "Will you chaps come?"
 "Rather!"
 "We shall have to take good care not to be seen, though!"
 Bulstrode did not answer. He led the way towards the back staircase in silence.

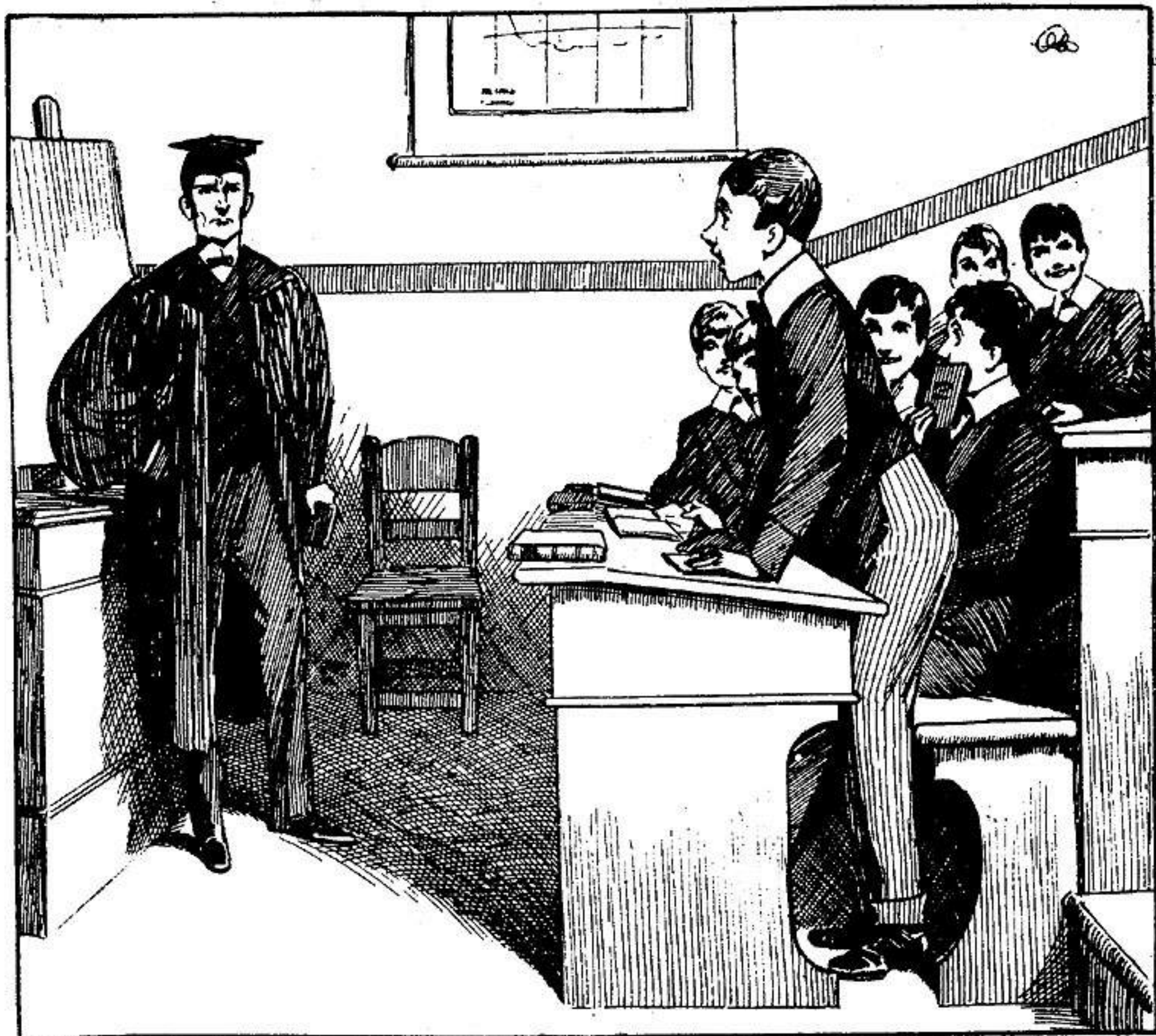
NEXT TUESDAY

"The Greyfriars Wheelers."

Another Grand, Long Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

N.B.—Would you like a "GEM" FREE HAMPER?



"Now that the summer is over, and the cold weather is with us once more," translated the new boy. The expression on Mr. Quelch's face as Peter Potts put those very un-Cæsar-like words into the great warrior's mouth was startling. (See page 22.)

All that evening Bulstrode had been occupied with an imposition for Mr. Quelch, and, although that had kept him in his study, it had not lessened his wrath.

In fact, his face was feeling stiffer than ever now, and, in consequence, his indignation was keener. He would have been prepared to have taken more serious risks to square accounts with the new page than a visit to the kitchens.

Skinner and Hazeldene followed grinning. There could be no doubt in the matter. Bulstrode was in a very determined mood.

All three crept silently down the stairs, and along the passage at the bottom. They walked more cautiously than ever as they neared the kitchen.

"Not a sound, chaps!"

"No; mum's the word."

"You can see into the room without pushing the door farther open, Bulstrode," whispered Skinner, and the other junior nodded.

Hazeldene and Skinner watched in dead silence. They saw Bulstrode peer round the door, then he pushed it gently open, and the new page was exposed to view.

He was seated at the table with his back to the door, evidently engaged in having supper. So absorbed in his task was he, that he failed to detect the slight warning of Bulstrode's approaching footstep.

Bulstrode crept on silently.

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Then, with a sudden shout, he flung his arms round the supposed page's neck.

"Come on, chaps—"

"Altogether!"

"Now, we've got him! Ha, ha, ha!"

Jolly had fallen forward on the table at the onset, flattening his supper with his chest, then he was wrenched back and slipped under the table.

"My hat! You duffers—"

"Collar him! Catch his legs!" panted Bulstrode.

"Hooray!"

"My only Aunt Jane!" gasped Jolly. "What the—who the—why the—"

The attack had been far too sudden for Jolly to offer anything but a feeble resistance, and Bulstrode & Co. were too determined to take much notice of feeble resistances.

Skinner and Hazeldene hauled him from beneath the table by his arms, while Bulstrode seized his legs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What shall we do with him, Bulstrode?"

"Bump him?"

"No; duck the young rotter!" said Bulstrode vindictively.

"Get his head under the tap—"

"No; put him in the copper!" yelled Skinner, and Bulstrode roared with laughter.

The copper had evidently just been filled with water, in

order that an early start might be made with the following day's wash. The huge iron affair was filled to the brim.

"That's the wheeze! Sit him in the copper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Before Jolly had grasped what was to happen to him, he was rushed across the kitchen.

Then he was doubled up into a compact body, his knees almost touching his face.

"One!" yelled Bulstrode.

"Two!" chuckled Skinner.

"Three!" gasped Hazeldene; and Jolly was swung in the air.

Then there was a huge splash, and two-thirds of Jolly disappeared amid a fountain of water. Bulstrode & Co. had quite forgotten the elementary laws of displacement. They were almost as drenched as Jolly was, but they did not mind that very much.

They stood and choked with laughter.

The copper was a very deep one, and they had pushed Jolly right to the bottom. Little more than his head and feet were to be seen above the water now. Skinner rolled about laughing uproariously.

"My only aunt! He'll never get out——"

"Then he can stay in!" shouted Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jolly began to struggle, and looked dismayed. He was very tightly wedged in the copper.

Hazeldene was laughing, but he did not mean to leave the new page in his present position.

"Perhaps he won't be able to get out, Bulstrode——"

"All the better!"

"Oh, rats! We can't leave him——"

"There's someone coming!" exclaimed Skinner. "Gosling, I think!"

"Yes; it's Gossy all right!"

Bulstrode darted for the other door.

"Come on, chaps; Gossy can attend to the young ass. My aunt, doesn't he look funny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And, chuckling with laughter, the three scudded from the kitchen. Jolly watched them go in blank amazement, struggled again to free himself, then listened.

Like Skinner, he heard approaching footsteps.

Jolly at once gave up struggling, and a smile flickered across his face. Whatever his faults were, Jolly certainly had a sense of humour.

He could appreciate tricks played upon himself just as well as if they were played on others. He waited patiently for the cause of the footsteps to approach.

Jolly could see it was Gosling, the porter. With one of his silent chuckles, Jolly remained in his unpleasant position without further attempt to get free.

Gosling was calling for him.

"Potts—Peter Potts! Which is nice goings hon! What I see is this 'ere. Potts—Peter Potts!"

"Yes, sir!" said Jolly solemnly.

Gosling came into the room and stared round.

He had had an hour to himself in the village, and his face and nose were slightly redder than usual, which is not saying a little.

He put down the redness to the exertion of a two-mile walk.

"Yes, sir," repeated Jolly, respectfully. "Here I am, sir."

Gosling stood still and looked round the kitchen. There was rather an alarmed expression on his face.

He could hear the voice quite plainly, but he could not see the speaker. Gosling began to wish that he had more water and less gin during his last call at the Cross Keys.

"Potts," he said sternly—"Potts, I don't allow tricks a-played on me! What I see is this 'ere—Ow!"

Gosling gasped loudly and stared at the copper. Jolly stared solemnly back.

It was a moment or two before either of them spoke again, then Gosling rushed forward.

"What I see is this 'ere: What do you mean by it, Potts? I demand an answer! What do you mean by it, a-startling a 'ard-working man—If 'e ain't sitting in water!"

Jolly nodded.

"Yes, I've been like this for a long time, now," he said pleasantly.

"My 'at!"

"It's cold, too! I suppose you couldn't light a fire underneath, Gosling? I don't know what would happen if we had a decent frost."

Gosling blinked, and stared, and blinked again.

"What's the hidea?" he asked at last.

"Blest if I know—I can't get out, Gosling!"

"You can't get hout? What did you get hin for, that's

what I want to know?—What I see—I say, you're fair wedged!"

"No doubt about that," grinned Jolly.

"No, there ain't, which is nice goings hon. What'll the 'Ead say? They'll have to 'ave the copper took down."

"Go hon! I say, get a chair and haul me out, Gossy! I've had enough!"

Still staring with blank amazement, Gosling obtained a chair. He stood up on it and tugged at Jolly. The new page wriggled at the same time, and, with a violent jerk, managed to get free.

He grinned pleasantly at the astounded Gosling.

"Good wheeze, that, Gossy, don't you think?"

"What is this 'ere?"

"Exactly!"

"I wants an hexplanation! I wants to know——"

"I agree with you," said Jolly feelingly. "Your hand, Gossy. There goes the bell!"

"Potts—Peter Potts! What I see——'E's gone!"

And Jolly had, chuckling in the curious, silent way he had.

Gosling sat down and looked solemnly at the copper.

He began to wonder if it all really had happened or not, and had not settled the point when sleep overtook him, and loud, if not peaceful, snores came from the depths of the very comfortable easy-chair, which was one of Gosling's weaknesses.

He dreamed strange dreams of coppers being full of gin-and-water, in which innumerable Peter Potts were being slowly but surely drowned.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Stops a Fight.

"MY 'at! Is this where we sleep?"

Peter Potts asked the question the moment he was inside the Remove dormitory.

Bob Cherry nodded with a grin.

"Did you think we slept in the class-rooms, kid?"

"No, of course not! My 'at, what a lot of beds!"

Peter Potts glanced round the room in surprise. He had never been in a school dormitory in his life before, and surprise at the even row of beds caused him to forget caution when speaking.

Harry Wharton & Co. were again looking at him curiously.

Other fellows were coming into the room, Bulstrode and Skinner amongst the last. Bulstrode was still chuckling to himself at the trick they had played on the supposed page.

The story was far too good a one to keep to himself.

He began telling Harry Wharton of the trick, when a sudden roar of laughter rang out. The laughter came from Peter Potts.

Bulstrode looked up with a grin.

"Oh, it was funny, and no mistake!"

"And you put him in the copper?" chuckled Potts.

"You put the kid in the copper?"

"Rather!"

"And he may be there still for all we know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hazeldene was laughing, but he caught a sharp glance from Harry Wharton, and coloured a little.

"No, the young ass is out all right now!" said Hazeldene.

"Gosling will have pulled him out."

Peter Potts was still chuckling loudly.

The others had laughed. Still, it was nothing very extraordinary in the way of japes. Even Skinner began to look surprised.

"My 'at, I'd 'ave given anything to have been there! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've sent the young ass into a fit, Bulstrode!" chuckled Skinner. "I——"

Skinner stopped speaking and stared blankly. A sudden change had come over Peter Potts.

There was not a vestige of a smile on his face now. He began to advance upon Skinner.

Skinner was not a fighting man, so he retreated.

"What's the wheeze, Jolly?"

"Don't be a young ass," said Bulstrode, laughing.

Skinner was still retreating.

"What did you say?" demanded Potts. "Repeat them words, me son!"

Skinner gasped.

"I didn't say anything! Look here, if you're so blessed thin-skinned, you ought to be in Cliff House School for girls!"

"What did you say?" repeated Potts, firmly. "I want that name repeated."

"My hat!"

"He's off his rocker!"

"I say, Jolly, when did you escape?" demanded someone.

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But Harry Wharton was looking from the new fellow to Bulstrode in surprise.

Bulstrode was laughing in the ordinary way, but there could be no mistaking the change which had come over Potts's face. The captain of the Remove remembered certain words which the new fellow had given vent to in the study, and wondered again where Jolly could have met Bulstrode.

Peter Potts was glaring at Skinner in a warlike manner. The humorist of the Remove did not feel at all comfortable.

"Don't goat, Jolly!"

"Is your name Bulstrode?" demanded Peter Potts.

"No."

"You mentioned the name Bulstrode, didn't you?"

"Yes, but—"

Bulstrode stepped forward with a puzzled grin.

"I'm Bulstrode," he said quietly. "Why do you want to know?"

Peter Potts wheeled round in great excitement.

"There aren't two Bulstrodes here, are there? I don't want to make a mistake."

"No. I'm the only Bulstrode. But—"

"Hooray!" yelled Potts. "Take that, my son—take that, an' may it make your 'air grow!"

And, to the bewilderment of Bulstrode and everyone else, the new fellow gave the bully of the Remove a violent push in the chest and sent him staggering backwards.

How far he would have staggered there is no saying, but there was a chair in the way to cut his backward progress short. With a gasp Bulstrode went over the chair and landed with a thump on the floor.

"Oh, you young rotter! Just you wait!"

"I'm waiting," said Peter Potts grimly.

And he slipped off his coat and rolled up his shirt-sleeves. A pair of very well-developed arms were brought into view.

Harry Wharton suddenly caught him by the arm.

"You can't fight in the dormitory, ass! Wait until to-morrow!"

"Move the chairs!" said Bulstrode wrathfully, kicking off his shoes. "You take your shoes off, Jolly, or they'll hear us below! Now, are you ready?"

"I ham!" said Peter Potts, and to prove his words, hit Bulstrode vigorously in the chest.

Bulstrode grunted and knocked Peter down. But Potts did not mind minor accidents like that.

He was on his feet again in a flash and right in the thick of the fray.

It was a startling fight to watch, for things were very equal, although very dissimilar. Bulstrode was by far the better boxer, but Peter Potts had more originality.

After a blow Bulstrode was satisfied to spar and wait for another opening. With Potts it was different.

After a blow in his chest, he rushed in and flung his arms round the other's neck, and they would go to the floor with a bump.

As the new fellow took good care to be on top in these falls, Bulstrode began to lose his temper.

"All right, cad! Is that how you like it done?"

Peter Potts did not say whether it was or not. He took the sturdy, left-handed hit on the nose, and grunted, then he retaliated with a round-arm, windmill-blow, which surprised Bulstrode's guard altogether.

"He fights like a street arab," muttered Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"I shouldn't be surprised if that's what he is," observed someone else. "Go it, Bulstrode!"

"Yes, keep it up, Bulstrode!"

After all, Bulstrode was a Greyfriars' fellow. He may not have been popular—with a good many he was exactly the reverse—but Greyfriars must always be backed up.

The new fellow had started the fight. It was not likely anyone was going to cheer for him.

John Bull, junior, watched with keen, critical eyes. He was a sturdy boxer himself—not so clever with the gloves as Harry Wharton, perhaps, but he had heaps of pluck and muscle. He had knocked Bulstrode out on his first day at the school.

It was his candid opinion that Peter Potts stood a very good chance of repeating the experience.

"He can't box for little apples, Wharton," John Bull whispered, "but he can hit."

"So can Bulstrode."

"Yes, but not so hard as Jolly. I say, if that blow had got home!"

But Bulstrode had long since realised that he had nothing of a walk-over in this fight. In points he knew he was all over the new fellow, but there was no one there to take the points.

It was simply a fight, and Bulstrode had long since forgotten that, as far as he knew, there was absolutely no reason for the fight at all.

He slogged away in his grim, plucky manner, and for a long time there was very little in it.

Alonzo Todd watched, suddenly digging Harry Wharton in the ribs with his bony knuckles.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

EVERY
TUESDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"I propose stopping this fight, Wharton," the Duffer of Greyfriars exclaimed. "I feel certain my Uncle Benjamin would not approve of such an exhibition. Bulstrode, please desist instantly."

"Go it, Bulstrode!"

"Well hit, sir!"

"Jolly, I must request you to refrain from striking another blow. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me—Bulstrode, pray desist this minute!"

Alonzo became enthusiastic, and approached the combatants. He even caught hold of Bulstrode's arm. Then one of Potts's many blows went astray.

It was a sturdy blow, intended for Bulstrode's chest, but it caught Alonzo on the side of the head instead. Alonzo staggered back over the chair with a yell, and it was at that moment the door of the dormitory was flung open.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, stood framed in the doorway. He thought he took in the situation with a glance.

"Bulstrode—Todd! Actually fighting in the dormitory!" he cried. "Todd, I am amazed!"

"Amazed, sir—"

"You were fighting with Bulstrode, Todd."

"Fighting with Bulstrode—"

"Don't repeat my remarks, boy!"

"Repeat your remarks, sir—"

Mr. Quelch had suffered a great deal since the advent of Alonzo, but there are limits to a man's endurance.

The Remove-master felt that the limit in this particular case had been reached. He strode into the room and wrenched Alonzo to his feet.

Then he caught sight of Peter Potts.

"Jolly, are you a party to this disturbance?"

"Not 'arf, sir!" said Potts. "If you 'adn't come in, sir, there wouldn't have been much left of Bulstrode, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked surprised for a moment, then turned to Bulstrode.

"What is the meaning of this, please?"

"I was fighting Jolly, sir," said the Remove bully sullenly.

"Then Todd was not taking a part in the affair?"

"No, sir," put in Harry Wharton. "I think he was trying to stop the fight."

"Trying to stop the fight," murmured Alonzo. "Oh, dear! My head is severely injured. My Uncle Benjamin—"

Mr. Quelch released Alonzo, and turned to Bulstrode.

"Bulstrode, I am surprised at you! One of the biggest boys in the room, to fight a new boy—"

"That's all right, sir," put in Peter Potts. "I started the fight, sir."

There were expressions of approval on the faces of all at the confession, not excluding Mr. Quelch's. The master still looked very stern, though.

"Jolly, this is a very strange way to commence your school-life here!"

"Yes, sir."

"What was your reason for wishing to commence the fight?"

Peter Potts started, then looked vaguely at the others.

"Come, Jolly; your reason for commencing the fight."

Peter Potts began to stammer. It was utterly impossible for him to explain to Mr. Quelch, and it seemed equally hard not to do so with the master facing him.

He looked imploringly at Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove sidled up.

"Say you'd rather not tell, Jolly," Bunter whispered as he passed; and Potts grasped at the straw.

"Please, sir, I'd rather not say."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Does that mean that the affair was forced upon you in any way, Jolly?"

"No, sir."

The Remove-master looked at the new fellow keenly for a moment or two, then turned to Bulstrode.

"Each of you boys has a hundred lines," he said. "They will have to be written after school to-morrow. If there is a continuance of the disturbance the punishment will be very much more severe."

He left the room, followed by approving glances. It was rather decent of Mr. Quelch to let the pair off with a hundred lines just because one of the combatants happened to be a new fellow. There were masters at Greyfriars who would not have done that.

"Good old Quelch!"

"Jolly decent of him, and no mistake!"

"You kids are jolly lucky!"

Bulstrode grunted, and Potts discovered that his nose was beginning to bleed. Both had their own opinions about being lucky.

But the strange part of it all, in Harry Wharton's eyes, was the change which had come over the supposed Jolly again. There was not a vestige of anger on the new fellow's face now.

"As it's all over, I suppose you'll shake hands," he said cheerily to Bulstrode; and Bulstrode glared.

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode, I think you might shake hands with my friend Jolly—"

"Bosh, Bunter!"

"What did Jolly want to go for him, anyway?" exclaimed Skinner. "We don't usually go for fellows without a cause here, Jolly."

"Oh, rats!"

"What had Bulstrode done to you?"

"Yes, why did you go for him, Jolly?"

The question was being asked on all sides, and Potts answered, with a grin.

"Because I don't like the way he parts his 'air," he said; and began removing his things.

Everyone stared except Billy Bunter, who laughed.

"Jolly good! Ha, ha, ha—"

"Hallo! What's the matter with you?" demanded Potts, in surprise.

"I was laughing at your joke, old man—"

"Don't be an ass!" said Potts; and he commenced to undress.

Bunter stepped up to the new fellow in the most friendly manner.

"Shall I help you, old man?"

"Elp me—elp me to take off my necktie?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Shall I cut the string, Jolly?"

"The string of what, ass?"

"The hamper," said the Owl, in astonishment—"the hamper which is under your bed."

Peter Potts grinned, and shook his head.

"Not much!" he said briefly. "That's for to-morrow, I expect. I'm going to sleep now."

"But—"

"Oh, rats!"

"But the things may go bad," pleaded Billy Bunter, in bitter disappointment. "You promised that we were to have the feed-to-night—"

"I know I didn't, kid."

"Oh, you did, really, Jolly!"

"Your mistake—"

"Well, I understood you to say so," said Billy Bunter weakly. "I didn't have any supper to speak of, and—and I feel jolly faint. I say, I believe I'm going to faint."

Peter Potts grinned as he threw his things on a chair.

"Faint over there, then, kid," he said pleasantly; "no room 'ere. Good-night, you chaps!"

And rather puzzled "Good-nights!" came from the others in response, Billy Bunter being perhaps the only one of the few who did not join in.

"Beast!" muttered Billy Bunter. "I know I shall faint! I—"

His painful meditations were cut short by his catching sight of something on the floor which glittered a good deal. He looked again, and started.

The "something" was a ring of keys, and they must have fallen from Jolly's jacket pocket.

Billy Bunter did not think about the strangeness of the keys ever having been in Jolly's pocket; he only thought of the keys themselves.

He had often seen them before in the distance. They were the school matron's keys—the pantry-key, Bunter knew, was amongst them.

The Owl of the Remove glanced round the room, then, skilfully dropping his handkerchief, picked it up again, and the keys with it.

A single glance told him the pantry key was there—the key he had often sighed for in the past. Bunter did not sigh now.

Without any settled plan in his head, he undressed hastily, and scrambled into bed. He took his find with him.

The presence of the pantry key raised happy thoughts in Billy Bunter's imaginative mind.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Disappointment.

BILLY BUNTER snored loudly. He was not asleep, but he was snoring.

Exactly why he should pretend to be asleep was not quite clear, but it seemed to come natural to the Owl of the Remove to pretend things. There was no one in Greyfriars better at "spoofing" than Billy Bunter.

He snored on loudly, and tried to put temptation behind him.

It was not that his conscience was troubled by a desire

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This week's "GEM" Library contains:

"JOE'S CHAMPION." A Grand Complete Tale of Tom

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to journey into the kitchen and see if the key he still had in bed with him really did fit the pantry door. Bunter's conscience had received too many rebuffs in these matters to cause much trouble now, but the risk of the proposed expedition did trouble him.

Billy Bunter thought of the very good chance there was of meeting some hard-working prefect who was sitting up, or perhaps stumbling across the path of a master. It was not an attractive picture.

But, then, it was no more attractive to lie in bed too hungry to think of sleep even.

"It's Jolly's fault," muttered the Owl of the Remove. "I saved up at supper for his hamper. Jolly's a beast!"

Billy Bunter felt very indignant. He could not help considering that Jolly had behaved in a very unfriendly manner; that he had failed to respond to disinterested overtures in a most unsporting way.

"Anyone would think I was a sponger," Bunter thought indignantly. "I knew Jolly was a beast directly I saw him."

Then the complacent mind of the Owl of the Remove drifted into a pleasant, dreamy groove.

There would be all sorts of things in the pantry. Perhaps some mince-pies—Billy Bunter loved mince-pies—and some ham—nice fat ham—it was almost certain there would be heaps of ham. It was a beautiful thought, all those provisions lying peacefully on the nice white pantry shelves.

Unconsciously Billy Bunter licked his lips.

There was already an expectant smile on his face. He was anticipating the pleasure of putting the key in the pantry lock. Billy Bunter's imagination carried him away in these matters.

He had long since given up hesitation on the point.

He was merely waiting for the time to pass to make an expedition even possible of success. He listened anxiously for the quarters to strike; then, as eleven o'clock tolled out, Billy rolled from his bed.

Now he came to stand up, he really was remarkably hungry. He did not remember having been so hungry for ages.

"I—I hope I sha'n't faint before I get there," he thought anxiously. "I sha'n't mind so much afterwards. It would be beastly to faint before, though."

Billy Bunter had so often told other fellows that he was in danger of fainting for want of food that he almost believed his own words now. None of the others did, though, and were not likely to.

With a cautious, silent tread the Owl of the Remove sidled from the dormitory and crept down the stairs. There was not a sign of anyone being about.

The faint light which escaped from under the doors of some of the masters' rooms made him hold his breath, but none of the doors opened, and with a gasp of relief the Owl of the Remove gained the kitchen.

He listened, but all the servants had gone to bed. Billy Bunter singled out the pantry key, and the expectant smile crept into his face again.

For an hour he had thought over the pleasure of opening the pantry door.

The key turned easily in the lock, and Bunter almost ran into the little room. Then he struck a match.

"My—my hat!"

The beautiful spectacle of wall-laden shelves overcame him for an instant—but only for an instant. He let the match burn out.

"I can eat in the dark," he muttered. "I almost think I could eat in my sleep to-night. Where was that game-pie?"

Billy Bunter found the game-pie, and whipped out his pocket-knife. Then he cut off a huge piece.

With his fat face wreathed in smiles the Owl of the Remove took a bite; then the smile lessened.

"I—I don't think this is game-pie," he murmured, after a pause. "I think it must be mincemeat. No, it isn't, though."

There was not a vestige of a smile on Billy Bunter's face now. He put the pie down and began to splutter.

He was certain he could taste treacle with the game, and the mixture was very unpleasant. Billy Bunter pushed the game-pie from him.

"I don't think I quite like that," he murmured. "It's not up to the cook's usual standard, and someone ought to complain. It's a disgrace to make a game-pie like that."

Billy Bunter struck another match, and pushed the offending pie still further from him. He felt that he would never care for game-pie again if he lived to be a century or so.

"It's beastly—absolutely beastly! Preserves!"

The fat junior spoke the last word in a loud voice. If there was one thing he really did like more than another, that one thing was preserves.

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He dug out a liberal helping with his pocket-knife, and shut his eyes as he transferred the helping to his mouth. When taking a large mouthful Bunter often did close his eyes. His face was so fat and chubby that he found it more convenient not to have both eyes and mouth open at the same moment.

"This is ripping! Blest if I don't stay here all night—O-oh! Ow! B-r-r-r!"

With a gasp Billy Bunter spat the preserve from his mouth and commenced to dance about the narrow confines of the pantry in the most distressed manner.

He rammed his handkerchief in his mouth and spluttered wildly.

"Pepper—red pepper! Oh, my tongue is burnt off!"

Billy Bunter was in too much discomfort for the moment to wonder how pepper could have got into a pot of preserves; the only point he was really troubled about at the time was to get the pepper out of his mouth.

"I must have a drink!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "I'm in awful pain! Where are the beastly matches?"

He obtained a light, in great excitement, and seized a jug of milk. Then he took a long and reckless pull.

The result was disastrous.

"Oh!" shrieked Billy Bunter. "Oh!"

And he flung the jug in the air.

The jug came down on the stone floor with a loud crash, while most of the milk found a way down Billy Bunter's neck. Billy Bunter himself had recommenced a wild dance round the pantry.

"More pepper!" he choked. "Some beast has been putting pepper into the milk! O-oh!"

Billy Bunter rubbed his tongue vigorously with his coat-sleeve, and became indignant.

"This is Jolly's doing, the beast!" he moaned. "That's why he had the keys. I hope he gets into a fearful row!"

But Billy Bunter was becoming desperate. He wished he had brought a candle, so that he could have examined all the provisions on the shelves and selected something that had not been tampered with.

Striking matches did not give him time to make a thorough examination.

"I'll get even with the beast somehow! I wonder if that jam is all right?"

The match went out suddenly, and to his disgust the Owl of the Remove found that it had been his last one. He was now without matches even to make an examination.

He took a cautious amount of the jam and applied it gingerly to his tongue. There was another instant gurgle.

"Salt!" spluttered the fat junior. "The beastly cad!"

Billy Bunter was wildly exasperated. All the horrors he had tasted so far had done nothing but increase his appetite for undoctored provisions.

He really was frightfully hungry.

He began to feel about the shelves in desperation. A pot of jam fell to the floor with a crash; then his fingers sank deeply into some jelly.

Billy Bunter decided to sample the jelly.

Again there was a splutter and much coughing. Someone had poured vinegar on the jelly, and the result was far from pleasing.

The Owl of the Remove became more desperate than ever. He seized a cake quite by chance, and wished afterwards that he had not done so.

Vinegar had been added to the cake. The dainty was completely saturated with the acid.

"The beast—the caddish beast!"

In his excitement Billy Bunter began knocking quite a number of things from the shelves, but he did not mind that in the least. If only he could find something to eat!

A loaf of bread came to hand, but he did not like bread; and even if he did he could not find the butter.

There was the cheese, of course. If he could find the cheese he would have a snack of that, although he hated bread-and-cheese as much as it was possible for him to hate any eatable.

But evidently the cheese was not kept in the pantry. Anyway, the Owl of the Remove could not find it.

He hacked off a piece of bread and ate it dry. So far that loaf was the only thing he had found which had not been doctored by Jolly.

Billy Bunter was certain it must be Jolly who had played such havoc with the provisions.

With growing anger, the Owl of the Remove ate the bread, feeling all the time for something less unpleasant to his taste.

He found many things, but they had all suffered at the hands of the new page. Billy Bunter did not believe there was a single eatable in the pantry which was not doctored.

"I'll get even with the beast!" grunted Billy Bunter. "You see if I don't!"

And as there were limits to his desire for dry bread, the Owl of the Remove turned from the shelves before long.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

In a very injured state of mind he made his way upstairs again.

So indignant was he that he forgot about caution. He strode past the masters' rooms without a thought of the masters themselves until a loud voice rang out:

"Who is there?"

With a gasp Billy Bunter dashed ahead.

"Quelch!" he muttered. "Suppose he saw me?"

"Who is there? Stop, boy!"

Bunter dashed on, gasping with relief. If the master had seen him he would have called him by name.

The fat junior felt certain of that point.

He raced up the stairs at a pace no one at Greyfriars would have thought he was capable of, and dashed into the dormitory.

Then he whipped off his clothes, and hesitated for a moment. How to get rid of the incriminating keys?

Then a chuckle broke from Billy Bunter's lips, the first since he had tasted the game-pie.

He placed the bunch of keys right on top of Peter Potts's clothes, and scrambled into bed.

He was scarcely beneath the sheets when the door was opened and a light flashed into the room.

It was Mr. Quelch who stood in the doorway.

"Is anyone awake?"

Billy Bunter snored on loudly. He could snore very naturally, although he was inclined to overdo it. Mr. Quelch was not aware of that.

He glanced at the Owl of the Remove before any of the other fellows, and walked grimly towards him; then he stopped abruptly.

He had caught sight of the keys on Peter Potts's clothes.

Billy Bunter was watching anxiously. He was frightfully interested in the master's next action.

Unconsciously, Mr. Quelch relieved the Owl of the Remove to a tremendous extent.

He picked up the bunch of keys and left the room without a word, and Billy Bunter opened his eyes.

He was relieved, but he was also surprised.

It was strange the master had not awakened the new fellow. The Owl of the Remove could not quite make that out.

"I—I hope it's all right!" he muttered. And fell to sleep still hoping.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Beginning of Potts's Troubles.

CLANG!

The loud-voiced rising-bell rang through the college in the depressing manner rising-bells have, and sleepy-eyed juniors scrambled unwillingly from bed.

It was still nearly dark and very chilly, and there was a hasty scrambling into clothes.

It was a half that day, so boots would be put on first thing. They were to be found in a long line outside each dormitory door.

They were dragged on, and a hurried way was made to the warmer breakfast-room. Breakfast was always a welcome meal to the healthy Greyfriars junior.

With a cheery laugh Harry Wharton looked through the window.

"Going to be a first-class day later on," he sang out.

"The mist will clear all right."

"The all-rightfulness of it is terrific!"

Frank Nugent turned to Peter Potts.

"Got your books, Jolly?"

"Don't know—"

"What?"

"Eh?"

"I mean, I haven't unpacked the box properly," added Potts hastily. "I expect there are some books there."

"My hat! Fancy not knowing!"

"Oh, I hate lessons; always did!"

Harry Wharton laughed pleasantly.

"Prefer footer myself any day, kid, but lessons have to be done. Latin and maths this morning."

"L-latin?"

"Rather!"

"Quelch takes us, too. He's awfully keen on good translation, but you'll get on all right."

"And there's a half-holiday this afternoon," added Harry Wharton. "We shall be going for a walk most likely; you'd better come and see what sort of country there is round about."

"I should like to," muttered Peter Potts. "I say, what is maths?"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared.

"Don't be funny, ass——"

"Is it arithmetic?" ventured Potts uneasily. "I used to be pretty good at arithmetic——"

"Well, that is part of maths., of course," exclaimed Harry Wharton blankly. "Algebra, Euclid, and so on. We are doing the second book again just now."

"Oh!" said Peter Potts. And he wondered what was the nature of the second book, and whether it referred to Latin or algebra.

Before another word could be exchanged the gong sounded, and there was a hurried scramble for places at the tables.

Still a good deal puzzled, Harry Wharton found a place for Potts near himself, looking curiously at the new fellow all the time. There was certainly something very unusual about him.

But this strangeness in the new fellow was forgotten as cups of steaming hot coffee were handed down the long table, to be received by their respective recipients with welcome.

"Cheer-ho!" grinned Frank Nugent. "Nothing like coffee on a cold morning. Oh! Yah!"

Frank Nugent's voice rang out in a ringing shout. Wingate, of the Sixth, jumped to his feet in astonishment.

Then another yell sounded across the room.

Coker, of the Fifth, was shouting like a Third Form fag. Mr. Quelch stared at him blankly.

Then a deep-voiced roar came from Billy Bunter.

"I'm poisoned! I'm—— Yow!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"Groo!"

Mr. Quelch glared round the huge room. The shouts and exclamations came from different places at different tables.

One solitary shout might have been put down to a burnt tongue, but a dozen shouts within the space of a few seconds could not.

Mr. Quelch looked stern.

"Boys, what is the meaning of this?"

"Yow!"

"The yowfulness is terrific!" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur, putting down his cup with a thud, and clasping his hands to his mouth. "The esteemed coffee is red hotful!"

"I'm poisoned!" bleated Billy Bunter. "I'm—— Pass the milk! Someone pass the milk!"

No one took any notice of Billy Bunter. All were interested in each other to notice such a well-known fraud as the Owl of the Remove.

Those who had not yet tasted their coffee stared at the wry faces of those who had, while fresh gasps and cries were heard every instant.

Bob Cherry looked at the Nabob of Bhanipur in complete amazement.

"What's the matter, Inky?"

"The esteemed coffee is red hotful!"

"Wait until it cools then, ass!"

"My worthy chum is wise!" said the Indian, in his curious diction. "Has he tasted the esteemed coffee?"

Bob Cherry had not done so. He looked at the pleasant cup before him, and took a long draught.

Then he dropped the cup in the Indian's lap, and his voice joined the voices of the others, who were protesting in loud gasps.

Mr. Quelch rapped angrily on the table.

"Silence! Wharton, what is the matter?"

"I—I don't know, sir!"

"What did you cry out for, then?"

The captain of the Remove looked puzzled for a moment. "I think there is something wrong with the coffee, sir," he said, at last.

Mr. Quelch sniffed and picked up his own cup. Every eye was turned towards the master, as he raised the cup to his lips.

The next instant the Remove-master commenced to splutter every bit as vigorously as Coker had done. Wingate, of the Sixth, could not understand it at all; but he considered he had enough to go upon to decide not to taste his coffee.

"Horrible!" gasped Mr. Quelch, who prided himself on a cultured taste in coffee. "Nugent, ring the bell!"

The bell was rung, and Gosling answered it. He came in in surprise, to meet the master's stern gaze.

"Gosling, what is the matter with the coffee?"

"Which there is nothing at all the matter with it, sir."

"Indeed!"

"No, sir. Which it was fresh made this morning. What I ses is this 'ere. Tastes in coffee differ."

"Gosling, taste the coffee in that cup!"

"Thank you, sir, which I don't mind if I do. What I ses is this 'ere. Ah! Ow! Yow!"

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And Gosling flung the cup, the saucer, and about half the coffee in the air. The other half he had drunk.

When Mr. Quelch had suggested the porter tasting the coffee he had meant him to just taste, and nothing more. Mr. Quelch did not play practical jokes.

The point was that he and Gosling differed in what constituted a taste.

Mr. Quelch jumped hastily out of the way of the stream of coffee, and stood in the centre of the room. He could not very well reprimand the porter in the circumstances, though.

"How ridiculous of you, Gosling!" he said irritably. "I——"

"Which is nice goings hon!" groaned the porter. "What I ses is this 'ere. My mouth is burnt, sir."

"What is the matter with the coffee?"

"Which I don't know, sir; leastways, unless you have put something in it, sir."

There was a subdued chuckle at that. Mr. Quelch went red.

"Do not be absurd! I——"

The Remove-master stopped speaking in amazement. He had looked down at the pool of coffee on the floor, and had noticed his boots.

Like the majority of Greyfriars people, Mr. Quelch put on his boots first thing on half-holidays, and he stood looking at his well-made footgear in amazement.

Then Gosling also looked at the boots.

"Which is nice goings hon, sir! What 'ave you done to your boots, sir?"

"I—I have done nothing to them. Dear me!"

"My hat!"

The last exclamation came from Bob Cherry. He was staring at Harry Wharton's boots, which he could just see under the table.

By a strange coincidence, Harry Wharton was gazing at Frank Nugent's boots at the same time, while Frank was cautiously smelling his coffee.

"Pepper!" he whispered to Harry Wharton. "That's what it is. My only Aunt Jane! Who has been japing with Inky's boots?"

"The japefulness is terrific!" gasped the Indian.

Then Mr. Quelch's voice rang out again, loudly and sternly.

"Boys, stand up!"

The fellows jumped to their feet.

"Stand in a line by that wall, please!"

All the juniors at Harry Wharton's table obeyed instantly. They stood in a perfect line, the sun shining through the window on their boots.

The few who were wearing house-slippers chuckled. Those who had boots on stared.

Mr. Quelch stepped forward.

"Gosling, what is the meaning of this?"

"Which is nice goings hon, sir!"

"Explain!"

Gosling gasped.

"What I ses, sir, is this 'ere——"

"Yes?"

"It's that new page, sir," gasped Gosling. "Peter Potts, sir!"

The real Peter Potts started, and looked uneasy. Mr. Quelch waited inquiringly.

"Continue, Gosling!"

"It's Potts, sir, which is nice goings hon! What I ses is this 'ere. He's blacklead the boots instead of usin' blacking."

"Black—black-leaded——"

"Yes, sir; that's hit! Blackleaded by mistake. I'll go and see, sir."

And the porter hurried away.

He was back again before all the fellows were re-seated, nodding vigorously.

"What I ses is this 'ere. I was right, sir. I couldn't find Potts, as he's been sent down to the station, but the blacking brushes are covered with blacklead."

"What an extraordinary mistake for a lad to make!"

"Yes, sir; but about the coffee."

Mr. Quelch started.

He had forgotten about the coffee.

"Have you discovered what is the matter with it?"

"No, sir! But what I ses is this 'ere. Hin the night one of the young gentlemen got into the pantry——"

"One of the young gentlemen! Gosling!"

"Which is nice goings hon, as you mean to say, sir," added the porter, sniffing. "The keys was sneaked before, and—and during the night the pantry has been real wrocked, sir. What I ses is this 'ere. Find the young gentleman who broke into the pantry, and you'll find the young gentleman who put the pepper in the coffee!"

"Pepper! Broke into the pantry!"

Mr. Quelch was greatly astounded, but his surprise

suddenly gave place to sternness. He remembered the keys he had taken from Potts's pile of clothes overnight.

He also remembered the vague outline of the junior he had seen racing past his door long after lights out.

It was strange Mr. Quelch had not thought of these two incidents before; but he was a man who was always occupied with the moment at hand. He had the keys in his hand now.

He wheeled round, and faced Peter Potts.

"Jolly, were these keys ever in your possession?"

Everyone looked at the new fellow, while the new fellow himself looked solemnly at the keys.

"Yes, sir; they har mine!"

Mr. Quelch started again with amazement, then turned to Gosling.

"Are not these your keys, Gosling?"

"They are the kitchen keys, sir. That one there is the pantry key. Nice goings hon—"

The Remove-master cut him short, turning to Potts again.

"Come here, Jolly!"

"Yes, sir?" said Peter Potts, who had not heard what had passed between the master and Gosling. "I can't think ow I came to lose them keys!"

"These keys are not yours."

"Yes, sir."

"They are 'not!'" exclaimed the master sternly. "How did they get into your possession?"

Peter Potts gasped audibly.

He had spoken untruthfully when he had said the keys were his, but he had meant to imply that they were Jolly's, whose place he had taken. The keys certainly had been in the jacket-pocket Potts had received from Jolly.

It never occurred to Peter Potts that the keys could belong to anyone except the owner of the jacket.

Mr. Quelch suddenly asked another question.

"Were you out of your room last night, Jolly?"

"No, sir!"

"Bunter, were you out of the dormitory?"

"Oh, really, sir!"

"Answer me, boy!"

"Certainly not, sir!" said the Owl of the Remove, who seldom had many scruples about telling falsehoods. "I didn't wake up the whole night, sir."

"I have reason to believe I saw you pass my door."

Billy Bunter gasped. Still, he maintained the astonished appearance of the innocent injured.

"Really, you must have been mistaken, sir," he said.

"Wharton can tell you I wasn't out of the dormitory."

"Can you do so, Wharton?"

"No, sir! I didn't wake up the whole night."

"Beast!" muttered Billy Bunter, looking indignantly at the surprised captain of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch seemed very undecided.

He certainly thought it was Bunter's almost unmistakable form he had seen hurrying past his room. But, then, it was absolutely a fact that he had taken the keys from the supposed Jolly's pile of clothes.

At the time of taking the keys, Mr. Quelch had been guilty of a little hasty jumping at conclusions. Knowing Billy Bunter, it had flashed through his mind that it was the Owl of the Remove he had seen, and that Bunter had contemplated a raid on the pantry.

Mr. Quelch thought his own appearance at the door had prevented the raid, and so that portion of the incident had slipped his memory. It had also occurred to the Remove-master that Billy Bunter had thrown the keys on the new fellow's clothes in order to escape detection.

Mr. Quelch was a little uneasy about these hastily-formed conclusions now, for he hated misjudging juniors.

"This is a very extraordinary affair!" he exclaimed severely. "I cannot understand your statement that these keys belong to you, Jolly."

"Perhaps I've made a mistake, sir."

"You certainly have! Had you keys like these?"

Peter Potts felt that he was out of his depth. He could only open his mouth, but he could not think of a suitable answer.

"Answer me, boy! Have you keys like these?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, where are they?"

"I don't know, sir," said Potts. And he ran his hand across his forehead.

Mr. Quelch's astonishment grew.

"You mean that this bunch of keys, in some extraordinary manner, has been substituted for your own?"

"Yes, sir," muttered Peter Potts, who was ready to think anything, provided it would please Mr. Quelch. "That's hit, sir!"

But the Remove-master was far from satisfied.

"This matter will be thoroughly sifted," he said shortly.

"Gosling, I hope you have ordered fresh coffee to be made?"

"Which I have done, sir."

"And speak to the new page about—about the disgraceful way the—the boots have been cleaned. And, Gosling!"

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EVERY
TUESDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"Yes, sir?"

"Tell Dr. Locke that I should like to see him in his room after breakfast," said the Remove-master. "Take your seats, boys."

And as the fresh coffee had not suffered at the hands of Jolly, breakfast proceeded without further interruption.

A good many surprised glances were directed towards Peter Potts, though, and they disconcerted him. Already the ex-page was becoming a good deal scared.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

First School.

"O I sit 'ere?"

Peter Potts asked the question of Harry Wharton, and Harry nodded.

"Yes, if you like, kid. I say, you haven't got any books with you."

"N-no."

"No time to slip upstairs and get yours now," returned the captain of the Remove, searching in his desk. "Quelch will be in any minute. There's a Latin grammar, and I know Bob Cherry has a spare translation."

"Right-ho!" sang out Bob Cherry, and he flung the little book across.

Peter Potts took them with a nod of thanks, and opened the grammar at random. The cryptic-looking contents rather startled him.

"I say, Wharton, what do you do with this 'ere?" he asked, without his usual caution in choosing his words. "Blowed if it don't strike me like Greek."

"Those declensions? Why, we learn them off, of course," exclaimed Harry in surprise. "Did you have to write them out at the last school?"

"No," said Peter Potts, with perfect truthfulness, and he closed the book.

He wished more than ever that he had not listened to the persuasions of Jolly. He longed to shut his eyes, and open them again to find himself cleaning knives and blacking boots, or, better still, listening to the anchor chain rushing past the guides as the ship which was to take him to Canada next week weighed anchor.

Mr. Quelch came in before Harry Wharton spoke to the new boy again, and there was instant silence. The Remove-master glanced sharply at Potts once, but he did not raise the point of the keys again.

Harry Wharton scarcely expected him to do so until after the Latin. Still, the captain of the Remove was a good deal puzzled as to what had taken place in the Head's study, for Mr. Quelch had been there ever since breakfast.

The master glanced round the room.

"Open the books where we left off last time. Bunter, show Jolly where we are up to."

Billy Bunter pointed to the place, and there was an uneasy silence.

None of the fellows were anxious to commence construing, everyone hoping it would be someone else. Frank Nugent was the unfortunate first choice, and he bent over his book with an inward groan.

Nugent was an average sort of junior at Latin, and got on in his usual way. He was pulled up once or twice for badly chosen words, but came out of the ordeal fairly well.

As Mr. Quelch ordered him to stop, heads bent lower than ever over the books. An injudicious cough might bring the next twenty lines to the unfortunate cougher.

Mr. Quelch's voice sounded again.

"Go on, please, Jolly."

Peter Potts heard without grasping for the moment. He was leaning over his book with the others.

Billy Bunter reached across and nudged him.

"Go on, Jolly; he'll drop on me if you don't buck up."

"Please translate, Jolly."

Potts started violently and stared at the Latin before him. The passage he had to translate was one of Cæsar's stirring speeches to his soldiers, but it might have been a poem in Greek for all Peter Potts knew.

An ominous silence followed.

Harry Wharton looked uneasy. He rather hated prompting, but Jolly was a new fellow, and if the captain of the Remove had been near enough he would have helped.

"Give him a leg-up, Bunter," Harry whispered; but Billy Bunter took no notice.

He still considered Potts responsible for the failure of what might have been a glorious feed in the pantry the previous night, and there was a good deal of meanness in Billy Bunter's character.

Skinner, the humorist of the Remove, was on the other side of Peter Potts, and he exchanged a glance with Bulstrode. Bulstrode nodded.

"Shall I give you a leg-up, Jolly?" whispered Skinner; and intense relief came into Potts's face.

"Rather! What's it all about?"
 "Oh, a lot of jaw. 'Soldiers of Rome,' that's where you start."
 "'Soldiers of Rome,'" said Potts very loudly, going a deep red. "What's next, Skinner?"
 "'Now that the winter is over—'"
 "'Now that the winter is over—'"
 "Winter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Did you say winter, Jolly?"
 "Y-yes, sir."
 "Indeed! Which word do you translate as winter, boy?"
 "My 'at!'" muttered Potts. "Which is winter, Skinner?"
 "Blessed if I know!"
 And it was as much as Skinner could do to prevent himself chuckling. His style of humour was rather crude sometimes. Peter Potts suspected nothing, and stared at the passage before him. Mr. Quelch rapped on the desk.
 "Answer me, Jolly. Which word do you consider means winter?"
 "The—the second one, sir."
 The whole class gasped. Mr. Quelch included. Bulstrode was red in the face with suppressed laughter.
 Harry Wharton leant over his desk.
 "Don't jape, you ass!" he whispered. "There'll be an awful row."
 "I'm not—not japing."
 "Summer, kid, not winter."
 "Silence, Wharton!"
 And Harry had to drop back in his place. Peter Potts almost choked.
 "Summer, sir. 'Now that the summer is over—'"
 "Well? Go on."
 "Help us out, Skinner, for 'eaving's sake!"
 "'Now that the summer is over,'" murmured the humorist of the Remove, "'and the cold weather is with us once more—'"
 "'And the cold weather is with us once more—'"
 The expression on Mr. Quelch's face as Peter Potts put those very un-Cæsar-like words into the great warrior's mouth was startling.
 Mr. Quelch really did love Latin, and to make fun of a translation was a heinous crime in his eyes. Harry Wharton started violently.
 What on earth was the new fellow up to? He would be sent to the Head in a minute.
 Mr. Quelch came across the class-room.
 "What—what did you say, Jolly?"
 "'And—and the cold weather—'"
 "Silence, boys!"
 But he scarcely expected to be obeyed. The shouts of laughter could not be stopped in an instant.
 Bulstrode's voice was heard above them all.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "My hat!"
 "The utter young ass!"
 "Silence!" cried Mr. Quelch again. "Silence! Jolly, I am aware of your regrettable past school life—"
 "My—my what, sir?"
 "I might say your disgraceful past school life, but I can inform you that you will not be allowed to continue such behaviour at Greyfriars. Go over to that desk there, and stay there for the remainder of this class."
 Potts was a brilliant pink as he made his way through the grinning class to the one desk right at the back, and it was only because he thought of it too late that he did not rush through the window and run wildly for the station.
 Everyone was chuckling, perhaps with the exception of Harry Wharton and the Nabob of Bhanipur.
 Somehow, neither of these two were quite satisfied that Potts was japing. There was something in his obviously distressed face which did not fit in with a jape.
 Bob Cherry did not notice the distressed look.
 "Of all the young duffers—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Fancy a new kid having the cheek!" chuckled Frank Nugent.
 "Quelchy will rub it in afterwards, and no mistake."
 "Rather!"
 The class went on quietly enough now, but Harry Wharton found himself glancing more than once in Potts's direction. And every time he glanced, he thought of the Head's strange instructions that Jolly was not to be lost sight of after his arrival at the station.
 And what did Mr. Quelch mean when he spoke about a regrettable past history for the new fellow? Harry Wharton wondered what sort of school he could have been to.
 Still, it was no good wondering. If Jolly had "spoofed" the translation, he was not likely to gain much fun from the experiment. If he really had not done so, then Harry was sorry for him.
 Then the Nabob of Bhanipur touched him lightly on the arm.

"The esteemed Skinner was prompting Jolly," the Indian whispered.
 "My hat!"
 "The my hatfulness is terrific."
 Harry Wharton looked towards the still grinning Skinner in disgust. It was not much of a trick to make a new fellow ridiculous in his first class.
 But Harry was called upon to construe at that moment, and he forgot Jolly's troubles in his own. Then Mr. Quelch closed his book.
 It still wanted a few minutes to dismissal, so the fellows waited expectantly. The Remove-master did not keep them waiting for long.
 "Jolly," he said sternly, "I require an explanation as to how you became possessed of the kitchen keys."
 Everyone waited in dead silence. The Remove-master was very much in earnest.
 "Explain, please, Jolly."
 "I—I can't, sir."
 "You cannot? Do you still mean me to understand that you do not know how the keys came into your possession?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Nonsense!" said Mr. Quelch sharply. "You said the keys were yours. I found them on your clothes in the dormitory last night. Explain instantly."
 Peter Potts groaned inwardly. He had not the faintest idea what it all meant, and yet he was ordered to explain. He became indignant.
 "You don't think as I put the pepper in the coffee, sir."
 "Some boy did so, and some boy spoilt a large quantity of provisions in the pantry. The only boy who could have done so was the one who had possession of the keys."
 "It wasn't I, sir; I don't know where the pantry is."
 "Have you found the keys you said you had lost—those which resemble the kitchen household keys?" demanded the master in astonishment.
 "N no, sir."
 "I do not believe you have any such keys."
 This was perfectly true. But it was also perfectly true that Peter Potts could no more understand the affair than Mr. Quelch could.
 Mr. Quelch, of course, could not be expected to realise this. He was beginning to view the matter with growing seriousness.
 "Jolly, I do not believe a word you have told me. I believe it was you I saw last night, and not Bunter."
 "It wasn't me, sir," said Bunter ungrammatically, and with so much vigour that Harry Wharton looked at him suspiciously. "I didn't wake up the whole night. Besides, sir, I don't think I would do such a horrible thing as spoil eatables."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Silence! Jolly, you are to go to Dr. Locke's room at three o'clock this afternoon."
 "W-what for, sir?"
 "To be present while this matter is thrashed out," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I shall also require an explanation of your disgraceful conduct in class this morning. I warn you, Jolly, you had better turn over a fresh leaf while at Greyfriars. I warn you entirely for your own good."
 And with a wave of the hand the Remove-master dismissed the juniors.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Maths.

"I BELIEVE he's off his rocker!"
 Frank Nugent spoke the words decidedly.
 He and a group of Remove fellows were in the common-room at the morning break, discussing the supposed Jolly and his doings. It was scarcely likely they would be discussing anything else.
 "Or else he was japing."
 "In class, you mean?"
 "What about the pantry bizney, though?" exclaimed Wharton. "Somehow, I don't believe the kid knows anything about that, and yet—"
 "Why doesn't he explain how he got hold of the keys, then?"
 Harry Wharton shook his head. It was all very puzzling. Frank Nugent stuck to his original explanation.
 "He's off his rocker, that's what it is, and the Head knows it."
 "He'd never have been allowed to come here if that was it, kid."
 "Perhaps he's only a little off his rocker."
 "Then Mr. Quelch wouldn't have spoken about disgraceful past behaviour, and all the rest of it," objected Harry Wharton. "No, the kid's all right, only—"
 "Only what?"
 "Blest if I know; but there's a mystery somewhere,"

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added the captain of the Remove. "He isn't a bit like a public school fellow. I don't really believe he knew the Latin."

The others looked as puzzled as Harry was, but no one spoke again. The junior they were discussing was hurrying towards them.

He came up, looking a good deal scared.

"I want to get down to the kitchen, Wharton," he said hastily. "I've forgotten the way."

"Then you have been there before!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Y-yes!"

"When?"

"Yesterday. I came into the college that way. Is it straight hon?"

Harry Wharton nodded, and followed the new junior along the passage. The others were also following.

Peter Potts did not seem to notice he was being accompanied.

He almost ran down the stairs, bursting into the kitchen in great excitement. Gosling was having some light refreshment, which looked very much like warm gin-and-water.

"Not allowed in the kitchens, young gentlemen. Which is nice goings hon. Is hall the school a-comin' down!"

"Where's the new page, Gosling?" exclaimed Peter Potts quickly. "I must see him at once."

"Well, you can't."

"But I must!"

Gosling sniffed.

"What I ses is this 'ere. Then you'd better go down to the station, 'cos that's where Potts is. Arterwards he's going on to Cliff House School, and won't be back until four o'clock, an' not then, most likely, which is nice goings hon—"

"Not back until four?"

"That's what I said."

Peter Potts ran his hand across his forehead. He was to go to the Head's room at three, and if he couldn't see the real Jolly before then, Potts did not like to finish the train of thought.

He had dreaded Latin, but that dread was nothing like the one he entertained when he thought of the forthcoming interview with the head-master.

"My 'at!" he gasped, half to himself. "My 'at! I aren't arf in a 'ole!"

Harry Wharton stepped in from the doorway.

"Why not have a look round the pantry, Jolly," he said quietly. "If you know anything about the jape, we might find a clue."

"Which is nice goings hon—"

"Right for you, Gossy!"

"What I ses is this 'ere—"

"And so say all of us," added Bob Cherry, opening the pantry door. "Have a scout round, chaps."

"Right-ho!"

Nothing had been put straight in the pantry; it was just as Billy Bunter and the real Jolly had left it.

The juniors stared.

"My aunt, what a mess!"

"Look out for the butter! Atishoo!"

"Atish-atish-oo!"

There was still enough pepper in the air to make a prolonged stay in the pantry unpleasant. Harry Wharton peered round under the shelves, but there was nothing to be seen.

Peter Potts stood in the kitchen, evincing very little interest in the search.

His great concern was that Jolly would not be back until four o'clock, while he was due in Dr. Locke's study at three.

"It's 'orrible!" muttered Potts. "That's what it is—'orrible!"

And when Harry Wharton & Co. came from the pantry they found that Peter Potts had left the kitchen. Even Harry Wharton began to suspect that the new fellow knew more about the affair than he pretended then.

"If he does, he's a young rotter!" the captain of the Remove said indignantly. "He must have been doing nothing but tell lies all the morning."

"Pretty rotten, if that's it!"

"Blest if I know whether it is, though," said Harry Wharton, in great doubt.

"The blestfulness is terrific."

"Oh, let's get out of this," said Bob Cherry. "The bell will be going for maths in a minute."

The chums of the Remove sauntered slowly upstairs, gaining the class-room for second school just as the bell sounded.

They dropped into their places as Mr. Quelch came into the room.

It was natural that the master should look for the supposed Jolly first of all.

"Isn't Jolly here?"

"He's just coming, I guess, sir," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, in his cool way.

"He should be here now."

"I guess he got detained," said the American coolly.

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ONE
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"So did Skinner," Fish added in a whisper to Harry Wharton.

"What's happened, kid?"

"Oh, nothing much. Bunter let out that Skinner had been stuffing Jolly over the Latin."

"I thought there was something like that," said Wharton indignantly. "What did Jolly say?"

"Not much, I guess. He went for Skinner, and was bumping him as I came along. I guess he's coming now."

Peter Potts came into the room a little relieved on account of his dispute with Skinner, but still very uneasy. He sat down, and looked grimly out of the window.

Mr. Quelch glanced at him, and stated a rider on the blackboard. It was a fairly simple proposition on the first book of Euclid.

"Jolly, prove that rider, please!"

Peter Potts looked at the collection of angles and letters, and wondered what it could all mean. But Potts had learnt a lesson at first school, even if he had done no Latin.

He had no intention of appearing ridiculous again, if he could help it.

"Don't know it, sir," he said firmly.

"Know it. Of course, you don't know it. I am stating a rider—"

"Never did one in my life, sir."

"What? Jolly, how dare you tell me those falsehoods! Come to the blackboard instantly."

Peter Potts got up, and walked to the blackboard. Mr. Quelch put a piece of chalk in his hand.

"Now, prove that those two angles are equal, Jolly."

Peter Potts had never done any Euclid in his life. He looked steadily at the angles for a long time, then turned to Mr. Quelch.

"They aren't equal, sir; that one's a lot bigger."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!"

In spite of his resolve, Peter Potts had unwittingly made the class laugh again. He shut his mouth, and waited.

The Remove master was very red. He did not doubt for an instant now that the supposed Jolly was living up to his reputation as a player of practical jokes.

As has been said, practical jokes did not appeal to Mr. Quelch.

"How dare you, boy! If I have another word of impertinence from you, I shall send you to the punishment-room at once until Dr. Locke returns."

Peter Potts brightened up for an instant. He had not known that the Head was away.

The Remove master soon set his mind at rest.

"The Head will not be back until three this afternoon. You will not care for four hours in the punishment-room, I assure you, Jolly."

"No, sir."

"Then prove that proposition."

"I can't, sir."

"Try."

"I don't know how to start about it, sir," said Peter Potts; and Mr. Quelch stared at him.

There was something in Potts's manners which made it difficult to believe he was not speaking the truth. And yet Mr. Quelch knew he had been to some of the best schools in England, and had been expelled from them.

It seemed incredible that he could know nothing at all of Euclid.

Mr. Quelch firmly refused to entertain doubt. The new boy was pretending not to know, but the Remove master did not care to continue the incident.

"I am sorry for you, Jolly," he said frigidly. "Go back to your place. I think there is no doubt that you will be thrashed this afternoon."

Peter Potts retreated to his desk, and sat down grimly. He had stood just about as much as he intended to stand.

He had been in a public school less than twenty-four hours, and he was in trouble over Latin, a thrashing was promised for him on account of Euclid, while he was supposed to have raided the pantry in the small hours of the night, and put pepper in the coffee.

This was all beyond Potts. He could accept his share of bad fortune, but he did not like a double share.

"Blowed if I aren't finished," he muttered to himself.

"I aren't cut out for these sort of schools. I wish the blackboard would fall on him, and hit him on the nose."

The blackboard, however, did not fall on Mr. Quelch, and the lesson continued in silence. At the word of dismissal, Potts rushed from the room.

He heard his name shouted, but he took no notice. He ran on until Harry Wharton's hand fell on his shoulder.

"Quelch's calling you, ass!" panted the captain of the Remove.

"Let 'im call."

"My—my hat!"

"Ang him!" said Peter Potts. "I've done with him! Let me go, Wharton!"

Harry obeyed in sheer astonishment. It was not usual for juniors to disregard the Form-master's summons.

"I say, you'll get into an awful row!"

"Rats!"

"Yes, you will," said Harry Wharton indignantly, "and it'll serve you jolly well right. You can't jape about here."

"Who has been japing?"

"My aunt!"

"Oh, rats!" said Potts; and he ran on before Harry could stop him.

Mr. Quelch came hurrying up, very angry looking.

"Didn't you stop Jolly, Wharton?"

"N-no, sir!"

"Go and find him at once, then, and bring him to my room!" exclaimed the master. "Cherry, Nugent—all of you, go and find Jolly!"

The juniors darted off, and made for the common-room.

All were a good deal excited.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Peter Potts Disappears.

"MY hat! Where can the young ass be?"

Harry Wharton gave vent to the exclamation in surprise.

He had followed Peter Potts along the corridor less than two minutes after that junior's disappearance round the corner, but not a trace of him could be found after that.

Harry Wharton & Co. had searched the whole school pretty well. He was not in the common-room. Micky Desmond said he had not been in the gymnasium, and no one in the quadrangles had seen him.

Bob Cherry shrugged his shoulders.

"The kid's hiding, of course."

"Yes; but what rot—"

"He can't mean to hide during dinner!" exclaimed Harry Wharton in some alarm. "The young duffer will get into a fearful row; he's japed enough as it is without this."

"Anyway, he doesn't seem to think so."

"He will think it when he goes up before the Head at three o'clock."

"The thankfulness of the esteemed Jolly will be terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Have any of you worthy chums carried out a searchfulness in the kitchen?"

"My aunt!"

None of them had thought of the kitchen again. A good half-dozen were employed in the search, and some of them were not best pleased.

It was fun in a way, but there was a football being punted about outside. Harry Wharton would much rather have spent their leisure half-hour before dinner practising than searching for Jolly.

Harry led the way to the kitchen again at a run.

"Ten to one the kid has slipped down there. Perhaps he's gone out into the kitchen garden."

"Shouldn't wonder!"

"Scud for it, chaps!"

The half-dozen pelted along, bursting into the kitchen in a bunch. Gosling was having some more light refreshment. He jumped to his feet indignantly.

"Look you here, Master Wharton—"

"Has Jolly been down?"

"Jolly, the new kid, you know?"

Gosling sniffed.

"Which he has," he said snappishly. "Nice goings hon, giving a 'ard working porter messages to 'and round, as if I hadn't anythin' to do—"

"Messages?"

"What messages?"

"Notes, that's what they was—fair flung 'em at me, he did, which is nice goings hon—"

"What notes, ass?"

"It appears to my watchfulness that the esteemed notes are on the dresser—"

"Good for you, Inky!"

Harry Wharton did not speak, but he picked up the notes. One of them was addressed to himself, and the other was not addressed at all.

"My hat, one's for me!"

"An' the other's for Potts, the new page, which is nice goings hon—"

"Open it, Harry!"

"What's the young ass got to say—"

Harry Wharton gasped.

"My only Aunt Jane!"

The others crowded round him.

"Get it off your chest, Wharton!"

"Fire ahead!"

"There are only a few words!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove in blank astonishment, "and jolly funnily worded. There's a mistake in nearly every line—"

"Japing, as usual, I suppose?"

"Blest if I know—"

"Read it out, ass!"

"My dear Wharton," read Harry; "Just a line to thank you for helping me, but it's no good. Greyfriars is too much for me, what with one thing and another. I'm catching the twelve-fifty train, so good-bye."

"It's no good following me, as I wouldn't come back for an old-age pension."

Harry Wharton read the quaint words in great excitement. The note was not signed, and the handwriting rather shaky.

The captain of the Remove wheeled round to Gosling.

"Are you certain Jolly gave you this, Gosling?"

"Which, of course, I am—"

"Come on, chaps," breathed Harry Wharton. "We must tell Quelch. There goes the bell!"

The juniors hurried into the dining-room in suppressed excitement. It was not often a junior ran away from Greyfriars and the supposed Jolly had not been in the school twenty-four hours yet.

Harry Wharton sat down, but he was watching the door anxiously. Mr. Quelch had sent him to find Jolly, and Mr. Quelch must be informed at once what had happened to the new junior.

Mr. Quelch came into the large room almost at once, and looked inquiringly towards Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove jumped to his feet.

"I think Jolly has run away, sir," he said quietly, lowering his voice.

"Run away?"

"Yes, sir; he left this note for me."

Harry Wharton went rather red as he handed the note up, because of the thanks it contained. But this was not a time for hesitation.

If Harry had received the note at the moment it was given to Gosling, he would have done his best to prevent the supposed Jolly catching the twelve-fifty train, and so escape subsequent trouble. But that had been impossible.

Mr. Quelch must know the facts of the case.

The Remove-master took the note, read it, and hurried from the room without speaking. He went straight to Mr. Prout's study.

The Fifth Form-master looked up in surprise.

"Anything the matter, Quelch?"

"Yes," said Mr. Quelch grimly; "something is very much the matter. You saw the new boy I had in the Remove—Jolly?"

"Yes. Young rascal has been expelled from half a dozen schools for playing pranks, hasn't he?"

"No!" said the other master. "Sixteen schools is the correct number."

"Bless my soul!"

"And he has concluded that record by—running away from Greyfriars!"

"No?"

"Read that note, then, Prout!"

The Fifth Form-master read the note which had been left for Wharton, and turned to his colleague in amazement.

"Good gracious! This is nice—"

"I suppose the doctor isn't back yet?"

"No; won't be until two or three—"

"Then I shall have to wire to Sir Edmund Jolly, the lad's father at once!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "The boy has to cross London to reach home. I do not consider the boy is fit to cross London alone. Have you a telegraph form?"

Mr. Prout had, and Mr. Quelch fidgeted with his pen. It was not an easy telegram to write.

Mr. Prout understood the other master's difficulty.

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"No good trying to beat about the bush, Quelch," he said. "Just say the boy has run away. Bother the post-office people knowing!"

"Yes, I suppose I cannot—keep up appearances. 'Your son left without permission. Believed to have taken the twelve-fifty train to London.' Will that do?"

"Yes, I should think so," smiled Mr. Prout at the other master's avoidance of the words "run away." "I'll send it out at once, Quelch!"

"Thanks, if you will. I must get back to the dining-room!"

And the Remove-master hurried down the stairs.

The news that the supposed Jolly had run away spread, of course, but Mr. Quelch was not in the mood to allow whispering. He was sterner than usual on the point of quietness, and watched the road from his position at the head of the table for signs of a telegraph boy.

But an answer did not come until some little time after dinner, and when it did, the message was very brief.

"Run away, eh?" read the telegram. "Shall be down at Friardale at five o'clock. Meet me.—EDMUND JOLLY."

Mr. Quelch read and re-read the telegram.

He could scarcely believe a man so well known in the world of politics could be responsible for such a strange wire.

The Remove-master hurried with it to Mr. Prout.

"Just read that, Prout!" he said blankly. "Read it, and then tell me there isn't madness in the Jolly family!"

"The old boy is jovial, anyway," laughed the Fifth Form-master.

"The old boy is as mad as a hatter, you mean!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I shall not be surprised if he arrives in charge of a keeper!"

And he strode from the room.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Head's Return.

"I SAY, had enough, you chaps?"

Bob Cherry gave vent to the words lazily.

There had been no football match arranged for the Remove that half-holiday, and the season was getting on. Already the juniors were thinking of next term, and King Cricket.

It was scarcely to be wondered that "shooting in" at the Nabob of Bhanipur should lose its interest after an hour's hard work.

Frank Nugent gave one last kick and nodded.

"Yes, I've had enough."

"Same here!" said John Bull junior. "Who is coming for a walk?"

Harry Wharton, as captain of the Remove, captured the balls, and turned suddenly to the others.

"I say, what about wandering down to the station, kids?"

Bob Cherry stared.

"The station! What on earth for?"

"What's the good of walking to the station?"

Harry Wharton had become serious.

"It's only just occurred to me, but wouldn't it be rather a good idea to go and make some inquiries about that young ass, Jolly?"

"Inquiries?"

"Yes; find out from the station people whether the young duffer really did go by the twelve-fifty!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "He may have been spoofing, and is hiding about somewhere in the village."

"My hat!"

Bob Cherry was exasperated that none of them had thought of that before. After all, they had had good proof that the supposed Jolly was not new to the art of spoofing.

They hurried into their things as quickly as possible.

"Rather!"

"Good wheeze, Wharton!"

"Blest if I don't think there may be something in it," said Frank Nugent. "If he isn't mad, Jolly was about the best spoofer we've ever had here—after Billy Bunter, of course."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"That's all right, Bunter; don't apologise!"

"Really—"

"Go on!" grinned Nugent. "Ready, you chaps?"

Billy Bunter watched the others go with hesitation. He wondered if there was any likelihood of their stopping on the way for a feed.

He decided, however, that there was not, and so went into the gymnasium and made himself a general nuisance by trying to borrow half-a-crown from everyone he met.

Harry Wharton & Co. went on without thinking of Billy Bunter. Harry's sudden suggestion that the new fellow might not have taken the train, after all, seemed very feasible.

"There's just the chance that he meant to take it, and missed it, too," said Bob Cherry, as they neared the gates. "He hadn't any too much time."

"No, that's so."

"I wish we'd thought of it sooner!" exclaimed Wharton. "Hallo!"

A cab was coming up the road—the well-known and ancient

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PENNY.

station cab. The juniors' thoughts flew to Jolly again, then Bob Cherry laughed.

"It's the Head coming back—"

"Give him a cheer, chaps!"

And as the old school-master passed them a subdued but hearty cheer rang out. Dr. Locke's face lighted up, as he raised his hat.

Much as the juniors liked the Head, they did not like him more than he liked them.

"Excellent lads!" the old school-master mused, as the cab drove him up to the college. "I feel certain their influence will have a good effect on Jolly. I am very glad that I placed Jolly in the Remove, although he probably is backward."

Dr. Locke got out of the cab and hurried into the college. The cab rumbled away.

The Head walked on to his room until an excited voice hailed him.

"You are back, doctor. I am glad of that!"

Mr. Quelch almost ran to approach the Head. The master of the Remove had his coat on and his hat in his hand.

Dr. Locke looked inquiringly.

"Nothing has happened, I trust?"

"Yes, sir, I regret to say something of a very serious nature has happened."

"Indeed?"

"Jolly has run away, doctor. A note he left for Wharton informs us that he went to London by the—we suppose he went to London—by the twelve-fifty—"

"Bless my soul!"

"I wired to Sir Edmund Jolly at once—"

"Yes, that was right, of course."

"I am glad you think so, sir," added Mr. Quelch, fumbling in his pocket. "And—and I received this telegram in reply. I was just about to meet Sir Edmund at the station, as you are rather later than we expected."

"Yes. Good gracious, what an extraordinary telegram!"

"Astounding!"

"I—I cannot understand it. Sir Edmund is coming in by the five o'clock train! I think I had better meet him, Quelch."

"Yes, certainly, sir!"

"What a pity I allowed the cab to go back! Perhaps you had better come with me, Mr. Quelch, and we can discuss the affair on the way. Will you have the victoria got ready?"

"Certainly, doctor."

The Remove-master hurried away, going to the stables himself. He was rather surprised to find the new page there, dressed in the coachman's livery.

Mr. Quelch stared at him, but the page touched his hat gravely.

"The coachman's not well, sir, so I offered to take duty for him, sir," the real Jolly said politely. "I'm very used to horses, sir."

"Indeed? James is not seriously ill?"

"Oh, no, sir; a little indisposed! He had a headache, and we advised him to lie down."

Jolly did not add that half-a-sovereign had made the headache worse than it really was, that James had been bribed to lie down by most subtle means.

Jolly had the virtue of never saying more than was necessary.

Mr. Quelch dismissed the matter from an already troubled mind.

"I want the victoria got ready at once, Potts—"

"It's ready now, as it happens, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Yes," said Jolly hastily. "I thought as how it might be wanted. Where have I to drive you, sir?"

"To the station!" exclaimed the Remove-master, glancing at his watch. "We have none too much time. Drive me round to the main entrance now, Potts."

The journey from the stables convinced Mr. Quelch that the new page was a capable whip. He drove very carefully.

But every now and then Jolly's wiry form shook in a curious manner in the coachman's somewhat large clothes. Jolly was giving vent to his silent chuckles.

The news that Sir Edmund was to come to the college because his son had run away had reached Jolly's ears the moment he was back from his journey to Cliff House School, and Jolly had succumbed to the temptation.

It had cost him half-a-sovereign to increase James's headache, and it would be the finish to the whole plot, but Jolly decided that it was worth it.

He touched his hat gravely again as Dr. Locke joined Mr. Quelch in the victoria, then he drove from the grounds.

A few minutes later he was taking the carriage along the High Road at a spanking pace.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Father and Son.

"HERE we are, chaps!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry led the way up the station steps at a run. The others were not many yards behind.

The station officials were getting ready to receive the five o'clock express, and one or two suspicious glances were directed towards the small crowd of Greyfriars juniors.

"No train for half an hour, Master Wharton, unless you want to meet the five o'clock—"

"We aren't going by train, thanks!" said the captain of the Remove cheerily. "Are you busy?"

"Not particularly!"

"Good! We want to make some inquiries, if you don't mind. We want to go the round of porters and ticket-collectors to see if any of them remember one of our chaps going by the twelve-fifty train to London."

The station-master thought for a moment or two.

"Not for London, sir."

"My hat! Is that so?"

"There was a junior I didn't recognise—a tallish fellow, about your size, Master Wharton."

"Without any luggage?" exclaimed Harry.

"No, he hadn't any luggage," returned the station-master. "I noticed him particular, because I thought it strange a junior should be going to Pegg at that time—"

"Pegg?"

"Yes, Master Cherry—a single third to Pegg was the ticket he took."

"My aunt, what did he want to go to Pegg for?"

"Pegg, of all places!"

The juniors looked at one another. They wished more than ever they had thought of making inquiries before this late hour.

Pegg was no distance from Friardale, and an afternoon spent in the pleasant little fishing village might have saved the situation.

Frank Nugent looked very puzzled.

"Then I suppose he's coming back to-night."

"But he took a single. Are you sure he took a single?"

"Yes, certain, sir," answered the station-master. "Here comes the express. I shall have to go for a minute or two."

The juniors stood where they were, watching the on-coming express in a puzzled way.

It was too late now to think of going to Pegg, unless they had special permits, and there would be no time to get back to Greyfriars for the permits and then catch the train.

It was an exasperating situation.

John Bull junior caught Harry Wharton by the arm.

"What about ringing Mr. Quelch up on the telephone, Wharton, and explaining?"

"My hat!"

"That might be done. Quelch would give us permits at once—"

"Where's the nearest telephone call-office?"

"Outside, at that tobacco-shop," said Bob Cherry. "I vote we go and ring the school up."

Harry Wharton nodded briskly.

He felt that he was a good deal mixed up in this affair somehow, and he was clear-headed enough a junior to know that the proper course was to put all the facts in the masters' possession.

Valuable time was being wasted if Mr. Quelch were trying to trace Jolly in London when he was at Pegg all the time. Harry Wharton was pleased with the telephone suggestion.

They moved down the steps in a body; then Bob Cherry's voice rang out:

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!"

"What's up, Bob—"

"Isn't that the doctor's victoria, kids?"

The juniors peered along the road.

"My hat, yes—"

"And the Head's in it!"

"And Mr. Quelch!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Good egg! We'll stop them and explain."

"Rather!"

"They are coming to the station, too."

The juniors stood on the station steps, awaiting the approaching carriage.

The carriage had just been brought to a standstill when a pleasant, cheery voice rang out behind the juniors:

"Are you young gentlemen guarding the station, may I ask?"

"Sorry, sir!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, stepping aside.

The juniors glanced at the tall, well-built man with a pair of the most humorous and boyish eyes they had ever seen in a man of his age.

He nodded pleasantly to the juniors and stepped up to the carriage before the two masters had time to alight.

"Dr. Locke, sir?"

"Yes. Sir Edmund Jolly?"

"Yes, I'm Jolly!" laughed the stranger.

And the juniors looked at him still more keenly.

So this was the missing Jolly's father. He had not wasted time in coming to Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton glanced at the others as the three gentlemen shook hands. Bob Cherry nodded.

"Get on with it, Harry."

The captain of the Remove stepped forward. A few words would do to explain that the missing junior was at Pegg.

Harry stopped as Sir Edmund commenced speaking again, in a loud, cheery voice.

"So you think my young rascal has run away—eh?"

"He has, Sir Edmund—"

"Don't you believe it, doctor!" laughed Sir Edmund, in great glee. "That is one thing Arthur never has done yet, run away. He's hiding. Have you looked in the roof?"

"Bless my soul—I mean, no, certainly we have not looked in the roof."

"Humph! We'd better do that as soon as we get to Greyfriars. He was missing for three days at his last school, and was found in the roof."

"You—you don't say so!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, I do, by Jove! Another time he shut himself up in the cellar to see if twenty-four hours of darkness was as bad as some people say. No telling what Arthur will be up to next."

"I should think not, sir!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"No telling whatever!" laughed Sir Edmund heartily.

"But it's in the blood. Sacked myself when I was a kid for putting pepper in the school coffee."

"Putting—putting pepper—Dear me!"

Mr. Quelch remembered the coffee of that morning and shuddered. Dr. Locke looked uneasy.

Interesting as Sir Edmund's reminiscences might be, they were not the sort of experiences the Head liked to hear recalled in the presence of juniors.

Several subdued chuckles had come from Harry Wharton & Co. already.

On the box seat the new page was staring solemnly in front of him. He might have been a coachman of long standing, to judge from his perfect, expressionless face.

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Sir Edmund was laughing heartily.

"It's the same with all the Jollys," he declared. "My father was almost sacked from the Service for ragging. In the blood."

"It must be very unpleasant, sir," said Mr. Quelch frigidly.

"Has its drawbacks, of course; but what's in the blood can't be got out. No good fighting against it. Grin and bear—"

"Dear me!" said the Head weakly. "Shall we drive to the college at once, sir?"

"As soon as you like, doctor. I want to send a telegram first, though."

"Certainly, Sir Edmund. Potts, stop at the post-office."

The new page touched his hat, as solemn and stolid as ever. Sir Edmund glanced at him as he stood, half in and half out of the victoria.

He remained in the position for a moment or two, then slowly got out into the road again.

A startling change had flashed into his laughing, cheery face. He walked round to the horse's head, and stared at the new page, then he burst into roars of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared. "Ho, ho, ho!"

The doctor and Mr. Quelch gasped. Mr. Quelch had no doubt about insanity being in the Jolly family now.

He considered the two members he was acquainted with as thoroughly insane.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Sir Edmund. "Oh, dear! In the blood! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Really, sir—"

"Sir Edmund—"

"My son—when did he run away?" gasped Sir Edmund.

"Do you know the exact time?"

"The twelve-fifty train."

"Then he was pretty quick coming back!" gasped Sir Edmund. "In the blood! Arthur, you young rascal! Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch jumped to their feet. Mr. Quelch, at any rate, was beginning to feel nervous.

Sir Edmund was a big man, and if he became dangerous, the Remove-master felt he would rather be out in the road than in the confined precincts of a victoria.

Dr. Locke watched in the blankest astonishment.

Suddenly Sir Edmund stepped forward and seized the new page by the arm. With a quick movement he yanked him off the box seat.

"Here he is, doctor," he said, choking with laughter. "Here's the young rascal! In the blood! By Jove, he'll be the death of me!"

The amazement of the two masters was complete.

They stared from Sir Edmund to the new page blankly, and back again. Neither of them understood.

Sir Edmund's laughter must have been heard all over the station.

"Allow me!" he exclaimed. "This is my son, doctor. In the blood. My son, Arthur—"

"No," said Mr. Quelch, very feebly, "that is Potts."

"Excuse me, sir, but I recognise my son quite distinctly. You will admit it is unlikely I should make a mistake with such a son. Ha, ha, ha!"

"The governor is right, sir," he said respectfully to Mr. Quelch. "I'm Jolly; it was Peter Potts who ran away."

"W-what?"

"Yes, sir," said Arthur Jolly pleasantly. "I ought to apologise, but the temptation to change places after the chase from the station—"

"How did you work it, you young rascal?" laughed Sir Edmund, who was more interested in the plot itself than the seriousness of it. "Did this lad Potts arrive at the same time?"

"Yes, father, and we met in the kitchen. We thought it would be an awful rag to change togs and names—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it was I who japed with the things in the pantry. You'll have to pay for the damage, father."

"Of course; but—"

Then Dr. Locke recovered from his surprise. He stood up in the Victoria, a stern, unrelenting figure.

"I regret to say, Sir Edmund, that it is now impossible for your son to be entered at Greyfriars!" he exclaimed. "I'm sorry to have to take this course, but I think it better that he should not even return for tea."

"Oh, dear; then I shall have all the trouble of finding another school for the young rascal!" sighed Sir Edmund, wiping his jolly old eyes. "St. Jim's, perhaps. See what trouble you bring upon your father's grey head, Arthur."

"It's in the blood, sir," said Arthur solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha! So it is—so it is! We will go back by the next train. When does it start?"

Sir Edmund looked inquiringly at Harry Wharton.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 165.

"In twenty minutes, sir."

"Well, come and have tea with me at that creamery over the way," laughed Sir Edmund. "Dr. Locke, Mr. Quelch, pray join us, and Arthur shall apologise—on his knees, if necessary. You will come?"

The two masters hesitated, but they could not very well refuse. Besides, there was something very pleasing about Sir Edmund's laugh that was not without effect.

They both exchanged glances, and accepted the invitation. Arthur Jolly gave vent to one of his silent chuckles, and turned to Harry Wharton & Co.

"You're included, of course, kids."

"It's awfully decent of Sir Edmund—"

"Rats! I spoilt your breakfast for you, didn't I?" grinned Arthur Jolly. "I say, did Potts share out that hamper of mine?"

"No; he wouldn't touch it."

"Ass! But he was a good sort, was old Peter; he sent me back the fiver I said he was to spend, and wants to know where to send my togs," laughed Jolly. "I rather let Peter Potts down."

"My hat!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Not much doubt about that!"

"You should have seen him at Latin."

"And maths."

"Ha, ha, ha! Never mind, I'll make it up to him with a first chop outfit for Canada. He's going there, you know, and I've sent the fiver back to him already. I say!"

Harry Wharton & Co. waited in surprise.

"About that hamper," added Arthur Jolly doubtfully.

"It's no good for me now, you know, and I rather think it's up against a new fellow to stand a feed. Do you mind sharing it, chaps?"

"Thanks awfully!"

Harry Wharton answered quietly, and without a trace of hesitation. Arthur Jolly had made his offer in such a decent way that there could be no thought of refusing.

Then they all made their way into tea, and a splendid tea it was, too, and afterwards Harry Wharton & Co. assembled on the platform.

They cheered loudly in waving good-bye to the new page as he hung half out of the window, his father clinging to him to prevent an accident.

Then Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, and burst into roars of laughter, and started on the homeward journey to the old school.

THE END.

Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "The Greyfriars Wheelers," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of the MAGNET in advance. Price One Penny.

[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and it contains no reference or allusion to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.]

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Ferrers Lord is the possessor of a wonderful submarine, called "The Lord of the Deep." One night the model is stolen from him by Michael Scaroff, a Russian. Ferrers Lord, accompanied by his friend, Rupert Thurston, sets out on the track of the Russian on board the "Lord of the Deep." Meanwhile Paul Scaroff, brother to Michael, enters the house of Lady Violet, Ferrers Lord's niece, and tells her that he has come to kidnap her on his brother's behalf.

(Now go on with the story.)

Scaroff Strikes a Stunning Blow.

A handkerchief was forced over Lady Violet's mouth, stifling her screams, and the clang of the bell died away. She struggled madly, but in vain. Her wrists and ankles were strapped, and the Russian raised her in his arms, and carried her into the bed-room. The window was open; the girl felt the damp air upon her face.

"Out with you," she heard Paul Scaroff say, "and steady her over the ledge!"

He gave the rope one turn over the rail of the bed, and clipped a noose under her arms. Frozen with terror, she found herself dangling in mid-air. It was the back of the

NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIARS WHEELERS."

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house, and on the left wing protruded, making a right angle. All the windows were dark; the house was buried in sleep.

The Russian paid out the rope. His companion, clinging to the ivy, had already scrambled along the ledge below the window, and reached the corner, where a thick iron pipe drained the water from the gutters. By the aid of the pipe and the gnarled stems of ivy, he descended like a cat to the ground.

The limp body swayed down, for Lady Violet had fainted now, and Ivan caught it in his arms. The rope and macintosh fell, and, closing the window behind him, Paul Scaroff edged cautiously forward, still puffing calmly at the half-smoked cigarette. In a few minutes he was beside his companion, brushing the dust and dead leaves from the silk front of his coat.

"Ten thousand pounds, Ivan!" he said, with a chuckle of triumph. "Think of it—ten thousand pounds! How lucky it rains, and is so dark! I'll take the girl. Go first, and see that the coast is clear."

They crossed the damp lawn, and plunged into a narrow belt of shrubbery. A ladder was laid against the wall, and a figure stepped out of the darkness—one of Ferrers Lord's grooms.

"I see you've managed it," he said. "The carriage is waiting at the corner of the mews, and the gate is undone. Where's the boodle?"

There was a rustle of banknotes. Five minutes later a carriage rolled swiftly away in the direction of Oxford Street. Scaroff had struck another stunning blow.

Nathan Trethvick's Strange Pet.

The Lord of the Deep lay hidden from human gaze beneath the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Night had fallen, and to the north the lights of Brindisi twinkled dimly. Thurston was in the saloon writing up the log-book, and Ferrers Lord, stretched upon a couch, was smoking lazily.

"Have you almost finished, Rupert?" asked the millionaire. "Nearly," said Thurston, looking up. "Do you check this?"

"No; Trethvick does all that. Take it to him when you have done. We are going on shore presently to get our telegrams."

Rupert shrugged his shoulders. The idea that the dwarf was to examine his latitude and longitude did not please him. He blotted the writing, closed the book, and went out to find Nathan Trethvick. He passed through the silent engine-room towards the captain's cabin. The whole vessel seemed to sleep.

Suddenly a cracked voice struck his ear. It was Trethvick, singing his old song

"The skipper hangs on the yardarm high,
And I'm the skipper now."

Rupert knocked at the door. There was a fierce snarl, a rattle of chains, and an oath.

"Come in!" cried Nathan Trethvick.

Thurston drew back with a start as he turned the handle. Two bloodshot, wicked eyes glared at him through the gloom. Something huge and shapeless leapt towards him with a vicious growl, and again he heard the rattle of a chain.

"Who's there, Lucifer, my love?" croaked the captain's voice. "Who is it, my bonnie beauty?"

The light flashed up. A monstrous, grinning ape, chained to the wall of the cabin, was struggling and straining to reach the young man. The ugly face of Nathan Trethvick appeared over the edge of a hammock.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he croaked. "Ha, ha, ha! Don't be frightened, sir. That's Lucifer—my bonnie Lucifer! Lie down, you imp, lie down!"

A whip hissed through the air, and cut cruelly across the shoulders of the ape. It shrank back into the corner, whining with pain.

"Ha, ha!" tittered Nathan Trethvick, rubbing his hairy

hands together. "I know how to teach obedience in both men and beasts. Let 'em disobey me, and I'll flay 'em, kill 'em, burn 'em! You've brought the log, sir, eh?"

"Yes, here it is," said Rupert quietly.

Trethvick opened the book, replaced the pipe between his teeth, and nodded approvingly.

"You write a mighty pretty fist," he croaked, "and this looks all neat and shipshape. Always be neat and shipshape, sir, and you'll get on. What do you think of Lucifer? A strange pet, eh? He knows me, sir, but Heaven help the man he gets his arm round! He's sent three fellows to Davy Jones already. Lucifer, my loved one, your grog."

Trethvick took a bottle of rum from the shelf, and poured some of the spirit into a tin mug. The hideous brute snatched it eagerly from his hand, and gulped down the fiery liquid.

"Ha, ha, ha!" croaked the dwarf. "You like your grog, my bonnie darling. Drain it off, my pet, it's good. Squeeze every drop out of it. Ha, ha!"

The ape seemed to understand. It took the pannikin between its hairy paws, and crushed it flat. Not one man in a thousand could have exerted such strength.

"Good-night," said the captain. "You're going on shore, but I'm going to turn in. Take care of yourself, for Brindisi is a mighty queer place, and I've known a man have a knife stuck between his ribs for being fool enough to sport a gold watch and chain. Will you take a drop of rum before you go?"

"No, thank you; I seldom drink. Good-night, Mr. Trethvick!"

Rupert went slowly out of the cabin, and closed the door behind him. He heard the dwarf croaking out the song about the mutiny on board the Sally Howe, and the murder of the captain and the mate. He thought the man and the ape were well matched, but of the two the vicious ape was perhaps the nobler animal. It seemed to him that Nathan Trethvick exerted some strange influence over Ferrers Lord.

"What's the matter, Thurston?" said the millionaire. "You look quite sad and melancholy."

Rupert laughed.

"Hardly that," he answered; "but the captain's pet rather startled me."

"Oh, you mean Lucifer? Yes, Trethvick has queer tastes and queer ways. He is a splendid sailor, and afraid of nothing. No doubt you think it strange that I should have such a man in command, for, of course, he's not a gentleman. The crew of the Lord of the Deep consists of forty-five pressed men. They are bound to me by solemn oaths for two years. Until that time is expired, or my vengeance completed, they are my slaves, and will never set foot upon any inhabited land. It is a long time, Rupert, to be imprisoned, and only a strong will can keep them in order. Trethvick rules with

a rod of iron, and they fear him and obey him where they would rebel against another man. He is cruel and heartless; but this is what we want."

The young man nodded.

"Two years imprisoned here is certainly a long time," he said gravely.

"You do not expect any trouble with your crew, do you? It would be a terrible thing."

"One never knows," said Ferrers Lord. "They are all quite ignorant of the object of the voyage, and when their term of service is over each of them will be practically a rich man, for I pay enormous wages. If there is trouble, we will know how to meet it. I am the master of life and death here, Rupert."

"You mean you would shoot anyone who disobeyed orders?"

"Like a dog!" said the millionaire grimly. "Come, let us go ashore!"

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