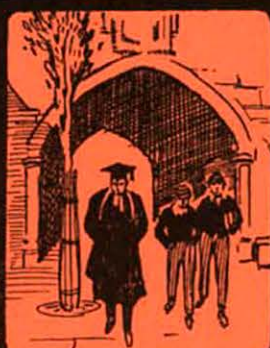


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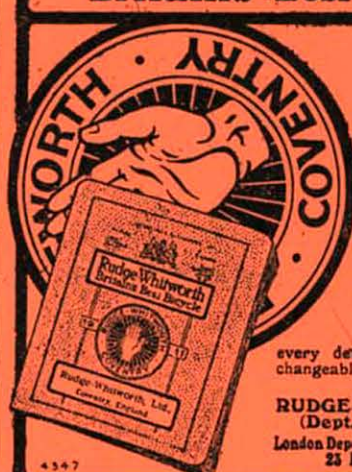
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# The Greyfriars Wheelers.

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

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fed Up!

SNIFF!  
Sniff!

Harry Wharton looked up with a resigned expression upon his face as he heard the expressive sniffs. Harry Wharton was sitting on the table in his study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, with a newspaper spread over the knees of his trousers and a bicycle lamp resting upon the newspaper. He had a pair of ancient gloves upon his hands to keep them clean while he was cleaning the lamp. It was a lamp of the acetylene variety, which burned gas generated by the action of water upon carbide of

calcium, so, needless to say, there was a strong scent when the container was opened for cleaning purposes.

Several fellows had looked into Wharton's study during the last quarter of an hour, had expressed their feelings by sniffing, and retired after a very brief stay, and Harry was getting used to it.

Sniff!  
"Oh, go it!" said Harry, in a resigned tone. "Don't mind me."

Bob Cherry took him at his word. He sniffed, and sniffed again.

"Pile it on!"

Sniff!

"Go it!"

Sniff—sniff!

Harry Wharton laughed, and scraped away at the clogged container. Bob Cherry changed the sniff for a snort.

"Look here!" he said. "Why can't you use an oil-lamp like a respectable person instead of poisoning people with that—that atrocity?"

"Well, your oil-lamp niffs at times," Wharton remarked. "These things don't really smell if you keep them clean, you know."

"Why don't you clean it, then?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

Sniff!

"Besides, it's a healthy chemical smell, and I expect it's an antiseptic, really," said Harry cheerfully. "You get used to it."

Sniff!

"Did you come here to do anything but sniff?" asked Wharton.

"Well, yes," said Bob Cherry.

"Go ahead, then!"

"It's the springtime now," said Bob Cherry. "Under the genial influence of the season all Nature is waking up to new life, and the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road, and to long excursions in the shady lanes and over the brown moors."

Harry Wharton laid down the lamp and looked at Bob Cherry.

Bob, as a rule, was concise, not to say rugged, in his verbal expressions, and he had never been known to burst into eloquence.

"Would you mind saying that over again?" asked Harry politely, pausing with the duster in his hand, and staring straight at Bob Cherry.

Bob coloured a little, for some reason.

"Certainly," he said. "It is the springtime now, and under the genial influence of the season all Nature is waking up to new life, and the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road, and to long excursions in the shady lanes and over the brown moors."

"Oh!"

"So my idea is, that it's time we gave some attention to our bikes," said Bob. "I know cricket is beginning, but cricket isn't everything. The Cliff House girls ride, but they don't play cricket. Of course, that wouldn't influence me at all."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Of course not!" he agreed.

"All the same, it would be very pleasant to have some rides with Marjorie and Clara," said Bob, his colour deepening. "We've had some nice spins with Marjorie and Marjorie—I mean Marjorie and Clara. Of course, I shouldn't dream for a moment of neglecting cricket for wheeling. But—"

"Of course not!"

"But it's no good neglecting cycling, is it?"

"No good at all."

"I was thinking we might plan some rides, then, for the spring afternoons, and—especially for to-morrow afternoon, as it's a half-holiday."

"Good!"

"Then I'll look out my jigger," said Bob Cherry. "I was going to stop and discuss the rides with you, but I think you'd rather be alone to clean your lamp."

"Not at all; please stay."

"Oh, I won't bother you."

"No bother at all," said Harry Wharton politely. "I should be glad for you to stay."

"I'm afraid I should be in the way—"

"Not a bit of it!"

"I think I'll be moving on—"

"Oh, do stay!"

"Well, the fact is," said Bob Cherry, coming out into the open at last, as it were—"the fact is, I can't stand your blessed carbide of calcium! I'm off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bob Cherry went down the passage.

Harry Wharton laughed, and went on cleaning his lamp. He fully expected to hear another sniff shortly—and he did. Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, came into the study. They were his study-mates. Both of them halted just inside the door and sniffed.

Sniff—sniff!

"What on earth's that?" asked Frank Nugent. "Is there a dead cat in the study?"

"The scentfulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Wharton held up the lamp.

"Well, you might drown it," said Nugent. "Blessed if I can stand this! I came to speak to you about cycling."

"Go ahead!"

"Well, I don't know how long I can stand that niff. But THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 166.

look here! It's springtime now," said Nugent. "Under the genial influence of the season all Nature is waking up to new life—"

"What?"

"And the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road—"

"Eh?"

"And to long excursions in the shady lanes and over the brown moors."

"My hat!"

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Nugent, staring at him. "It's true, isn't it?"

"Quite true."

"Then what are you babbling about?"

"My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here— Oh, I can't stand that niff! Open the window when you've finished. I was thinking that we ought to form a cycling club in the Remove, and— Oh, I'm off!"

And Nugent strode away sniffing. The Nabob of Bhanipur sniffed, too, and followed him. They left Harry Wharton in a state of great astonishment. That Bob Cherry should suffer from a burst of eloquence on the subject of the spring was surprising enough; that Nugent should have a similar attack was surprising; but that both the juniors should express it in exactly the same words was amazing.

"Well, my hat!" Wharton exclaimed.

Tom Brown of the Remove put his head in at the door—and sniffed.

The New Zealand junior was in Norfolk jacket and knickers, and had a cap on the back of his head, and looked very fit.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Boiling old bones here for soup?"

"No."

"Oh, it's that blessed lamp! Why don't you use the new kind of carbide that doesn't niff?"

"Is that a riddle?"

Sniff—sniff!

"Well, never mind; if you can stand it—I sha'n't be staying a minute. I've been turning over in my mind a new idea—a cycling club for the Remove, say to be called the Remove Wheelers, or something like that. It's the springtime now," said Tom Brown, in a tone of explanation, "and under the genial influence of the season all Nature is waking up to new life, and—"

"Eh?"

"And the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road, and to long excursions—"

"Long excursions?" repeated Wharton dazedly.

"Yes; in the shady lanes and over the brown moors."

"Well, of all the chumps—"

"Eh—what?"

"If this is a rag, I'm getting fed up with it," said Wharton a little excitedly. "Of all the silly, rotten dodges—"

"Dodges!"

"Yes; of all the silly rags I think this is about the rottenest!" said Wharton. "Can't you think of a better wheeze?"

"Wheeze!"

"Yes, ass! First Cherry, and then Nugent, and then you! I suppose there are some more coming on. Look here, enough's as good as a feast! The next chap who comes and works that stale gag on me will get it in the neck!"

"Gag!" repeated Tom Brown

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Look here—"

"Buzz off, ass!"

"I think you're off your rocker!" said Tom Brown, with a sniff. "But I don't want to stay within range of that lamp. I'm off!"

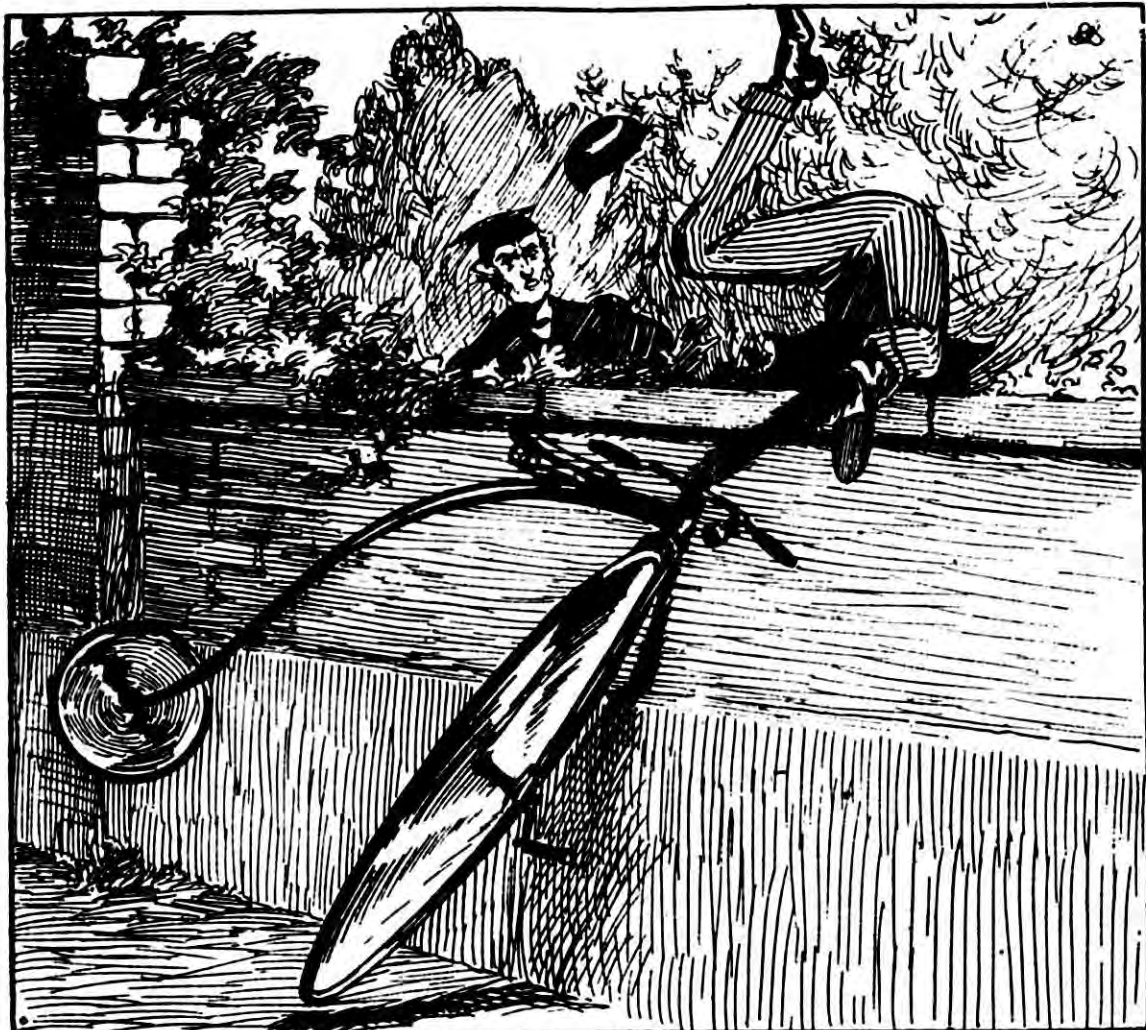
And he departed. Wharton sniffed himself, but not at the carbide of calcium. He went on cleaning his lamp, with a red face. He had not the slightest doubt that this was a rag—a practical joke arranged among the juniors to take a rise out of him.

Wharton had scraped out the container and deposited the used-up carbide of calcium on a sheet of paper, ready to be thrown away. He was rubbing the lamp clean now, and the scent had dissipated somewhat.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and Wharton slid off the table and stood ready. If another joker came along he meant to anoint him with the carbide dust, as a lesson that a joke might be carried too far.

Bulstrode of the Remove put his head into the study. Bulstrode was a big, burly fellow, the biggest in the Lower Fourth, and a little of a bully, and frequently in a disagreeable temper. But he was looking quite genial now. It might have been the influence of the bright spring weather.

He nodded in quite a friendly fashion to Wharton.



Crash! Right into the garden wall crashed the old bicycle, and Fisher T. Fish shot forward out of the saddle, cleared the low wall, and shot head-foremost into the shrubbery. (See page 2.)

"Hallo, Wharton!"—sniff. "I say, I've got a bit of an idea, and if you like we'll jaw it over and see about it."

"Go ahead!"

"It's the springtime now—" began Bulstrode.

"Oh, is it?" said Wharton, his hand gliding towards the paper of damp carbide.

"Yes," said Bulstrode, apparently a little surprised at Wharton's tone; "and under the genial influence of the season—"

"Under the what?"

"The genial influence of the season all Nature is waking to new life, and the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road—"

"And to long excursions, I suppose—"

"Exactly."

"In the shady lanes—"

"Just so," said Bulstrode, in surprise; "and over the—  
Oh! Ow! Groo! Yaroo!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Looking for Trouble.

**H**ARRY WHARTON had made a sudden step forward, the paper of damp used-up calcium powder in his hand. He smacked it fairly into Bulstrode's countenance, and the burly Removite staggered back in amazement, spluttering.

The remainder of the stuff was slammed on his head as he staggered, and Wharton rubbed it well into his hair.

"Ow!" gasped Bulstrode. "Groo! Oh! Yah!"

Wharton had taken care that none of the stuff should go into his eyes. But it was a very unpleasant dose to get on the face or hair at all, and it certainly made the burly Removite smell horrid.

"Yaroo! Help! He's mad! Oh!"

"There you are!" roared Wharton. "I told Brown the next silly ass would get it! I'm fed up with your rot!"

"Eh? Oh! What? Yow!"

"You can go and jape somebody else now."

"I—I wasn't japing you! Ow! You're mad!" yelled Bulstrode. "Ow!"

He backed out of the study and fled.

Wharton burst into a laugh. He peeled off the old gloves he had been wearing while he was cleaning his lamp and put them away. He opened the window wider to let out the scent. As he turned from the window again a face looked in at the doorway. It belonged to John Bull, a new boy in the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

"Hallo!" said Bull, sniffing. "What's the matter with Bulstrode? I've just passed him tearing along the passage."

Wharton laughed.

"It's a case of the japer japed, that's all," he replied.

"Oh, I see. I looked in to speak to you about an idea I had of a wheeling club for the Remove," said Bull.

Wharton stared at him.

"Oh, you did, did you?" he said.

"Yes. If you're not busy—"

"Oh, I'm not busy!"

"Good! I thought perhaps by your tone you hadn't any

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time to spare. But I'll go ahead, if that's all right. It's the springtime now, you see!"

"The springtime!"

"Yes. Under the genial influence of the season——"

"The——the season!"

"Yes. All Nature is waking up to new life, and the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road, and to—— Yow, yow!"

Harry Wharton had hurled himself upon the speaker, interrupting him in the midst of that eloquent sentence.

Wharton was, as he had expressed it, quite fed up. A jape was a jape, but to carry the thing to this length was too bad! He collared John Bull, and whirled him round the study. The sturdy junior seemed too astounded to resist. He was probably the only fellow in the Remove, with the possible exception of Mark Linley, who could have stood up to Wharton; but he seemed an infant in his hands now.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Yow! Oh! What the dickens——"

"Out you go!"

"Why——what——oh!"

Wharton whirled him to the door. With a powerful swing of his arms, he sent John Bull whirling into the passage.

"Outside!"

Bull bumped against the opposite wall, and slid down to a sitting posture. He sat there, and glared at Wharton with an expression of astonishment that was almost idiotic.

"Ow!" he gasped.

Wharton glared at him in return, his face crimson with excitement and exasperation.

"You ass!" he shouted.

"Eh?"

"Get out!"

"What?"

"I've had enough of it!" roared Wharton.

"Nuff of what?"

"Oh, buzz along!"

"B-b-b-but——"

Wharton made a step forward. Bull leaped up and ran. As a rule, Bull was not given to running away; but he ran now.

Wharton retreated into the study, breathing heavily.

He was very much disturbed, and very much excited. It looked like a rag in which nearly the whole of the form was joining, and Wharton thought it had gone too far. He had handled John Bull rather roughly, but if another japer came along, he was likely to get a worse handling than Bull.

Wharton's eyes gleamed as footsteps came along the passage. He was quite ready. A thin, keen face looked in, and Wharton recognised Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.

"I guess there's something up," the American remarked.

"I've just passed Bull on the stairs, and he yelled to me that you were mad."

Wharton laughed angrily.

"He's been here on a rotten jape," he replied. "If you've come on the same wheeze, Fish, you had better slide."

The American shook his head.

"Nope," he replied. "I'm not japing, I guess. I've got an idea about a wheelers' club for the Form."

"What?"

"It's the springtime, you see——"

"The——the springtime," said Wharton, coming nearer.

"Yes," said Fisher T. Fish unsuspiciously. "It's the springtime now. Under the genial influence of the season, the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road, and to long excursions in the shady lanes and over the brown moors."

There was more of it. But Harry Wharton did not read any more. Further down the column he caught a glimpse of Cyclists' Club and Wheeling Club, and he guessed that the article had reference to the formation of junior cycling clubs.

He understood!

His exasperated face softened into a grin, and the grin became a laugh, and the laugh a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" began Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" I suppose that paper has been the rounds of the Remove!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Mark Linley chuckled.

"Yes, rather. It was sent to me this morning, and a lot of the fellows have borrowed it to look at—a dozen or more."

"Ha, ha, ha!" And I suppose they borrowed an idea from that article, and thought it out in afternoon school, and then——" Wharton burst into a roar again. "Well, they shouldn't spring a sentence like that on a chap as their own."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish set his collar straight, and grinned.

"Well, I guess I was repeating it as I read it," he remarked. "The chap who wrote it expressed just what I was thinking, and I suppose I picked it up. But——"

"You're the fifth or sixth dummy who has come along, and sprung that blessed sentence on me, word for word."

"Great snakes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mark Linley.

"I guess——"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Wharton. "Here's Ogilvy. I wonder——"

He did not finish. Ogilvy of the Remove came up, and nodded to them in a genial way.

"I've got an idea, you chaps," he remarked. "I wanted to see Wharton about it, as Form-captain. It's the springtime now——"

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

Ogilvy looked puzzled.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at in that," he remarked.

"A rotten jape!"

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"I guess——"

"My dear Wharton," said Alonzo Todd, "I trust you will recover your temper. I was about to speak to you, and make a suggestion. It is now the springtime——"

"What?" shrieked Wharton.

"Under the genial influence of the season all Nature is waking up to new life——"

Wharton made a rush at Todd. The startled Todd gave him one look, and fled along the passage. Mark Linley grasped Wharton, and halted him.

"What's the row?" he asked. "What are you going for Todd for?"

"He's in it, too!" yelled Wharton.

"In what?"

"The jape!"

"What jape?"

"Repeating that idiotic sentence."

Mark Linley grinned.

"Oh!"

"You've heard 'em, I suppose. I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton stared angrily at the Lancashire lad, but Mark Linley did not hear him. He released the captain of the Remove, and reeled against the wall, yelling with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Mark Linley Explains!

FISHER T. FISH staggered to his feet, and stood pumping in breath. Wharton was gasping, too; and Mark Linley roared. The Lancashire lad was usually very quiet, but this time he yelled. There evidently seemed to him to be something extremely comic in the situation.

"You cackling ass!" exclaimed the exasperated Wharton.

"What do you mean?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Explain yourself, you fathead. What's the cackle about?"

Mark Linley almost wept. He took a paper from his pocket, and unfolded it. It was a copy of the "C. T. C. Gazette."

The Lancashire lad pointed to a paragraph at the top of a page.

"Look at that!" he said, still gasping with merriment.

Wharton looked.

In amazement he read it. The paragraph ran as follows:

"It is the springtime now. Under the genial influence of the season Nature is waking up to new life, and the cyclist's thoughts naturally turn to the road, and to long excursions in the shady lanes and over the brown moors."

There was more of it. But Harry Wharton did not read any more. Further down the column he caught a glimpse of Cyclists' Club and Wheeling Club, and he guessed that the article had reference to the formation of junior cycling clubs.

He understood!

His exasperated face softened into a grin, and the grin became a laugh, and the laugh a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" I suppose that paper has been the rounds of the Remove!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Mark Linley chuckled.

"Yes, rather. It was sent to me this morning, and a lot of the fellows have borrowed it to look at—a dozen or more."

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Fisher T. Fish set his collar straight, and grinned.

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"You're the fifth or sixth dummy who has come along, and sprung that blessed sentence on me, word for word."

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"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mark Linley.

"I guess——"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Wharton. "Here's Ogilvy. I wonder——"

He did not finish. Ogilvy of the Remove came up, and nodded to them in a genial way.

"I've got an idea, you chaps," he remarked. "I wanted to see Wharton about it, as Form-captain. It's the springtime now——"

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

Ogilvy looked puzzled.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at in that," he remarked.

marked. "I've got an idea about forming a junior wheelers' club."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, cut the cackle. It's the springtime now, and under the genial influence of the season, all Nature is—

"Waking up to new life!" shrieked Wharton.

"Yes; and the cyclist's thoughts—"

"Naturally turn to the—"

"Road!" said Mark Linley.

"And, I guess, to long excursions in the shady lanes, and over the brown moors," said Fisher T. Fish, with a chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, yes," said Ogilvy, rather uneasily. Then he caught sight of the "C. T. C. Gazette" in the Lancashire lad's hand, and grinned.

"I say, you fellows—"

A fat junior in spectacles rolled along the passage. It was Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove. He blinked solemnly at the juniors.

"I say, you fellows," he began. "It's the springtime now!"

"Bunter, too!" gasped Wharton.

"Et tu, Brute!" grinned Fish.

"Oh, really, Fishy, there's no need to call me names because I've got a ripping idea about forming a junior wheelers' club," said Billy Bunter. "Under the genial influence of the season, all Nature—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

But the juniors refused to listen. They walked away, laughing, leaving the Owl of the Remove standing in the passage in a state of great surprise.

Micky Desmond met Harry Wharton at the foot of the staircase, and pulled his sleeve.

"Faith, Wharton, and I've been looking for ye," he said.

"Sure, it's an illigant idea I've got intirely. It's the springtime now—"

"Oh, cheese it!" shouted Wharton.

"Faith, and sure I—"

"Shut up!"

"But—"

Wharton jerked himself away and strode on.

At the door of the School House he met Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. Vernon-Smith nodded to him, although they did not, as a rule, speak.

"I want to speak to you, Wharton," he began.

Wharton laughed.

"I think I can guess what you're going to say," he replied.

Vernon-Smith looked astonished.

"Can you?" he exclaimed.

"I believe so. It's the springtime now—"

"Eh?"

"And under the genial influence of the season, all Nature is waking up to new life—"

"What?"

"The cyclist's thoughts," continued Wharton, "naturally turn to the road—"

"Do they?"

"Yes, and to the long excursions in the shady lanes, and over the brown moors. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think you must be off your rooker," said Vernon-Smith.

"Is that a joke? Blessed if I see where the humour comes in, if it is."

Wharton looked a little disconcerted.

"Isn't that what you were going to say?" he demanded.

"Of course it isn't. I was going to say that if you'd like my new motor-cycle at any time for a run, I'd lend it to you with pleasure."

Wharton stared at him blankly. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, had always been on bad terms with him. If only for the fact that he had led Hazeldene, Wharton's friend, into bad ways, Wharton could not stand him. They had never made any pretence of friendship. Vernon-Smith, who was the son of a millionaire, could afford many luxuries that were impossible to the other fellows in his Form; and the new motor-cycle was one of them. Many fellows in the Remove envied him his possession; and Harry had looked at the cycle with great admiration. Vernon-Smith's offer to lend it to him was simply amazing.

"You're very good," said Wharton, at last.

"Not at all; I hardly touch the thing myself. You're welcome to it whenever you please," said the Bounder carelessly.

"Thanks very much!"

"I suppose you'll be doing some cycling, now the weather's looking up," the Bounder remarked.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"I believe the Cliff House girls cycle with you fellows a lot."

"Yes," said Wharton, rather shortly.

"I should like to make one of the party some time."

Wharton understood then. Vernon-Smith was not offering him the loan of his new motor-bike for nothing.

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"I'm afraid it can't be done," he said. "You don't get on with Marjorie, and I couldn't take the responsibility of taking you."

And the captain of the Remove turned away before Vernon-Smith could speak again. He left the Bounder with a very unpleasant expression upon his never very pleasant face.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Catching Fish!

"I GUESS it's a good idea," said Fisher T. Fish.

It was some time afterwards, and a group of juniors were discussing it outside the School House. Although all the fellows had obtained the idea from the same source, it was agreed that it was a good one.

"You see, you chaps give too much attention to games, and not enough to cycling," the American junior went on. "I've been going to show you how to play footer—"

"But you've never done it," Bob Cherry remarked.

There was a laugh.

But Fisher T. Fish was not in the least abashed. The American youth generally failed to make good any of his "swank," but he was not in the least put out of countenance thereby. When he began to show the other fellows things, he generally succeeded in demonstrating how they should not be done. But Fisher T. Fish did not mind in the least.

"I guess I could play you off your heads at footer," he said, "or at cricket, either, for that matter."

"Go ahead, then."

"It's still light enough for cricket," said Frank Nugent. "Let's trot down to the pitch, and see how they play cricket over there."

"Talking about cycling—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We were talking about cricket—"

"Talking about cycling," said Fisher T. Fish, unmoved.

"I guess I can lay over anything this old school can do. Yes, sir."

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Bosh!"

"Yank!"

"Swank!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The American junior shrugged his shoulders. He was accustomed to having his assertions received in that ribald spirit, and he did not mind in the least.

"I guess we cycle a heap over there," he said. "You should have seen me on the roads over the Catskill Mountains. Some. Trot out any old machine you've got, and see me ride. That's all!"

"Oh, you can't ride!" said Bob Cherry.

"I guess I'll knock spots off you, at any rate. Yep!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Do you mean to say that you can ride any machine we've got at Greyfriars?" he asked.

"Yep!"

"Any machine, mind?"

"So long as it's a cycle," said Fish. "No catches, you know. I don't undertake to ride a sewing-machine or a lawnmower."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A cycle, certainly," said Bob Cherry. "Any make?"

"Yep."

"You don't object to any style?"

"Nope."

"Well, I'll trot out the machine. We'll see you try," said Bob Cherry, and he winked at Wharton and Nugent, and they followed him as he walked away.

Wharton looked a little puzzled. He had a strong suspicion that Fish was a very poor cyclist, and he generally failed at anything he attempted.

"Look here, Bob, what's the idea?" he asked. "You're not going to lend Fish your machine to try on, are you?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"No," he replied.

"Well, I know you're jolly well not going to lend him mine."

"Ha, ha! I wasn't thinking of that."

"Then what are you going to get?"

"You come with me, and you'll see."

"You're not going towards the bike-shed," said Harry, as Bob swung away with his long strides towards the porter's lodge at the gates.

"I know that!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"Hullo, Gossy," said Bob Cherry, with a nod to Gosling, the school porter, who was sunning himself outside his lodge.

"Nice afternoon."

ANOTHER SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON AND CO. NEXT TUESDAY.

Gosling granted.

"Nice enough," he remarked surlily.

"Weather make you nice and good-tempered, I suppose?"

"Huh!"

"Would you like to earn a bob, Gossy?"

Gosling looked at him.

"That depends, Master Cherry. If it's a thing that's consistent with my dooty—"

"That's right, Gossy; dooty first," agreed Bob Cherry. "There's an old ordinary-bike that belonged to a chap who used to be at Greyfriars; you've got it stowed away."

Gosling looked puzzled.

"I know I 'ave, Master Cherry," he said. "It's in the lumber-room next the woodshed. Wot do you want with it?"

"Chap wants to ride it."

"Eh? Wot I says is this 'ere, that machine ain't safe to ride," said Gosling. "You'd better let it alone, Master Cherry."

"Oh, I'm not going to ride it!" said Bob. "We want to have it out, that's all. If you'll let me have the key of the shed, I'll get it, Gossy, and trundle it back when we've done with it."

"There ain't no objection that I knows on, Master Cherry," said Gosling very civilly, as he caught the glimmer of silver in Bob Cherry's hand. "I'll wheel it out for you if you like."

"Thanks, Gossy!"

The three juniors walked away. Nugent and Wharton were grinning by this time as much as Bob Cherry. They knew that old "ordinary," which had reposed in the lumber-shed since days long before they had come to Greyfriars. It had been thrown aside at the time when safety bicycles had been introduced, and its owner had not thought it worth while to take it away from Greyfriars when he went.

Fisher T. Fish looked at the three chums as they came up.

"Well, where's the jigger?" he asked.

"It's coming along," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"I guess I'm ready," said Fish, with his hands in his pockets, leaning back easily against the balustrade of the steps. "I reckon I can ride anything on wheels. Yes, sir."

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "How very nice to be such an expert cyclist! I am a very poor rider myself. My Uncle Benjamin does not ride a cycle, and I never attempted to ride before coming here. But I regard it as a very pleasant and healthy form of exercise, and I should be glad to practise. My dear—Bulstrode—"

"Hallo!" said Bulstrode, who had just jumped off his machine outside the house. "What do you want?"

"I was thinking, my dear Bulstrode, that you might care to give me a lesson in cycling," said the Duffer of Greyfriars, with his simple smile.

"Not on my machine, if I know it," said Bulstrode.

"My dear—"

"Rats! Don't you touch that machine," said Bulstrode, as he went into the house, leaving the bicycle leaning against the wall.

"I guess that's a chance for you," said Fisher T. Fish.

Todd shook his head.

"My dear Fish, Bulstrode expressed a wish that I should not use his cycle," he said.

"Oh, that was only a joke!"

"Was it really?"

"Well, you know what a humorous chap Bulstrode is," said Fish. "You know he's played a lot of japes on you, Todd."

Todd nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes, indeed, my dear Fish. Now I think of it, I have no doubt that Bulstrode was joking, as he could hardly be so ungenerous as to wish me not to ride his cycle. Will one of you fellows help me to mount?"

"I guess so."

"Thank you, my dear Fish."

Fisher T. Fish drew the bicycle away from the wall, and held it ready for Alonzo. The pedals spun round. Bulstrode had a free wheel in his machine, without a back-peddalling brake, and so when the pedals were turned backwards, they spun round and round a score or more of times at top speed.

Fisher T. Fish took the pedal, and whizzed it round backwards.

Todd, whose knowledge of bicycles was about as intimate as his knowledge of aeroplanes or Hebrew, watched the proceedings with great interest and some surprise.

"My dear Fish, what is that for?" he asked.

"That's to wind it up, I guess."

"Wind it up?"

"Yep."

"Dear me! I did not know that bicycles wound up," said Todd, in astonishment. "Why, it must go on some clock-work principle, then?"

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"Yep."

"I—I suppose it is not dangerous?"

"Nope."

"Shall I mount it now, my dear Fish?"

"Certainly. You sit in the saddle, and hold on to the wall here till the bike starts."

"But—but how does it start?"

"I guess it's wound up. You start it by pressing this little lever," said Fish, pointing to the bell on the handle-bars.

"Dear me! But will that not ring the bell?"

"Yep."

"I see—it serves the double purpose of ringing the bell and starting the bicycle," said Todd. "It is truly wonderful! There is no limit to the wonders of modern science, my dear Fish. My Uncle Benjamin says—"

"Ready?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"Then go!"

Todd sat on the saddle, his feet resting on the pedals, one hand on the bell, the other against the brick wall for support.

The fellows standing by yelled with laughter, but Todd took no notice of that. He was not unaccustomed to the sound of merriment when he made any attempt at anything.

Fisher T. Fish grinned, and retired to the steps. Todd pressed the bell vigorously, and waited for the bicycle to start.

Ting-a-ling—ting-ting—buz-z-z-z!

Loud and clear and sharp rang out Bulstrode's bicycle-bell. But the bicycle did not start!

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Wound Up!

"MY only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

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

"Great Scott!"

"The great Scottfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That Todd should really be so simple as to imagine that spinning the pedals backwards wound up the cycle, and that he should sit upon it, expecting to start it by ringing the bell, appealed to the juniors as funny.

"Go it, Todd!" roared Ogilvy.

"Buck up!"

"On the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Fish," said Todd, looking round with a puzzled expression—"my dear Fish, the bicycle is not starting."

"You're not pressing hard enough on the bell."

"Dear me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd pressed the bell more energetically. It was a large and a loud bell, and it made a perfectly terrific noise.

Ring-ting-ling-ting-buz-z-z-zzz!

Br-r-r-r-z-z-z!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Todd!"

The furious ringing of the bicycle-bell brought fellows from far and near to look on. When they heard what was going forward they yelled.

Todd stuck to his task manfully.

There was a sudden exclamation from the doorway, and Bulstrode appeared, red with wrath. The burly Removite had heard the ringing of his bell, and he had come out to see who was meddling with his bicycle.

At the sight of Todd sitting in the saddle, supporting himself against the wall, and ringing away at the bell with might and main, he stood transfixed for a moment.

Then, with a howl of wrath, he dashed towards the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Get off my machine!" he yelled.

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"You—you sweep!"

"But—"

"Get off!"

"My dear Bulstrode, I am about to start. The cycle is wound up—"

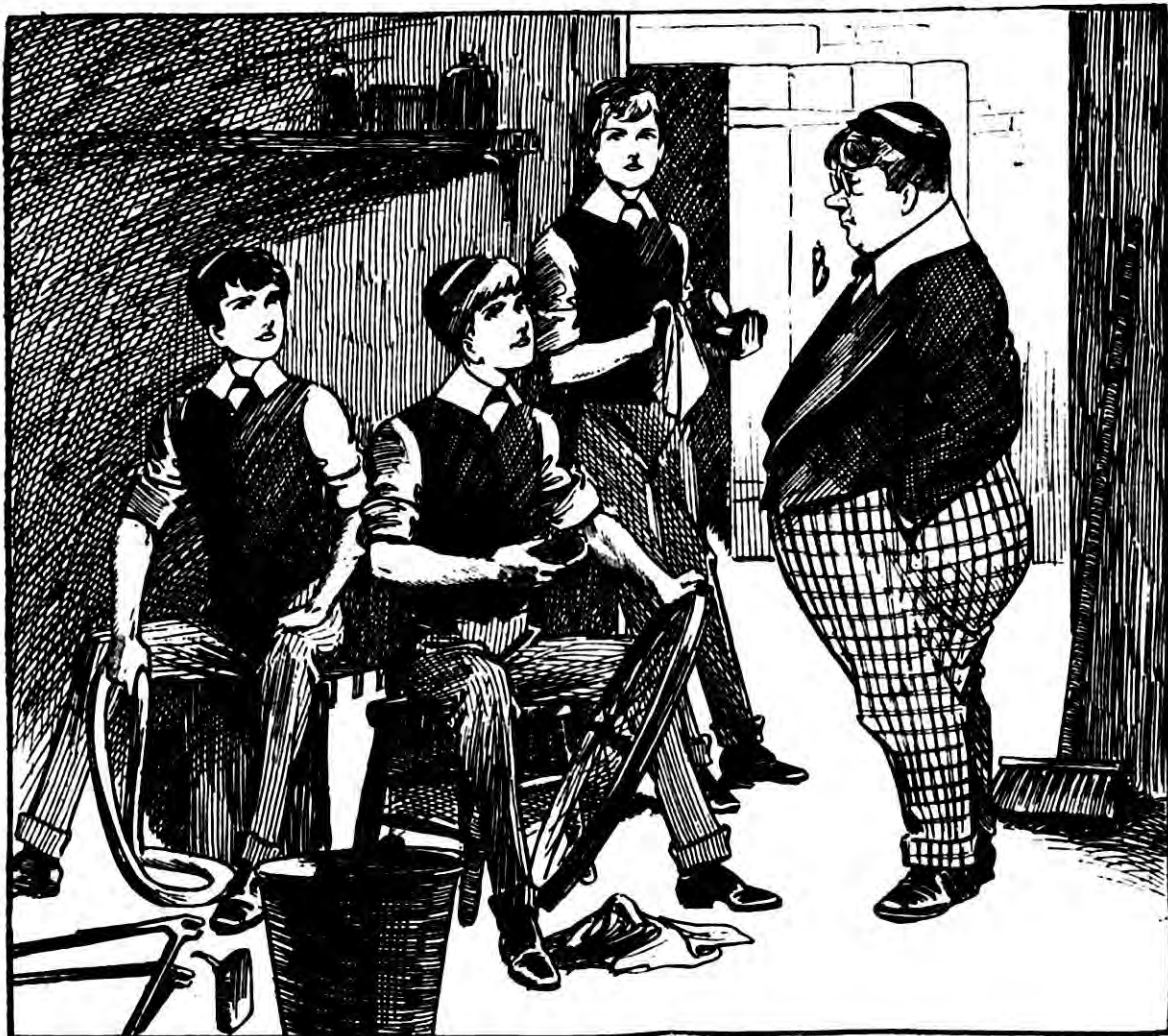
"Eh?" gasped Bulstrode.

"I am desirous of practising cycling. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that I should neglect no manly sport. I— Oh! Oh!"

Bulstrode grasped the Duffer of Greyfriars with both hands and wrenched at him to drag him off the bicycle.

The machine came whirling round from the wall and curled round Bulstrode's legs, and Todd threw his arms round Bulstrode's neck for support.

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"I say, you fellows——" began Billy Bunter. "It's not a feed, it's a bike-cleaning competish," said Bob Cherry, "so you can buzz off. There's nothing to eat, unless you want some lamp-oil or dead tyres." (See page 13.)

"Oh!" he gasped. "Help! I am falling! Save me! Ow!"

He fell! Bulstrode staggered over the bicycle and went down, with Alonzo Todd sprawling over him. The machine went down to the ground with a terrific crash.

"Oh!" gasped Bulstrode.

"My dear—ow!"

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

"Ha, ha!" I guess that takes the whole biscuit factory! Ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-fulness is terrific."

"Go it, Todd!"

Skinner ran to pick up Bulstrode's bike. The two juniors were rolling on the ground, but Bulstrode speedily sat up. He had Todd's head in chancery, and was punching away furiously at the bewildered Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Take that!" he roared. "And that! Yah! And that!"

"Ow—groo—oh! Help!"

"Here, stop that, Bulstrode!" exclaimed Harry Wharton sharply.

"Rats! Take that! And that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop it, I say!"

"Rats! And that—oh!"

Wharton grasped Bulstrode by the collar and dragged him away from the Duffer of Greyfriars.

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Todd staggered to his feet.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. "You have been brutal, Bulstrode—brutal and violent! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode turned savagely upon Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove clenched his teeth, quite ready for business.

Bulstrode changed his mind. He strode towards his bike, which Skinner was holding for him, and then gave Todd a furious look.

"You'll get more than that if you touch my jigger again!" he exclaimed.

Todd rubbed his nose.

"My dear Bulstrode, I did not know you were serious in stating your objection to my using your bike. How was I to know that you were speaking the truth—when that is far from your usual custom?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "How was he to know, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode made no reply, but wheeled his bike away with a scowling brow.

The machine had been well shaken up, but it was not really damaged, and there was really no cause for Bulstrode to lose his temper so much.

Todd gazed after him, more in sorrow than in anger, and rubbed his nose ruefully.

**ANOTHER SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON AND CO. NEXT TUESDAY.**

"Oh, dear!" he murmured. "I feel quite flustered, my dear fellows—I feel as if something had happened to my right eye."

Bob Cherry shrieked.

"Something has happened! Ha, ha, ha! You've got a black eye!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Buzz off and ask Mrs. Kebble for a beefsteak," said Wharton. "You may be in time to save it."

"To save a beefsteak?"

"Ha, ha! No, ass! To save your eye from going black."

"Oh, I see! Thank you so much for the suggestion, my dear Wharton. I will certainly approach Mrs. Kebble on the subject."

And the Duffer of Greyfriars hurried away, leaving the juniors yelling.

"I guess that chap takes the cake," said Fisher T. Fish, in his drawing voice. "But I kinder guess you haven't trotted out your machine for me to ride yet, Bob Cherry."

Bob grinned.

"Here it comes," he said.

There was a yell from the juniors as Gosling was seen approaching, wheeling the old ordinary. The saddle of the old machine was higher than Gosling's head. There were juniors at Greyfriars who had never seen an ordinary—a kind of machine that, surely, should be re-christened the "extraordinary."

Fisher T. Fish's face was a study for a moment or two. He had declared that he would ride any machine that could be produced, but he had not calculated upon being confronted with this pathetic relic of the past.

But there was no escape for Fisher T. Fish, unless he "climbed down" in public—which he was not at all inclined to do.

The juniors were yelling with laughter.

"Go it, Fish! There's your jigger!"

"I guess I didn't know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's your jigger!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Jump on, Fish!"

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Extraordinary!

**F**ISHER T. FISH stood regarding the ancient machine with a dubious gaze. It was pretty evident that he did not like his task.

"I guess I'm ready," he said at last. "I guess I can handle any machine—some! You should see me ride over there—"

"Jump on, then!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"I'm just going to begin—"

"Begin, then!"

"All serene, Cherry! Guess I'm on," said Fisher T. Fish, with a critical look at the ancient bicycle. "Gee! Guess this wheel's big enough for a paddle steamer. But I guess I'm on."

"The on-ness of this esteemed Yankee is terrific."

"Oh, for goodness' sake, mount!" said Frank Nugent.

"Sure, Nugent—"

"Start!" yelled the juniors.

"That's the ticket, boys! I like encouragement!"

Harry Wharton laughed heartily. Fisher T. Fish got worse instead of better. He certainly took his time over things, and, in a way, it could not be denied that he was amusing.

"How's this for a start?" said Fisher T. Fish, wheeling the old machine further out. "I lay that it's a fair deal to see whether she goes easy."

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

"Get up! The machine's for riding, not wheeling about!" yelled Nugent.

"Or would you prefer to do your tricks with a basinette, or a go-cart, Fish?" asked Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Guess you're funny," said Fisher T. Fish, nothing put out. "But this is where you get left. The moths have been at your old bicycle, mebbe, but there are no flies on Fisher T. Fish. Surely."

And without any more ado, the American junior prepared to mount. Reaching over the back of the high saddle, he hopped along behind the big bicycle. But mounting an old "ordinary" isn't like mounting a modern safety machine. Twice he stumbled, and, catching the saddle with his chin, was only just able to maintain his balance.

"Don't eat the machine, Fish!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Merely ride it. That's all we want. It's quite easy."

"Jever get left?" said Fisher T. Fish, preparing for another try.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Guess you think you stuck me asking me to ride your rotten old paddle-wheel," said the American. "Guess we'll see, though."

"That's what we want," said Harry Wharton. "Go on."

"Perhaps Fish would be able to do it better if we spread a net for him."

"Buck up, Fish!"

"Gee!" interrupted the cyclist. "How's this? Say, Wharton, when I'm right on, guess you can ride on the step."

And Fisher T. Fish began to run round with the old ordinary. His idea was to get up a good speed, and then, putting one foot on the revolving pedal, to vault into the saddle, and, of course, electrify the chums of the Remove. But this sort of manoeuvre is nearly impossible on an old ordinary bicycle, as anyone but the daring American would have stopped to think out. Round he rushed. How he managed to escape being thrown down by the revolving pedal was a mystery. But he did. The juniors at first were rather startled. Then they saw that Fisher T. Fish was really managing things very well. They cheered.

"I lay she runs well, Bob Cherry!" shouted Fish.

"She does," assented Bob Cherry. "So do you. When are you going to ride?"

"All serene. How's this?"

As he spoke, Fisher T. Fish put his left foot on the step of the bicycle instead of the pedal, as most of the juniors had expected. His idea was evidently to make one tremendous spring into the saddle, and if he missed, he would not be so likely to hurt himself. Up went his right leg like a flash. But in his leap with his left for the step, he had miscalculated the distance. His foot just grazed the step. He tried to gain his footing on it. But it was too much for him, and though he made a great effort, he appeared to hang over the back of the machine for a second, then he tumbled on the other side of the wheel.

Then the juniors roared. He appeared to be doing a sort of polka in which his head wanted to join with his feet, the old ordinary also coming down with a crash almost at the same instant, a dozen yards away.

"Bravo, Fishy!" roared Frank Nugent. "D'you mind doing it again, old son?"

"Nope! Guess I'll make her do what I want, though!" panted Fisher T. Fish. "I guess there isn't a machine I can't ride, ordinary or extraordinary!" And he was up again like a cork in water. "Say, Cherry, fetch the grid across! I'm on again, you bet!"

Harry Wharton & Co. roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Certainly, Fish!" said Bob Cherry. "Will you have a pair of housemaid's steps to get on this time, or shall Wharton lower you on to the bicycle from one of the upper windows?"

"Guess you talk too much, Cherry. Yank over the wheel!"

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Frank Nugent.

In another moment the bicycle was in position again. Fisher T. Fish was about to explain why he had fallen off, when Bob Cherry and Nugent let the old bicycle tumble against him.

Fisher T. Fish took the hint. Without more ado, he prepared to go on. But he thought he'd have just one word, whatever the juniors might do afterwards.

"Say," he said, looking from the bicycle to Harry Wharton & Co., "if this is what you call a bike over here—"

"You said you'd ride any bicycle," said Bob Cherry, laughing.

"Yep. But I guess pop would call that a piece of scrap-iron."

"You can chuck it if you're funkning it, Fish!" shouted the juniors.

"Me! Not while that wheel'll go round, anyhow."

"Then begin."

"Guess I am beginning."

"But that means get on, in England, Fish," said Mark Linley.

"Put all your money on me, then," said Fisher T. Fish.

"How's this? Jever get left?"

And away went Fish again, bobbing and hopping behind the bicycle. But after "dotting and carrying one" for a number of times round the Close, Fisher T. Fish was at last seen to be in the saddle. In doing it, he nearly went over the front of the wheel. But he maintained his balance with a superhuman effort.

"Jever get left?" he called out. "Can't I make her rip? What price the old country now? Tell me when you'd like me to pick you up!"

And Fisher T. Fish pedalled round the Close like a conquering hero. Now he was mounted, there was no stopping him, so to speak—there was no telling what lengths he would go to. On he went like a whirlwind. Then the inevitable happened; his feet, used to the rat-trap pedals of modern

machines, flew off the old-fashioned rubber pads. He tried vainly to pick them up again. But he howled as the pedal caught the front of his shin. They were revolving altogether too quickly for him, once he had lost them. There was no break on the bicycle, and round and round the Close he had to go.

"Now, then, you lunatic!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Mind what you're about!"

But Fisher T. Fish could not hear him. As a matter of fact, he was rather scared. Tearing about on a bicycle six feet from the ground at that pace was no joke.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry exclaimed. "The duffer will get hurt!"

"Jump off, Fish!"

"Chuck it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish clung desperately to the bicycle. As a matter of fact, it was by sheer chance that he had got into the saddle, and got going at all. Now that he was going, the machine declined to be ruled by him.

The way it kept up was a mystery. No doubt it had a great deal of impetus on it, for Fish's feet had been going round at a tremendous rate before he lost the pedals.

Once it rushed right at the school wall, but Fish managed to wrench it round, and then he came straight at the group of juniors near the door.

They promptly scattered.

"My hat!"

"Look out!"

"Run for your lives!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They scattered right and left, and the terrible old ordinary rushed over the spot where they had been standing. The juniors ran after it.

"Stop it, Fish!" shouted Harry Wharton. "You'll get hurt!"

"Jump off!"

"Catch the pedals!"

"Stop!"

Fisher T. Fish did not even answer. As a matter of fact, he was considerably scared himself by this time.

The cycle was rushing right on, and now it was heading for the wall of the Head's garden.

It was easy for Fish, from his high seat in the saddle of the old ordinary, to see into the garden over the wall. Perhaps he thought that the shrubbery on the other side would be the softest place possible to fall. Perhaps he did not think at all. Perhaps he had quite lost control of the machine.

At all events, he let the ordinary rush right on to the garden wall. There was a wild shout of warning from the Removites.

"Look out, Fish!"

"Hard a port!"

"The Head's in the garden!"

"Turn round!"

"Jump off!"

"My hat!"

Crash!

Right into the garden wall crashed the old bicycle, and Fisher T. Fish shot forward out of the saddle, cleared the low wall, and shot head-foremost into the shrubbery.

"Goodness gracious!"

Fish sat up in the shrubbery, and looked at the Head, and the Head of Greyfriars looked at him.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Surprise for the Head.

**D**R. LOCKE had been taking a quiet stroll in his garden—a habit he had after school hours, when he was accustomed to thinking out little improvements in the wonderful edition of *Æschylus* he was engaged upon. To have a long-limbed junior come flying through the air, to land at his feet, at such a moment, was amazing enough, and it was no wonder that Dr. Locke was startled.

"Goodness gracious!" he ejaculated.

"Ow!"

"What—wh-wh-what—"

"Yow!"

"Boy, where did you come from?"

The old ordinary had dropped on its own side of the wall, of course. The means by which Fisher T. Fish had been projected into the garden were not visible.

Dr. Locke looked at the sky, as if he half expected to see a balloon or an aeroplane there, from which the American junior might have fallen.

"Where did you come from?" he repeated. "Dear me! It is Fish, of the Remove! This is extraordinary! Where did you come from, Fish?"

"Groo!"

"Are you hurt?"

"Yep."

"Cannot you get up?"

"Yep."

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"Then get up at once, Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish crawled out of the shrubbery, and rose painfully to his feet. As a matter of fact, he was very much shaken up.

Dr. Locke fixed a stern glance upon him.

"This is a most extraordinary happening, Fish!" he exclaimed. "Did you leap from the wall into the garden?"

"Nope, sir."

"How did you enter, then?"

"I fell in, sir."

"What! You fell in?"

"Yep."

"B-b-but how could you fall in?" gasped the Head.

"I was chucked, sir."

"Chucked!"

"Yep."

"Do you mean to imply by the absurd word 'chucked' Fish, that you were hurled into my private garden by force?" exclaimed the Head of Greyfriars sternly.

"Yep."

"Ah! Then you are not to blame. Who hurled you in, Fish?"

"Nobody, sir."

"What!" exclaimed the Head.

"Nobody, sir. It was a bike."

"A—a what?"

"A bike, sir," said Fish, recovering his coolness. "I guess I fell off my bike over the wall, sir."

Dr. Locke looked searchingly at Fish. The statement seemed so utterly preposterous that he could not help suspecting, for a moment, that the boy was wandering. The Head did not notice a faint sound of chuckling from the other side of the wall. The juniors were lying very low there; but they heard all that was said in the garden.

"I fail to understand you, Fish," said Dr. Locke, at last. "Am I to understand that you state that you fell off your bicycle over the garden wall?"

"Yep, sir."

"Boy!"

"Yep!"

"How dare you tell me such a story?"

"I guess it's the frozen truth, sir."

Dr. Locke breathed hard through his nose. Of the old ordinary machine which had been for a dozen years or more stowed away in the lumber-shed Dr. Locke had no knowledge. He might have had some knowledge of its existence once; but, of course, he naturally did not think of it now. When Fish spoke of a bicycle, Dr. Locke naturally imagined he spoke of a safety bicycle—and he knew that Fish had one, which was kept in the bicycle shed at Greyfriars. Fish's bike had been made in America, and so it was not at all unlikely that there might be accidents with it. But to fall over that wall from a safety bicycle was quite impossible, the Head knew that.

He was at a loss for words for some moments. Fisher T. Fish did not help him out. He waited stolidly.

"I hardly know what to say to you, Fish," said Dr. Locke.

"Nope, sir."

"You say you were riding a bicycle in the Close, and fell over the wall?"

"Yes, sir. My bike ran into the wall, and I was chucked right over."

"But it is impossible, Fish."

"I guess it happened, sir."

"Boy! You have either taken leave of your senses, or you are telling me a most impudent falsehood," exclaimed Dr. Locke angrily.

"It's the solid truth, sir."

"Fish! Where is the machine now?"

"Where it fell, I expect, sir."

"Very well, Fish," said Dr. Locke quietly, "I will look at the machine, and if it is possible for you to have been thrown from it over this wall, I will pardon you for your outrageous intrusion here. Otherwise, I shall cane you severely for having told me a foolish falsehood."

"I guess that's all O.K., sir."

Dr. Locke did not reply. He strode to the gate that gave admittance from the garden to the Close, and Fisher T. Fish followed him. The American junior's face was quite cool and composed.

Dr. Locke strode into the Close with rustling gown. There was a faint sound of flying footsteps among the old elms. The juniors had vanished by the time the Head of Greyfriars appeared.

"Fish!" exclaimed the Head.

"There's the machine, sir," said Fisher T. Fish meekly.

The old ordinary lay stretched upon the ground. Dr. Locke gazed at it in dead silence for several seconds.

"Oh!" he gasped at last.

Fish stood waiting.

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The Head turned a scrutinising gaze upon him.

"I—I did not know that it was a bicycle of this kind you were riding, Fish," said the Head, in a curious tone of voice. "Why did you not tell me?"

"You didn't ask me, sir."

"Ahem! True! I—I see now that it was possible for you to be thrown over the wall from this machine, and I—I am sorry I doubted your word, Fish. I shall pardon you. But you must not ride that machine in the Close again, Fish. Remember that."

Dr. Locke strode back into the garden. Fisher T. Fish winked at the elm trees, and picked up the old ordinary, and wheeled it away.

The moment the Head had disappeared into the garden, the juniors surrounded Fisher T. Fish. The American grinned at them serenely.

"I guess I'm well out of that!" he remarked.

"You cheeky bounder!"

"You blessed fraud!"

"You've been pulling the doctor's leg, you bounder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you've got plenty of nerve, even if you can't ride," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I guess I can ride—any machine you can trot out," said Fisher T. Fish coolly. "I've ridden this old jigger, I guess."

"Ha, ha! You mean you've let it run away with you!"

"I guess I'd ride it again!" said Fish. "Only after what the Head said, you see—"

"Ha, ha, ha! You could ride it in the road, though!"

"Well, you see—"

"Ha, ha! Funk!" yelled Skinner.

"Rats! I guess I'll ride it in the road!"

"Better chuck it," said Harry Wharton. "It's not safe! You can't ride it, and you've shown that you can't, so you may as well chuck it."

"It's chucked you," grinned Nugent, "and one good turn deserves another."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I can ride it!"

And Fisher T. Fish wheeled the old ordinary out of the school gates, into the road. The juniors followed him in a body. There was no doubt that the American youth had made up his mind to ride that bicycle—but whether he would ride it was another matter!

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### OFF!

**F**ISHER T. FISH stopped in the middle of the road. There was a hedge on one side, and the school wall on the other. The juniors watched him with grinning faces. That Fish could not ride the bicycle was pretty certain, and if he proved anything by keeping on, that was all he could possibly prove. But the American junior was not done yet. He held the bike, and put his foot on the step, and made a jerk to get into the saddle. Once, twice, thrice, he made that jerk, and each time he came down with a clump into the road again. A yell of laughter greeted the third attempt.

"Better get a ladder!" suggested Skinner.

"Mount from the hedge," said Bulstrode.

"Nope."

"Shall I give you a bunk up?"

"Yep!"

Bulstrode winked at Skinner.

"It's really the best way to mount a bicycle, Fish," he said.

"Guess so," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll take your word, Bulstrode."

"Ready?"

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish. "She's an obstinate brute, though," he concluded, slapping the saddle of the bicycle. "Guess I'll accept your offer, Bulstrode."

The juniors grinned.

"Which hoof, Fish?" said Bulstrode.

"Guess that as my left foot is now on the step you do what you call your bunking-up with my right—"

"You see his right one's left, Bulstrode," said Bob Cherry facetiously. "Isn't it, Fish?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Funny beast, Cherry," said Fisher T. Fish. "Guess I'm ready to be bunked, Bulstrode. Let her rip."

"Here you are," said Bulstrode suiting the action to the word.

And he lifted Fisher T. Fish up with such energy that the American before he could stop himself found himself going right over the front wheel. The juniors roared as he went sprawling into the road. Fisher T. Fish uttered a terrific yell as he landed there.

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Bulstrode looked surprised. The bicycle went down with a crash.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Fish!" exclaimed Bulstrode, hastening to pick his victim up. "Hurt much?"

"Nope," said Fisher T. Fish laconically. "You can't have me too much, Bulstrode. Guess I'll bunk myself up next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And he did.

"I say, Wharton. I can trust you," he called out. "When you see me well on, just steady her by the back stay. I'm going this time—"

"Certainly!" said Harry Wharton. "I shall be delighted!"

"Sure!"

And Fisher T. Fish was hopping and bobbing behind the old bicycle once more. The road was down hill. Almost before even Fisher T. Fish himself could believe it, he was in the saddle.

The machine was apparently making up for its past behaviour.

"Say," he called out airily. "Jevver get left!"

Harry Wharton ran after the cyclist. But Fisher T. Fish was putting on all the speed he could command. The captain of the Remove was a good runner, but Fisher T. Fish was simply tearing along. Harry Wharton gave up the chase.

"Don't forget to write home, Fish!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure!" came a faint reply from away down the road. "Jevver get left!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We shall get left this time!"

"Looks like it."

"The leftfulness will be terrific."

"The blessed chump will brain himself, or break his neck!" exclaimed Nugent.

The old ordinary was going down hill at a great rate now. Fisher T. Fish, of course, had lost the pedals by this time.

He was clinging to the bike as he had been clinging to it in the Close, what time he had been flung over the garden wall into the Head's garden.

The juniors dashed after the American at top speed. But they could hardly expect to keep pace with the cycle.

Down the road, half-way to the village, was the spot where the roads crossed, and in the centre was a sign-post, and at the corner a wide, deep pond, where cattle came from the adjoining field to drink in the warm weather.

Fisher T. Fish was tearing down towards the cross roads, and it looked as if he would never be able to turn the corner.

"Stop, you ass!" shrieked Tom Brown.

"He can't!"

"He'll be over!"

"Oh, look!"

Fisher T. Fish made a desperate wrench at the machine to make it clear the sign-post. He turned it a little too thoroughly, and it rushed right at the pond.

The American could not turn it again.

Right at the pond the old ordinary went, and right into the water, completely turning over there.

Splash! Splash!

Fisher T. Fish and the bicycle disappeared into the pond.

The juniors came up gasping.

Fisher T. Fish rose to the surface of the pond again, spluttering and gasping, but the bicycle could not rise. It remained in shallow water, lying upon its side in the mud. Fisher T. Fish stood with water up to his neck, gasping, snorting, and puffing.

The juniors had been anxious for a minute or two. But they could see now that no damage had been done, and they burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Fish!"

"Jevver get left?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Fish. "Ah! Ow! Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yoop! Help me out, you grinning guys! I'm wet, I guess!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish scrambled and plunged towards the bank, and the juniors reached to help him out.

The American's boots had sunk deep into the soft mud at the bottom of the pond, and it was not easy to pull him out.

He was jerked out like a cork from a bottle, gasping and spluttering, and laid upon the grass to recover.

"Ow—ow—ow! I guess I'm wet! Yow!"

"Well, you look wet," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

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"Yow! Help! He's mad! Yaroo!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish, whirling round the study with Harry Wharton's grasp on him. (See page 4.)

"Biggest fish I've ever landed from that or any other pond!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jevver get left, Fishy?"

"Oh, I guess that was an accident!" said Fish. "I'm getting back to the coll. to change my clothes—I'm wet!"

And he started off.

"Who's going in for that blessed bike?" asked Bob Cherry, dubiously. "I promised Gossy that it should be taken back to the lumber-shed."

"You'd better keep your promise, then," grinned Nugent.

"Go in and win!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you chaps would care to fish it out——"

"Thanks; we wouldn't!"

"H'm! I'll get a stake from the fence, then, and yank it out."

Bob Cherry brought a long stake upon the scene, and fished for the bicycle. He splashed and panted, and panted and splashed, while the juniors watched him, laughing; but finally he succeeded in hooking the old bike near enough to drag it out. Then the dripping machine was wheeled back along the road in the dusk towards Greyfriars.

As soon as the school was reached, the old ordinary was deposited with Gosling, who stared as he saw the state it was in, but was quieted with an extra sixpence. The juniors found Fisher T. Fish had changed his clothes, and he was

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looking as cool and cheerful as ever as he waited for them at the door of the School House.

"Hallo," he said, "got it safe home?"

"Yes."

"Good! I guess I've shown you how we can ride over there—some!"

"My hat! Do you call that riding?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Surely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

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

Fisher T. Fish shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess you should see us ride over there!" he remarked.

It was evident that there was no abashing the self-satisfaction of the junior from New York.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### All Hands!

"HAZEL, old man!" Harry Wharton stopped to speak to Hazeldene.

Hazeldene paused. There was a shadow on Hazeldene's face, a wrinkle between his brows. It had often been there lately, and Harry Wharton thought that he knew the reason. There was trouble on the mind of Marjorie Hazeldene's brother, and it was not difficult to

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guess the cause—not difficult for Wharton, at all events. More than once the captain of the Remove had helped Hazeldene out of the troubles into which his weak and easily-tempted nature had led him—troubles which would have been worse but for that timely help. Hazel knew very well that Wharton's interference had saved him, on at least one occasion, from being expelled from Greyfriars.

"Well?" said Hazeldene curtly.

"I want to speak to you," said Harry.

"Go ahead!"

"It's about that Wheelers' Club idea," said Harry. "The weather's ripping, and it's a jolly good idea, you know, to plan out some good rides. I suppose you are going to be one of the Wheelers?"

Hazeldene made a grimace.

"I would, only—"

"Look here, Hazel, don't refuse!" said Wharton quickly. "Marjorie would like it if you were one of us, you know that, and it's better for her in lots of ways for you to come along on a ride. I understood that you had given up that rotten business along with the Bounder. You promised to drop smoking when I put you down for a trial for the eleven."

"I've kept my word."

"Good! Then you can be one of the Wheelers?"

Hazeldene gave a grunt.

"You don't understand, Wharton. I'm in debt. I have a very small allowance from my father, and he never sends me any tips as your uncle does. I owe Vernon-Smith money, and—and other fellows—some of them outside the school. I've no tin."

"But—"

"My bike's an old crock, and I haven't a bob to pay towards repairing it, for one thing," said Hazeldene shortly. "You'd better leave me out."

Wharton looked at him steadily.

"Look here, Hazel, if that's your true reason, it can be got over; but if you've got some game on with the Bounder for Wednesday afternoon—"

Hazeldene made an irritable gesture.

"I haven't. We're not on good terms now. I haven't been out with him for weeks. He has made conditions that I won't agree to."

"Good enough! We'll see about the bike."

"I don't want you to pay for it, if that's what you mean," said Hazel sullenly. "I'm not going to take your money."

"I wasn't thinking of that. I was thinking that we'd turn to, all of us, and put it in order," said Harry.

"That's a rule of the Wheelers' Club—in case of accident, every chap turns to, and does what he can, and contributes what he's got, to set the matter right."

Hazeldene laughed.

"My bike will want a lot of setting right," he said. "Both tyres are rotten, and there's rust all over the machine. I shall want a new chain, and a pair of new pedals, and—and other things."

"I suppose, as a matter of fact, you haven't taken care of it through the winter," said Harry Wharton. "But we'll see to it. No other objection to joining the Wheelers?"

"No," said Hazel, brightening up considerably.

"Good!"

Hazeldene walked on with a more cheerful expression on his face. As a matter of fact, he had been very keenly desirous of becoming one of the new cycling club in the Remove—more especially as he knew that his sister Marjorie would be concerned if he did not. Hazel was very much under Marjorie's influence. It would have been well for him if that influence had been strong enough to counteract all others.

Harry Wharton looked into Study No. 1. Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were just finishing their prep. Wharton beckoned to them.

"Wanted!" he said.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?"

"All hands wanted, that's all! All Wheelers wanted to help repair a member's bike!"

Nugent laughed.

"Well, you're getting down to work pretty quick," he exclaimed, "as the Wheelers' Club hasn't been in existence three hours!"

"No need to lose time, you know."

"Who's bike is it—yours?"

"No," said Wharton, laughing. "Hazel's. Contributions wanted—tyres, pedals, and things. All hands turn up in the bike-shed for duty at half-past eight!"

"Right you are!"

Wharton went along the passage. A dozen or more juniors in the Remove had enrolled themselves in the Wheelers' Club. As it was a club without rules or regulations, with no fees or subscriptions of any sort, nobody had any objection to becoming a member; in fact, there were

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some fellows who would gladly have joined, but were excluded—Vernon-Smith being among them. The millionaire's son was not popular in the Remove, and Harry Wharton & Co. were resolved that he should not make them the means for bestowing his attentions upon Marjorie Hazeldene—for that was the Bounder's object. The paragraph in the "C.T.C. Gazette" had been the cause of the existence of the Junior Wheelers, and Nugent had remarked that the club would probably continue to exist until the weather changed, or until cricket claimed more serious attention.

Wharton looked into several studies to call up members for duty. He arrived at last at the end study, which was tenanted by John Bull, Fisher T. Fish, and Alonzo Todd. Todd was a sort of honorary member of the club, as he was not the possessor of a bicycle. He had declared, indeed, that he would ride anybody's bicycle, but there did not seem to be any wild enthusiasm on the subject of lending him one.

"Members wanted!" said Wharton, looking in.

John Bull yawned.

"What's the row?"

"All hands on deck for repairs!"

"Oh, all right!"

"I guess I'll come," said Fisher T. Fish. "Better leave the thing in my hands, I guess. I used to do a lot of cycle fitting over there."

"Rats!"

"I will come with pleasure," said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to make myself useful on all possible occasions. I shall be very glad to help."

"Ahem!" said Wharton. "I don't think you need trouble, Toddy—"

"No trouble at all, my dear Wharton. I shall be delighted—"

"H'm! Have you finished your prep.?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"Got any impositions to do?"

"None, I am delighted to say."

"I think you ought to lie down and take a rest, Todd, after your exertions to-day," said Wharton, seriously.

"But I have not been exerting myself to-day, Wharton!" said Todd, in astonishment.

"Well, you ought to have been, then," said Harry. "I think you ought to go into the gym. and put in half an hour's exercise."

"Perhaps so, but I will help you with these repairs first."

"Better go to the gym. first."

"Oh, no—I will help you. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that I should be willing to help on any occasion, my dear Wharton."

John Bull chuckled.

"It's no good," he said, "Todd's determined to help—ain't you, Todd?"

"Yes, indeed, my dear Bull!"

"We may as well go, then!" grunted Wharton. "Come on!"

The juniors left the study. Billy Bunter was at his door in the Remove passage, and he rolled out to intercept them.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"But, look here, I hear you're forming a Wheelers' Club, or something—"

"Well, it's not a war club," said Bull, "and it's not a policeman's club, and it's not a shillalah!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

The juniors walked on, and Bunter trotted after them.

"Look here, you fellows, I want to join the club, you know. I suppose I'm not going to be kept out of this by personal jealousy, as I am out of the cricket eleven?"

"Oh, you can put your name down if you like," said Wharton. "But what's the good—you haven't a bike!"

"I shouldn't mind riding yours."

"Go hon!"

"Or Bull's, as he's shorter than you, and his bike would suit me better," said Bunter. "I suppose Bull wouldn't mind lending me his bike sometimes—say, for half the club runs? That would be a fair division."

"Do you really suppose that?" asked John Bull curiously.

"Certainly!"

"Then there's something decidedly wrong with your supposer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Fish—"

"Buck up!" said Harry Wharton. "The other chaps will be waiting."

The juniors quickened their pace. Billy Bunter gasped after them in vain. The fat junior snorted as they vanished downstairs.

"Beast!" he murmured. "I know I'm jolly well not going to be left out, all the same. I'm jolly well in this!"

And Bunter tore downstairs after the chums of the Remove.

He reached the bottom of the staircase just as Loder, of the Sixth, reached it from the opposite direction. Bunter was too short-sighted to see Loder, and Loder was in too great a hurry to see Bunter. They met.

"Oh!" roared Loder.

"Groo!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You fat young idiot!"

"Oh, is it you, Loder! I—oh, I'm sincerely sorry! Ow! Yow!"

Billy Bunter fled, with Loder's boot to assist him on his way.

"Beast!" murmured Billy Bunter, as he paused in the dusky Close to rub his injuries. "Yah! Beast! Now, where are those other beasts? I'm not going to be left out. Beasts!"

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### On the Mend.

I GUESS that bike will want some mending," said Fisher T. Fish sententiously.

Hazeldene's bike had been taken off the stand, and brought out into the middle of the shed. Certainly, to judge by the look of it, it would want a great deal of mending.

It was rusty in many places from neglect. Hazeldene had not even vaselined it before putting it away for the winter. There were clods of last summer's mud clinging in the mudguards, and clogging on the chain. Certainly Hazeldene was not the kind of fellow to keep a bicycle in order. His carelessness in class, in money matters, in all matters, was reflected in the way he used his bicycle. It was just like Hazeldene. He had no chance whatever of getting a new bicycle, but he took not the least care of the old one. But he would have felt very injured if he had had no machine to ride that summer, and had to be left out of the Wheelers' Club runs.

Bob Cherry snorted as he looked at it.

"Blessed if a chap ought to have a bike if he uses it like that," he remarked.

"Quite so!" said Nugent.

"The quite-sofulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Indeed, Hazeldene is very careless," Todd remarked. "My Uncle Benjamin says that we should always take care of our dumb friends."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared John Bull. "Uncle Ben wasn't talking about bikes, I suppose, but dogs and cats."

"But a bike is a dumb friend, my dear Bull."

"Hazel's isn't; it makes a clatter like tin cans when he rides it," said Nugent. "But look here, Todd, would you like us to take care of you?"

"Certainly, my dear Nugent."

"Then be a dumb friend," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd looked very puzzled. He tried to think out Nugent's remark, but it was a long time before the meaning dawned upon him. Meanwhile, the Wheelers of the Remove devoted their attention to Hazeldene's dilapidated bike.

The wheels were taken off, and nearly every part that was unscrewable was unscrewed, and all detachable portions were detached. That was a beginning, as Bob Cherry remarked. Then Wharton called for contributions.

"Tyres wanted," he said. "Hazel doesn't want to buy new tyres."

"I haven't the tin," said Hazeldene, who was sitting on a box, looking on.

"Any chap feel inclined to dub up his second-best tyres?"

Nugent and John Bull offered. They brought out tyres that certainly showed signs of punctures and many mendings, but were still serviceable. Fisher T. Fish contributed a new chain, and Hurree Singh a pair of pedals. Micky Desmond had a second-best saddle, which was certainly better than the lopsided, mouldy one on Hazel's bike. As for the rest of the machine, it seemed possible to repair it, and the Wheelers started in earnest.

Cleaning and repairing went on at a great rate. The work was not easy, but a number of fellows working cheerfully in company can get through any labour pleasantly enough. All that is needed is willing hearts and cheerful tempers.

Hazeldene sat looking on in quite a detached way. It might have been somebody else's bike by the careless way he accepted the whole proceeding.

The work was proceeding merrily when Billy Bunter came into the bike-shed, with a sulky and injured expression upon his fat face.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wrong again, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, looking up from the lamp he was cleaning.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"It's not a feed, it's a bike cleaning competish," said Bob Cherry. "You can buzz off. There's nothing to eat, unless you want some lamp-oil or dead tyres."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't think it was a feed," said Bunter, glaring wrathfully at Bob Cherry through his big spectacles. "I'm joining the Wheelers, that's all."

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EVERY TUESDAY. **The "Magnet"** LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"Oh, rot!" said John Bull.

"I'm jolly well going to, all the same. I suppose I'm at liberty to join, and get a bike afterwards," said Bunter. "I'm expecting some postal-orders, as a matter of fact, and I'm thinking of getting a bike on the instalment system."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I'm jolly well going to be a member of the Wheelers' Club, I know that."

"All members have to buckle to and help when there's any work to be done," said Bob Cherry. "Are you ready?"

"Certainly!"

"Pile in, then. You can begin by cleaning this lamp."

Bunter backed away a little.

"I—I'm not used to cleaning lamps," he said. "You see, I—I haven't had any experience. I don't mind giving directions about it."

"You can polish up this rusty rim."

"I'm afraid I haven't had any experience in dealing with rust," said Bunter uneasily. "I think I'd better watch you do it for a bit."

"You blessed slacker! This is a Wheelers' Club, not a Slackers' Society," Bob Cherry exclaimed indignantly. "Look here, try your hand at cleaning these spokes."

Bunter shook his head.

"I'm a rather heavy-handed chap," he said; "I might break them. Splendidly developed fellows have a way of being heavy handed, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really—"

"Pump up these tyres," said Nugent.

"I'm afraid it would put me out of breath, and—"

"Fill this lamp with oil."

"Well, I don't want to make my hands dirty—"

The Wheelers all rose from their work and glared at Bunter. The cool nerve of the fat junior in insisting upon being admitted a member of the club, and then depending upon borrowing a bicycle from another member, and at the same time declining to lend a hand in the work, exasperated them, accustomed as they were to Bunter.

A dozen grimy hands were extended towards Bunter.

"Outside, you fat rotter!"

"Get out!"

"Vamoose!"

"Oh, really, you fellows!" said Bunter, looking at them.

"Look here, as a member of the Wheelers' Club, I—"

"You're not a member!"

"And you won't be!"

"Buzz off!"

"Vamoose the ranch, you fat guy!"

"Oh, really—"

"Oh, chuck him out!" said Harry Wharton, without looking up from his work of fitting on a tyre. "Sling him out on his neck!"

"Oh, really, Wharton— Oh! Yaroo!"

Half a dozen fellows collared the Owl of the Remove. They were fully fed up with Bunter's cheek, and they yanked him towards the door.

Bunter roared and struggled.

"Yow! Leggo! Beasts! Groo! Yow!"

Grimy hands left trails of cycle oil and mud and dust over Bunter's face and collar and clothes. The Wheelers did not stand on ceremony with him. The fat junior was whirled to the door, and sent spinning out into the darkness.

"Now, don't you come in again!" said Bob Cherry, shaking a warning forefinger after him. "You'll get it in the neck next time."

"Ow!"

"Buzz off!"

"Yow! I sha'n't! Yah! Beasts! Ow!"

"Hand me that broom over," said Bob Cherry. "I'll jolly soon see whether he'll buzz off or not."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here you are, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry charged out of the bike-shed with the broom held as if it were a lance of old. Billy Bunter gave a yell, and turned to flee. But he was not quite quick enough. The stiff head of the broom caught him in the back, and he yelled and sprawled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Wheelers.

"Ow! Yaroo!"

"Sweep that rubbish away, Bob!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry.

He swept at Bunter with the broom. But the rubbish did not wait to be swept up. Bunter jumped to his feet and fled.

"Beasts!" he yelled back from the darkness.

Then he disappeared. Bob Cherry returned laughing to the bike-shed, and the work of putting Hazeldene's "jigger" in order went cheerfully on, without the assistance of Billy Bunter.

ANOTHER SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON AND CO. NEXT TUESDAY.

### THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. The Evil Genius.

**V**ERNON-SMITH was standing outside his study when Hazeldene came along the Remove passage a little later. Hazeldene did not appear to see him, and he was going into his own room, when the Bounder of Greyfriars called to him.

Hazeldene paused uneasily. He had not been speaking to Vernon-Smith lately, and he was in dread of the Bounder. He knew only too well how the strong, masterful nature of the Bounder dominated his own weak one. Yet he had not determination enough to refuse to speak to the fellow who had led him many times into evil, and would probably do so again.

"What do you want?" asked Hazeldene uneasily.  
"Only a word or two with you," said Vernon-Smith. "Step into my study, will you?"

Hazeldene hesitated.  
"Can't you say it here?"

"Well, I could, but what's the use? Look here, Hazel, I've a new lot of smokes—real Turkish and first-class," said the Bounder.

"I don't want any."  
"Well, I must say you're civil."

"I tell you I've chucked all that," said Hazeldene irritably.  
"Why can't you let a fellow alone? I know I owe you money, and I'm going to pay it when I can. You said when you lent it to me that I could please myself about that."

"I don't want the money."  
"I'm not going to remain in your debt longer than I can help," said Hazeldene. "Hang it, what did you lend me the money for? It only went in cards at the Cross Keys, and Cobb and his set cheated me all along the line."

"Come inside," said Vernon-Smith.

"What for?"  
"Well, it's draughty in the passage, for one thing. Come on! I've got a good fire here, and a comfy armchair."

Hazeldene followed the Bounder into his study ungraciously. He sat down in the armchair Vernon-Smith pulled out for him, with a sulky expression on his face. Smith did not seem to notice it.

"Well, what is it?" asked Hazeldene curtly.

"It's about the Wheelers."  
"That's nothing to do with you, Smithy. You're not a cyclist."

"Oh, yes, I am! I have a bike, and a motor-bike, too," said the Bounder. "I've done a lot of wheeling in my time, though not lately. Look here, Hazel, you're going to join the Wheelers, I suppose? Wharton wouldn't leave you out."

"I'm a member, certainly."  
"Members are allowed to take friends along, of course."

"I suppose so."  
"I suppose we're still friends," said Vernon-Smith. "Look here, I want to take up cycling this season. I'm getting pretty sick of Cobb and his crew, and it's too risky to keep up that bizney of breaking bounds, and going down to the Cross Keys. I'm in want of some healthy exercise. Why shouldn't I join the Wheelers?"

"If the chaps want you, you can join."  
"I could come with you."

"I suppose you could," said Hazel, not very graciously.  
"I believe your bike is on the rocks," said Vernon-Smith.

"I'm having a new one sent down to-morrow morning." Hazeldene opened his eyes.

"Your old one is practically new," he said. "Blessed if I know what you want with a new one. You must be rolling in money."

"I have as much money as I want," said the Bounder coolly. "My governor pays for the new bike, though. Look here, my old machine suits you—you've ridden it often enough. You can have the loan of it for the season, if you like."

"Oh!"  
"What do you say?"  
"Well, it's jolly decent of you!"

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"Only I shall inflict my company upon you in the rides, that's all," said Vernon-Smith, with a smile. "I suppose you don't mind that. I'm not going to ask you to smoke or play—nothing whatever to put Wharton's back up, and make him drop on you, if you're uneasy about that."

Hazeldene flushed a little.  
"Hang it!" he said. "I'm not uneasy about that. Wharton's not my father-confessor. I can do as I like. But well, I've stopped all that—of my own accord, of course."

"Of course," assented Vernon-Smith smoothly. "I suppose you'll be getting up a club run for to-morrow afternoon?"

"I believe it's arranged."  
"Anybody from Cliff House coming?"

Hazeldene shifted a little.  
"My sister will be coming, I think, and Clara Trevelyn."

"Oh! And quite a crowd of the Wheelers, I suppose?"  
"Five or six, I expect."

"Well, the addition of one to the party won't make any difference."

Hazeldene was silent. He understood fully the Bounder's object. Vernon-Smith was determined to force his acquaintance upon Marjorie Hazeldene. The fact that Marjorie disliked him, and had shown it plainly, made no difference to the Bounder of Greyfriars—or, if it made any difference, it made him the more determined.

Hazeldene hardly knew what to do.  
He knew that Marjorie would not like it if the Bounder came, and he knew that Harry Wharton & Co. would not like it.

But he had not the firmness of will to refuse the Bounder.

Besides, there was the offer of the bicycle. The Wheelers had mended up Hazeldene's machine, but, of course, the patched-up affair was nothing like the practically new fifteen-guinea "jigger" that Vernon-Smith had offered him for the season.

There was a pang of envy in Hazeldene's heart. Vernon-Smith had but to say one word to his father to get a new machine at any cost, and Hazeldene knew only too well how such a request to his own father would have been met.

His father was a country vicar, with very little money to spare after he had made both ends meet. Hazeldene had been brought up in an atmosphere of economy and grim respectability, of keeping up appearances on an income that was not large enough for the purpose, and such a life was little in accordance with his reckless and extravagant tastes.

It was no wonder that he envied the Bounder, the son of a millionaire, who chose to ask a doting father

for, and spent it like water.

Vernon-Smith watched Hazel's face, with his keen, brown eyes that nothing seemed to escape.

"By the way, Hazel," he remarked. "You remember that little debt you owe to Cobb?"

Hazeldene started.  
"He's agreed to wait for that," he said.

"I saw him to-day, and he said he couldn't wait any longer. It seems that he's had some losses on the races, and he owes Banks, the bookmaker, money."

"I can't pay him."  
"They may make trouble for you, old chap, if you don't."

Hazeldene shrugged his shoulders.  
"They can't get blood out of a stone," he said recklessly.

"I'm stony, and Cobb knows it. If he goes to the Head about it, he won't get a penny, and he knows that, too."

"He asked me your father's address."  
"What?"

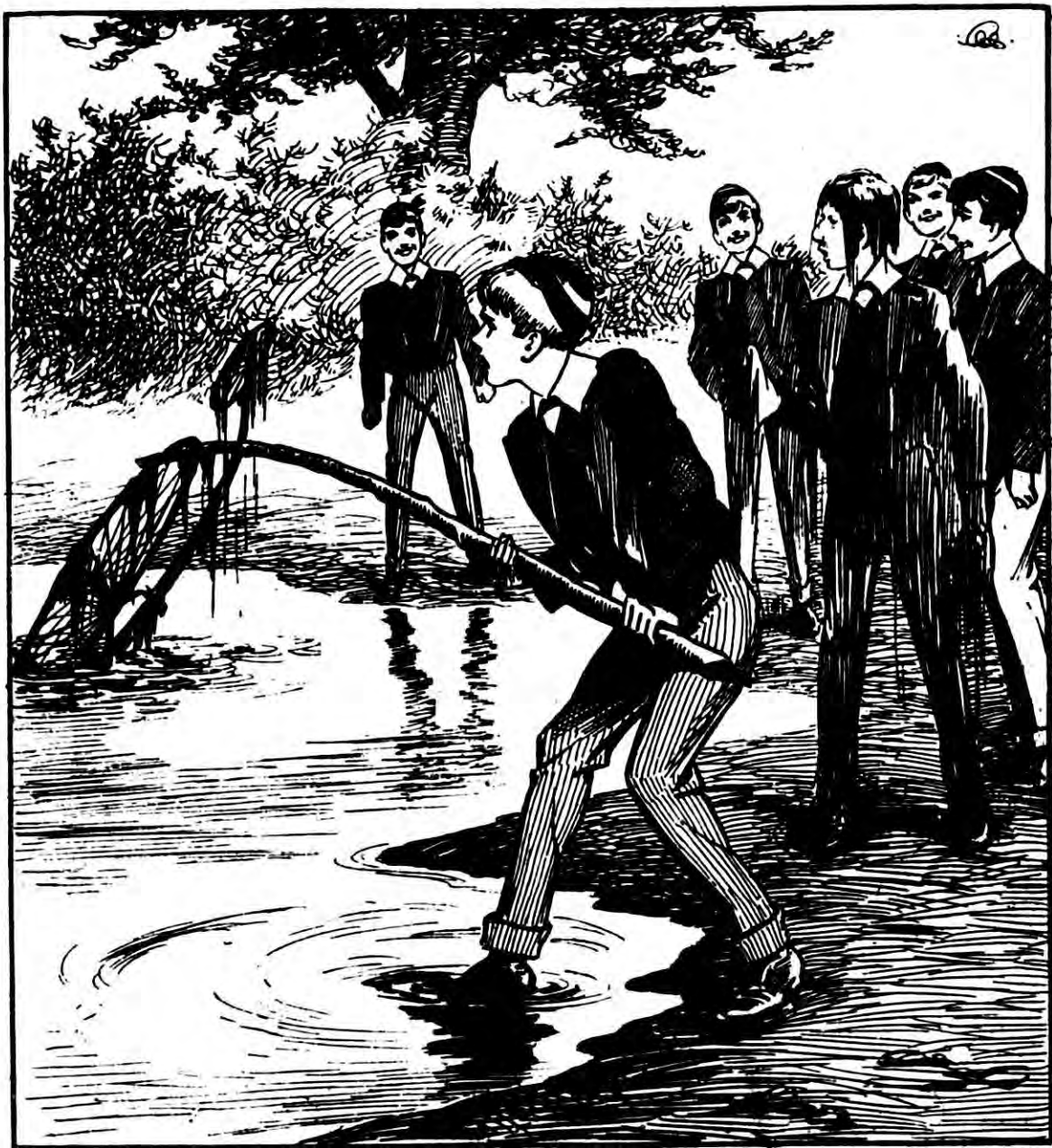
The Bounder lighted a cigarette. Hazeldene started to his feet, his eyes gleaming wildly.

"Smith, you didn't give him my home address," Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"No, I didn't!"  
Hazel gasped with relief.

"I don't know what would happen if he had it," he said.

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Bob Cherry brought a long stake upon the scene, and fished for the bicycle. He splashed and panted, while the juniors watched him, laughing. But finally he succeeded in hooking the old bike near enough to drag it out. (See page 11.)

"My father would kick up an awful shindy—take me away from Greyfriars, perhaps."

"You can depend upon me to stand by you, Hazel."

"Thanks, old man!"

"I sha'n't say a word," said Vernon-Smith. "You haven't treated me exactly like a friend lately, Hazel, but I feel just the same to you."

Hazeldene stirred uneasily, but did not speak.

"But Cobb may find out the address from some of our fellows," said Vernon-Smith. "Bunter would tell him like a shot. Bunter knows."

"Oh!"

"You'd better let Cobb have something on account."

"I've got no money."

"I have!"

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Hazeldene shook his head, but irresolutely.

"Come, old man," said the Bounder. "I've had a remittance from my pater to-day. Let me lend you a sov."

"I—I told Marjorie I'd never borrow of you again," said Hazeldene weakly.

The Bounder's eyes gleamed for a moment.

"But this wouldn't be borrowing," he said smoothly. "I'm just giving you this to pay Cobb. Look here, I've brought in a postal-order, in case you want it. You can post it to Cobb to-night, and keep the cad quiet."

Hazeldene still wavered, but his hand was moving towards the postal-order the Bounder had laid upon the table. He picked it up suddenly.

"Thanks," he said. "I'll have this, if you don't mind."

"Please do!"

"I—I'll let you know about the club run, Smithy."

"Right-ho!"

Hazeldene left the study with the postal-order in his pocket. The Bounder of Greyfriars smiled in his ratty, sneering way. "Just a turn of the screw," he murmured. "I think I shall always be able to bring my friend Hazel up to time. Just a turn of the screw—and it's worth a quid, if only to see Wharton's face to-morrow when I join them. Hazel won't say a word about it till the latest possible moment—if I know him."

And the Bounder grinned.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### The Bald Spot.

"**T**OO bad!" said Bulstrode.

"Rotten!" said Skinner.

"It's rough on Todd!"

"Yes, beastly rough!" Snoop remarked. "You see, it afflicts brainy people more than any others. That's why Todd's got it."

"I suppose it must be so," said Bulstrode musingly. "I've often thought I should like to be as clever as Todd, but really, if it means this—"

"Better be an ass, as you are," said Ogilvy.

Bulstrode glared at the Scottish junior.

"Look here, Ogilvy—"

"Well, I was only agreeing with you," said Ogilvy pacifically. "Speaking about Todd—"

"It's hard cheese," said Skinner.

"Yes," said Russell. "I'm very sorry indeed for Todd."

Alonzo Todd was coming into the junior common-room, and he heard every word that was spoken by the group of Remove fellows—as they probably intended he should. The Duffer of Greyfriars looked surprised and a little alarmed. It was very pleasant, no doubt, to know that his Form-fellows felt sorry for him, if there was an occasion for sorrow. But they were really speaking as if something serious was the matter.

"My dear fellows—" began Alonzo.

The juniors did not seem to hear.

"Of course, Todd will simply walk through all the exams.," said Bulstrode. "He will most likely get into the Fifth by the time we're in the Shell. But—"

"But this is very rough!"

"Hard cheese."

"Too bad!"

"My dear fellows," repeated Alonzo Todd, in a louder key.

"My dear fellows, I did not mean to listen, but I could not help hearing you mention my name!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Skinner, apparently greatly astonished.

"Here's Todd."

"Yes, I am here, my dear Skinner. I trust there is nothing the matter," said the Greyfriars duffer anxiously. "If there is, please tell me at once. My Uncle Benjamin says that it is always better to face one's troubles boldly."

The juniors exchanged glances.

"Shall we tell him?" asked Skinner.

"Oh, no; it would be too great a shock to poor Todd."

"We must be cruel only to be kind," said Bulstrode firmly.

"Todd may cure it in time if we warn him."

"Yes, that's true."

"I think, myself, that Todd ought to be warned," said Ogilvy. "If it were happening to me, I should like to be told."

"Yes, rather!"

Todd looked quite alarmed. The juniors were all as solemn as owls, and if Todd had been showing visible signs of developing a dangerous disease, they could not have looked more concerned about it.

"Please tell me what is the matter," he said tremulously.

"You tell him, Skinner."

"Perhaps you could break it more gently, Bulstrode."

"Oh, no; you're the chap—you're more tender-hearted than I am."

"Well, if I must, I must," said Skinner, with a sigh. "I'm sorry, Todd, but if you insist upon my telling you—"

"I do not insist, my dear Skinner, but I beg and implore you to tell me," said Todd, in great distress. "You have made me feel quite uneasy."

"Lean your head down, Todd."

"M-m-my head!"

"Yes."

"There is nothing the matter with my head, my dear Skinner, I assure you," said Todd, in amazement.

"Lean it down."

"I will do so to oblige you, but—"

Todd lowered his head. Each of the juniors inspected it with owl-like gravity. Ogilvy screwed a penny into his eye by way of a monocle to survey it.

"As I thought!" said Skinner sadly.

"As we all thought!" said Bulstrode.

"Well, I couldn't help noticing it when I saw the gas-light shining on Todd's head," said Snoop. "The bald spot shows up most then."

Todd jumped.

"The—the what?" he exclaimed.

"There, it's out now!" said Bulstrode. "You might have been a little more tactful about it, Snoop. I wanted Skinner to break it gently to Todd."

"I'm sorry!" said Snoop penitently. "But perhaps it was better for Todd to know at once. It's like having a tooth out, you know—the sooner it's over the quicker."

"Yes, there's something in that."

"Bald spot!" said Todd dazedly.

The juniors all nodded earnestly.

"Yes," said Skinner, "I meant to break it more gently, Todd, but there it is. You're going bald on top, and that's it!"

"Oh, dear!"

Todd raised his hand to his head and felt over the crown of it. Certainly the hair seemed thick enough to the touch, but Todd, naturally, could not see on the top of his head, and if so many eye-witnesses, as it were, agreed that his hair was going thin on top, it was not for him to gainsay them.

He ran his fingers through his somewhat long hair with a puzzled expression upon his kind, simple face.

"Oh, dear! Am I really going bald?"

"I'm sorry, Todd, but you'd rather know the truth, wouldn't you?" said Bulstrode sadly.

"Yes, yes, indeed, my dear Bulstrode!"

"Then I'm afraid there's no disguising the fact. I suppose your Uncle Benjamin is a bit bald on top?"

"Yes, certainly; but he is really middle-aged, and—"

"I expect you inherit it from him."

Todd blinked at Bulstrode in a perplexed way.

"My dear Bulstrode, it is impossible to inherit anything from an avuncular relative. You see, it is not in the direct line of descent—"

"Stuff! I know a chap who inherited two hundred pounds a year from his uncle—"

"That is quite different. You see—"

"I see you're going bald, Todd."

"You are quite certain, my dear fellow?"

"My dear Todd, I've called all these chaps together to discuss it, and decide whether to tell you and suggest a remedy."

Todd's eyes were quite moist.

"My dear Bulstrode, that was very, very kind of you! I fully forgive you now for smiting me upon the eye in that rough manner, especially as my eye has not, after all, assumed the aspect of discoloration that I at first feared."

"The fact is, I'm trying to make up for my—my rough conduct," said Bulstrode, who, as a matter of fact, had quite forgotten punching Todd for using his bicycle. "Will you let us do anything to cure your baldness, Toddy?"

"Oh, certainly! I shall be very grateful."

"That settles it," said Bulstrode. "If you're willing, Todd, we'll help you, and I haven't the slightest doubt that we shall be able to stop this. Of course, it's the brainy chaps who go bald, and if you'd prefer to let it go on it would really only make you look more brainy."

Todd shook his head.

"My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked if he saw it," he said. "I should be glad to try any cure, and I am very much obliged to you fellows for pointing it out. But what kind of cure would you suggest, my dear Bulstrode?"

"Oh, the Scratcho Hair Restorer, of course. It's the same that Mr. Quelch uses," said Bulstrode.

"I did not know that our Form-master used a hair-restorer,

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my dear Bulstrode. Now I recall it, Mr. Quelch is a little bald on the top of the head," said Alonzo thoughtfully.

"He uses it regularly every night," said Skinner. "I've often watched him at—his window. I got an empty bottle once, so I know what kind he uses. It's the famous Scratcho stuff, you know, and we've clubbed up to buy you a bottle in case you should like to try it."

"My dear Skinner, how can I thank you?"

"Oh, it was the other fellows as much as myself. Look here, Todd, if you'd care to try it there's plenty of time before bed," said Skinner. "Come into my study, and we'll rub the stuff into your hair for you if you like. Of course, the massage of the rubbing-in does a lot of good as well as the hair-restorer itself."

"We'll take it in turns to do that," said Bulstrode generously. "I think that we all want to rally round Todd, and see that the best is done for him under the circumstances."

"Hear, hear!" said all the juniors together.

"Thank you so much, my dear fellows!" said Alonzo Todd, quite touched. "I am sure it is most kind of you, and my Uncle Benjamin would be delighted with your kindness. Shall I go to your study now, my dear Skinner?"

"Please do, and I'll bring the stuff," said Skinner. "Buzz off! I sha'n't keep you a tick."

And Bulstrode & Co. marched Alonzo Todd off to the study. There they waited for Skinner. Todd beamed gratefully upon the juniors in the study.

"This is very, very kind of you!" he said. "I shall never forget it—never! I shall write and tell my Uncle Benjamin all about it, my dear fellows! Ah, here is Skinner!"

### THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Hair-Restorer.

"HERE'S the stuff, Todd," said Skinner, entering the study with a bottle in his hand.

"Are you sure it's the same stuff that Mr. Quelch uses, my dear Skinner?" asked Alonzo earnestly.

"You cannot be too careful, you know."

"Rather!" said Bulstrode. "Look here, Todd, it's very ungrateful to Skinner to—"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, you fellows!" said Alonzo penitently. "I didn't mean any harm. I only wanted to know. It's a serious business this, you know."

Ogilvy hid his face. Bulstrode carried it off as well as he was able. Skinner had a face of brass. He held up the bottle to the light for Alonzo to see.

"Lovely stuff, Todd!" he said.

"It is, my dear Skinner. Is it in a fit condition for instant use—I mean without heating the bottle, or anything like that?" asked Alonzo.

The juniors grinned. Several of them had thought that the liquid glue might not be liquid enough for use. Skinner interpreted the grin perfectly.

"Well, perhaps it would be as well to warm it before you use it, Todd," he said.

"Yes. My Uncle Benjamin—"

"Always warmed his before using, didn't he, Todd?"

"Why, that is exactly what I was going to say, Bulstrode!" said Alonzo. "Pray how did you know?"

"Mental telepathy, Todd," said Skinner. "You've a most expressive face. Bulstrode is simply great at it. But you can't do better than rely on me for hair-restorer."

Alonzo took the bottle. The fellows gathered closer round him.

"May I examine it, Skinner?" said Alonzo.

"Certainly, Todd," said Skinner. "Mind you don't drop it—I could not get any more just now. It's very scarce stuff."

"Yes," said Alonzo, uncorking the bottle. "Oh, it does smell nice!"

Skinner winked at his companions. Alonzo sniffed away at the bottle as if it contained all the perfumes of Araby. His face was wreathed in smiles.

"I say, Todd, hadn't you better begin?"

"Begin, Bulstrode?"

"Yes. It's getting jolly near bed-time, you know. It has to be rubbed in—"

"Rubbed in, my dear Skinner?"

"No, rubbed in your head, my dear Todd," said Ogilvy. "Hair-restorer has always to be well rubbed in. You have to get at the roots, Toddy, old chap."

Alonzo Todd beamed upon the Scottish junior. In inhaling the perfume of the eau-de-Cologne which Skinner had put in the liquid glue Alonzo had forgotten all else.

"Oh, thank you so much, Ogilvy! Perhaps you would be so kind as to assist me? I think you could rub it in nicely for me, couldn't you?" he said.

"He could, of course, Todd," said Skinner hastily, "but it's always best for the patient—I mean the chap himself to do it. Buck up, Todd, or we'll have to leave you, and we want to see you well through it before that."

"Oh, I'm so sorry to have delayed you, you fellows!" said

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Alonzo, quite concernedly. "But I'll buck up like anything now!"

"Sit in this chair, then," said Skinner, drawing an arm-chair forward. "I say, Bulstrode, fetch a towel to put round Todd's shoulders. We must have him do the thing properly."

"What-ho!" said Bulstrode.

"It's very, very kind of you fellows!" said Alonzo, grasping the arms of the chair and looking round the ring of juniors. "I shall write home to my Uncle Benjamin and tell him how anxious you were to prevent me going bald. It's very kind of you—"

Skinner waved his hand majestically.

"Not at all, my dear Todd!" said Skinner. "Ah, here's Bulstrode!"

"Thank you, too, Bulstrode!" went on Alonzo, as Skinner wound the towel round his shoulders.

Bulstrode held up the palms of his hands as if the obligation were his.

"There you are, Toddy!" said Skinner. "Now lay on!"

Alonzo looked caressingly at the bottle he held in his hand. Some of the fellows at the back were tittering, which changed to howls as Bulstrode kicked their shins. Alonzo looked round.

"How much shall I put on at the first, Skinner, if you please?" he asked.

"Oh, just as much as will go in the palm of your hand. Start the rubbing on the affected part," said Skinner. "Rub till a feeling of warmth is experienced."

"Yes," said Alonzo, pouring out the mixture on his hand. "And you're sure it's the same stuff that Mr. Quelch uses for his—"

"That's!" suggested Ogilvy.

"Not at all, my dear Ogilvy. That is the roof of a house. I meant Mr. Quelch's hair."

Alonzo's gravity was a severe trial to the juniors. They were simply bubbling over with excitement, but a warning look from Bulstrode kept their laughter in check.

"Quite sure it's the same stuff that Mr. Quelch uses, Todd," said Skinner. "Go on—it's getting late."

A burst of laughter interrupted Skinner. Alonzo, realising the force of Skinner's injunctions, had taken time by the forelock. Even as Skinner spoke, he raised the hand that held the liquid glue to his head with what he thought a carefully-thought-out movement. There was a howl of merriment as most of the stuff ran down his shirt-sleeves—another roar as what he managed to get on to the back of his head began to trickle down the back of his neck.

"We can't help it, really, Todd!" explained Bulstrode. "It really does look funny!"

Alonzo was not at all reproachful, however. His Uncle Benjamin had impressed upon him to bear with people, and he thought that matter was a case in point.

"But don't be discouraged, Todd," said Skinner. "You'll get the right quantity on next time. You must expect to waste some, of course."

Alonzo nodded as pleasantly as a stream of liquid glue running down the middle of his spine would permit. He was rather doubtful whether to go on, but Snoop came to the rescue with a reminder of the horrors of going bald. And Alonzo poured out another dose.

"Bravo!" cried Ogilvy. "You've done it now, Toddy!"

Alonzo had really managed to get a considerable quantity of the sticky stuff on to the crown of his head, and, to the intense delight of the juniors, was rubbing his cranium as if dear life depended on it.

"That's the ticket, Todd!" said Skinner. "Nothing like doing a thing yourself if you want it done well!"

"I find it rather hard to rub in, my dear Skinner," came the small, still voice of Alonzo from under his dripping hair.

"But think of the awful bald spot, Todd!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, sotto voce.

Alonzo rubbed like a demon. The juniors rocked with laughter as the liquid glue began to settle in little pools in Alonzo's ears. Then they literally shook when he looked up at them. If they had not seen him start they would have concluded he was a poodle after a rather bad time with an incompetent naturalist. His hair hung over his face in clotted masses.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rub it in, Toddy, old son! Think of what Uncle Benjamin would say if his nephew went home bald!"

The idea had not occurred to Alonzo. He began to rub with redoubled vigour. With loud encouragement, to hide their irrepressible laughter, the juniors spurred him on. But as the stream of liquid glue down Alonzo's spine began to get stronger, he at last appeared to consider that he had done enough. From the way he shuffled his feet, it was apparent that the sticky stuff had got down into his boots. And even Bulstrode, Skinner, & Co. considered that enough. Alonzo at last put the cork in the bottle. With an angelic

smile he turned to Skinner. With a supreme effort Skinner returned the look stolidly.

"How does it look, my dear Skinner?" asked Alonzo sweetly.

"You wait till morning, Todd," said Skinner facetiously.

"Why? What's the matter, you fellows?" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, in surprise, as one after another of the juniors began to file out of the study, holding their sides.

"Bed-time, you know, Todd," said Bulstrode quickly.

Alonzo smiled most amiably. Bulstrode at once led him up to the dormitory.

"Better get to bed quickly, Todd," said Skinner. "Might catch cold, you know."

Alonzo obeyed like a lamb. And after a few more twitters of merriment all were in bed.

"Fine thing, hair-restorer," said Ogilvy, sitting on his bed, with a view to a chat with Snoop. "Know what I shall do if mine ever gets thin—"

Ogilvy stopped, as the dormitory door opened and Loder put his head in.

"What are you doing, with your light not out, you young rotters?" snapped the prefect. "My hat! What a niff!"

Alonzo pricked up his ears at the word niff. He thought, somehow, it must be the hair-restorer that Loder meant. He watched the prefect sniffing, and trying to locate the smell. A laugh in a near bed made Loder turn round.

"Some of your rotten doings, I suppose, Skinner?" he said.

"Not at all, my dear Loder!" came the dulcet tones of Alonzo Todd. "Skinner is entirely blameless. It's only my hair-restorer. I'm so sorry, Loder—"

"Your what?" said Loder.

"My hair-restorer, if you please, Loder," said Alonzo.

Loder stared at Alonzo Todd. Then, suddenly whipping out the gas, he departed, roaring with laughter.

Alonzo looked round the dormitory greatly puzzled. Not a sound came from the other beds but the steady breathing of their occupants. The Duffer of Greyfriars would have liked to ask one of them what was the matter with Loder, but he recollected "how kind they had been to him," and, with a final look, he lay down again.

But rest was not for the Duffer of Greyfriars yet. He was heard smoothing down his pillow, turning over several times, and generally making smothered remarks of uneasiness. Then his still small voice was heard in the land again.

"My dear Bulstrode—"

There was no reply. Bulstrode, in the next bed, was apparently sleeping like a top.

"My dear Bulstrode, my head appears to be sticking to the pillow," continued Alonzo.

"Groo-er! Let it stick!" murmured Bulstrode.

Alonzo gave him up. How strange that the fellows should go to sleep so quickly!

"My dear Skinner—"

Skinner affected to be suddenly awakened out of a deep sleep.

"Eh? What? Ho! That you, Todd? Did you say it was sticking to the pillow?"

"Yes, my dear Skinner. Please be good enough to come and assist me—"

"Oh, that's all right, Todd! No need, I assure you. It's merely the first effect of the stuff. You're all right. Go to sleep, there's a good chap."

"But, my dear Skinner—"

Snore!

"Dear me! How strange! Would you mind assisting me, Ogilvy?"

Not a word. Alonzo heard but the echo of his own voice. He felt at his sticky head for a moment. Then, resolving to hope for the best, he was heard plastering his hair down in the dark. Something whizzed past him.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Alonzo, in surprise. "Did someone hurl a missile in my direction?"

"Shut up!"

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"Go to sleep!"

"But—"

"Oh, ring off!"

"But my head—"

"Hang your head!"

"Is sticking—"

"Rats!"

"To the pillow!"

"Rubbish!"

"Under the circumstances— Oh!"

A boot swept through the air, and missed Todd's nose by an inch. The Duffer of Greyfriars lay down, and his voice was silent for a time.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 166.

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## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### "There's Hair!"

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had gone to sleep almost at once. They were tired from their labour upon Hazeldene's bike, and after that they had also gone over their own machines, with a view to putting them in perfect order for the morrow. Marjorie and her friend from Cliff House were expected to join in the first club run of the Greyfriars Wheelers, and the junior cyclists meant to have everything spick and span.

But there was no rest for the weary in the Remove dormitory just then.

Ere long the still small voice of Alonzo Todd was heard again.

"My dear Bulstrode—"

Snore!

"My dear Skinner—"

Snore!

"Oh, dear! My head is sticking to the pillow, and I cannot detach it," said Todd, in great distress. "There seems to be something very sticky in the hair-restorer, Bulstrode."

There was a suppressed giggle.

"I wonder what Mr. Quelch does to prevent his head from sticking to the pillow, after he has used the stuff?" said Todd. "Do you know, Snoop?"

Snore!

"Perhaps he uses cold-cream also," suggested Todd.

Snore!

"This is really most uncomfortable. Bulstrode! Skinner!" Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"What's that blessed row about?" he demanded.

"Row, my dear Cherry?"

"Yes. I want to go to sleep," roared Bob. "Why can't you be quiet?"

"I was speaking to Bulstrode—"

"Well, don't speak. Go to sleep."

"My head is sticking to the pillow—"

"Let it stick quietly, then."

"My dear Cherry—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I am in a most uncomfortable position, my dear Cherry. The hair-restorer I have used seems to be of a very adhesive nature."

"The what?" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"The hair-restorer, my dear Cherry!"

"My only hat! You don't mean to say you meant what you told Loder?"

"I trust you do not suspect me of prevaricating, my dear Cherry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to prevaricate in the smallest matter, and—"

"You ass!" roared Bob. "Do you mean to say that you've been using real hair-restorer? I thought you had been rubbing your silly head with some barber's stuff, but—"

"Hair-restorer, my dear Cherry. Scratcho hair-restorer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" shouted John Bull. "Can't you let a fellow go to sleep?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Todd's been using hair-restorer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And it's sticking his head to the pillow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were all awake now. There was a howl of laughter from one end of the Remove dormitory to the other.

"My dear fellows, I see no cause for laughter," said Todd reproachfully. "It is most unfortunate that the hair-restorer should stick my hair to the pillow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fear that there has been some mistake, and that it is not the same kind that Mr. Quelch uses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob Cherry. "I never knew that Quelch used any; but if he did, it can't be that sort. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Skinner assured me—"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Todd," said Harry Wharton, laughing, "if your hair's sticking to the pillow, it can't be helped now, and you may as well leave it till the morning."

# ANSWERS

"You are quite right, my dear Wharton. It is useless to meet troubles halfway, as my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me."

"Good-night! Go to sleep."

"Good-night, my dear Wharton!"

And Todd, though he had a most peculiar feeling about his head, laid it upon the pillow again to sleep.

The juniors chuckled, and followed his example.

Todd fell into slumber at last. The Remove was silent in sleep, while Todd's hair, drenched with liquid glue that was fast becoming solid, stuck faster and faster to his pillow.

The Duffer of Greyfriars did not awaken again till the rising-bell was clanging through the early morning.

When he awoke he sat up in bed, with a peculiar feeling of tightness about his head, as if his cranium were enclosed in iron bands.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo.

He put his hand up to his head.

To his amazement, the pillow was hanging there. His hair was as hard as iron, stuck out from his head almost in spikes, and to the coagulated masses of hair and glue the pillow was firmly attached.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Todd.

He remembered the hair-restorer now. He hopped out of bed in dismay. There was a roar of laughter from the Remove as they saw him.

Todd had appeared to his Form-fellows under many a comical aspect, since he had come to the school and earned the title of the Duffer of Greyfriars. But it is safe to say that he had never before looked so funny as he did now.

"My hat!" gasped Bulstrode. "Look at him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Todd!"

"How do you find the hair-restorer?" asked Skinner innocently. "Does your hair seem to have grown during the night, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The growfulness of Todd's esteemed and honourable hair has been terrific!"

Todd passed his hand over his head. From the touch, his hair seemed to have frozen into icicles during the hours of darkness. As a matter of fact, it had hardened in the glue into all sorts of weird shapes.

"I—I cannot understand it!" gasped Todd. "The hair-restorer seemed very nice when I was using it, but the result is certainly not gratifying."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see how I am to go downstairs in this state," said Todd, in great distress. "What would you advise me to do, my dear Bulstrode?"

"Better get Gosling to take the lot off with the garden shears," said Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Impossible, my dear Bulstrode—"

"Well, of all the chumps, I think you take the cake, Todd!" said Harry Wharton. "It was too bad to play this rotten jape on the silly ass!"

"My dear Wharton—"

"You'd better let me hack that pillow off with my pocket-knife," said Harry. "Blessed if I know what you're going to do with the hair."

"Better try washing it," said Bob Cherry, laughing. "You may be able to get the stuff off by melting it."

"Oh, dear!"

Todd began to wash his head. But the cold water did not seem to have much effect on the glue.

The glue was as hard as stone now. The pillow was cut off, but fragments of it were irremovable, and still stuck fast to Todd's head.

The juniors had all gone down, leaving Todd to work out his problem by himself, by the time the Duffer of Greyfriars desisted.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo. "I am sure that this will attract attention. I suppose it will be all right if I explain to Mr. Quelch that I have used the same hair-restorer as he uses. He may be able to tell me some way of averting these extremely uncomfortable consequences."

And Todd towelled his head, and descended from the dormitory. He met Loder, of the Sixth, on the stairs. The prefect stopped, and stared at him.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter with you, Todd?"

"Matter, my dear Loder?"

"What have you been doing with your hair?"

"Oh! That's the untoward result of the hair-restorer, my dear Loder."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder walked away yelling with laughter. Todd strode on, his hair strongly resembling the quills upon the fretful porcupine. Wingate, of the Sixth, was going into the dining room, and he met the Duffer of Greyfriars in the doorway.

The captain of Greyfriars started back as if he had seen a ghost.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 166.

ANOTHER SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON AND CO. NEXT TUESDAY.

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"Great Scott! Todd!"

"Yes, my dear Wingate."

"What's the matter?"

"Ah! You are referring, I presume, to the unusual state of my hair, my dear Wingate. It is caused by the untoward result of using hair-restorer—"

Wingate staggered against the door-post.

"Hair-restorer?" he said faintly.

"Yes; Bulstrode and Skinner discovered that my hair was going thin on top, and they were kind enough to obtain some hair-restorer for me—the same kind that Mr. Quelch, our Form-master, uses—"

"My only hat!"

"It seems to have been somewhat unfortunate in its results," said Todd. "That may be due to inexperience in applying it, however. My dear Wingate, I trust you are not ill."

Wingate certainly looked as if he were going into a fit, or into hysterics. He was gasping, and he staggered unsteadily into the dining-room. Todd blinked after him in astonishment.

There was a murmur as Todd came in, from the fellows in the dining-room.

"Here's Todd!"

"Here he comes!"

"There's hair!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd grew quite pink as he walked into the dining-room, and made his way to the Remove table. Most of the Remove were already there, and Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, was in his seat at the head of the table. Removites, and fellows of all forms, stared at the amazing Alonzo as he came in.

"My hat!" said Coker, of the Fifth. "Only look!"

"Ha, ha, ha! There's hair! Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd arrived with blushing cheeks at his place at the Remove table.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Fellow-Sufferers.

M R. QUELCH stared in amazement at Alonzo Todd.

The Duffer of Greyfriars looked something like a traveller might have looked like after a little difficulty with a cannibal.

His hair was sticking out like spikes of toffee; and all points of the compass were alike to Alonzo's hirsute appendage. Seeming to proclaim a taste for upholstery on the part of the unfortunate Alonzo, soft patches of pillow down nestled affectionately in and out the gluey spikes of his hair. One spike poking straight down to the bridge of his nose made him look as if he were winking. And he happened to be favouring Mr. Quelch with one of his most ingratiating smiles. Whatever people might have done to the Duffer of Greyfriars, he always had that particular smile ready for them in the morning. The Remove saw what they thought was a wink as well as Mr. Quelch. They had to keep quiet, but they were on the point of bursting with laughter.

"What's the meaning of this, sir?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"This, sir?" said Alonzo, very puzzled.

"Yes, sir!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Your absurd appearance."

"Appearance, sir?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with a darkening brow.

"How did you get into this state?"

"This state, sir?" said Alonzo. Whenever anyone was sharp with Alonzo, it threw him into a state of confusion, and then he had a curious trick of repeating what was said to him, instead of replying.

"Pray don't repeat my words like a parrot, sir," almost shouted Mr. Quelch.

"Parrot, sir?"

There was a titter as Alonzo stared helplessly into Mr. Quelch's face.

"You had better be careful, Todd," said the Form-master.

"Answer my question at once, if you please. Do you hear? At once!"

"Yes, sir. At once. Certainly," said Alonzo in his most obliging way. "But what is the question?"

Mr. Quelch almost jumped. He looked very sternly at Alonzo Todd. The Form-master always made some allowance for the Duffer of Greyfriars, but he clearly thought Alonzo was taking advantage of him, this time.

"I assure you, I am entirely at your service, sir," continued Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin—"

Mr. Quelch cut Alonzo short with a hasty wave of his arm. He had had rather more than enough of Alonzo's celebrated relation.

"Answer me, boy!" he said testily; "or I shall punish you severely."

"Punish me, sir?" said Alonzo, his eyebrows arching up to meet the glaucous spikes in most comical fashion.

"Don't repeat my words in that idiotic fashion!" almost roared Mr. Quelch. "Tell me at once. How do you come with your hair like that?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, sir!" he said, leaning forward towards Mr. Quelch and pointing confidentially to his spiky hair. "I was going bald, you know, sir."

And as Alonzo stepped back with a smile, Mr. Quelch dropped with a thud into his chair. He stared at Alonzo Todd, as if he thought Greyfriars had suddenly been transformed into a Colney Hatch. Then he rose hastily, and walked over to Alonzo Todd. The Duffer of Greyfriars was frightened. He had never seen Mr. Quelch look quite so severe before.

"Todd," said the Form-master in a grim voice, "you'd better tell me at once how you made your hair like this, unless you wish to receive the severest caning I have ever administered."

And Mr. Quelch took hold of Alonzo's spiky hair as he spoke. Alonzo howled. Although the hair was pretty stiff, Mr. Quelch had succeeded in loosening some of it.

"I'll tell you, sir," he gasped.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Now, Todd!"

"It's only my hair-restorer, sir," said Alonzo. "You know, sir, I don't want to mention it in public, but—you know, sir, surely."

"Snoop! Go to my study, and fetch the cane you will find in the corner near the door!"

Alonzo Todd looked alarmed.

"It is not necessary in the least, I assure you, sir," he said pathetically. "You know, sir—you know! You—you surely understand, sir!"

And the Remove roared as Alonzo Todd went through a dumb show of rubbing his hair. Mr. Quelch himself could hardly refrain from laughing.

"Good gracious!" he said. "The lad must be mad!"

"You know, sir—you know!" persisted Alonzo, still keeping up the rubbing process.

"Stop that ridiculous clowning, Todd!" shouted Mr. Quelch.

Snoop returned with the cane.

"Now, you shall be cured of this, Todd!" said the Form-master.

"You know, sir," still persisted Alonzo, in a voice that suggested a mystic bond between master and pupil. "You know—you know, sir. You understand?"

Mr. Quelch took the cane from Snoop.

"Speak up, boy!" snapped the Form-master. "I've had enough of your nonsense."

"But my Uncle Benjamin told me never to mention a private matter in public, sir—"

"Enough of this!" said Mr. Quelch. "Hold out your hand!"

Alonzo Todd looked dismayed.

"I was only reticent on your behalf, sir, really," he faltered. "Must I speak plainly, sir? I have been using 'Scratcho' hair-restorer, sir, the same that you use, sir."

The cane dropped from Mr. Quelch's hand.

"As a fellow-sufferer, sir," pursued Alonzo Todd, "I am very sorry you are going bald. I tender you my sincere sympathy."

"W-w-w-what!"

"Nothing could be more annoying than incipient baldness," said Todd. "I am sure, sir, that you will feel for me, as a fellow-sufferer."

"Todd!" gasped Mr. Quelch faintly.

He stared dumbfounded at the Duffer of Greyfriars.

The Remove were roaring now. They could not help it. If Mr. Quelch had gone up and down the table, caning everyone who laughed, they could not have stopped laughing. They simply shrieked.

From the other tables, too, came yells of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even the masters were grinning. Alonzo Todd looked round in great surprise. He was accustomed to the sound of laughter; but even the Duffer of Greyfriars had never witnessed such Homeric merriment as this before.

"Todd!" gasped Mr. Quelch, at last. "You—you say you have been using hair-restorer?"

"Yes, sir."

"You unfortunate boy! Why?"

"Because I was going bald, sir!"

"Bald!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You are not fifteen yet! Bald!"

"Yes, sir. Skinner discovered it, and he was kind enough to point it out to me," said Todd. "It was very kind of Skinner, and I am very much obliged to him, sir."

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"Oh! So this is a joke of yours, Skinner, on this foolish boy."

Skinner looked alarmed.

"It—it was only a lark, sir," he stammered.

Todd looked at Skinner in astonishment.

"My dear Skinner," he exclaimed, "you are dreaming. You remember telling me I was going bald, and offering to procure me the same kind of hair-restorer that Mr. Quelch uses."

"Ah," said Mr. Quelch unpleasantly, "so you told Todd I used hair-restorer, Skinner! You induced him to plaster his head with this ridiculous stuff! It is not hair-restorer you have used, Todd!"

"N-n-not hair-restorer, sir?"

"No. It is glue."

"Gug-gug-gug-glue, sir?"

"Yes. Go at once and ask the housekeeper for some hot water, and do not come into the class-room till you have washed it off," said the Form-master sternly. "You will have to melt it in hot water, and it will take some time. In order that your work may not suffer, you will be detained an hour this afternoon in the class-room."

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Todd.

"I shall not cane you, Todd. Go!"

The Duffer of Greyfriars went.

"I shall cane you instead, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch.

"Hold out your hand! Not so much for your ridiculous prank upon Todd, but for speaking disrespectfully of your Form-master."

Swish! Swish!

"Ow! Yow!" said Skinner.

The Remove chuckled joyously all through breakfast. Skinner was the only one who looked serious—and he looked very serious indeed.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Fish Does It.

"LETTER for you, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, as the Remove came out of the dining-room after breakfast. "Shall I open it for you?"

"No, you fat boulder!"

"Ah, I'm sorry! I've just slit the envelope for you ready, and—Ow!"

Wharton took the fat junior's ear with one hand, while he took the letter in the other. The envelope was torn open, and he knew that Bunter had read the letter. It was a little way Billy Bunter had, of looking into other fellows' correspondence if he had a chance.

"Ow!" squealed Bunter, as Wharton squeezed his ear.

"Ow! Yow! I haven't looked at the letter. I don't know what's in it! I should have read it if I hadn't thought it was for me; I recognised Marjorie's handwriting. Ow!"

The fat junior jerked himself away, rubbing his ear.

"You young cad!" said Harry.

"Yah! I haven't read the letter. I suppose you don't suspect me of reading another chap's letters, you beast! Besides, I thought Marjorie would give you a message for me. I don't know how she came to forget to mention me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "How do you know that she's forgotten to mention you, then, if you haven't looked at the letter?"

"I didn't say I hadn't looked at it; I said I hadn't read it—"

"It's the same thing, you ass!"

"It's nothing of the sort, Bob Cherry. It may do for you, but it wouldn't do for me. I suppose you can't be so exact as I am in these matters; but I was brought up to be very truthful, and I can never really look at things as you do."

Bob Cherry stared.

"You cheeky young blackguard!" he said, in measured tones.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

Bob Cherry swung his heavy boot round, and Bunter hurriedly departed. Harry Wharton had taken the letter out of the envelope, and he waved it gleefully in the air as he finished reading it.

"It's all right," he announced.

"Marjorie's coming?"

"Yes."

"Hurrah!"

"I guess that's all O.K.," said Fisher T. Fish. "You can leave it to me to take care of the ladies, you know. That's where I come in."

"Rats!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "I'm jolly glad they can come. The weather is going to be ripping, and we shall have a splendid run—the first club run of the Greyfriars Wheelers."

"The splendidence of the honourable run will be terrific."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Clear out, Bunter!"

"But I say, I shall have to come, you know. You know that the girls will miss me fearfully if I don't come—"

"I sha'n't miss you, if I begin on you with my boot," said Bob Cherry darkly. "Clear out, and don't let's have any more rot."

"Oh, really, Cherry, I think it's very hard on Marjorie to have to miss the only really decent chap in the Remove—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, you know how miserable she will feel if I'm not there. I— Oh!"

Biff!

Billy Bunter travelled along the passage at a great rate with Bob Cherry's boot behind him, and disappeared from the scene.

The Wheelers were very cheerful that morning in class. It was splendid spring weather, and the afternoon was a half-holiday, and the Wheelers' Club was to have its first run, and the girl-chums of Cliff House were to come with them.

The juniors had cause to be content.

Half a dozen of the Wheelers were to go with Harry Wharton and Marjorie and Clara. As Bob Cherry remarked, the girls wouldn't want a whole crowd of blessed hooligans kicking up a dust round their bikes. When Ogilvy suggested that Bob should stay at home, and make a hooligan the less, Bob looked quite cross.

After morning school, there was a rush to get the bikes in order.

Hazeldene's machine was brought out, and Harry Wharton tested it in the Close, and declared that it was in ripping order.

Hazeldene stood looking on, with a curiously sheepish expression upon his face. He had accepted the offer of Vernon-Smith's second-best machine, and he was under the promise to bring the Bouncer with him. The Wheelers knew nothing of that so far.

"The jigger's all right," said Wharton, jumping off. "Try it, Hazel."

"I guess I'll try it for you," said Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess you won't," said Wharton. "We're not looking for an acrobatic performance at the present moment."

"I guess—"

"Rats, my son! You go and perform on the ordinary," said Nugent. "If this bike is smashed again, there will be too many repairs."

"I guess—"

"Br-r-r! Jump on, Hazel!"

"Oh, let Fish try it!" said Hazeldene carelessly. "He can ride a safety bike all right, I should think."

"Jolly risky to let him touch a bike at all."

"Oh, I don't mind!"

Wharton was a little nettled. After the trouble the juniors had taken to mend Hazel's bike on the previous evening, he ought to have minded. But Harry said nothing more upon the matter.

Hazeldene stood by while the American junior, with a grin on his face, jumped on the bicycle.

Fisher T. Fish could, of course, ride a safety bicycle; but there was no doubt that no machine was really safe in his hands.

He dashed up and down the cycle-path, turning the machine almost in its own length, just to show the Greyfriars fellows what he could do.

"I guess this machine is all right!" he called out.

"And I guess you've done with it now," said Bob Cherry. "We don't want you to tie it into a knot, and give us a mending job again."

"I guess—"

"Jump off!"

"Nope!"

"Look here—"

"I guess I'm going to turn a figure of eight on this bike."

"Go ahead!" said Hazeldene.

"Surely!"

The chums of the Remove looked on anxiously while Fisher T. Fish turned his figure of eight. As Hazeldene encouraged the Yankee junior they did not feel that they could interfere. But they trembled for the bicycle.

And with reason. As Fisher T. Fish was turning, there was a sudden crash, and the bike turned in upon itself, and went reeling to the ground. Crash! Smash!

The rider was pitched to the ground, and he lay there with his long legs sprawling, gasping in a breathless way. The bike lay in a heap.

Wharton ran to it.

The crank was twisted out of shape by the fall, the front rim was hopelessly twisted, several spokes were broken, and other damages were done—in short, the bike was in a state that required an afternoon's hard work to set it right.

"You silly ass!" roared the exasperated Wharton.

"Ow!"

"You champion fathead!"

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

"I guess—"

"You dummy!"

Fisher T. Fish sat up on the ground, and rubbed his nose, and looked at him. The American youth seemed to be in a state of considerable astonishment.

"Something happened, I guess," he said.

"I guess it did," howled Bob Cherry. "You've smashed up Hazeldene's bike, after we spent all last evening mending it!"

"I guess—"

"You frabjous clump—"

"I guess there was something wrong with the bike."

"Something wrong with the bikist, you mean, you fat-head!"

"Oh, never mind!" said Hazeldene. "It will be all right—"

"Can't ride that again to-day," said Harry Wharton.

"No; but I can get another machine—"

"Oh, I see! Somebody going to lend you one?"

"Yes. Vernon-Smith has a new bike this morning, and he's going to lend me his old one," said Hazeldene, looking away as he spoke.

Wharton did not answer for a moment.

"Oh, all right!" he said then, very shortly, and turned away.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The American Bike.

VERNON-SMITH tapped Hazeldene on the shoulder, when the Remove came out of the dining-room after dinner. There was a smile on the Bouncer's face. Things seemed to be going in accordance with his wishes.

"I hear you've had a bike smash," he remarked.

"I haven't," said Hazeldene. "Fish was trying my bike, and he's busted it, that's all. It was just like him—he was swanking as usual. It's all right, though, as you've offered to lend me your bike."

"The fellows know?"

"They know that, yes."

"But about my coming?"

Hazeldene paused.

"No need to mention that till the last minute," he said.

"Look here, it would be a good idea to let them start first, and I'll arrange to join them at Cliff House, where we meet the girls. Then if I take you with me, they can't possibly say anything."

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Good idea," he said.

"We'll leave it at that, then."

And Hazeldene moved away from his friend. Vernon-Smith chuckled softly. There was no repugnance in his mind to the idea of joining a party that did not want him. His only feeling on that subject was of triumph at being able to score over the Wheelers who had rejected him from their ranks.

Hazeldene was feeling uneasy; but it was too late to think about altering the arrangements now. He was in the Bouncer's hands.

A cheerful party of juniors went down to the bike-shed to get the machines out. All the Wheelers, of course, wished to join the party with whom Marjorie was to ride. But that was impossible, and the party was composed of Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Hazeldene, John Bull, Tom Brown, and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. The other Wheelers made up another party. Fisher T. Fish, however, wheeled his bike out to join Harry Wharton & Co.

"Number's full," said Bob Cherry.

Fisher T. Fish shook his head.

"I guess it's not full without counting me," he said.

"Look here—"

"I guess I'm in this party—some."

"Oh, very well," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose one more or less doesn't make much difference. Will your bike hold out?"

"I guess it's an American-made bike," said Fisher T. Fish proudly.

"Yes, that's why I asked if it would hold out; we're going to ride more than a mile, you know," said Harry, with a grin.

"I guess my bike will outlast any British bike you can scare up in this old country," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Well, I guess we shall see."

"Ready, Hazeldene?" called out Harry Wharton.

"Not quite," said Hazel. "I think I shall have to look at this tyre."

"Phew! We've none too much time now."

"Don't wait for me," said Hazeldene. "I'll be after you. You'll have to wait a bit at Cliff House, and I'll join you there."

"Oh, no, we won't start without you," said Nugent.

"Let's all lend a hand and get the tyre off."

Hazeldene coloured, and shook his head.

"It's all right; I'd rather."

"Perhaps I can be of assistance," said Alonzo Todd obligingly. "I should be very glad to help you in any way, Hazeldene. Shall I take the tyre off for you? I have a large pocket-knife here, and I suppose the simplest way would be to cut it off."

"Get away, you ass!"

"My dear Hazeldene—"

"Let's see what's wrong with it, anyway," said Tom Brown. "The tyre seems all right to me, Hazel. What are you afraid of with it?"

"Oh, I tell you I'll follow you!" said Hazeldene, drawing the machine back from the inspection of the New Zealand junior. "I'll overtake you at Cliff House soon enough. Buzz off now. You can't keep Marjorie waiting."

"Well, if you'd rather—"

"I would!"

"Then we'll buzz off."

And Harry Wharton & Co. wheeled their bikes out into the road, and mounted. A healthy and merry set of lads they looked as they pedalled down the quiet country road. There was a puzzled expression upon Nugent's face.

"Do you understand what Hazel meant, Harry?" he asked, as he rode by the side of the captain of the Remove.

Wharton wrinkled his brows for a moment.

"No! What do you mean, Frank?"

"He seemed to want to stay behind."

"I don't see why he should."

"Neither do I. It's odd."

They rode on, both somewhat puzzled by Hazeldene's conduct. There was a sudden crack from Fisher T. Fish's machine, and the American junior gave a start. The other fellows looked round at him.

"Anything wrong?" asked Bob Cherry.

"N-n-n-no."

"Sounded like something gone wrong with the works."

"I guess it's O.K."

"Oh, good!"

But there was a troubled expression upon Fish's face. Perhaps he was not really quite so confident as he wished to appear.

"I guess this is a first-rate American bike," he said. "The jigger was packed up and sent over to me by my popper in New York, and it's hardly been ridden. I guess there can't be anything wrong with this bike."

Crack!

"Well, that mayn't be wrong, but it doesn't sound right," grinned Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that's only the clutch."

"Do clutches make that kind of row over there?"

"Oh, I guess it's just a little too slick—going a trifle too easy—a little more than up to the mark, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crack!

The juniors were breasting a steep rise now. A short cut across the lower slopes of the Black Pike led them to the village of Pegg, on the bay, where Cliff House stood. The rise was abrupt, and growing steep. Those of the juniors who had change-speed gears put the lowest on, and all of them bent to the work.

Crack! Crack!

"My hat!"

"All right, Fish?"

"Yep."

"Nothing gone wrong yet?"

"Nope."

"Think you'll get over the hill?"

"Surely."

The juniors ground on. The top of the rise was just ahead, and the last bit was very steep. Crack, crack, crack! Whiz!

"Yaroorh!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What's the matter?"

"Come on! Put your beef into it!"

"Thunder!"

Fisher T. Fish was slaving away at the pedals, but, as a matter of fact, they were running round without any effect on the bike. Something had gone wrong at last, past denial. The pedals revolved forwards as easily as backwards, the bike remaining at a standstill. Even Fisher T. Fish could not deny that the bike was just a little bit out of order, under the circumstances.

"Thunder!" he repeated. "Great snakes!"

He jumped off the bike.

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The juniors waved their hands to him as they pedalled on up the rise.

"Good-bye, Fish!"

"Au revoir!"

"Adieu!"

"Good-bye, Bluebell!"

Fisher T. Fish snorted. The Greyfriars juniors passed over the crest of the rise, and disappeared on the other side, and dashed on towards Cliff House. Fisher T. Fish was left to wheel his famous American bike back to Greyfriars.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The First Club Run of the Season.

M ARJORIE HAZELDENE was standing at the gate of Cliff House, with her little gloved hand on her bike, as the Greyfriars juniors rode up. Miss Clara was sitting on the gate, but she slid off as soon as the juniors appeared. Her machine was leaning against the school wall.

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped down, and raised their caps.

"You are in good time," said Marjorie brightly.

"Yes, two minutes early," said Nugent.

"But where is my brother?"

"He's coming on," said Wharton. "He wanted to look at his tyre, and he insisted upon our starting and not keeping you waiting."

Marjorie's face brightened. She had been afraid for the moment that her brother had not joined the cycling party, and that would have meant, of course, that he was spending the afternoon with Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Then we'll wait," said Miss Clara.

"Or we could go down the road and meet him?" Marjorie suggested. "We shall have to go that way if we're going along the coast road, and back by the old priory."

"Good!" said Wharton.

The two girls were quickly mounted, and the cyclists rode down the lane in the way the Greyfriars juniors had come. The two girls were looking very bright and cheerful.

"It was a ripping idea of yours, this Wheelers' Club," said Clara Trevlyn. "Who was it first thought of it?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"About a dozen fellows at once," he replied. "They got the idea from an article in the 'C. T. C. Gazette.' And each of the bounders came in turn and sprang it on me as an original idea."

"Well, a chap can get an idea from a paper if he likes," said Bob Cherry.

"The springtime is here," grinned Wharton, "and all Nature is waking to new life."

"Oh, cheesc it!"

"Under the genial influence of the season, the cyclist's thoughts turn naturally to the road, and to long excursions."

"Oh, ring off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Marjorie uttered an exclamation.

"Ah! There is my brother!"

"Who is that with him?" asked Miss Clara.

Harry Wharton's face clouded.

They were at the foot of the acclivity, on the other side of which Fisher T. Fish had been left behind half an hour ago. Two cyclists had just come into sight on the top of the rise, and one of them was Hazeldene.

The juniors did not need telling who the other was.

It was Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent exchanged a quick glance. It could not have been accident that brought Vernon-Smith into Hazeldene's company. They thought that they knew now the reason why Hazeldene had delayed at the start. He had intended to bring the Bounder of Greyfriars with him, all along.

Wharton compressed his lips. It was something very like treachery on Hazeldene's part, but he could say nothing—then, at all events.

The two cyclists were coming down the hill, free wheeling, at a tremendous speed. Harry Wharton & Co. drew to the side of the road to give them plenty of room.

Whiz! Rush! Whiz!

Down came the two cyclists, gathering more and more speed as they dashed down the abrupt slope.

Hazeldene, like a sensible fellow, put his brake on, and slackened down considerably before he reached the bottom, and came on at a gentler pace.

But that did not suit the Bounder.

His idea was to come down at an express speed, and shoot past the astonished girls like a locomotive under full steam, and then put his brakes on, thereby showing what a wonderful nerve and a steady head he had.

Down he came like an arrow, and Harry Wharton set his lips as he looked at him.

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"The swanking ass!" he muttered. "He's looking for an accident."

"Lucky for him there's nobody in the road," said Nugent.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look!"

From a side lane close to where the juniors were standing with their machines, a cart drew out into the road.

For a moment the horse and cart covered the entire width of the road before the slow-witted countryman who was driving realised that there was a cyclist coming down the hill at top speed.

Marjorie turned pale.

"Oh!" she cried. "He will be killed!"

Clara clasped her hands.

"Look out!" yelled Wharton.

"Brakes on!" roared John Bull.

The Bounder was so close now that they could see every sign in his face, and they saw the deadly whiteness of terror sweep over it, as the cart blocked up his way down the road. No brakes could have stopped the machine then without a mishap; but the Bounder did his best.

He jammed on both brakes—the back-pedal brake and the plunger—but so swift was his descent, that he was within three yards of the cart when he had the brakes on.

The sudden jamming of the brakes, at so high a speed, threw the bike completely over, and it crashed into the hedge.

The Bounder went heavily into the hedge, and lay there struggling, and his bike rolled over and curled up in the ditch, which was fortunately dry.

The cart pulled out of the road, and went on down hill, the yokel at the reins giving Vernon-Smith one stolid stare before he went, and taking no further notice of him. Perhaps he thought a cyclist ought to have more sense than to dash down a steep hill at top speed, when there was a side road at the bottom from which a vehicle might emerge at any moment.

The juniors ran to the Bounder's rescue at once.

Sorry as they were to see the Bounder there, they did not want the fellow to be hurt; and there were few fellows who could have gone through such an experience without getting hurt.

The Bounder was still struggling in the hedge, very much torn and scratched, when the chums of the Remove reached him.

His face was livid with rage and chagrin, and if he was hurt he did not seem to feel the injury so much as the shame of his downfall in the sight of the Cliff House girls.

"Help me out!" he growled ungraciously.

"Here you are!"

"Give me your fist!"

"Nothing broken, I hope?"

The Bounder snarled.

"Of course not. Do you think I'm made of putty?"

He struggled out into the road with the assistance of the juniors, and shook himself. He was torn and dusty, but did not seem to be injured.

"You've had jolly good luck, then!" said Harry Wharton drily. "You might have broken your neck, or your leg, with a fall like that!"

"Well, I haven't."

"Your bike looks done in, though," said John Bull.

A look of rage crossed the Bounder's face.

He could see that for himself; his bicycle had been terribly damaged. He had had a fortunate escape, but his machine was a wreck.

Bob Chorry and Tom Brown grasped it and dragged it from the ditch.

Both the brakes were broken, and the front wheel was a wreck, and one of the bars was snapped clean across.

The machine could not be ridden again that day, if at all. The Bounder set his teeth hard, as he choked back the savage words that rose to his lips.

This was the end of his scheming.

His own vainglory had been the cause of his downfall, and his carefully-laid scheme to force his company upon the Wheelers, and ride with the Cliff House girls, had come to nothing, after all.

Unpleasant fellow as he was, the juniors did not feel any triumph over the downfall of the Bounder. But they could not help a slight feeling of satisfaction to know that his bicycle could not be ridden again, and that his riding with the Wheelers was, therefore, out of the question.

Vernon-Smith glanced at Marjorie and Clara. The girls' faces were expressionless; if they were glad to be relieved of his company, they did not show it.

But he detected a lurking grin on the face of more than one of the juniors, and it made him bite his lips with rage.

Hazeldene, who had now ridden up, jumped off his machine. And as he glanced at him, a new gleam came into the Bounder's eyes. That machine was his, and if he could induce Hazeldene to stand out of the party—the thought had no sooner entered his mind, than he determined that he would.

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## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

### Not Beaten!

**H**AZELDENE was trying to look concerned, but in spite of his efforts he could not help a glimmer appearing in his eyes, which told of inward satisfaction. The accident to Vernon-Smith's machine seemed to extricate him from his difficulties. The Bounder could not come now; and so that matter was comfortably settled.

But Hazeldene was soon undeceived. The Bounder drew him a little apart while the others were examining the machine—trying to make it fit to wheel back to Greyfriars. They were very willing to do that much for the Bounder.

"I say, Hazel," whispered the Bounder, "I want you to do me a favour."

Hazeldene looked uneasy.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"You don't want to ride this afternoon, particularly?"

"Well, my sister wants me to go."

"Oh, she'll be all right!"

"I could give it up, I suppose, if you want me to come somewhere else," said Hazeldene weakly. "Not to Cobb's place, though. I bar that."

"I don't want you to go there."

"Then I'll do as you like."

"You're not set on cycling, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; that's nothing!"

"Then, look here, you can let me have the machine?" said Vernon-Smith.

"You want your machine?"

"Yes."

"You can have it, of course. I sha'n't want it, if I'm not to ride with the chaps," said Hazeldene.

"Good!"

Then Hazeldene realised suddenly what the Bounder meant.

"Hold on!" he muttered. "You don't mean that you're to join the party, and ride with them—without me?"

The Bounder nodded coolly.

"Yes," he said.

"It can't be done!"

"Why not?"

"Well, it—it can't!"

"Stuff! You can tell your sister that you're not fit for exercise—you don't look very fit, anyway—and say you'd rather wheel my bike home for me."

"Oh, rats!"

"I'll take your machine, and ride. It will be all right. After all, you know you don't care for cycling, and it will be a long ride."

Hazeldene hesitated.

"Look here, I've done you favours enough!" the Bounder muttered. "I'll do them again, too! You can depend upon me when Cobb begins to bother you again; and, mind you, he'll be after you before very long."

"I—I can't do it!"

"Then look out for trouble!"

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Mind, I'm in deadly earnest now!" said the Bounder, in a fierce whisper. "Do you think I'm going back to Greyfriars, leaving Wharton here to laugh at me—leaving all of them to make a joke of how I tried to join the Wheelers, and was sent home wheeling a crippled bike like a kid? My hat! If you don't stand by me now, Hazel, I'm your enemy from this moment—your enemy for life!"

And there was a deadly intensity in the Bounder's voice, a gleam in his eyes, which showed that he meant every syllable that he uttered.

"I—I say, Smithy—"

"Yes or no?" muttered the Bounder.

"Yes, hang you!"

"Right." The Bounder's manner changed. "I'll remember this, Hazel. You can ask me for what you like when we're back at Greyfriars, only see me through this, and you'll see that I'm not ungrateful."

Hazeldene looked curiously at the Bounder.

Why was the fellow so bent upon this? That he wanted to be on friendly terms with Marjorie, Hazel knew. Vernon-Smith was not the first fellow who had "battered up" Hazeldene for the sake of getting a smile from Marjorie. But this deadly earnestness of the Bounder was a surprise to Hazel. He did not understand the savage, determined nature of Vernon-Smith; the deep, galling effect anything like a defeat had upon him; the deadly resolve which could baulk no obstacle in the way. Vernon-Smith would have spent every penny he possessed, and undertaken any sacrifice, rather than be defeated in the carrying out of this project, even if the project itself had been nothing at all to him.

"Well, it's settled," said Hazeldene.

"Right you are."

The Bounder went towards the juniors who were examining

the bicycle. Bob Cherry and Tom Brown were holding it, and Wharton was seeking in vain to get the front wheel in a state for wheeling. He looked up, red with exertion, as the Bounder came up.

"I'm afraid it can't be done!" he said.

"It won't go?"

"No. You'll have to carry it back to Greyfriars, or else wheel it on the back wheel," said Wharton.

"Rotten bad luck!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm sorry you can't even wheel it home."

"Oh, never mind!" said the Bounder. "I don't care if it's left there."

"You've lost your ride," John Bull remarked.

Bull was a new boy at Greyfriars, and he did not understand fully how high feeling ran between the Bounder and Harry Wharton & Co.

The Bounder shook his head.

"That's all right," he said. "Hazeldene doesn't care for the ride, and he's going to let me have his machine."

"Oh!"

The Famous Four looked blank. They had not expected Vernon-Smith to be able to checkmate them in this way.

Marjorie set her pretty lips for a moment. Hazel came over towards his sister, looking very red and apologetic.

"You don't mind if I don't come, Marjorie?" he murmured. "I'm feeling very rocky, really, and not up to a long spin."

Marjorie looked anxious.

"What's the matter with you, dear?" she asked.

"Well, I've been putting in a lot of practice at the nets," said Hazel vaguely, "and the fact is, sis, the machine I was riding belongs to Smith. He lent it to me, you see. It's hard lines on a chap to have to lend another chap his jigger, and walk home, isn't it? You see—"

"But, Hazel—"

"I've—I've promised to stand out and let him ride. You see, he seems to want to," said Hazel; "and I'm really not fit."

Marjorie was silent.

"Oh, you are a duffer, Hazel!" said Miss Clara, in her characteristically frank way. "If you were my brother I would box your ears!"

Hazeldene laughed uneasily, and turned away.

He could not help realizing that he was, indeed, a duffer, and that Vernon-Smith took advantage of it, and that fact was quite apparent to everyone.

"Well, somebody will have to carry this jigger," said Bob Cherry. "Perhaps you'll get a lift on the way home. Are you really going with it, Hazel?"

"Yes."

"More fathead you!"

"Thanks!"

"Not at all," said Bob Cherry politely.

Harry Wharton & Co. mounted again, and Vernon-Smith with them. Marjorie cast a glance back at her brother—an anxious glance. Had Vernon-Smith been anyone but the Bounder of Greyfriars, she might have spoken to him. But she would have died rather than ask a favour of the Bounder. Hazel had to be left behind, and the Bounder had to come in his place; but to Marjorie Hazeldene it seemed as if the pleasure of the afternoon's excursion was gone, though she said not a word.

Clara was more angry than Marjorie. That Hazel had been "done" made her angry with him. A fellow in the possession of his senses ought not to be "done," was the opinion of practical and determined Miss Clara. She was angry, too, with the Greyfriars juniors for allowing Vernon-Smith to join the party; though how they could have helped it was not clear. Miss Clara would certainly have been still more angry with them if there had been a "row."

Upon the whole, the Wheelers started off upon the first club run of the season in an extremely uncomfortable mood.

The only fellow in the party who seemed quite at ease was Herbert Vernon-Smith. The Bounder of Greyfriars had gained his point, and he was quite satisfied. He was quite willing to endure patiently Miss Clara's sharp glances, and the silence of the other fellows.

All that seemed very little to the Greyfriars Bounder so long as he had gained his point, and shown the other fellows that he was not to be beaten.

## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

### The Shadow of the Bounder.

MARJORIE was riding silently, and Wharton, who generally kept up a cheery chat when he was with Marjorie, was silent, too. The whole party, as has been said, were uncomfortable, with the single exception of Vernon-Smith. They followed the coast road, and the broad billows of the North Sea were soon gleaming on their right, as they rode along with high cliffs rising on

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their left. It was a splendid afternoon, and the sea was curling in, white-edged, at the foot of the shore. Out of the sea the white sails glanced and gleamed, and further out there were great black blurs, the trail of the great steamships. Seagulls circled and shrieked overhead, round the cliff-tops. It was a ride that would have been enjoyable to any but a confirmed misanthrope, and in spite of themselves, the Wheelers felt their spirits rise.

"Well, this is ripping!" Harry Wharton exclaimed at last, rising a little on his pedals to get a wider view of the sea and the shore.

Marjorie smiled.

"Yes, isn't it good?" she said.

"Jolly!" said Vernon-Smith. "You can't beat English coast scenery. They can say what they like about Switzerland, but there are precious few things on the Continent to beat what we can show them. Don't you think so, Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry.

On a certain vacation Wharton had spent his holiday in Switzerland while Vernon-Smith was there, and they had been at daggers drawn all the time. But it suited the Bounder to refer to the time as if they had been the closest of friends.

"Your brother was with me there, Miss Hazeldene," said Vernon-Smith, cheerfully. "We were great chums in Switzerland."

Marjorie's face clouded. From Hazel, himself, she had learned how he had frequented gaming casinos with the Bounder, and lost there money that did not belong to him.

"Indeed!" she said.

The Bounder gave her a sharp look. He wondered how much she knew of those Swiss adventures, and how much Hazel had not told her.

"Look out here!" said Bob Cherry.

The path was turning among the cliffs, and was narrow and steep. It was a ride that only good cyclists could undertake. Bull and Tom Brown, who did not know the way so well, dropped behind, Harry Wharton taking the lead with Marjorie. Frank Nugent found himself riding with Miss Clara, and the others not close at hand.

Miss Clara gave him a sharp glance.

"What did you let him come for?" she demanded.

Nugent looked surprised.

"Who?" he asked. "Wharton?"

"You know I don't mean Wharton!"

"Bob Cherry—Tom Brown?"

"You know I mean Vernon-Smith!" said Miss Clara tartly. "You are trying to put me out of temper!"

Nugent grinned.

"Oh—the Bounder!" he said. "We didn't let him come—he came! Nobody could have been more surprised than I was when he turned up with Hazel."

"You didn't know?"

"I hadn't the faintest idea."

"Why did he come?"

"Because he's a bounder, I suppose."

"You can see how annoyed Marjorie is. She wanted her brother to come," said Miss Clara, petulantly.

"That was Hazel's bizney, you know. He shouldn't have played the giddy goat."

"He seems to do everything that Vernon-Smith tells him. We saw him telling Hazel that he must give him his bike—I know that that was what he was saying to him, and Marjorie knows it."

Nugent was silent.

"Marjorie can't stand him," went on Miss Clara, in her boyish way. "She knows about his leading Hazel into gambling, and things—Hazel never keeps anything from her long, and he will blurt out things before anybody. He will be expelled, some day, from Greyfriars, and you are not helping him a bit."

Nugent looked dismayed.

"What can I do?" he asked.

"Well, you can save Marjorie from being annoyed by your precious friend—"

"He's not my friend!"

"Your precious friend this afternoon," persisted Miss Clara. "If he's not your friend, and you don't want him, it's up to you to get rid of him."

Nugent started.

"You're jolly hard on a chap, Miss Clara!" he said. "How can I get rid of him? You don't want a row, I suppose?"

"Don't be silly! Of course not!"

"Can I throw him off the cliff?"

"You will make me bad-tempered if you talk nonsense," said Miss Clara crossly. "You can puncture his tyres, or something, surely!"

"My hat!"

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"Single file!" called back Harry Wharton from the front.

"Right you are!"

The cyclists strung out in a line. They were following a path that grew narrower and narrower over the cliff. They soon had to dismount and wheel their machines, and walk in a single-file with them. Marjorie was just behind Harry, and the Bouncer third. As the path broadened again, the Bouncer quickened his pace and walked beside Marjorie. She gave him one glance, but did not speak.

"I am sorry, Miss Hazeldene!" said the Bouncer, in a low voice.

Marjorie started.

"I do not understand you," she said.

"I am sorry if I have spoiled your pleasure for the afternoon!"

"I did not say so."

"But you looked so," said the Bouncer quietly. "I suppose I shouldn't have come. But I did want the pleasure of a ride with you—and goodness knows I feel friendly enough to everybody here, if they'd only let me be."

Marjorie did not reply.

"But if you don't want me, Miss Hazeldene, you've only to say the word," said Vernon-Smith. "I'll cut off as soon as we get over the cliff."

Marjorie shook her head.

"Please don't alter your plans on my account," she said.

"You'd like me to stay?"

"I'd rather say nothing."

"Then you don't want me?"

Marjorie was silent.

"I dare say your brother would be glad to see me if I got back to Greyfriars," said the Bouncer bitterly. "And I've other friends, Miss Hazeldene, though these chaps don't care for my company. I could have a jolly time enough, and your brother, too, if I rode off now. Shall I go?"

Marjorie coloured.

She understood the veiled threat in the Bouncer's speech. She had either to ask him to stay, or else he would return to Greyfriars and take Hazeldene with him on one of his lawless excursions—a gambling excursion to the racecourse, or to a card-party at the Cross Keys in Friardale.

The Bouncer looked at her with a lurking mockery in his eyes.

"Shall I go?" he repeated.

"No," faltered Marjorie.

"Shall I stay?"

"Yes."

"That's all I want you to say," said Vernon-Smith.

"You really want me to stay, Marjorie?"

He purposely raised his voice a little, so that Wharton should hear. Harry glanced back.

"Yes," said Marjorie.

"Then I'll stay."

As they came out into a wider path, the cyclists mounted, and as they were able to ride three abreast, the Bouncer rode on one side of Marjorie, leaving the other to Wharton. The Bouncer kept up a flow of talk, but Wharton had fallen silent again. What did Marjorie mean by telling the Bouncer she wanted him to stay with them, Harry was wondering.

Miss Clara had caught a great deal of the talk between her friend and the Bouncer, and her eyes were gleaming with anger.

Nugent looked at her rather uneasily.

"I'm sorry, Clara," he said, in a low voice. "The afternoon seems to be a muck up, any way. It's rotten, I know."

"Oh, I suppose you can't help it," said Clara.

"I would if I could, you know."

"Oh, boys can't do anything!" said Clara.

"Thank you!"

"Unless girls tell them," said Clara. "I wonder whether I forgot to bring my scissors with me?"

"Scissors!" said Nugent.

"Yes. I usually carry a pair of scissors in my saddle-bag," said Miss Clara. "They are often very useful. Suppose you get a piece of braid caught in the chain, or anything of that sort?"

"Yes; but—" said the puzzled Nugent.

"Well?"

"You haven't anything caught in your chain, have you?"

"No."

"Then what do you want the scissors for?"

"I didn't say I wanted them," said Miss Clara, rather inconsequentially.

"But you said—"

"I said I wondered whether I had forgotten to bring them."

"Well, then—"

"If I'd been a boy I should have forgotten," said Miss Clara. "As it is, I suppose they're all right in my saddle-bag."

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"Yes, I dare say they are," said Nugent. "But—"

"Oh, don't keep on saying 'But'!"

"I seem to be worrying you," said Nugent. "I'm sorry I'm so stupid."

"So am I," said Miss Clara cheerfully.

"Perhaps I'd better ride on—"

"Why?"

"And not bother you any more."

"Perhaps I like being bothered," said Clara.

Nugent grinned, and he did not ride on. Miss Clara had a remarkably frank tongue, but upon the whole Nugent seemed to get on with her amazingly well.

## THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

### Quite a Success.

"HALT!" said Harry Wharton.

The cyclists had been mounting and mounting, and now they had reached the high plateau they had been aiming for, from which a wide view of the sea and the land could be obtained. Wide round them lay hill and dale and green country, and in front the sea—wide and blue, lighted and gleaming in the bright sunshine.

They dismounted, and the bicycles were stood together in a group, and the Wheelers rested while they looked at the scenery. Then a bag was opened, and several bottles of ginger-pop and some dozens of tarts and buns were brought to light. Bob Cherry took a little spirit-stove out of his bag, to make tea for the girls, and found that he had forgotten to bring any water, and murmured something about a fat head.

"It's all right," said Marjorie, smiling. "We like ginger-beer just as well—though it was really very kind and thoughtful of you to think of tea."

"And to forget to bring water," said Nugent, grinning.

"Oh, shut up, Nugent!" growled Bob. "Why couldn't you think of it, if it comes to that! You've got simply no head!"

"Well, you've got one, but there's nothing in it!" said Nugent.

"Look here—"

"The gingerbeer is very nice!" said Marjorie.

"Ripping!" said Clara.

Bob seemed to be struck by a sudden thought.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "I wonder whether we could make tea with gingerbeer instead of water? I don't see why not. It's a fluid."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, do stop cackling, Nugent! I should think you'd be glad of a chance to make some tea for the girls."

"Not with gingerbeer!" roared Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"It ought to make tea all right."

"Might spoil the flavour," said Wharton.

"Well, there's nothing like trying."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't begin to cackle like Nugent, Bull! You make me tired," said Bob Cherry crossly. "Will you taste the tea if I make some with gingerbeer, Marjorie and Clara?"

The girls exchanged demure glances.

"I—I don't know," said Marjorie. "Have you brought any tea with you, by the way?"

Bob Cherry jumped.

"My hat! I forgot that, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent.

"Oh, shut up!" shouted Bob Cherry. "I don't see what you want to cackle for like a whole blessed barn-yard. I—I suppose we can't make tea without—er—tea?"

"Try the jam-tarts!" suggested Nugent. "If you can use gingerbeer for the water you can use jam for the tea, I should think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The teafulness would be terrific."

"You silly asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And have you got any methylated spirit for the stove?" asked Harry.

"Oh, dear!" said Bob.

"You haven't any?"

"N-n-no!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try some gingerbeer for that, too!" shrieked Nugent.

The exasperated Bob rushed at Nugent, and chased him round the group of standing bicycles. Nugent was laughing almost too much to run, and Bob overtook him, and the other fellows had to drag him off.

"It's all right, Bob!" gasped Nugent. "There won't be any tea; but you're entertaining the ladies a treat. Isn't he, Clara?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

Bob Cherry turned crimson.

ANOTHER SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON AND CO. NEXT TUESDAY.

"I—I'm sorry!" he gasped. "That chap is enough to exasperate a saint, you know. Of course, I sha'n't be able to make the tea, after all."

"Well it would be difficult without any tea, water, or methylated spirit," said Harry Wharton. "Sure you've got the stove with you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he hasn't, he could use a gingerbeer-bottle, perhaps!" suggested Nugent.

Bob made a rush at him again.

"You will knock the bicycles over if you are not careful," said Miss Clara severely. "Is my machine safe?"

"Oh, yes!" said Bob, halting. "I—I'm sorry!"

"I think I will look at it."

Miss Clara went over to the machines. The Wheelers were sitting on the rocks at a short distance from the group of bikes. The Bounder was talking to Marjorie, and Marjorie was answering quietly, with evident effort.

Clara looked at the machines, and moved hers a little. It was locked with the Bounder's machine. Something gleamed in Clara's hand for a moment, and there was a faint hissing sound, and Nugent's eyes, too, gleamed as he heard it. But he was the only one who heard, and he said nothing.

Clara came back and sat down, and Nugent handed her the tarts and a foaming mug of gingerbeer.

"It is very nice," said Clara.

Nugent grinned.

"You hadn't forgotten your scissors, after all," he remarked.

Miss Clara's hand shook so suddenly that some of the gingerbeer was spilt. It went on her skirt, and she gave a little cry.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" said Nugent.

"You are a duffer!" said Miss Clara.

"Take my handkerchief—"

Clara mopped up the gingerbeer with Nugent's handkerchief.

"Now, what did you mean?" she demanded.

"What I said," grinned Nugent. "You hadn't forgotten your scissors, after all?"

Miss Clara's cheeks dimpled, and a gleam of fun came into her eyes.

"Mum's the word!" she whispered.

"Oh, rather!"

"I heard what he said to Marjorie," said Miss Clara, in a low voice. "He's been threatening her—yes, that's the right word. She had to pretend to want him to stay, or else he was going straight back to Greyfriars to take Hazel out—and take him to some place where he would get into dreadful mischief."

Nugent's brows darkened.

"The cad!"

"Yes, he is a cad!" said Clara.

No more was said on the subject.

Shortly afterwards the Wheelers rose to remount their machines. The heat of the sun was gone, and there was a glorious cool afternoon for the rest of the ride. From the lonely spot they had reached the Wheelers had a long down-grade for free-wheeling, and then a spin along the country roads home. They had a good dozen miles before them.

"We shall get to Cliff House in good time for tea," said Clara. "Only we mustn't delay on the road for anything."

"Rather not," said Nugent.

The juniors pulled the bikes out.

There was a sudden exclamation from the Bounder—an exclamation of rage he could not suppress. He had noticed at a glance that both his tyres were perfectly flat.

"Punctures?" asked Harry Wharton.

Marjorie started. Miss Clara was busy with her machine, and did not appear to hear.

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"I—I can't understand it!" he muttered. "I've never seen punctures like that before—they look as if I'd ridden on a knife. I never noticed anything wrong, either, when I got off the machine."

"By Jove, that's a clean cut!" said Harry, looking at the puncture in the rear wheel. "Why, the outer cover and the inner tube are both cut through as clean as a whistle—just as if it had been done with a knife or a pair of scissors."

"I'm quite ready to start," said Miss Clara hurriedly.

"Are you ready, Marjorie?"

"Yes, dear."

"Let's get off, then."

"Smith's got a couple of punctures," said John Bull.

"Oh, dear! There's no time to stop, either," said Clara.

Harry Wharton glanced at her and then glanced at the Bounder's machine. His brow was puzzled; but if he suspected anything he did not say so.

Nugent wheeled his machine out to start, and Miss Clara's with it.

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"We'll be getting on," he remarked. "You follow."

And Nugent and Miss Clara pedalled off together. Marjorie mounted and followed, and Bob Cherry promptly joined her. The other juniors waited a minute or so to look at Vernon-Smith's punctures and condole with him.

The Bounder ground his teeth.

"I don't believe they're punctures at all!" he exclaimed savagely. "The tyres are cut right through. It's a trick!"

"What do you mean?" asked John Bull.

"One of you fellows has done that to make me walk home!"

"Oh, rot!" said Tom Brown.

"I know it's a trick! I tell you—"

"Well, you'll have to walk home, I suppose—unless you ride without any tyres," said Harry Wharton coldly. "You can never mend them—they're in rags. You'll have to wheel the machine."

"You did this!" shouted the Bounder furiously.

Wharton started.

"I? What do you mean? I haven't touched your machine!"

"It's a lie!" yelled the Bounder furiously.

Wharton's eyes flashed, and he clenched his hands. He gave one look round to ascertain that the girls were out of sight. They had disappeared behind the rocks.

"I did not touch your machine," Harry repeated. "If a trick has been played it serves you right for forcing yourself where you weren't wanted. You have spoiled the afternoon for Marjorie, and it serves you right."

The Bounder, beside himself with rage, struck full at Wharton's face with his clenched fist. Wharton's left swept up, and the Bounder's hand was struck away, and then Wharton's right came full upon his jaw.

"Take that, you cad!"

The Bounder staggered back, and fell upon the ground.

Wharton, without another glance at him, strode to his machine. The Removites mounted, while the Bounder staggered up. He gave Harry Wharton a glance of the deadliest hate, but did not attempt to renew the conflict.

"I will make you pay for that!" he said between his teeth.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Any time you like," he said.

The juniors rode away after the others. Vernon-Smith was left upon the rocky plateau with his useless machine. He looked again at the punctures. So clear and sharp were the cuts that he could have no doubt, upon an examination, how they had been caused.

They were the work of a pair of scissors—and scissors were not likely to be carried by boys. It was either Marjorie or Clara to whom he owed his defeat—and he could guess which of the two.

He ground his teeth—but he was powerless. He took up the machine and set out for the long, weary tramp back to Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton pedalled quickly, and joined the girls, and the party rode on together—minus the Bounder. They did not miss him.

Marjorie gave Wharton one inquiring glance.

"Vernon-Smith can't come," he said: "his tyres are useless. He's walking his machine home. It can't be helped."

"What's the matter with your knuckles?" asked Clara.

Wharton started.

"M-m-m-my knuckles?" he stammered.

"Yes. You've knocked your hand against something, haven't you?"

"Ye-e-es," stammered Wharton.

No more was said. But Miss Clara smiled.

The party rode on together quite cheerfully. The loss of the Bounder seemed like the lifting of a cloud that had lain upon their spirits. As for his threat, that was impotent now, and Marjorie knew it. He had to walk home to Greyfriars, and he would not arrive there before dark; and after such a walk he would hardly be fit for any fresh excursions. Indeed, he was not likely to get in before the others, though they were to stop for tea at Cliff House.

Gaily enough the Wheelers spun down the slope of the hill to the lower roads. Nugent started a song, and they all joined in—Bob Cherry singing seconds in a way that made the singers leave off to laugh every few minutes. Bob had as much sense of time and tune as he had of political economy or aerostatics, and he wandered around into all possible keys; but he was cheerful and merry all the time, and when he put the others out nobody seemed to mind—Bob least of all.

In the setting sun the juniors came down into Friardale Lane, and then the final spin brought them to the gates of Cliff House.

A little tired—with the healthy, cheerful tiredness of an

afternoon in the open air—they went in to tea. And a ripping tea it was, enlivened by merry talk and laughter.

"It's been a glorious afternoon," said Marjorie, when the time came to part. "I think the Greyfriars Wheelers' Club is one of the best ideas you've ever had. I hope we shall have some more club runs."

"What-ho!" said Harry Wharton emphatically.

"We'll make Hazel come next time," said Nugent; "and we'll arrange the whole thing a little more carefully in— in several ways. This was really only a trial trip."

"And a jolly good one!" said Miss Clara. "Quite a success!"

"Oh, quite!" said Marjorie.

"And you won't need to bring your scissors next time, Clara," Nugent murmured, as he said good-bye to that cheerful young lady.

The girls waved their hands at the gate as the Wheelers rode off.

They reached Greyfriars just after dark, and wheeled their machines in. As they were putting them up in the bike-shed a dusty and weary junior came tramping in with a jerking bike, and thrust it savagely against the wall. It was Vernon-Smith!

"Just got in?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes!" snapped the Bounder.

"So have we. Jolly afternoon, wasn't it?"

Vernon-Smith made no reply. He could not trust himself to speak just then to the Greyfriars Wheelers!

THE END.

Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week 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.]

## GRAND NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL JUST STARTED!

# Wolves of the Deep.

The Story of a Great Conspiracy, introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.

By SIDNEY DREW.

### READ THIS FIRST.

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 Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane and kidnaps his niece, Lady Violet. One evening as the Lord of the Deep is nearing Brindisi, Ferrers Lord decides to leave the submarine and go ashore.

(Now go on with the story.)

### Ashore in Brindisi—Shadowed.

As Ferrers Lord touched a bell, the huge pumps forced the water out of the tanks, and the Lord of the Deep rose slowly to the surface. Taking Ferrers Lord's advice, Thurston put on an overcoat. They ascended the companion, and one touch of the lever raised the manhole.

Rupert filled his lungs greedily with the fresh, salt air.

"This is good," he said. "Your manufactured air is marvellous, Lord, but it does not taste like the real thing. There is something wanting in it, after all."

"Well, we will try to improve it," answered the millionaire. "It's rather a pity. Have a real seabreeze put up in bottles like pickles. Now, then, are you ready there?"

"Quite ready, sir."

The steel deck gaped open, and the lift ascended, carrying the launch. It slid along the oiled stays as the lift was tilted, and plunged lightly into the water. Horton did not accompany them, for he was hard at work repairing a diving-suit. The two men followed the sailor into the launch, and her head was turned towards the twinkling lights of Brindisi.

She slipped along gallantly over a choppy sea, Ferrers Lord at her helm. They passed a few fishing-boats beating out to the fishing-grounds, and entered the harbour, flying the pennant of the Royal Yacht Club. Ferrers Lord and his companion climbed the oozy steps, and plunged into the narrow streets of the Italian port.

The millionaire walked on quickly like a man who knew his way. Suddenly he turned abruptly to the right, and entered an evil-smelling alley, strewn with rotten garbage, a veritable den of poverty and filth.

He tapped at a door, and uttered a shrill whistle. A light shone through the clinks, and a little grating was opened.

"Who is there?" asked a woman's voice, in Italian.

"Friends of yours, signora. Open!"

The light vanished, and Thurston heard the rattle of bolts. Ferrers Lord pushed him roughly in, and the door was

barred and locked behind them. He felt the millionaire's hand upon his wrist, and went blindly forward. A hum of voices reached his ears; a second door opened, and a flood of dazzling light poured out.

Thurston looked round him, amazed. He was in a large room, richly furnished. Two men were sitting at a table, playing chess. They rose and bowed when they saw Ferrers Lord, and the millionaire returned their salute with a cold nod.

"Sit down, Rupert," he said, "and make yourself comfortable. Well, Ricardo, what news?"

"Puzzling news, signor," answered one of the men. "But it is easy to put two and two together. I have had telegrams from four places—St. Petersburg, Archangel, Marseilles, and Odessa. At each of these places engineers have received orders and plans from Scaroff."

Ferrers Lord ground his teeth.

"Then he is having the vessel built in segments," he said. "I might have guessed as much. We must find out now where he intends to have the segments put together. Be watchful, Ricardo, and work hard."

A grim smile crossed his lips as he turned to Thurston. "It is perhaps for the best, Rupert," he added, "for it will save time. The vessel will be built much more speedily, and then our work will begin in earnest. Good-night, Ricardo!"

"Good-night, signor!"

Once back in the filthy alley, Thurston could no longer restrain his curiosity.

"You are a strange man, Lord," he said. "What is the place we have just left? One would hardly expect to find such a room in a miserable den of dirt like this."

The millionaire laughed, and shrugged his shoulders as they hurried on.

"I have queer tastes," he answered carelessly, "and sometimes I like to hide myself. The great hotels do not know, for in most parts of the world I have little homes of my own like the one you saw. Of course, I take my own servants with me. Was that a footstep?"

He turned quickly, and looked back into the gloom.

"I heard nothing," said Rupert. "Bah! How the place smells!"

Ferrers Lord lighted a cigar.

They went towards the quay through a network of slums and passages.

Noiselessly, with stealthy tread, a shadow followed behind, pausing when they lingered, hurrying when they quickened their pace.

Little by little other shadows appeared. They made no

ANOTHER SPLENDID TALE OF HARRY WHARTON AND CO. NEXT TUESDAY.

noise, and hugged the darkness. They vanished into a gloomy entry, but the first shadow still crept on silently after the two men. It passed under a guttering lamp, and the light flashed for an instant on a white, evil face.

The man had only one arm!

#### What Happened in the Harbour—The Ape is Unchained.

When the millionaire and Thurston left the launch, the sailor in charge had turned her head away from the quay, and brought her out into the middle of the harbour. The night had grown strangely dark, and the breeze had increased in strength. The little anchor went clattering down, and the sailor made himself comfortable, and lighted his pipe.

Finally he found himself nodding, and roused himself with a start. The drowsy lapping of the water lulled him into sleepiness, and the pipe slipped from his fingers. Then his eyes closed.

A few hundred yards beyond the launch a rusty tramp steamer lay at anchor. An hour passed, and the man slept on. Then came a soft splash of oars, and a boat crept round the stern of the steamer.

"Hallo, you!" cried a voice in English. "What do you mean by anchoring in mid-channel?"

There was no answer, for the words had fallen upon unconscious ears. The boat came nearer. It was crowded with men.

"By Jove, I believe he's asleep!" said the same voice, more softly. "Give me the boathook!"

He bent forward, and drew the boat cautiously alongside of the launch. The sailor slept on, his head pillowed upon a heap of tarpaulin. A lantern flashed in his eyes, and, with a cry, he started up. The boathook hissed through the air, and fell with a heavy thump upon his unprotected head. Without a groan he fell forward, and pitched on his face, and lay in a huddled, motionless heap.

"Pitch him overboard when we've done with him!" said the ruffian who struck the blow. "Strip him, one of you, and be quick about it. They'll be here in ten minutes. Now, Giuseppe, show your skill!"

A lean, sawn-faced Italian clambered over the rail of the launch, and held the lantern to the face of the unconscious sailor.

"It's an easy job!" he chuckled, rubbing his bony hands together. "An easy job, signor. But give me the gold first—give me the gold!"

"Take it, then, you old miser!"

Giuseppe counted the bundle of banknotes, and chuckled as he heard them rustle.

"I love money, capitano!" he tittered. "Ha, ha! I love this crackling, and I love to hear the chink of gold. Where is the bag? Hold the light there. Now, capitano, sit down."

The old man opened his bag, and took out a bundle of wigs and false beards. He glanced again at the face of the stunned sailor.

"Here is the beard, capitano!" he chuckled. "Look, it is just the same. A touch of rouge here, and a little darkening of your eyebrows—so! Put on the fellow's cap and coat. Corpo di Bacco, have I not earned my money well?"

A cry of admiration came from the others as they saw the transformation a few skilled touches had wrought. They looked from the face of the sailor to the face of their leader. They were identical, in every feature alike.

"Pitch him overboard!" said the captain brutally. "We have no time to waste. He looks like coming round. Then get away as soon as you like."

There was a dull splash, a gurgling cry, and the dark waters closed over their victim. The men scrambled back into their boat, and rowed rapidly down the harbour.

"Death of my soul!" muttered the Italian, as he rolled a cigarette. "It is like putting one's head into the lion's mouth; but to live at all, a man must risk his life. And if I win I shall be rich—rich for ever! I must speak little, and act quickly. Have I the fuses safely?"

His own coat lay beside him, and from the pocket he took two ugly dynamite cartridges, and a roll of fuse. Then he flung the coat overboard, and lighted the cigarette.

A soft whistle came from the quay. It was the signal. He set the little screw working, and dragged up the anchor. The launch thrashed across the harbour, and he saw two figures against the sky. Ferrers Lord sprang on board, followed by Thurston, and took the helm.

Lord buttoned up his overcoat, as the keen breeze came hissing over the water.

"We have almost had our journey for nothing, Rupert," he said. "It is certain that Scaroff will have his boat afloat much sooner than we imagined—in a week, perhaps."

"Impossible, Lord!"

"Why not? He may have thousands of hands working at

it, and it would take a very short time to have it pieced together. Can you see the Lord of the Deep?"

Thurston peered ahead, but could see nothing.

"No," he answered.

"She swims very low," said the millionaire, "and the colour makes her difficult to discern. I have seen a vessel pass quite close to her in broad daylight, quite unconscious of her presence. She is right ahead of us. Watch!"

He put a silver whistle to his lips, and a shrill peal echoed over the sea. A bright flash of light from the conning-tower answered.

The screw ceased to revolve, and the little launch ran alongside. The two men went below, leaving the crew to bring the launch on board.

They never dreamed that black treachery was at work, and that Michael Scaroff's minion was among them!

"What are your plans now?" asked Rupert.

"I hardly know, my friend. We had better wait here, I think, for a day longer, at least, until we get some news of Scaroff. He is not in St. Petersburg or Moscow, and for a time all my spies are baffled. There was a telegram from London to say that his brother Ivan had disappeared suddenly from the Russian Embassy there. Most likely he has only fled from his numerous creditors, and I do not attach any importance to the news. Good-night, Rupert! I'm going to turn in."

"Good-night! I'm not very sleepy yet, so I'll find Horton, and get him to smoke a last pipe with me."

Thurston joined the diver in the saloon, and smoked and chatted for half an hour. Then the diver rose, hiding a yawn, and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"Do you know, sir," he said, "I think there's something queer about that chap, Trothwick. I came past his cabin about an hour ago, and his cabin-door was open. What do you think he was doing?"

The diver's voice sunk to a hoarse whisper. He shook his head ominously.

"I'm afraid I'm not good at guessing," said Thurston. "What was he doing?"

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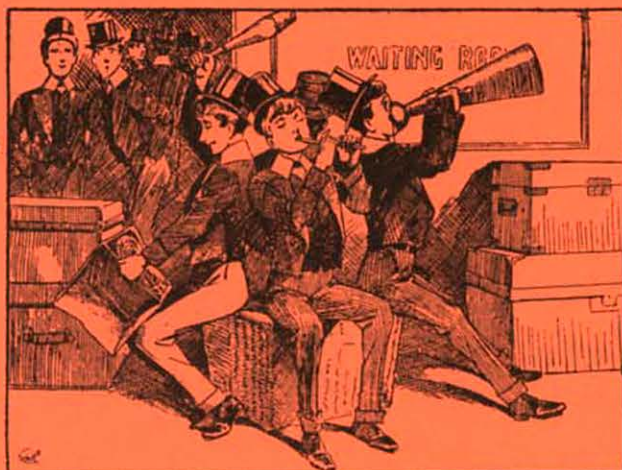
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