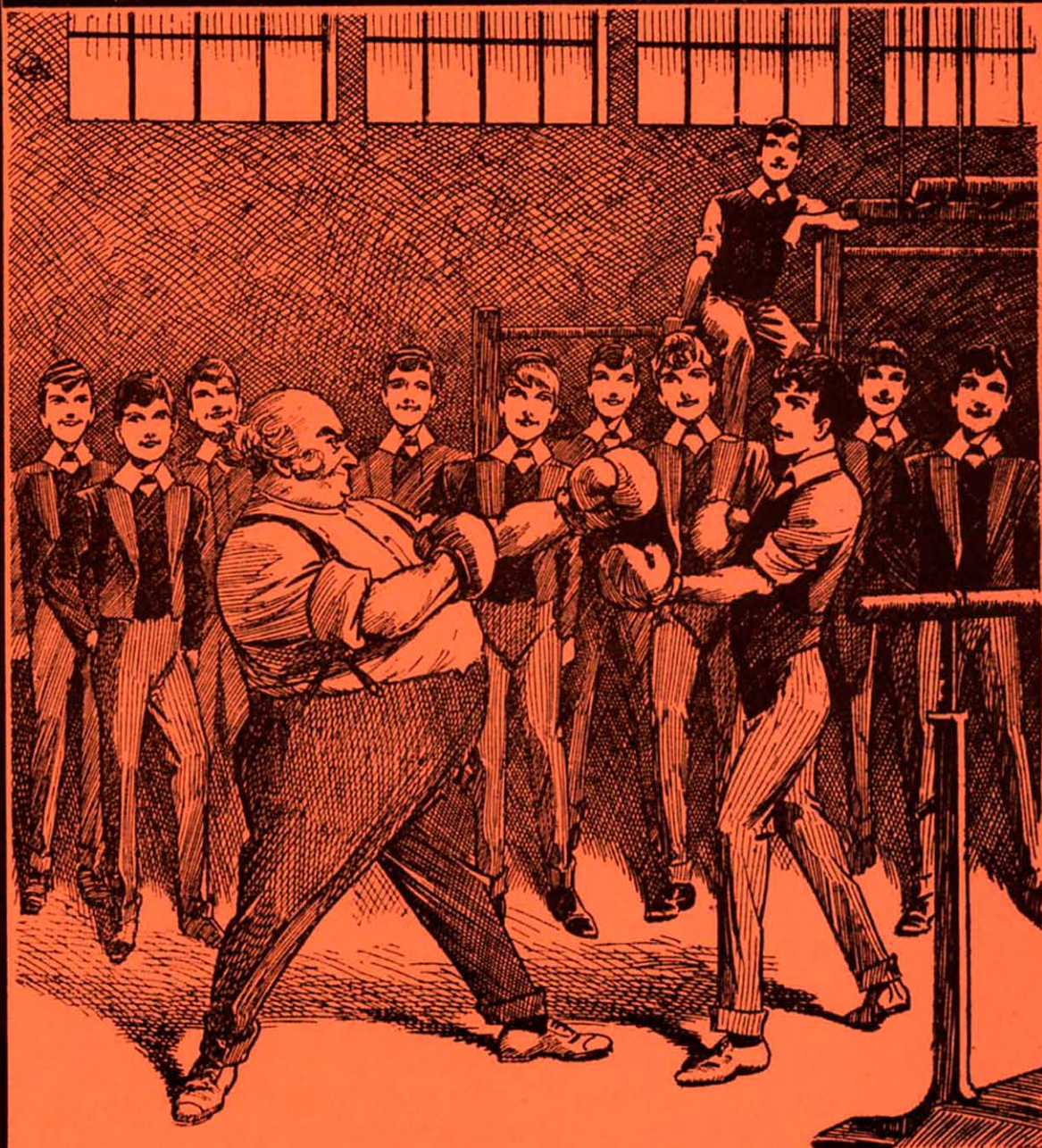


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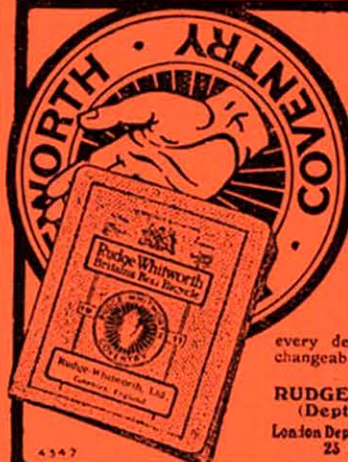
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wanted—A Bully.

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove at Greyfriars, came into the Form-room with a frown upon his face. The boys were already in their places, and at the sight of Mr. Quelch's frowning face they assumed instinctively their most dutiful, obedient, and attentive expressions. Nobody in the Remove was anxious to catch Mr. Quelch's eye at that moment.

The Form-master walked up to his desk, and a pin might have been heard to fall in the Remove-room.

"Something's up!" Bob Cherry whispered to Harry Wharton.

Harry Wharton nodded without speaking.

It was pretty clear that there was "something up," and it was not a judicious moment to select for whispering in class. The frown upon Mr. Quelch's face deepened as he turned and looked at his class.

He did not speak for a moment. His eyes, which the Removites had often compared to guilets, because they were

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so sharp, roved over the class, as if he were seeking out some special offender.

It was evidently a time for the guilty to tremble.

Billy Bunter was observed to turn slightly pale. He was, thinking, doubtless, of a certain unauthorised visit to the pantry. Bulstrode, the burly Removite, looked slightly uneasy, but he squared his broad shoulders, and set his lips.

Mr. Quelch's eye seemed to linger upon Bulstrode for a moment.

"Before we commence this morning," said the Remove-master, in deep tones, "I have a few words to say to the class."

Dead silence!

"A matter has been brought to my knowledge," said the Form-master—"a matter affecting this Form, disgracing it in the eyes of all the school."

There was a movement of great interest in the Form. The Removite were very keen on that subject. They were certainly the most unruly form in Greyfriars—and there was very frequently trouble of some kind in the Remove Form-room or the Remove studies. But the Removites, upon the whole, were a decent set of fellows enough, and they were very sensitive upon the point Mr. Quelch had touched upon.

"It is a case of bullying," said Mr. Quelch.

"Ah!"

It was a deep-drawn breath from the Form.

All eyes turned, as if instinctively, upon Bulstrode. The red deepened in the cheeks of the burly Removeite.

But he sat quiet.

"A boy in the Second Form," said Mr. Quelch. "Nugent minor, of the Second Form, has been most cruelly treated. He admits that he was ill-used by a boy in the Remove, but from an over-strained sense of honour, he refuses to give the name of his assailant."

Frank Nugent looked up quickly. Nugent minor, of the Second, was his younger brother, and Frank was naturally interested.

"Nugent minor has had his arm twisted," went on Mr. Quelch. "Probably the matter would not have been known at all, but the boy is suffering still from the effects of his cruel usages, and has had to be excused from lessons. It was done by a boy in this Form. I want to know that boy's name."

Silence!

"That the boy who was guilty of this cowardly and barbarous action is in my Form, I know," said the Remove-master. "He must be punished. I call upon him to stand up and confess."

There was still silence.

Bob Cherry murmured that there were no takers for such a really attractive offer, but he was careful not to let Mr. Quelch hear him.

Mr. Quelch regarded his class with a stern eye.

Whether he expected the guilty party to rise and confess, in response to his appeal, his face did not show; but if he expected it he was disappointed.

There was no movement on the part of anyone in the Remove.

The silence was unbroken, till the Form-master spoke again.

"I may add," he went on, his voice growing harsher, "that the matter will not be allowed to rest here. It will be investigated, and the guilty party will be discovered, and punished all the more severely for his attempt to elude justice. I call upon him again to take the only manly course, and to confess his fault."

No one moved.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, compressing his lips.

Bulstrode started.

"Yes, sir."

"Stand up!"

Bulstrode stood up.

"You have the reputation, Bulstrode, of being of a bullying disposition," said Mr. Quelch. "I have had to speak to you upon the subject before."

Bulstrode turned scarlet.

"You have sometimes been on bad terms with Nugent minor, of the Second Form, I believe?" the Form-master went on.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you ever ill-used him?"

"No, sir."

"Not at all?"

"I may have cuffed him, sir, if he was cheeky."

"Did you touch him yesterday evening?"

"No, sir."

"Did you twist his arm?"

"I did not, sir."

"Have you ever done such a thing?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked at him long and hard. The class listened breathlessly. Bulstrode's replies were quick and clear enough.

"I hope you are telling the truth, Bulstrode," said Mr. Quelch, at last.

"I am telling the truth, sir."

"Rats!" murmured a voice at the back of the class.

Bulstrode's eyes gleamed. Fortunately Mr. Quelch did not hear the interruption.

"Very well," he said, "I will find no boy guilty without proof. If I have specially questioned you, Bulstrode, it is because you have laid yourself open to suspicion by your conduct for some time past."

"I am sorry, sir."

"Very well! I may say that this matter will not be allowed to drop, and the boy who has ill-used Richard Nugent will be properly punished. If he will not confess, I shall investigate the matter myself. For the present, the matter is ended."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"May I speak a word, sir?"

"Wharton's going to confess," murmured Skinner aloud. Wharton gave him an angry glance.

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly you may speak, Wharton, if you know anything about the matter."

"I don't know anything about it, sir. But I want to say that if there is such a rotten bully in the Remove, we're all ashamed of him, and we think as badly of him as you do, sir. I think I ought to say that, as Form-captain."

"Hear, hear!" said a dozen voices.

Skinner sneered. But most of the fellows were evidently quite in accord with Harry Wharton.

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Quite right," he said. "I am glad you have spoken in this way, Wharton—glad that my Form dissociate themselves, as a whole, from the base conduct of the wretched bully who has ill-used Nugent minor. I trust he will soon be discovered, and held up to the contempt of his Form-fellows."

And with that the subject dropped.

But during morning lessons, it is safe to say that the Greyfriars Remove bestowed more thought upon what Mr. Quelch had said than upon their work.

And when classes were dismissed, and the boys crowded out of the Form-room, Mr. Quelch's communication was almost the sole topic of their eager talk.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Find Out!

BULSTRODE came swinging out of the Form-room with his hands in his pockets, and a look of half-sullen defiance on his face. Bulstrode was the bully of the Remove, and he was, as a rule, the terror of smaller boys; though sometimes he could be kind and good-natured, and he had been known to stand feels to fags in his kinder moments, after licking them perhaps only an hour before. Bulstrode was a contradiction of the old saying, that a bully is a coward; for Bulstrode certainly had plenty of courage, and though he was usually in the wrong in a dispute, he was as determined as he was hot-headed, and generally quite willing to "stand up" to anyone who opposed him, careless of the consequences.

Bulstrode had been captain of the Remove before Harry Wharton came to Greyfriars, and he had never forgiven Wharton for being elected to the post. True, Wharton made a much better Form-captain. But there were many fellows who preferred Bulstrode, with all his swagger and roughness, to Wharton, who was generally supposed to put on quite as much side, though in a quieter and less obtrusive manner.

But just now Bulstrode was evidently in the Form's black books. Many of the Remove were reckless and unruly, and there was more than one blackguard in the Form—such as Vernon-Smith, the Bounder. But they did not like to be told that they were disgraced in the eyes of the whole school. That was a very bitter pill to swallow. Bulstrode knew that he was to go through an unpleasant time as soon as they were out of the Form-room, and, as a matter of fact, the door had hardly closed when the juniors gathered round him.

Bulstrode stood with his hands in his pockets, the frown of defiance deepening on his hard face.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded.

"We want a few words from you," said Frank Nugent.

"Did you bully my minor?"

"You heard what I said to Quelch."

"I've heard you tell lies before."

"What-ho!" said John Bull. "I've heard you tell lies, Bulstrode, so you can't expect a fellow to take your word."

Bulstrode turned crimson.

"I see you are all against me," he remarked. "You haven't said anything to me yet, Wharton—now's your chance to hit a fellow who's down. Go ahead!"

Harry Wharton looked at him quietly.

"I've nothing to say," he replied. "If you twisted young Nugent's arm, you ought to be kicked out of the school. That's all."

"And you think I did?"

"I think it's very likely. You're a bully, and you generally bully small chaps," said Harry scornfully. "If you didn't do it, it's your own fault that you're suspected."

"The faultfulness of the honourable Bulstrode is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in his curious English. Bulstrode set his teeth.

"Well, you can think what you like," he said, "I don't care."

Nugent came closer to him.

"Did you do it?" he asked.

"Find out!"

Nugent's eyes gleamed.

"That's what I mean to do," he said.

"My dear Bulstrode—" began Alonzo Todd, the junior who had the distinction of being known as the Duffer of Greyfriars.

There was a general exclamation:



"My uncle!" said Todd, with a proud and introductory wave of the hand. "My aunt!" muttered Harry Wharton, as the juniors jumped up to receive their visitor. (See page 6.)

"Dry up, Todd!"

Alonzo Todd blinked round at the Removites.

"My dear fellows——"

"Shut up!"

"But I wish to make an appeal to Bulstrode. I wish to appeal to his better feelings, as I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would advise——"

"He hasn't any," said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Under the circumstances, my dear Cherry, I decline to ring off. I wish to appeal to Bulstrode. If he was guilty of this cowardly and unpleasant action, his best course is to own up and repent. What he has done is wicked and brutal. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at him—nay, disgusted. I appeal to Bulstrode——"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bulstrode; and he swung away, leaving Alonzo Todd looking after him more in sorrow than in anger.

Nugent strode after the burly Removite, and caught him by the shoulder as he reached the door into the Close.

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"Hold on!" he exclaimed.

Bulstrode swung round.

"Let go my shoulder!" he said.

"I want your answer first," said Nugent, between his teeth. "You're a rotten bully, and we all know it, and I believe you did this to my young brother. Did you?"

"Take your hand away!"

"Not till you've answered."

"Find out!"

"Will you answer?"

"I won't say a word! Take your hand away, or I'll knock you flying!" said Bulstrode, his voice trembling with rage.

Nugent tightened his grasp instead of removing it.

Bulstrode clenched his hand hard.

"Let me alone!"

"I won't!"

"Then take that!"

Bulstrode's fist shot out, and Frank Nugent guarded too late. The burly Removite's knuckles caught him fairly on the chin, and he went staggering back and fell in a heap on the floor.

NEXT WEEK: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Fight.

HARRY WHARTON ran forward.

Bulstrode put up his hands.

"Come on!" he said, gritting his teeth. "You as well, if you like!"

Wharton did not reply. He stooped and helped Frank Nugent to his feet. Nugent seemed to have been dazed by the powerful right-hander.

"Thanks!" he muttered. "You'll settle this with me, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode gave a scornful, angry laugh.

"I'm ready!" he exclaimed.

"Come out, then!"

"Leave it to me, Frank," muttered Wharton. "Let me take him on, old man. I—"

Nugent shook his head.

"It was my minor he's been bullying, and I'm going to tackle him. I don't care if he licks me. I'll make him sit up, too, at all events."

"I wish you'd leave the thing to me," said Wharton.

"I won't!" said Frank bluntly.

Wharton said no more. He walked out of the house with Nugent, and nearly all the Remove followed. It was clear that there would be a fight, and it was pretty certain that it would be a hard one, and worth watching.

Bulstrode was the biggest fellow in the Remove, and there were fellows in the Shell, and even in the Fifth, who would not have cared to tackle him. In the Remove, only Harry Wharton and John Bull and Mark Linley could stand up to him, though fellows like Tom Brown and Bob Cherry could have given him a hard tussle. But there was little doubt that he was far above Nugent's weight.

Frank was slim and light in comparison. He was an athletic lad, and brave as a lion, and a good boxer, but he was no match for Bulstrode, and there was no getting away from that fact.

"Look here, it's rotten!" said John Bull, joining the chums as they went towards the gym. "Will you leave this to me, Frank?"

Nugent laughed.

"That's the second offer," he remarked. "But I can't do it. A chap must fight his own battles, you know."

"Yes, but—"

"I'll take this on for you, if you like," said Mark Linley, coming up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Linley looked at Nugent in surprise.

"Where's the joke?" he asked. "I mean it."

"You're the third chap to offer."

The Lancashire lad smiled.

"Oh, I see! Well, I mean it. I believe Bulstrode was the chap Quelch was talking about, and I'd gladly take it on."

"I'm going to try to manage it myself."

"Just as you like, of course."

"I guess you'd better let me handle it," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior in the Remove. "You see—"

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

"I guess I could do it. I've done a heap of boxing over there, and I tell you I can box some."

"Why, Bulstrode would knock you into a cocked hat in one round," said Hazeldene.

"I guess—"

"Here we are," said Harry Wharton.

It was a quiet spot behind the gymnasium. The bulk of the building sheltered it from view from the school windows. It was a spot often chosen by the juniors for settling little matters of this sort.

Bulstrode stripped off his jacket. No one offered to be his second. Even Skinner, who was usually his chum, seemed to be inclined to give him a wide berth just now. The bully of the Remove glanced at Skinner with a bitter expression.

"Are you going to be my second, Skinny?" he asked.

Skinner hesitated.

"Well, if you like," he said.

Bulstrode grunted.

"Get away, hang you!" he said.

"If you don't want me—"

"I don't!"

Skinner shrugged his shoulders, and put his hands into his pockets.

Alonzo Todd blinked at Bulstrode, and at Skinner, and at the other fellows, and finally came forward.

"My dear Bulstrode," he said, "I will be your second, if you wish. I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would approve—"

"Oh, get out!"

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"Buzz off, you ass!"

"My dear—"

Bulstrode turned his back upon Alonzo Todd. Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, lounged forward.

"I'll help you, Bulstrode."

"Thanks!"

The two juniors faced one another.

Frank Nugent's face was set and hard, and there was a steely light gleaming in his eyes. He might not be a match for the burly Bulstrode, but he meant to put up a good fight, and the Remove bully was not likely to escape without punishment.

"Time!" said Harry Wharton.

And the fight began.

Bulstrode attacked with a heavy and savage rush, and his big, heavy fists were soon beating upon Nugent's handsome face.

But Frank replied well, and more than once the Remove bully staggered back under his fierce blows.

It was not difficult to see that Bulstrode was the more powerful of the two, and that all the advantages were on his side, and that he meant to make the best of them.

But Nugent was game all through, and the sympathies of the onlookers were all with him, and that counted for something.

They went at it hammer and tongs, fighting hard.

In two rounds both of them were showing signs of wear and tear. Bulstrode's left eye was closed, and his lip was cut; and Nugent had a swollen nose, with a stream of blood running from it, and his mouth seemed to have taken a sideways twist.

But he was still game. He came up steadily for the third round, though he was evidently failing before the attack of the stronger youth.

"Go it, Frank!"

"Pile in, Nugent!"

"Bravo!"

But there was no shout for Bulstrode.

The Remove bully did not care, or tried to think that he did not care. He knew that he was winning, and that was enough for him.

In the fourth round Frank Nugent received a terrible upper-cut, which flung him heavily back into the arms of his second.

Bob Cherry caught him.

Bulstrode burst into a savage laugh.

"Have you had enough now?" he cried.

There was a murmur from the crowd:

"Shame!"

"Shut up, you cad!"

Bulstrode gave a fierce glance round.

"I'm willing to stand up to any chap here who wants to take it up for Nugent!" he exclaimed, with lowering brows.

"Good!" said Harry Wharton. "I'm the man!"

"And I, too, after Wharton!" said Mark Linley.

"And I!"

"And I!"

Bulstrode sneered bitterly.

"Oh, all right! Take your turns, hang you!"

"Bully!"

"Rotter!"

Frank Nugent tried to come up to time again, but it was out of his power. His head was singing and reeling from the terrible blow he had received, and he staggered from sheer weakness as he tried to face the bully of the Remove. It was clear that Frank was "done."

"Chuck it, Franky," said Harry Wharton, in a low voice. "You can't go on, old chap."

Nugent gasped.

"I—I suppose I can't," he muttered. "I'll tackle the bully again another time, though."

"I'll tackle him now!"

Wharton stepped up to Bulstrode.

"I'm ready, if you are!" he exclaimed.

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"I'm quite ready," he said.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Let's have fair play. Bulstrode's not in a condition to stand up to a second chap now. Give him a rest."

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode. "I'm all right!"

There was a sudden shout from the corner of the gym.

"Look out! Cave!"

"What is it?"

"Prefect!"

"Blow the prefect!"

"It's Loder!"

"Oh!"

There was a scattering of the juniors. Only the principals in the fight, and half a dozen other fellows, remained on the spot, as Loder, of the Sixth, came striding round the corner of the gym.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Little Too Hasty.

LODER came up with an angry brow. Loder, of the Sixth, was a prefect, and the most unpopular one at Greyfriars. He neglected his duties, as a rule; but when he was bound to carry them out, to keep up appearances, he had a way of coming down very heavily. He scowled at the group of juniors.

"There's fighting going on here!" he exclaimed.

"No," said Bull. "It's gone off!"

And the juniors grinned.

"You, Wharton, I suppose?" exclaimed Loder angrily.

"No," said Harry quietly.

"Which of you have been fighting, then?"

"I was one," said Nugent. "I should think you could tell that by the state of my nose, if you took the trouble to look, Loder."

"I was the other," said Bulstrode defiantly.

"You'll take two hundred lines each!" said Loder. "I'll report this to your Form-master, and he will ask for the lines. Now clear off."

There was no help for it. The prefect's orders had to be obeyed. The juniors cleared off unwillingly, Nugent's chums marching him away to bathe his face, and Bulstrode walking away with no companion but the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Frank Nugent walked a little unsteadily, leaning upon Harry Wharton's arm. Wharton's face was darkly clouded.

Nugent had had a licking, there was no denying that; and Harry felt it quite as keenly as if he had received it himself. He was longing to stand up before Bulstrode in some quiet spot where they would be uninterrupted. The same feeling was in John Bull's breast, and in Mark Linley's too.

Nugent was marched up to the Remove dormitory, where he bathed his face. But the bathing did not do much towards removing the signs of the conflict. His nose was red and swollen, his eyes darkened, and his cheeks bruised. He had had a severe punishment, and would bear the signs of it for days.

He grinned ruefully as he looked into the glass.

"Well, I must say my chivvy is a jolly sight," he remarked.

"Rotten," said Bull. "Bulstrode isn't so very much better, though."

"No; that's a comfort."

Alonzo Todd looked in at the door.

"My dear fellows—"

"Buzz off, Todd."

"I have a suggestion to make, my dear fellows. I really wonder that I did not think of it before," said the Duffer of Greyfriars. "Nugent has been fighting Bulstrode because Bulstrode bullied Nugent minor. Well, before the matter goes any further, would it not be a good idea to ask Nugent insofar whether it was really Bulstrode?"

The chums of the Remove stared at Todd.

Simple as that suggestion was, it had not occurred to any of them.

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton.

"I am all the more desirous of establishing peace in the Form," went on Alonzo Todd, "because I am expecting a visit from my uncle this afternoon."

"Your uncle?"

"Yes, my uncle. You have heard me speak, I dare say, of my Uncle Benjamin?"

The juniors grinned.

"Well, yes, I think so," said John Bull.

"He is coming to see me this afternoon," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile.

"Uncle Benjamin?"

"Yes, indeed."

"My word!"

"You will be pleased to see him, I am sure," said Todd.

"And—"

"Of course we shall," said Bull. "Overjoyed, as a matter of fact. It will be ripping, not to say gorgeous."

"Stunning," said Wharton.

"I'm so pleased to hear you say so, my dear fellows. And I am sure you will endeavour to keep the peace this afternoon, so as not to give Uncle Benjamin a bad impression of the Remove."

"Ahem!"

"We'll see young Dick," said Nugent abruptly. "As a matter of fact, I might have looked him out, only I suppose I was in rather a hurry to go for Bulstrode."

Nugent fastened his collar, and the chums left the dormitory. They looked for Dicky Nugent of the Second Form, and found him in the Form-room. He was talking to Gatty and Myers, of the Second, and at the same time disposing of oranges from a bag. Gatty appeared to have brought in the oranges to comfort the sufferer.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

NEXT WEEK: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

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ONE
PENNY.

Dicky looked round as the Removites came in.

"Hallo!" he said. "What's the matter with your mug, Frank?"

"It's been punched," said Nugent.

"I hope you wiped up the ground with him," said Dicky, doubtless referring to Nugent's opponent, whoever he might be.

Nugent grinned.

"No; he wiped up the ground with me," he said. "It was all on your account, too, you young sweep."

"Mine!" exclaimed Dicky.

"Yes. Quelch told us you had been ragged by a chap in the Remove, and had your arm twisted, or something."

"So I have," said Dicky, holding up his arm. "I can't write; it's as stiff as anything, and pains when I move it. The Form-master found it out. I wasn't going to say anything."

"But you can tell me who did it," said Nugent.

Dicky gave a whistle.

"Is that what you've been fighting about?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then you haven't been licked?"

"Yes, I have; but I'm going to try again."

Dicky snorted.

"My word!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that you let a waster like Skinner lick you? I'm ashamed of you, Frank."

Nugent gave a jump.

"Skinner!" he shouted.

"Yes, Skinner."

"Was it Skinner twisted your arm?"

"Of course it was. My only summer bonnet!" yelled Dicky Nugent. "Have you been going for some other chap?"

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young sweep!"

"Who was it?" yelled Dicky.

"Bulstrode!"

"Bulstrode! My Aunt Matilda! You gorgeous ass!"

Nugent glared at his minor. Wharton and Bull looked at one another ruefully. There was no doubt that they had made a big blunder.

"Then it wasn't Bulstrode?" Nugent said feebly at last.

"No, it was Skinner."

"You—you're sure?"

"Yes, ass. I suppose I ought to know."

"I—I've a jolly good mind to give you another twist," growled Frank Nugent. "Just like you to get me into a hobble like this."

"Well, I didn't know you knew anything about it, and you never asked me a word," said Dicky. "How was I to know you were going to make such a blessed ass of yourself?"

Nugent did not reply to that question. He left the Second Form-room with his companions, looking very blue.

"Well, I must say this is a pretty kettle of fish," John Bull remarked. "You've been jumping on Bulstrode for nothing."

"I was sure it was Bulstrode."

"It was his reputation did it," said Wharton. "You've really nothing to be sorry for; if Bulstrode hadn't been a rotten bully, you wouldn't have suspected him."

"Well, that's so."

"All the same," remarked John Bull, "as Bulstrode didn't do it, I think you might as well tell him you're sorry."

Nugent hesitated.

With his face aching and smarting from Bulstrode's blows, he was in no humour to make any concession to the bully of the Remove.

But his better nature prevailed.

"All right," he said shortly.

Harry Wharton nodded assent. He was inclined to take Bull's view of the matter, little as he liked Bulstrode.

The juniors looked for Bulstrode. They found him in Vernon-Smith's study. Both the bounders of the Remove looked grimly enough at the visitors.

"Looking for trouble?" asked Bulstrode aggressively.

"Not this time," said Nugent. "I've been speaking to my young brother, and he says that it wasn't you who bullied him."

"Oh, does he?"

"Yes; it was Skinner. and—and I jumped to a conclusion a little too quickly," said Nugent. "I'm sorry. That's all."

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders. He, evidently, was not in a conciliatory mood.

"Well, if you're sorry, that's an end of it," he said. "I don't want to hammer you again."

Nugent's eyes blazed.

"I don't mean that I'm sorry because I'm afraid of your hammering me!" he exclaimed. "If you put it like that,

you're a worse cad than I took you for. I found I made a mistake, and did you an injustice, and I'm sorry for that—that's all."

"Put it how you like," said Bulstrode carelessly.

"As for your hammering me again," said Nugent hotly, "you can begin that as soon as you like—here and now, if you choose. My hat, I'll begin it myself if you look at me like that, you sneering cad!"

"Oh, get out!" said Bulstrode.

Nugent made a forward stride; but Wharton and Bull caught hold of him, and marched him out of the study. Bull slammed the door. Nugent looked angrily at his two chums in the passage.

"Look here—" he began.

"Come on," said Wharton quietly. "You don't want any more fighting just yet, Frank. Bulstrode is a pig, I know, but enough's as good as a feast, old man. Besides, you've got two black eyes already, and you don't want to get any more for Alonzo's uncle to see this afternoon."

Nugent laughed, and walked away with his chums

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Uncle Benjamin.

"MY uncle!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked up quickly.

The chums of Study No. 1 were at tea in that historic apartment. There was a very cheery spread upon the table, and besides Harry Wharton and Nugent and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, Bob Cherry had come in to tea.

The juniors had been in the flood of talk on the interesting subject of cricket in general, and Remove matches in particular, when there came a tap at the door, and it was thrown open.

Two figures appeared in the doorway.

One was the exceedingly slim, if not elegant, figure of Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars.

The other was a little fat old gentleman, with an excessively red and jolly face, and beaming eyes that were very like his nephew's.

"My uncle!" said Todd, with a proud and introductory wave of the hand.

"My aunt!" muttered Harry Wharton.

The juniors jumped up.

Uncle Benjamin, highly as he was prized by Alonzo Todd, was not the visitor they would have chosen to entertain in their study. But politeness came before everything, and he looked so good-natured and jolly that they could not help liking him, even at first sight.

"Please come in, sir!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Uncle Benjamin rolled in.

"Ah! You are my nephew's friends, are you?" he exclaimed. "Let me see—your name is Skinner, isn't it?" he went on, shaking hands with Harry Wharton; "and yours is Bulstrode?" he added to Bob Cherry.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Thanks, no," he replied.

Alonzo hastened to introduce the chums.

Uncle Benjamin shook hands with them all round, Todd watching the ceremony with a kind and beaming face.

"I'm sure you will like my friends, uncle," he said. "They are delighted to see you. Nugent said it would be splendid for you to come to Greyfriars, and Bull said it would be gorgeous. Wasn't that nice?"

"Indeed it was," said Mr. Todd.

"Well, it is ripping!" said Harry Wharton. "You'll have tea with us, won't you, sir? We're just beginning."

"Certainly—with pleasure!"

Wharton pulled forward a chair for Uncle Benjamin.

Nugent proceeded to make fresh tea. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh raided the cupboard for fresh supplies for the tea-table.

"Here you are, sir. Sit down."

"Thank you, my boy."

"Sit down here, Todd."

"My dear Wharton, I thank you very much."

"Buck up with that tea, Frank."

"Just ready."

"You take tea, sir?"

"Certainly, my boy—certainly!" said Uncle Benjamin, rubbing his fat hands. "By gad, this reminds me of my young days!"

"Does it really, sir?"

"Bogad, yes! I was a young rascal then," said Uncle Benjamin, with his fat chuckle—"a regular young rascal, sir! You'd hardly believe it to see me now, but I was!"

The juniors certainly agreed with him.

Mr. Todd looked too fat and comfortable and prosperous ever to have been a young rascal at school.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

But they were willing to take his word for it, although appearances were against him.

"I suppose you weren't at Greyfriars, sir?" said Bob Cherry.

Mr. Todd shook his head.

"No, this was not my school, but it was much the same—much the same. I was a regular young rascal, and I make allowances for boys—I make allowances. Now, I have no doubt that my nephew, Alonzo, is a bold, daring young rascal, always getting into scrapes, but, bless my soul, I don't think any the worse of him—not a whit!"

The juniors tried not to grin.

The idea of the Duffer of Greyfriars as a bold and daring young rascal tickled them immensely.

Uncle Benjamin partook of tea, and cake, and other delicacies of the study table, with a good appetite.

He told stories of his boyhood while he had tea, and the juniors listened with respectful interest.

"I don't think boys are what they were in my young days," Mr. Todd remarked, with a shake of the head. "They don't play cricket, and they don't run and swim as they used to do. Now, I have an idea."

"Have you really, sir?"

"I have! I'm thinking of putting you boys through it a little while I'm here," said Mr. Todd. "I'm staying the night, so I shall have plenty of time, I hope."

"Oh, good!"

"I want to see you run, and box, and play cricket," said Mr. Todd. "Then I can show you how we used to do it in our young days."

"How kind you are, uncle!" murmured Alonzo.

"Not at all," said Mr. Todd—"not at all! It is only right of the old boys to impart their knowledge to the young fellows, and help them on. Of course, public school cricket will never be what it was. There were giants in those days, bogad! But I'm willing to show you youngsters how we used to do it."

"You are very good, sir."

"I'll show you immediately after tea," said Uncle Benjamin. "It will make me feel a boy again to have a bat in my hands, bogad!"

The juniors smiled and nodded politely.

They simply could not imagine Todd's uncle as a cricketer, but they were willing to see what he could do.

Tea over, Mr. Todd rose from the table.

"Now," he said, "I'm ready."

"Come on, sir."

Todd squeezed Wharton's arm as they followed Mr. Todd and the others from the study. Todd was beaming.

"Isn't he ripping, Wharton?" he murmured.

"Gorgeous!" said Wharton.

"My Uncle Benjamin is a wonderful man, you know."

"I'm sure he is—marvellous!"

"It's very kind of you to say so, my dear Wharton."

"Not at all—the simple truth," said Wharton solemnly. "I've never seen a man like your Uncle Benjamin before!" They turned out into the Close.

There was quite a crowd waiting there to greet them.

Words had passed round among the juniors that Alonzo Todd's celebrated uncle had arrived, and all the fellows were anxious to see him.

"It's Todd's uncle!"

"Todd major, you know!"

The whispers reached Mr. Todd's ears, and he smiled and nodded at the juniors, in high good-humour.

"Are you coming down to the nets, Harry?" called out Hazeldene.

"Yes; Mr. Todd is going to show us some cricket."

"Oh!"

"That chap play cricket!" said Bulstrode. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you cad!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I dare say you will see me play cricket in a way that will not deserve to be laughed at, my young friend," said Mr. Todd, quite good-humouredly.

"What-ho!" said Bulstrode, sarcastically.

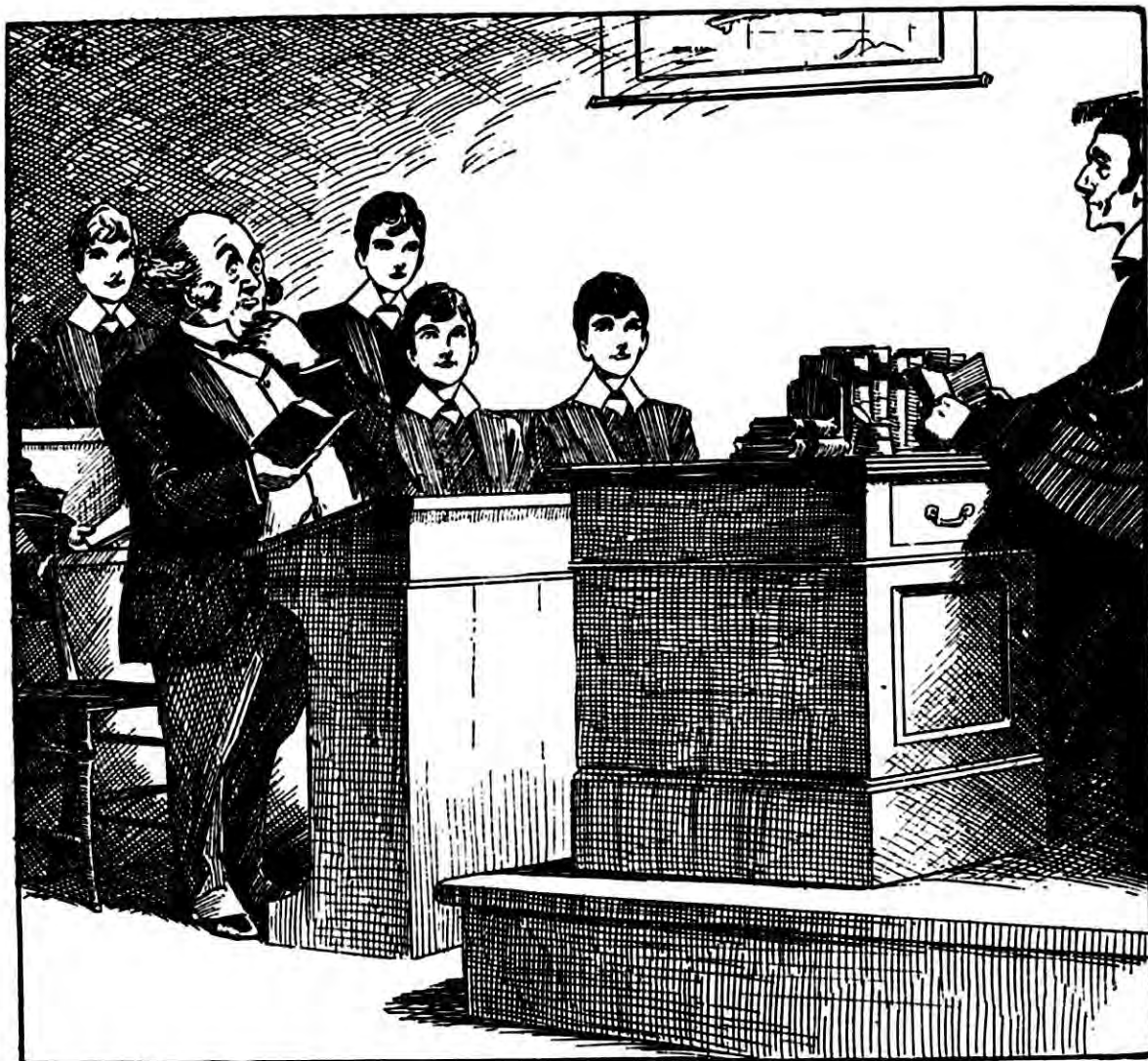
"This way to the pitch, uncle," said Alonzo.

And they went down to the cricket-ground.

The juniors followed them in a body. So did a good many of the seniors. All the Greyfriars fellows seemed eager to see how Todd's uncle would play cricket.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not quite know what to make of him. But they had an idea that Mr. Todd's cricket would turn out to be something on the lines of Alonzo's.

But they were willing to give him a chance. And there was no doubt that Uncle Benjamin firmly believed that he could perform wonders with the bat, and that he was going to give the Greyfriars fellows a really brilliant exposition of what cricket had been like in his younger days.



Uncle Benjamin rose at his desk, book in hand. He meant to show the Remove what Latin really was like in his young days. "Ahem!" said Uncle Benjamin. The Remove waited. "Ahem!" Not a word could Uncle Benjamin remember!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Todd's Uncle Plays Cricket.

MR. QUELCH, the Remove-master, met the party as they proceeded to the cricket-field, and he greeted Mr. Todd politely. The fat little gentleman had met the Remove-master before.

"You are coming down to see the cricket?" he said jocularly.

Mr. Quelch hesitated.

"Pray come, unless you are busy," said Uncle Benjamin.

"I am going to show the youngsters what cricket was like when we were boys."

"Indeed!"

"I think it may do them good."

"I am sure I hope so," said Mr. Quelch.

He walked down to the pitch with Mr. Todd. Perhaps he thought he saw signs of an intention to rag among the juniors, and thought that his presence would keep any practical jokers within bounds.

Practice was going on on the pitch when they reached it. Tom Brown was batting, with Ogilvy, of the Remove, bowling to him.

Uncle Benjamin surveyed the scene with a critical eye.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

"Very good," he said.

"You like it?" asked Wharton.

"Yes. Not quite my old style, but very fair," said Uncle Benjamin indulgently.

"Brown is considered a pretty good batsman, sir."

"Quite passable," said Mr. Todd. "Of course, the bowling is not difficult. I fancy I could take that wicket very quickly. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try, sir," said Nugent.

"Oh, no! It would be rough on Brown, begad!"

"Oh, Brown wouldn't mind, sir. Here, Ogilvy, give Mr. Todd the ball!"

Ogilvy turned his head.

"Eh? What's that?"

"Give us a catch! Mr. Todd is going to show us what bowling's like."

Ogilvy chuckled.

"Oh, all right," he said.

He tossed the ball over, and Nugent caught it and handed it to Mr. Todd. The little gentleman took it.

"You are sure Brown won't mind being bowled?" he asked.

"Quite sure. You don't mind what happens, do you, Brown?"

NEXT WEEK: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Not at all," said the New Zealand junior, laughing.
 "Very well, I will bowl, then," said Mr. Todd.
 And he trotted upon the pitch.
 Alonzo Todd held up his hands admiringly. His admiration of his uncle was profound, and he evidently expected great things.

"Go it, sir!" shouted the juniors.
 And Uncle Benjamin "went it."
 He took up his position at the bowler's wicket, and grasped the round, red ball, and prepared to deliver it.
 Taking a little trot, he bent over as if about to tie up his shoe-lace, and the ball flew from his hand.
 It whizzed through the air, but it missed the batsman and the batsman's wicket by about six yards, and there was a sudden roar.

A fat junior, who was eating jam tarts from a paper bag, was seen to collapse and roll on the grass.

"Look out, Bunter!"
 "What's the matter?"
 "Where's the ball?"
 "Oh!" roared Billy Bunter.
 "Ha, ha, ha! Bunter's got it!"
 "Begad!" said Uncle Benjamin, in wonder. "B-b-b-but he wasn't near the wicket! My goodness!"

Bunter certainly wasn't near the wicket, but he had got the ball. It had caught him in the fattest part of his circumference, and doubled him up like a pocket-knife.

He lay gasping on the turf.
 "Ow! Groo! Yow! Oh!"
 Wharton ran to him.
 "Give me the ball, Bunter!"
 "Groo! Yow!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat up. Jam-tarts were plastered over his face and his waistcoat. He had fallen upon the paper bag, and it had burst.

He gasped and snorted with rage.
 "Ow! What idiot threw that ball at me?"
 "Ha, ha! It was Todd's uncle—bowling."
 "Ow! I'm seriously injured. Ow!"
 "Never mind, Billy; you've been seriously injured before, and you've got over it," said Harry Wharton, and he picked up the ball.

"Ow! Yow!"
 Wharton returned the ball to Uncle Benjamin.
 "I'm really sorry," began Mr. Todd; "that was a slip."
 "It's all right, sir—"
 "I hope he is not hurt."
 "Not at all, sir."
 "But he is lying down."
 "He likes doing that, sir."
 "Dear me! Well, I will bowl again."

Uncle Benjamin grasped the ball once more.
 The juniors stood away, very deep, for Mr. Todd to bowl.
 Whether Bunter was hurt or not, they did not want to be bowled over in the same manner.

Uncle Benjamin bowled again.
 Tom Brown grinned, and made a swipe at the ball, but it was far beyond his reach, and it went hopping and rolling merrily towards the pavilion.

"Dear me!" said Uncle Benjamin.
 Hazeldene returned the ball.
 "I am a little out of practice," Mr. Todd remarked.
 "Looks like it," murmured Bob Cherry, sotto voce.
 "Oh, try again, sir!"
 "Go it, Todd major."

Uncle Benjamin bowled once more.
 The batsman, who was waiting for the ball, made a sudden wild spring into the air, and his bat clattered down upon his wicket, knocking it to pieces.

"Oh!" roared Tom Brown.
 "Dear me!"
 "Ow! Yaroo!"
 "What's the matter, Brown?"
 "Groo! Yoop!"
 "My hat!"
 "Out!" said Uncle Benjamin. "How's that—ch?"

The wicket certainly was down. Tom Brown walked off the pitch, holding both hands to his hip. Mr. Todd had bowled him instead of the wicket, and Tom Brown was hurt. It was not the New Zealand junior's way to make a fuss; but he didn't mean to have any more of Mr. Todd's bowling.

Perhaps Mr. Todd was short-sighted, or perhaps he was not very observant. Or perhaps he had quite forgotten how to play cricket.

At all events, he appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the way he had taken that wicket.

"How's that?" he repeated.
 Harry Wharton laughed.

"Out!" he said.
 "Very good! Send another man in."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.
 Come to London
 To See the Coronation:

Wharton looked round.
 "Will you go in, Nugent?"
 "I don't feel quite up to it," said Frank promptly.
 "You'd better take the bat, Bulstrode—"
 "No jolly fear!" said Bulstrode.
 "Will you, Ogilvy—"
 "Catch me!"
 "Hazel—"
 "Some other time," grinned Hazeldene.
 "Try it yourself, Wharton," Fisher T. Fish suggested. "I guess you're the chap to stand up to that bowling."
 "H'm!" said Wharton rather hurriedly. "Would you mind doing some batting now, Mr. Todd? We've seen how you bowl, and we'd like to see you bat."
 "Certainly!" said Todd's uncle obligingly. "Anything you like, my dear boys."

Mr. Quelch walked quietly away. The fellows were all laughing, and the Remove-master was very near laughing himself. In order not to depart from his gravity, he quitted the cricket-field. He did not wish to appear to encourage the juniors to make fun of Todd's uncle. But there was no doubt that Todd's uncle was decidedly funny.

Mr. Todd grasped the bat that was handed to him, and took up his position at the wicket. The ball was handed to Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Go easy," murmured Wharton.
 The Nabob of Bhanipur nodded assent.
 "The easyness shall be terrific," he replied.

And he gave Uncle Benjamin the easiest of balls. Uncle Benjamin's bat swept the air, and the ball rolled gently on to his wicket, and wrecked it.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Todd.
 "Try again, sir."

"Yes. That was undoubtedly a fluke."

Down came the ball again.
 Mr. Todd made a wild swipe, and smashed his stumps out of the ground with the bat, breaking one of them in half.

There was a roar.
 "Well hit, sir!"
 "Hurrah!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Dear me!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Something Like Boxing.

MR. TODD looked in considerable surprise at his wicket. There was no doubt that he had wrecked it, and that he had smashed a stump.

"Dear me!" he said. "This is—extraordinary!"

"Yes, isn't it, sir?"
 "Very odd indeed," said Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "A little out of practice, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Perhaps you'll come and give us something in the gym, sir, instead of—of cricket."

"Cricket—ye gods!" murmured John Bull.

Mr. Todd nodded genially, and handed over the bat to a junior.

"The bat was hardly the size for me," he said, "and perhaps I am a little out of practice. But let us go to the gym."

Harry Wharton & Co. walked the little gentleman off to the gymnasium. He was not likely to do so much damage there. As Bob Cherry remarked in a whisper, it would come expensive if Mr. Todd smashed a stump every time he swiped at a ball.

Mr. Todd looked round the gym.

"I suppose you do a lot of gymnastics here," he remarked.

"Pretty fair, sir."

"The prettyfairfulness is terrific."

"You box—eh?"

"Oh, yes, sir, we all box a bit."

"I wonder if it is anything like the boxing in my younger days," Uncle Benjamin remarked, with an indulgent smile which hinted that he really didn't think it was. The juniors didn't think it was, either, so they were able to agree with him.

"Do let us see you with the gloves on, uncle," said Alonzo.

"I am sure that it will afford the fellows a great deal of pleasure."

"Now, which of you fellows will box with me?" said Uncle Benjamin.

The juniors looked doubtfully at one another.

"I will promise not to hurt you, and of course we shall have the gloves on," Mr. Todd observed.

"Wharton's the best boxer in the Remove, sir," said Bulstrode maliciously.

"Then Wharton shall box with me."

A FREE OFFER!

See this week's number of
 "THE BOYS' HERALD." id.

"The boxfulness will be terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Rami Singh.

Harry Wharton nodded a resigned assent.

"With—with pleasure, sir," he said.

"I am ready, my lad, if you are," said Mr. Todd, removing his coat. "Someone get the gloves. Ah, thank you, my boy!"

Mr. Todd took the gloves from Frank Nugent, and put them on. It was evidently a long time since he had worn boxing-gloves, and he seemed to be in difficulties about them. "Can I help you, sir?" said Bull politely. "You see, sir, it's best to put the left-hand glove on the left hand, and it—it goes on easier."

"Dear me, of course!" said Mr. Todd.

And the gloves were got on at last.

Mr. Todd, stripped to the braces, with gloves on his fat hands, looked a far from dangerous figure; but he was evidently in deadly earnest.

Harry Wharton donned the gloves and faced him.

Wharton did not expect to get many taps from Mr. Todd, but he tried to take the boxing-match seriously.

The juniors stood round in a ring, with grinning faces, prepared for fun. They were not disappointed.

Uncle Benjamin squared up to Wharton in an extravagant attitude, with an expression of ferocity upon his face that made the juniors chuckle.

Wharton stood upon his guard.

"You're ready?" asked Mr. Todd.

"Yes, sir."

"Quite ready?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"Then look out, my boy."

Harry Wharton laughed. He could not help it.

"I'm looking out, sir."

Tap, tap!

Uncle Benjamin lunged out, and Harry easily pushed his clumsy hands into the air, and stopped him with a gentle tap on the nose.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well hit!"

"Go it, Todd major!"

Tap, tap!

Two more taps on the nose made Uncle Benjamin stagger back, with the water coming into his eyes, and an expression of great astonishment upon his face.

"Dear me!" he murmured.

"Oh, my hat! This is gorgeous," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Todd major!"

Harry Wharton retreated now before the onslaught of the little fat gentleman.

As a matter of fact, Uncle Benjamin had no wind, and if he had ever known how to box, he had long ago forgotten his knowledge on the subject.

But the captain of the Remove did not want to be hard upon him.

Uncle Benjamin was trying to show the Remove how to box, and it would be too rough on him to be knocked out by a junior.

So Wharton retreated round and round the ring, allowing the little gentleman to follow him up, slogging at him terrifically.

The juniors were gasping with merriment.

They could see, of course, that Wharton was only playing with Uncle Benjamin; but Mr. Todd was very far from seeing anything of the sort.

Not a single blow did he get in at Wharton. The guard was too perfect. But he drove the captain of the Remove back, step by step, round and round the grinning ring of Removites.

Loud shouts of encouragement urged on Todd's uncle, and neither he nor Alonzo detected the ironical ring in them.

"Go it, Todd major!"

"Sock it to him!"

"Knock him out!"

"Show him what boxing's like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Round and round went Wharton and Uncle Benjamin, till the little fat gentleman, exhausted and thoroughly winded by the pursuit, at last dropped his hands, gasping.

"Are you done?" he asked.

Wharton looked astonished.

"I—done!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, I—I won't be hard on you!" gasped Uncle Benjamin.

"Oh!"

"I think I have done you pretty completely," said the fat gentleman, stripping off his gloves. "We may as well stop here."

"Oh, good!" said Harry, laughing.

"Quite so, my dear uncle," said Alonzo Todd. "Wharton has been unable to hold his ground against you from the very start. Of course, he could not expect to."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"Well, hardly," assented Uncle Benjamin complacently.

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry—"

Harry Wharton gave Bob Cherry a warning look.

"Quite right," he exclaimed. "I've had enough of it. You must have been a real terror in your younger days, sir."

"I think I was, begad," said Uncle Benjamin. "And I'm glad of an opportunity of showing you young fellows how I used to do it."

"Thank you, so much, sir!"

"Not at all. It's an old boy's duty to do that sort of thing," said Uncle Benjamin. "I'm going to put you through it, my boys. I've asked Mr. Quelch's permission to take the Form in Latin to-morrow morning, before I leave."

"In—in Latin, sir?"

"In Latin, my boy."

"I suppose you were as strong at Latin as you are at boxing, sir, when you were at school?" said Nugent demurely.

"Quite right, my lad, I was," said Uncle Benjamin unsuspiciously. "But never mind the Latin now. I'm going to show you how we used to sprint."

"Oh, are you really, sir?"

"Yes, if you don't funk it."

"Funk it?"

"Yes. If you don't funk it, I'll take you for a cross-country run that will make your hair curl," said Uncle Benjamin.

"My hat!"

"Any takers?" asked Uncle Benjamin genially.

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"You bet," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Then get into your running clothes, my boys, and I'll show you how we used to sprint in my young days," said Uncle Benjamin.

And the grinning juniors obeyed.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

The Sprinters.

"READY, sir?"

"Quite ready, my lads!"

"Who's starter?"

"My dear fellows, I will act as starter with pleasure," said Alonzo Todd. "Under the circumstances—"

"Oh, I'll start you," said Nugent. "I'm not fit to run. Now, then, all in a row."

"Ready?"

"Ready!"

"It's across the field, round by the old barn, and back by the lane," said Nugent. "Mind you don't forget."

"I guess that's all serene."

"Ready?"

"Yes, you ass!"

"Go!" said Nugent, dropping his handkerchief.

The sprinters started.

Away they went down the road from the gates of Greyfriars, and a crowd of juniors who watched them start sent a loud cheer after them.

They turned from the road into the field, and pounded on. The juniors forged ahead at once. They had not expected Todd's uncle to be able to run.

But they had not expected either that he would be quite so short-winded and helpless as he now appeared to be.

Mr. Todd had plenty of pluck and determination. But he had no running powers whatever.

He pounded along like an elephant.

His breath came in short, quick puffs, and he gasped away like a steam-engine getting up steam as he pounded across the field.

His red face grew redder, and it was dripping with perspiration.

The juniors could have simply walked away from him if they had chosen. But they did not do it.

Quite good-naturedly, they dropped behind, and allowed Uncle Benjamin to take the lead.

They grinned at one another as they slackened, and dropped behind the fat, panting form of Todd's uncle.

"How's this for sprinting?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't he a giddy figure for running?"

"Cheese it, Bob; he'll hear you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Uncle Benjamin turned his head.

"Buck up, my lads," he said kindly, "I'm slackening down to give you a chance."

The juniors gasped almost as much as Uncle Benjamin.

"Give us a chance!" murmured Wharton.

"Oh, my hat!"

NEXT WEEK: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Come on, youngsters! Don't let the old fellow run you right off your feet," said Uncle Benjamin encouragingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right, sir," said Harry Wharton faintly. "We'll—we'll buck up, sir. Keep on, sir, and see if you can give us a lead."

"Oh, that's easy enough, I think!" laughed Mr. Todd. And he pounded on again.

The juniors had to slacken still more, in order not to pass him, but they managed to keep behind.

Their pace slackened almost to a walk by the time the field was crossed, and Uncle Benjamin was pounding away round the old barn, the turning-point of the race.

When the little old gentleman looked back, they made a great show of running, but when his back was turned they almost walked.

There was nothing else to be done for it. If they had run, they would have left Uncle Benjamin hopelessly behind, and have arrived at Greyfriars far out of his sight, leaving him to follow them on alone.

But Uncle Benjamin hadn't the slightest suspicion of the real state of the case. He turned his head from time to time to call out encouragingly to the heroes of the Remove.

"Now, then, buck up! Put your beef into it, my lads! Don't let the old fellow walk right away from you, you know."

"My hat!"

"Buck up!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, sir! We'll buck up!"

"You must have given them some awful hard runs at your old school, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Uncle Benjamin chuckled breathlessly.

"I did, begad!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They dashed across the field back to the Friardale Lane. There was a sudden roar from the distance.

Wharton looked round quickly.

"My hat!" he exclaimed, in alarm. "I forgot the bull!"

"Phew!"

"The bull!"

"Look out!"

Bellow, bellow!

"Begad!" gasped Uncle Benjamin.

"Run!" gasped Wharton.

The juniors ran in earnest now.

A big black bull was charging towards them across the field, and the juniors had seen that bull before, and they knew how dangerous he was.

"Buck up, sir!" shouted Wharton.

"My goodness!"

"Run for it!"

Uncle Benjamin pounded on desperately. The juniors ran their hardest, and leaped the wide ditch and the hedge into the lane. Uncle Benjamin rushed after them as fast as he could. But he could not run as they did. Harry Wharton held back from the jump. He would not desert Uncle Benjamin.

"Run, my boy!" gasped the old gentleman. "I will cover your retreat. I will not go and leave you."

"Jump yourself, sir!"

"You first!"

There was no time to waste. The bellowing bull was close behind.

Wharton jumped, and cleared the hedge, and the ditch beyond it, and landed in the lane, with a fine leap.

Uncle Benjamin, highly as he thought of his own athletic powers, would probably have hesitated about taking such a leap at any other time.

But with a charging bull behind him, he was not left much choice in the matter. He made a wild leap at the hedge.

Crash!

The fat little gentleman alighted on top of the hedge, being quite unable to clear it. A disappointed bellow came from the bull. He careered up and down inside the hedge, but he could not reach Uncle Benjamin.

And the little gentleman stayed on top of the hedge only a few seconds—only long enough, in fact, to roll off on the other side.

Splash!

Uncle Benjamin did not know the ditch was there, but if he had known it, it would have made no difference. Right into the deep water he splashed, and perhaps it was fortunate for him that it was deep. Otherwise, he might have had other injuries beside a soaking.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Groo! Help!"

The juniors rushed to the rescue. Uncle Benjamin was dragged out of the ditch. The bull was still bellowing with disappointment on the inner side of the hedge.

Uncle Benjamin stood in the lane, shedding mud and slime and muddy water on all sides.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Come on, sir!" exclaimed Wharton. "You'll catch cold if you stand still for a moment, sir. You must run all the way to the school."

"Groo! Certainly! Ow!"

And the juniors rushed the little gentleman off. They rushed him at top speed down the lane, holding his arm and propelling him on, while he gasped and panted, and panted and gasped.

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Todd. "You—you are running now much faster than you were before. It is very odd."

"We're anxious about you, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"I—I am quite out of breath. I—I think we had better slacken a little," murmured Mr. Todd. "I—I have no doubt that the sudden wetting has deprived me of my wind, you know. I feel quite breathless."

"Very well, sir," said Harry Wharton.

The juniors slackened down, but they kept Uncle Benjamin on the run, and a few minutes later they reached the gates of Greyfriars. A yell of laughter greeted the appearance of Uncle Benjamin.

"Todd's uncle wins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, he's an easy winner," said Bob Cherry; "and he fell at one of the obstacles, too. You'd better get in and get a change, sir."

"Begad, yes!"

"My dear uncle—"

"However, I think I have shown you young fellows how we used to run in my young days," said Uncle Benjamin.

And the juniors replied in a kind of chorus:

"You have, sir! Oh, yes, sir!"

And then Uncle Benjamin was marched off by his dutiful nephew to get a towelling and a change, and it was some little time before Uncle Benjamin made his appearance in public again.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Shut Up!

"NOW, then, you young sweeps, clear out!"

"Loder!" said Skinner, in a loud whisper.

"Let him bawl," said Bulstrode to Skinner, Snoop, and several other kindred spirits. "I'm not going."

"D'you hear?" said Loder.

There was a perceptible diminuendo in the volume of the juniors' talk. Loder was given to making things worse for them. They thought discretion the better part of valour.

"Come on, Bulstrode," said Skinner.

"I'm not moving from here," said Bulstrode, loud enough for Loder to hear.

"We'll see about that!" said Loder.

And the juniors heard him coming along the passage. Bulstrode stood his ground for a second, then he departed with the rest, declaring that he would have waited for the prefect if they had backed him up.

"I wonder what Loder wanted us to clear out for?" said Snoop.

Skinner turned back and made his way cautiously up the stairs again, stopping from time to time and listening.

"Yes," he murmured to himself, "the beast is in the old box-room, and I'll jolly well lock him in!"

And Skinner crept forward. He paused again when he reached that landing from which Loder had chased them. There was a noise of tumbling boxes proceeding from the corridor just beyond. Skinner chuckled. Loder was in the box-room.

Skinner was not brave, but he was resolved to teach Loder a lesson. He went to the door quickly. Arrived at some two feet from it, he made a dive for the handle, and in a minute he had banged the door to and locked it. Taking the key from the lock with as much deliberation as possible, Skinner grinned as he heard Loder shout.

"Open the door, you young hooligans!" said Loder, hammering upon it.

The only reply he got was the echo from the passage. Skinner tittered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who are you?" shouted Loder. "You'd better own up at once. It will be better for you."

"Is it Loder?" asked Skinner, in an assumed voice.

"Yes!" thundered the enraged prefect. "You young monkey, you know it is!"

"He, he, he!"

"D'you hear?"

"Yes," answered Skinner, still keeping up the assumed voice. "I hear you perfectly, whoever you are."

"Whoever I am!" shrieked Loder. "What do you mean? I'm Loder!"



Before Uncle Benjamin left Greyfriars he stood a glorious feed at the tuckshop to all of the Remove Form.

"I would let you out in a moment if I was really sure you were Loder," said Skinner.

"Let me out!" screamed Loder. "Why, you cheeky young monkey, you know you locked me in!"

"What language!" murmured Skinner. "It can't be Loder—he never talks like that!"

For answer Loder banged on the door louder than ever. Skinner chuckled.

"Help! Help!" shouted Loder.

"I really would let you out if you'd be calmer," pursued Skinner, "but I am sure you are not the person you represent yourself to be. I'd better go for assistance, I think." And Skinner made a pretence of walking away. Loder heard the footsteps, and showered his blows on the door faster than ever.

"You young cub!" he yelled. "If you go away I'll skin you!"

"You are only proving to me that you are not fit to be let out," said Skinner, tantalisingly. "I daren't take the risk of liberating such a dangerous fellow."

"Who are you?" roared Loder.

"I daren't tell you that either, I suppose," said Skinner.

"You'd know me afterwards, and perhaps cause me some serious bodily injury—"

"Alonzo Todd!" exclaimed Loder thickly.

An involuntary ejaculation escaped Skinner. Loder had put what he thought a very good idea into his head. He had not in the least thought of Alonzo when he had made use of the assumed voice, but he saw that it would serve his turn admirably now.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

NEXT WEEK: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Todd!" bellowed Loder. "Open the door, you young fool!"

"My dear Loder, pray calm yourself! I couldn't think of such a thing! You're in too dangerous a condition."

This time Skinner got up a very creditable imitation of the Duffer of Greyfriars' voice.

"I'll make you think of something when I get out!" roared the prefect. "Go this instant and get someone to come and let me out!"

"You mean it?" said the pseudo Alonzo Todd.

"Yes, you blessed young lunatic! Go!"

Skinner lost no time in disappearing from the passage. Down into the Close he ran. He was bursting with laughter. Alonzo was not to be seen, but Skinner happening to cannon into Billy Bunter, that worthy supplied him with the information of Todd's whereabouts.

"He's in Mrs. Mimble's," said Billy Bunter; "and next time you go mad mind who you're bumping into, or I'll—"

But Skinner did not wait to hear what Billy Bunter would do next time. He wanted Alonzo Todd. He found Uncle Benjamin's chosen nephew taking the top off ice-cream in Mrs. Mimble's famous establishment.

"My dear Skinner, whatever is the matter? You are quite excited!"

"Quick, Todd!" said Skinner breathlessly. "There's not a moment to lose!"

"My dear Skinner—"

"No, don't talk, Todd! It's very important, really! Will you do me a favour?"

"Certainly, my dear Skinner. My Uncle Benjamin always

impressed upon me the necessity to be obliging. Pray what is the matter—"

"There's someone making a fearful hullabaloo up near the old box-room. From the sound of the voice I should think it's Loder. He's bellowing for someone to let him out—"

"Let him out?" asked Alonzo, in great surprise.

"Yes. I suppose he's got locked in the box-room by some mischance. Here's the key. I want you to go and release him."

And Skinner held out the key to Alonzo. That individual was not so ready to take it now. He did not like Loder's temper any more than most juniors. But he had given his word. Skinner knew he would not break it. Alonzo took the key slowly.

"Could not you go, Skinner?" he asked.

"I would in a minute, but I've so many other things to do, really. And you promised, you know, Todd," he added.

"Very well, Skinner, I will go. My Uncle Benjamin told me never to break a promise. Is Loder very angry?"

"He'll be all right when he's let out," said Skinner evasively. "I should hurry up if I were you. He might ask you to tea."

It did not appear to strike Alonzo Todd as strange that Skinner was very ready to forego such a treat. Without another word he toddled off, leaving Skinner nearly double with laughter. Two minutes later Alonzo was mounting the stairs that led to where Loder was in durance vile. Skinner had judged his time well. There had been no one about since he went in search of Alonzo. Loder heard the approaching footsteps.

"Come on, you lazy young vagabond!" he shouted. "Open the door—quick!"

Alonzo Todd paused on the landing. Loder's voice was terrifying. The Duffer of Greyfriars was in two minds whether to go on or not, but his Uncle Benjamin, he remembered, had told him never to forsake his duty. And Alonzo had an accommodating way of regarding everything as his duty. Alonzo advanced to the door.

"Where have you been all this time? What d'you mean by keeping me pent up like this?"

"Like this, Loder?" said Alonzo, in his mildest tones of surprise.

"Yes, you idiot! It's an hour since you went for assistance."

"Since I went for assistance, my dear Loder? Why, this is my first appearance here to-day!"

"Well, of all the young fibbers!" shouted Loder. "I'll boil you for that when I get out!"

"I should not mind the boiling a bit, Loder, but you really must not accuse me of falsehood. My Uncle Benjamin told me I must never—"

"Oh, blow your Uncle Benjamin! If you have the key let me out at once, I say!"

"Really, my dear Loder, I am afraid to do so. You might do me a mischief."

"I will if you don't, you ass! Don't stand there jawing—"

"Jawing, my dear Loder?"

"Yes!"

And without waiting for Alonzo's reply Loder began to hurl himself against the door. But it was stout enough to resist far more than his attacks. Finding he could not hope to smash it open that way, the enraged prefect began to hurl boxes against it.

Alonzo stood petrified in the passage. He was at his wits' end. He certainly expected instant destruction at Loder's hands if he undid the door.

"Oh, pray don't, Loder! You'll hurt yourself! Please to be more calm!" he said.

"Open—open—open—open, you silly young jay! I've had enough of this!"

"Have you, my dear Loder?" said Alonzo, almost tearfully.

"Oh, I'm so sorry! But, really, I can hardly believe it's you, Loder. You sound more like a madman!"

"Todd!"

"I'm so sorry, Loder, but under the circumstances—"

"Will you open this door?" roared the bully of the Sixth.

"My dear Loder—"

Hammer, hammer, hammer came at the door.

"Let me out, you young sweep!"

Todd hesitated, and then, making up his mind to it, he turned the key. Loder tore the door open the instant he heard the click of the key and rushed out. He collided with the Duffer of Greyfriars, and sent him reeling.

"Now, you young scoundrel—"

He grasped furiously at Todd, but the Duffer of Greyfriars was not quite duffer enough to let Loder get hold of him. He dashed down the stairs, and raced along the Remove passage, with Loder tearing furiously after him.

A little fat gentleman came round the corner, and there was a fearful crash as Todd rushed into him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

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"Ow! My dear Uncle—"

"My dear Alonzo—"

"Yaroo!"

Loder, unable to stop himself in time, rushed into them, and the three rolled on the linoleum together.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Getting on Nicely.

UNCLE BENJAMIN sat up and gasped.

"Oh! Oh, dear! Oh! Ah! Oh!"

"Dear me!" panted Alonzo Todd.

"You—you—you—" yelled the prefect.

He hardly saw Uncle Benjamin in his fury. He reached out and grasped somebody, and began pommeling.

There was a wild roar from Uncle Benjamin. It happened to be the uncle and not the nephew whom Loder was pommeling and pounding.

"Yow! Ow! Help—help!"

"Rescue!" roared Harry Wharton, dashing out of his study.

"Loder's going for Todd's uncle! Rescue!"

There was a rush of juniors to the rescue at once.

Loder might be a Sixth-Former and a prefect, but the Remove were not going to see Todd's uncle pounded by him.

A dozen hands clutched at Loder and dragged him off Todd's uncle, and he was rushed down the passage to the head of the stairs.

There he wrenched himself away from the juniors, and stood holding on to the banisters, and gasping.

"I am going to thrash him, Alonzo—I'll—I'll—"

"Let me get at him!" roared Todd's uncle, dashing up and brandishing his fat little fists. "I'll—I'll—"

"My dear uncle—"

"I am going to thrash him, Alonzo—I'll—I'll—"

But Loder did not wait.

He realised that Todd's uncle meant business, and he realised, too, that he would get into trouble if it came out that he had assaulted a visitor to the school.

He dashed down the stairs; and the juniors judiciously crowded into Uncle Benjamin's way and stopped his pursuit.

The little gentleman calmed down.

"It was most extraordinary!" he exclaimed. "Why was that ruffianly fellow pursuing you along the passage, Alonzo?"

Todd shook his head.

"I really do not know, uncle. Skinner asked me to unlock the door of the box-room for him; Loder had gone in, and somehow he had got locked in. Instead of being grateful for being released, Loder was very angry, and he proceeded to treat me with unjustifiable violence, so I departed hurriedly."

"The rascal!" said Uncle Benjamin. "Dear me! I was going to dine with the Head, and he has put me into a state of great disorder. I shall have to tidy myself."

And the little gentleman hurried off in great haste.

The juniors returned to their studies, grinning. They had no doubt that Alonzo had been the victim of a practical joke, and Loder as well; but no one felt sorry for Loder. The bully of the Sixth deserved what he got, in any case.

Alonzo Todd rubbed his bruises, which were numerous, as he proceeded on his way. He kept a careful eye open for Loder, but the prefect had vanished. The Duffer of Greyfriars was going towards the Common-room when suddenly he almost stumbled over something that stood in his path, a little out from the wall—very carelessly placed, considering that the passage was growing dusky.

The Duffer barked his shins upon it, and uttered a sharp exclamation, and then stopped to ascertain what it was he had run into.

"Dear me, I believe it's whitewash!" said Alonzo, in wonder.

The Duffer of Greyfriars had suddenly come upon a bucket containing some white fluid. There was nothing very strange in that. But it was lying there in the not very much frequented passage below the Remove Form-room.

"What a strange place to leave it!" thought Alonzo. "I came here to get as far away as possible from what my Uncle Benjamin calls the madding crowd. But, instead, I find this passage evidencing the prosecution of busy employment. How strange!"

And this was true. For the whitewash still smoked a little. It was evidently freshly made.

Alonzo started as he caught the sound of hurrying footsteps. The passage echoed the sound with so much reverberation that he could not define which way they were coming.

The way to the Common-room was straight on, however. Alonzo took that direction without any further delay. But before he had taken two steps a figure burst into the passage. It was Skinner.

"Hallo, Toddy! What's the giddy find?"

"Find, my dear Skinner?"
"Yes, cuckoo! What are you staring at?" said Skinner.
"Oh, I was trying to think who could have left here this evidence of the house decorator's art, my dear Skinner!" said Alonzo, pointing to the bucket.

"My only hat!"
"Not at all, my dear fellow," corrected Alonzo mildly.
"It is a bucket of whitewash."

"Go hon! Uncle Benjamin taught you to make wordy lots like that, didn't he?"

"Certainly, my dear Skinner. My Uncle Benjamin is a wonderful man—"

"Rather!" agreed Skinner quickly. "But what are you going to do with the whitewash, Todd?"

"Whitewash, Skinner? Me? It is not mine to do anything with, I'm afraid."

"Finding's keeping, you know, Toddy," went on the other.
"You could do a lot of useful things with that, too."

"But Gosling is most likely the owner—"
Skinner shook his head vigorously.

"I should say the Head," he said promptly.
"The Head, Skinner?"

"Certainly, my dear Todd! This spot is very near his study. He's cleaning up his study. Depend upon it—"

"But surely, my dear Skinner, you are mistaken. Why should the Head whitewash his own study? I thought Gosling would be the person to do that," said Alonzo wonderingly.

"Up till recently, yes, my dear Todd. But, to put it mildly, the Head's about fed up with Gosling. I should say he's taken this job on himself," said Skinner.

"But, my dear Skinner—"

"And he's very likely looking for someone to assist him, even now."

"Dear me! You do surprise me—"

"It's as plain as daylight," went on Skinner, as if Alonzo did not exist. "He's been carrying the whitewash to his study, when the thought occurred to him, and he's gone off to find a suitable person."

"But—" essayed poor Alonzo once more.

"You, very likely," persisted Skinner.

"Me, Skinner? But—"

"Of course, Toddy, my son! Everyone, even the Head knows what a useful fellow you are."

"Yes, indeed, my dear Skinner!" agreed Alonzo, getting a word in this time. "My Uncle Benjamin always told me to make myself useful to everybody—"

"And the Head knows that as well as anyone," said Skinner, with a face of brass. "I can almost hear him dropping that bucket like anything and saying, 'Why, what am I thinking of? Todd's the very fellow!'"

"My dear Skinner, you interest me. Do you really think so?" said Alonzo.

"Rather! I should wade in at once if I were you."

"At once, Skinner?"

"Certainly! The whitewash will be of no use if it's allowed to go cold."

"Oh, dear! I'm so sorry, Skinner. I'm afraid I'm on the horns of a dilemma. And my Uncle Benjamin told me to take the obvious course if ever such a circumstance befel me."

"And that's to start whitewashing the Head's study at once!" said Skinner emphatically.

"But suppose it's all a mistake, my dear Skinner—"

"Oh, all right! Don't believe me!" said Skinner offensively. "If you like, though, you can go and see for yourself. The Head's study door was open when I passed. You'll see whether he hasn't made preparations. Go on! I'll look after the whitewash!"

Alonzo made another effort to conciliate Skinner. But that individual would not relent.

As a matter of fact, he wanted time to get that bucket of whitewash into one of the adjacent rooms. He was afraid of its real owner coming back to claim it before he had primed Alonzo sufficiently to carry out his jape.

Alonzo went without another word.

Skinner whipped up the bucket and disappeared into the nearest room. He was not a moment too soon. Hardly had he closed the door when a well-known, grumbling voice was heard in the passage.

It was the porter, Gosling—and he was not pleased.

"What I says is this here," growled Gosling—"dang them lads! If anything's left for a minit it disappears! That's what it does! Dang 'em!"

And Gosling uttered sundry other expressions more expressive than printable.

"I'd like to look inter one of them there rooms. I would," muttered Gosling, after a fruitless attempt to discover the whereabouts of his property. "Now then!" he continued, knocking at the very door behind which Skinner was ensconced. "Come on with yer. Give us that there whitewash!"

But Skinner had chosen his hiding-place well. He knew
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from former experience Gosling would not dare to enter any of those rooms. Things obnoxious had been known to fall on Gosling when he attempted such things. Skinner guessed very rightly that Gosling was now thinking that several juniors were waiting behind that door to upset the whitewash upon him. He held his breath and let Gosling go on. Alonzo was apparently making an exhaustive inspection of the Head's study.

In a few minutes Gosling had had enough of his search. Grumbling like the proverbial bear, he at last went away, vowing destruction on all juniors. As he went he also banged something up against the door. It fell with a swishing sound.

Skinner would have given his ears to know what it was. But he had to be content until the porter was out of the way. Thinking to give Gosling five minutes to get well away, he fairly jumped as he heard his name pronounced just outside the door. But it was only Alonzo Todd.

"You idiot!" said Skinner, coming out. "What do you want to come back so quietly for? You startled me out of my wits!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, my dear Skinner!" murmured Alonzo. "But it's all right! I'm quite satisfied with what you told me about the Head. He has made elaborate preparations, judging by the appearance of his study."

"And you're going to do it?" said Skinner, beginning to look about for something.

"Certainly, my dear Skinner. Pray what are you looking for?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Skinner. "That's what he dropped then!"

"I'm sure I don't understand, my dear Skinner," said Alonzo. "I didn't see anyone drop anything. Who do you mean?"

"Oh, it's of no account, my dear Todd!" said Skinner, as he picked up a whitewash-brush. "But you'll want this, won't you?"

It was the whitewash-brush that Gosling threw at the door in his temper.

Alonzo was very mystified. He looked vacantly at Skinner.

"Why, my dear Skinner, the Head must have brought it back!" exclaimed Alonzo, as a light seemed to break in on him. "He's looking for me, while I'm looking for him."

"Didn't I tell you, Todd?" said Skinner, assuming quite as much enthusiasm. "Buck up!"

"By all means, my dear Skinner! I'll not lose another moment!" cried Alonzo.

And, suiting the action to the word, Alonzo Todd picked up the bucket of whitewash and toddled off to the Head's study.

Skinner watched him, exhorting him to do his very best, until he was lost to view round the bend in the passage. Then the joker doubled himself up to laugh it off. Alonzo Todd got better and better every day.

Alonzo cantered along merrily. He slopped a good deal of whitewash on his trousers as he went. But that was a detail. He was the Head's chosen. He was preferred to a man of experience—Gosling. Had not Skinner said so?

"What a pity the Head should have had so much trouble to find me!" muttered Alonzo, as he came to the study door. "I've a good mind to go and tell him I'm beginning."

But Skinner's exhortations still echoed in his ears. He must press on.

Alonzo marched in with the spirit of an Ajax defying the lightning. Taking off his coat, he rolled his shirt-sleeves up to the armpits. The fact that half the things in the study were uncovered never even occurred to Alonzo Todd. The whitewashing was the thing! The Head should see what whitewashing should be.

Slosh, slosh, slosh! went Alonzo's brush in the whitewash, just as he had seen his Uncle Benjamin do when that great man was whitewashing his fowl-houses.

Alonzo's first dash for cleanliness brought a picture off the wall.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo. "I hadn't noticed there was a picture on the wall. How extremely unfortunate! I'm so sorry!"

But the principal of experience being gathered from thorns did not occur to Alonzo. He was whitewasher. And had not his Uncle Benjamin always told him that a thing worth doing was worth doing well? And so when Alonzo had finished his well-trimmed patch, the next sweep of his arm brought down more game—two rare old engravings.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo. "There appears to be quite a lot of pictures on the walls. Yet I thought it clear that the Head had made all preparations for me. Ow!"

The last exclamation was occasioned by Alonzo's careless grasp of the upheld brush, letting that utensil fall against

his open mouth. Instantly he appeared to have aged perceptibly. For the whole lower part of his face took on the semblance of a large white beard.

But that was not all. In his surprise he dropped the brush, and, taking a step back to recover, he put his foot in the whitewash. The only thing that occurred to Alonzo was that it ought to be wiped dry at once.

Hastily withdrawing his foot from the bucket, he hobbled round the room, leaving a lovely white trail wherever he went. He was so anxious to find a cloth for the purpose that he failed utterly to notice the depredations he was making. He found a duster under the Head's desk. Wiping his boots, he left it obligingly on the top of the desk. Then he resumed business.

"Slap, dab, slap, dab, up and down the brickwork," goes a once popular song.

But it was as nought to the slap-dabbing of Alonzo Todd. In less than a quarter of an hour he had reduced the Head's study to a simply terrific state. Manfully he plied his festive brush. And he was very impartial, too. Things not usually whitewashed were in luck that day. Alonzo spread a white mantle over all.

"The Head will be pleased!" he murmured.

There was a step at the door.

A fearsome figure in cap and gown appeared in the doorway, and Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, stood looking in upon Alonzo Todd, petrified by what he saw.

"Todd!" he gasped.

Alonzo turned round with a beaming smile.

"Yes, sir," he said; "I'm getting on nicely, sir."

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Gets It.

DR. LOCKE looked at the whitewashed study and at the white-washed Alonzo like a man in a dream. He seemed to be unable to believe his eyes.

"Todd!" he gasped at length.

Todd was startled.

The look on the Head's face did not seem to indicate that he was pleased, yet the Duffer of Greyfriars, who always tried to please everybody, had certainly done his level best to please the Head.

"Ye-es, sir?" he gasped.

"Todd! How dare you?"

The Head gasped out the words.

Todd gave a start of dismay, and dropped the whitewash brush, with a splash, into the pail. Drops of it came out in a spatter over his trousers. But the Duffer of Greyfriars hardly noticed it.

"Oh, dear!" he murmured. "I—I hope you're not angry."

"I—I thought I was saving you trouble, sir."

"Boy! What! Oh!"

"I understood that you wished for assistance in having your study whitewashed, sir," said Todd, in a trembling voice.

He could see that something was wrong now, though he did not quite know what. The Head could hardly articulate.

"Todd! You wretched boy! How dare you?"

A fat figure came along the passage, and Uncle Benjamin looked into the study. Uncle Benjamin had changed into evening-dress for dinner, and he looked more fat and cosy and comfortable than ever.

Even Todd's uncle seemed surprised at what he saw.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed. "Begad, sir, what have you been doing to your study?"

"It—it is this—this wretched boy!" gasped the Head. "Unless he is mad, I cannot imagine why he has treated my study in this way."

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I'm so sorry, sir," said Alonzo. "I—I suppose there's some mistake. I—I certainly understood that as you were having your study whitewashed you required my assistance, and I—I was only trying to be useful and obliging, sir, as my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me."

Uncle Benjamin nodded.

"That is certainly the case," he said. "I have always impressed upon my nephew to be useful and obliging, Dr. Locke."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 109.

Dr. Locke made an effort to control his anger. Had not Uncle Benjamin been there, Todd would certainly have been booked for the licking of his life. But in the presence of his august relative, a guest in the house, too, Dr. Locke felt that there was only one thing to be done.

He accepted the situation with the best grace he could muster.

"I suppose the boy has been the victim of a foolish practical joke," he said. "I believe that is frequently the case with Todd. Todd, you may go, and take that whitewash with you."

"Yes, sir," said Todd meekly.

And he departed forlornly from the study, with the pail of whitewash in his hand, and almost as much whitewash splashed over himself as was left in the bucket.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bull, as Todd came down the Form-room passage. "What on earth have you been doing, Todd? Whitewashing yourself?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Playing ghost, eh?"

"My dear fellows——"

"What on earth have you been up to?" asked Bulstrode.

"I—I fear that I have been deceived," said Todd. "I found a pail of whitewash in the passage, and Skinner led me to believe that the Head wished me to whitewash his study."

There was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Duffer! Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Licked?" asked Wharton, wiping the tears of merriment from his eyes. "Oh, Toddy, you're too funny to live! Have you been licked?"

"I am glad to say that I have not, my dear Wharton; but I cannot help suspecting that the Head would have acted with some violence but for the opportune presence of my Uncle Benjamin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Benny!"

"My dear Bulstrode, that is hardly a respectful way of alluding to my Uncle Benjamin."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner.

"My dear Skinner, it was very wrong and inconsiderate of you to tell me such untruths," said Alonzo. "It has led me into considerable trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha! You funny ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Awfully funny, wasn't it?" said Frank Nugent, with a glare at Skinner. "By the way, Skinner, I want to speak to you."

Skinner left off laughing.

"To me?" he stammered.

"Yes," said Nugent grimly. "I've been looking for you all day, on and off, and I haven't come across you."

"Oh! I—I want to speak to Hazeldene, and I'll see you later. I——"

Wharton caught Skinner by the shoulder and swung him back as he was going. The cad of the Remove looked very alarmed.

"I—I say, you know——" he began.

"Mr. Quelch slugged the whole Form because my young brother had been bullied by a cowardly rotter," said Nugent, with flashing eyes. "I jumped to the conclusion that it was Bulstrode, and I slugged him."

"And got the worst of it," said Bulstrode.

"Yes," said Nugent calmly, "and got the worst of it. And I found out afterwards that the rotten bully in this case wasn't Bulstrode."

"Wasn't it?" exclaimed Mark Linley.

Bulstrode looked at the Lancashire lad with a sneer.

"No, it wasn't, as you see," he exclaimed. "I dare say it is a surprise to you."

Mark looked at him steadily.

"It's your own fault if you're suspected of any bullying that goes on," he said. "We all know you are a bully."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"And we know what to think of you, too," said Bull.

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"Come on youngsters! Don't let the old fellow run you right off your feet!" panted Uncle Benjamin, as he pounded along. "Ha, ha, ha!" gasped the juniors. (See page 10.)

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"I dare say I can get on without your good opinion," he remarked.

"Never mind Bulstrode now," said Frank. "I know who it was bullied my minor, and twisted his arm, and made Quelch rag us in the Form room. It was Skinner. He can't deny it."

"I didn't mean to hurt him," muttered Skinner.

Nugent's eyes blazed.

"No; you twisted a kid's arm so badly that he had to be let off lessons afterwards, and you didn't mean to hurt him!" he exclaimed. "Well, I mean to hurt you. You'll come into the gym. with me, without gloves on."

"Look here, I—"

"Come on!"

"This way!" said Harry Wharton.

Skinner did not move. He stood where he was, his colour coming and going. He had no intention of standing up to Frank Nugent in fair fight.

"Look here," he said awkwardly. "I'm sorry. I really didn't mean to hurt him so much. I'm jolly well not going to fight you, Nugent."

"You cad!"

"Dot him on the boko," said Bull.

Nugent did not touch Skinner.

"The rotter!" he said. "He could bully a little fag who's not big enough to protect himself; he's brave enough for that. Will you come into the gym., Skinner?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

"No, I won't," muttered Skinner; "and if you touch me I'll complain to Mr. Quelch, so there."

Frank's lip curled.

"So you think you're going to get off scot-free!" he exclaimed. "I won't touch you; you're not fit to touch. But take that!"

With a sudden movement, Nugent grasped the bucket of whitewash from the hands of Alonzo Todd. He swept it into the air, turning it over Skinner's head.

A flood of white fluid descended upon Skinner.

"Ow!" he roared. "Ouch! Grooch!"

There was a yell of laughter from the juniors. With startling suddenness Skinner was transformed into a ghost.

He stood, a statue of whiteness, gasping and spluttering and puffing over the floods of whitewash running down his face.

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

"My heye!" It was Gosling's voice, as the school porter came along the passage. "My heye! Nice goings hon, I must say! Wot I says is this 'ere, somebody will 'ave to pay for that whitewash."

"You'd better ask Skinner," grinned Bob Cherry. "He's got it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Gosling was left to argue it out with the spluttering Skinner.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Lalla!

THERE was some excitement in the Remove the next morning.

Uncle Benjamin had told Harry Wharton & Co. that he had Mr. Quelch's permission to take the Form in Latin, and the Form were curious to know how it would turn out.

If Mr. Todd's Latin was equal to his cricket, his boxing, and his running, the lesson was likely to be a very peculiar one.

The juniors looked forward to it, on that account, with great interest. It is safe to say that the classics had never roused such interest among the Greyfriars juniors before. Their faces were expectant when they took their places in the Form-room for morning lessons.

Mr. Quelch was looking very serious. Perhaps he felt that he had been a little too easy in his polite yielding to Mr. Todd.

He may have had doubts, when it was too late, as to whether the old gentleman remembered sufficient Latin from his early youth to have any left to impart to the Greyfriars Remove.

However, he said nothing on the subject until time for the lesson, when he briefly informed the boys that Mr. Todd would take them for next lesson.

There was a slight buzz in the class.

Alonzo smiled beamingly. At last the fellows would see what a wonderful man his Uncle Benjamin really was.

Not many men, after a long life spent in commercial pursuits, could remember sufficient of the Latin of their school-days to take a class in the subject. Perhaps Uncle Benjamin couldn't; but Alonzo didn't think of that.

"Now we shall see," he murmured.

Bulstrode chuckled.

"Yes, we shall see," he murmured in reply. "Don't you think you'd better stand up and cheer when your uncle comes in, Todd?"

"Do you think I ought to do so, my dear Bulstrode?"

"Undoubtedly! You see—"

"Don't be an ass, Todd!" whispered Bob Cherry, dragging Todd back. "Bulstrode is pulling your leg, you giddy ass."

"My dear Cherry—"

"Here comes Uncle Benny!" said Skinner.

"Now we sha'n't be long!" murmured Bull.

Uncle Benjamin entered the Form-room, looking very fat and rosy, and neat, and prim. He smiled at the boys, and bade them good-morning, in the most genial manner, as they rose respectfully.

"Good-morning, sir!"

"Ahem!" said Uncle Benjamin. "With the kind permission of your Form-master, my boys, I am going to take you this lesson in—in, Latin—"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Bulstrode.

Mr. Quelch gave Bulstrode a stern look.

"Silence in class!" he exclaimed.

Bulstrode gave him an impertinent look.

"Did you speak to me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. Take fifty lines."

"Fifty lines, sir."

"Yes—and be silent."

"I thought we were under Mr. Todd for this lesson, sir," said Bulstrode.

"Shut up, you cad!" murmured Tom Brown. "What do you want to make trouble for?"

"You will take a hundred lines, Bulstrode," said Mr. Quelch, hardening his lips. "The boys are ready for you to proceed, Mr. Todd."

Mr. Todd went to the desk that had been set apart for him. He blinked at it, and looked over the books that lay upon it, and there was a perceptible hesitation in his manner. Was it possible that the books were strange to Uncle Benjamin—that he had forgotten such old familiar friends as Virgil and Horace—that he no longer saw, in his mind's eye, such old acquaintances as the pious Aeneas and the snow-clad summit of Socrates? Was it possible?

The Remove watched him with great interest.

Uncle Benjamin rose at the desk, book in hand, and blew out his fat cheeks in a very important manner. He meant to show the Remove what Latin really was like in his younger days.

But—

Not a word could he remember!

The class waited. A faint giggle was heard in the silence of the class-room, and then it died away.

The Remove waited for Uncle Benjamin.

He stood at the desk, blinking at the first page of the book he had opened, which was the first that came to hand. His red face grew redder.

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his mind during the fifty years that had elapsed since his schooldays, that even the "Q. Horatii Flacci" on the title-page puzzled him.

He simply couldn't read it, let alone read it out. As for telling the boys to construe, he had forgotten how to construe himself.

"Ahem!" said Uncle Benjamin.

The class waited.

"Ahem!"

There was a faint giggle again.

"Hum! H'm! Ahem!"

Todd looked puzzled. Everybody else grinned. Alonzo could not imagine why his uncle did not go ahead. The others could.

"I guess the guy is stuck fast," murmured Fisher T. Fish.

And the others "guessed" so, too.

"Ahem!" said Uncle Benjamin, clearing his throat.

"Ahem!"

"If you please, sir," said Bulstrode.

"Yes, my boy?"

"Would you mind telling me what book it is?"

"Ahem!"

"I can't find that word in my Virgil," said Bulstrode.

"Eh?"

"Is it a Latin word, sir?"

"Ahem!"

"Perhaps you'd tell us what part of speech it is, sir," said Bulstrode calmly, apparently quite unconscious of Mr. Quelch's frowning brow. "Is it a noun, sir?"

"H'm!"

"You might tell us the case, sir, and then I could work it out myself."

"Ahem!"

"Silence, Bulstrode!"

"Yes, sir. I only want to know, you know."

"Silence!"

The Remove were all grinning. Even Mr. Quelch's frowning brow could not stop that. Uncle Benjamin certainly was amusing that morning.

"Ahem!" said Uncle Benjamin.

"We've had that before," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ahem!"

"My hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific."

"He's just going to begin," said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Uncle Benjamin blinked at the book and blinked at the class. Suddenly an idea flashed into his mind. Why should he read the Latin at all? Better to make one of the pupils do it.

"Bulstrode!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir."

"Stand up!"

"Yes, sir."

"You will read," said Mr. Todd.

Bulstrode fixed his eyes upon his book.

"Well, read," said Uncle Benjamin.

"I am reading, sir," said Bulstrode innocently.

"I—I mean aloud."

"Oh, you didn't say so, sir!"

"Proceed at once, Bulstrode."

"Yes, sir."

Bulstrode proceeded. It was the second book of Virgil that he had in his hand, and he started at "Conticue omnes" and read on. Uncle Benjamin looked puzzled. His own book started at "Maecenas atavis," and he could not make them agree.

"Stop, Bulstrode!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"You have the wrong book."

"Yes, sir."

"Sit down. You are a stupid boy."

"Thank you, sir!"

Bulstrode sat down.

"My only hat!" murmured Harry Wharton. "I don't think I ever saw a Latin lesson quite on these lines before."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in class!"

"Ahem! Perhaps," said Mr. Todd, whose fat face had gradually been assuming the hue of a well-boiled beetroot—"perhaps it would be better if I should read it out to you."

The juniors chuckled.

They wanted to hear Mr. Todd read it out. As Bulstrode remarked, there would be a quantity of quantity that would be very interesting.

"Maecenas atavis edite regibus," began Mr. Todd.

Bulstrode looked up.

"Would you mind construing, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Todd did not appear to hear the question. He turned over the leaf hastily.

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"Ahem! I think we will commence here: 'Quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres—'"

"Yes, sir. Shall I construe, sir?"

"Certainly, Bulstrode."

"Very well, sir. Quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres—" said Bulstrode, and he went on deliberately to construe. "If I am a liar I am taken to quod—"

There was a yell from the Remove.

They could not help it. Mr. Quelch's brow was like thunder. But the Remove could not help it; they roared. "Is that correct, sir?" asked Bulstrode blandly.

"Yes, I think so," said poor Mr. Todd, who hadn't the faintest idea of the meaning of that well-known line. "You may go on, Bulstrode."

"Certainly, sir. Sublimi feriam sidera vertice—"

"Very good!"

"Sublimely ferocious—"

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

"Go on!" said Uncle Benjamin.

The poor gentleman had evidently so utterly forgotten his Latin that he did not object to "sublimi feriam" being rendered as "sublimely ferocious."

But Bulstrode could not go on. The Remove were yelling with laughter, and Bulstrode himself broke down and giggled helplessly.

Uncle Benjamin closed his book.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, the truth dawning upon him at last, that Bulstrode was deliberately "pulling his leg."

"I think it is time for me to pack my bag."

And he hastily rolled out of the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch frowned at the laughing class.

The laughter died away.

"I have no doubt, Bulstrode, that this seems very comic to you," said the Remove-master quietly; "but the Form-room is no place for your peculiar sense of humour. If you cannot construe such a line as 'sublimi feriam sidera vertice,' it is evidently necessary for you to devote a little more time to your lessons; and you will stay in an hour after classes this afternoon to do so. We will now proceed."

And they proceeded.

But Bulstrode did not care for the hour's detention—the ragging of Uncle Benjamin was worth it.

And the Remove thought so, too, for they were bursting into incessant giggles all the morning, and after morning lessons, Bulstrode received quite an ovation from the class. There were few fellows who would have ventured to construe in that way in the presence of the Form-master, and Bulstrode certainly had shown plenty of nerve; and so for a time Bulstrode found himself a hero, and in the language of the poet he had rendered so humorously, he also seemed to strike the stars with his sublime head.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bulstrode's Mistake.

THE Remove did not see Uncle Benjamin again that day, as his train left Friardale before morning lessons were over. But in spite of the old gentleman's peculiar ways, they liked him very well, and delighted Alonzo by speaking quite affectionately of him.

Even Bulstrode was in a good humour with him, having scored off him so well to the admiration of the whole Form. Alonzo said that he hoped his uncle would come to Greyfriars again soon. And the juniors said they hoped so, too—anticipating more fun.

Uncle Benjamin was destined to come again ere long—though under circumstances that Alonzo and the other fellows were far from anticipating at present. But just now the Remove had other matters to think about, more important than Uncle Benjamin. There were troublesome times ahead for the chief spirits of the Greyfriars Remove. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Form, had known it for some time, and, in fact, Bulstrode was so intent upon making trouble, that it could hardly fail to escape his notice. But Wharton went on his way quietly, and made no sign; and if Bulstrode's determination troubled him at all, he did not show it.

There had always been friction between Wharton and Bulstrode, and it seemed to be coming to a head at last. Bulstrode could not forget that he had been captain of the Form before Wharton came; and although Wharton had been elected by a big majority, he could not concede to Wharton a right to the post. And it seemed to Bulstrode now that matters were working his way, and that with an effort he might be able to realise his ambition—to take the place from Harry, and leave his rival out.

Wharton was a little too much given to disdaining the machinations of his enemy. He would take no trouble to conciliate anybody. If the Remove wanted him for Form-captain, they could have him; and if they didn't, he would resign. That was the way he looked at it, and it was a way that put many fellows' backs up. They wanted their opinions and their votes taken a little more account of.

Bulstrode made no such mistake. There were a good

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many fellows in the Remove who would have been pleased to "give Wharton a fall," as they expressed it, careless of any possible consequences. And Bulstrode turned that feeling very much to his own advantage. And possibly Harry did hold his head a little too high, and disdained a little too much anything his rivals could do.

"The chaps are talking about a new election for Form-captain," Frank Nugent remarked at tea that evening in the study. "All rot, of course!"

Wharton looked up.

"A new election!" he repeated.

"So they say."

"For Form-captain!"

"Yes."

Wharton laughed.

"Then they are not satisfied with me?" he asked.

Nugent looked uneasy.

"It's Bulstrode's doing," he said. "I suppose it will come to nothing. All you've got to do is sit tight."

Harry shook his head.

"I sha'n't do that," he said. "If the fellows don't want me I shall resign, and then they can have their election, and decide for themselves."

"And you'd put up against Bulstrode?"

"I don't know. Perhaps, and perhaps not."

Nugent looked alarmed.

"My dear chap, you can't stand out!" he exclaimed. "If you retired in earnest, Bulstrode would get in as Form-captain, that's certain."

"The certainfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

"Well, the Remove would have what they want then."

"Yes; but—"

Nugent paused. He had more than once observed that Wharton was given to being what he called touchy on some points. And on this question of yielding up his place as Form-captain, Wharton was especially touchy. The study door opened, and Bob Cherry looked in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed. "Going to have tea? This is where I come in."

"Come in, by all means," said Harry cordially.

"Mossoo's gone," said Bob, as he sat down to the tea-table. "He looked quite seedy."

Wharton nodded. Monsieur Charpentier, the French-master of Greyfriars, had been suffering in his health for some days, the result of a bad cold, and it had been arranged for him to leave the school for the seaside for a week. A substitute was taking his place at the school during his absence, but the new master had not yet arrived.

"Poor old Mossoo!" said Nugent. "I wonder what the new chap will be like?"

"I heard Loder say he was a younger man. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter!"

Billy Bunter looked in, blinking through his big spectacles.

"Good-bye, Bunter!" said Nugent.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Farewell!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Close the door after you."

"Look here," said Billy Bunter wrathfully, "I haven't had my tea!"

"Sorry. Good-bye!"

"I've got some news for you chaps—"

"Rats! Good-bye!"

"It's about the French-master—the new one. What do you think?"

"I think there would be less draught if the door were closed," said Nugent.

Billy Bunter closed the door, keeping on the inside of it, however, blinking wrathfully at the chums of No. 1 Study.

"You're on the wrong side of the door, Bunter."

"Oh, really—"

"Buzz off!"

"Look here, I've got startling news!" said Bunter. "You remember that French chap who kidnapped the Head's daughter? Lasalle, I think his name was."

"Yes," yawned Nugent.

"Well, my belief is that he's coming back," said Bunter impressively.

"Phew! What makes you think so?"

"Well, there's a new Frenchman coming here—"

"That's Monsieur Charpentier's substitute, while he's away at the seaside, you are!"

"How do you know that it isn't that other French villain in disguise?" demanded Billy Bunter. "The idea occurred to me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

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

"Look here—"

"Oh, cheese it, Bunter! And don't read newspaper serials, and get fat-headed ideas into your napper!" said Wharton. "You can have tea here if you like, but stop your rot!"

"Oh, really—"

"Ring off!"

"Well, as you're so pressing, I'll have tea with you," said Bunter. "Bull was urging me to have tea with him, but I give you fellows the preference."

"Oh, don't do that!" said Nugent politely. "We're willing to take a back seat. Go and have tea with Bull, by all means."

"Yes, do!" said the others all together.

Bunter blinked round at the juniors.

"I—I'm sitting down now," he said. "It's—it's not worth the trouble of getting up again, when you come to think of it. But about that Frenchman coming here in disguise. You know, I think it's very likely—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door opened, and Bulstrode stepped in, with Skinner at his heels. The Remove bully looked very suspiciously at the chums. He seemed to have an idea that their laughter might be in connection with himself.

"What's the joke?" he demanded.

"Oh, it's Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, grinning. "He thinks that Mossoo's substitute may be Felix Lasalle, in disguise, coming here to kidnap the Head's daughter again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Ass!" said Bulstrode. "You'd better tell that to Todd. I say, Wharton, I came here to speak to you. I've been talking it over—"

"Talking what over?"

"About the state of things generally. Lots of fellows in the Remove are agreed upon the point with me, that things aren't in a satisfactory state."

"Indeed!"

"The general opinion seems to be, that things would go much better under a new Form-captain," said Bulstrode. "It would make a change, and would let a sort of new life into the management, so to speak."

"Well?"

"The general opinion seems to be that you should resign."

"The general opinion of yourself and Skinner and Snoop, I suppose?" said Harry Wharton, with a scornful smile. Bulstrode reddened.

"I believe it's the general opinion of the Form!" he exclaimed hotly.

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Cherry—"

"More rats!"

"I agree with Bulstrode," said Skinner. "And I must say that things would go much better with Bulstrode as Form-captain."

"Bullying allowed, and that sort of thing!" said Frank Nugent sarcastically. "Fags' arms twisted, without a dose of whitewash to follow—eh?"

Skinner did not reply.

"Look here," Bulstrode exclaimed roughly, "I say what I think, and I believe a lot of other fellows in the Remove think the same. I think that Wharton ought to resign. If the Remove want him, they can elect him over again, I suppose."

"Of course!" said Skinner.

Wharton set his lips.

"If a majority of the Form want me to resign, they can say so," he replied. "I don't resign till then."

"You mean to hang on while—"

"I mean to hang on till then," said Wharton, with a nod. "And I don't mean to discuss the matter with you, Bulstrode, or with Skinner either. I shall be obliged if you will get out of the study."

Bulstrode burst into an angry laugh.

"Very well," he exclaimed. "You'll hear something more about this, that's all, Wharton. We're going to bring you down off your perch."

"Oh, get out!"

Bulstrode and Skinner tramped out of the study, Bulstrode slamming the door behind him with a slam that echoed the length of the Remove passage. Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, now Wharton's going to get the order of the boot, what do you say to backing me up to become captain of the Remove—"

"Dry up!" roared Bob Cherry.

And Bob looked so ferocious that Billy Bunter, contrary to his usual custom, dried up at once.

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THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Taken In.

"YOU don't say!"

"But I do, Skinner!" said Bulstrode.

"What! You mean to say that—"

"Yes. I mean to say that the fellow who took Miss Rosie away from her home is coming here as the new French-master!" persisted Bulstrode.

"Rats!" said Ogilvy.

"Shut up, ass!" snapped Bulstrode. "Can't you see Todd coming this way?"

The Scotch junior grinned. Until Bulstrode had spoken he had failed to notice the advent of Alonzo Todd. Snoop emphasised the fact that a jape was on by winking vigorously.

"Yes," went on Bulstrode loudly. "And I think it's a jolly shame!"

Alonzo Todd apparently woke from the brown study he was in. He looked anxiously to where the chums were standing. Bulstrode was apparently in distress, so Alonzo felt himself behoven to assist, if possible. But he did not approach at once.

"Rather. I should think so, Bulstrode," said Skinner.

"What ever can the Head be thinking of? Going balmy?"

"Dear me!" thought Alonzo. "What would my dear Uncle Benjamin think if he knew poor Dr. Locke was in such a fearful plight?"

But the Duffer of Greyfriars still kept at a distance.

Bulstrode, however, meant that he should not escape. Louder and louder waxed the confab.

Ogilvy was rather conscience-stricken. He thought Alonzo might be let off for once. But the others were obdurate.

"He's fair game," Snoop said. "What does a fellow want wandering about the Close like that for? Go on, Bulstrode. Tell us some more about the new master."

Alonzo Todd pricked up his ears. Despite all his Uncle Benjamin's efforts, Alonzo had certainly developed the bump of inquisitiveness.

"He's a villain!" said Bulstrode. "Take my word for it. The fellow will end up a murderer, or something quite as bad!"

"Shame!" echoed the juniors.

Alonzo edged a little nearer. He was deeply alarmed by Bulstrode's wild utterances.

"The Head ought to be ashamed of himself, bringing such a chap to Greyfriars!" went on Bulstrode. "What do you think, Todd?"

Alonzo started as if he had been shot. Until that moment he had not dreamed that anyone had been aware of his presence.

"Think, Bulstrode?" he asked, in genuine alarm.

"Yes," said the Bully of the Remove. "What do you think of the Head bringing that fellow who abducted Miss Rosie here as the new French-master—"

"My dear Bulstrode—"

Skinner, Snoop, and chorus groaned.

"But I was not aware that M. Charpentier was leaving," said Alonzo very anxiously.

"Neither are we supposed to be, Todd," went on Bulstrode importantly. "It's a secret."

"Oh, dear! I'm so sorry, my dear Bulstrode. My Uncle Benjamin told me never to have any secrets. But surely you cannot be serious?"

"Rather!"

"My dear Bulstrode, something must be done!" gasped Alonzo.

"Something must be did."

"How callous, my dear Ogilvy, to jest at such a time! Pray, what do you suggest, my dear Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode flung up his hands as if he were utterly prostrated by the magnitude of the task. The others looked at Alonzo as if he were the cause of it all. Alonzo looked from one to the other as if entreating their utmost indulgence.

"May I suggest that I write to my Uncle Benjamin for advice?" he said meekly.

A vigorous shaking of heads intimated a decided negative.

"There's no time, you see, Todd," said Skinner.

"Justice must fall swiftly," said Snoop, with awful gravity. "He's coming to-day."

"To-day!" cried Alonzo, in wild alarm. "Oh dear!"

"And there's not one of us at liberty to watch the villain," said Bulstrode.

"Not one, Bulstrode?" asked Alonzo anxiously. "What ever is the Head thinking of?"

"I suppose he's unaware that he's engaging the same man."

"Surely we could form ourselves into a courageous band and frustrate the villain, my dear Bulstrode?"

"I've got to mend my football boots," said Ogilvy quickly. "And I'm swotting up like anything for the exam," explained Snoop.

"You understand my case, don't you, Todd?" said Skinner. "I'd come with your little band of heroes like anything, but I've promised to help Bull with his Latin—"

"Oh, certainly, Skinner! You could not think of breaking your promise, could you?"

Skinner winced. Alonzo had a way of unconsciously driving things home.

"And I'm simply crammed up with engagements, Todd," concluded Bulstrode.

"Dear me! How very unfortunate!" reflected Alonzo. "I'm afraid my little band of heroes will be reduced to me alone. Skinner, don't you think I had better go to the Head first—"

Alonzo stopped precipitately. Bulstrode & Co. had thrown up their hands in attitudes of horror. Alonzo Todd retreated, thinking they were going to hit him.

"That's just what we want to avoid," said Bulstrode. "The Head would merely think we had got hold of some cock-and-bull story."

Alonzo was very much impressed, but he hadn't the least idea what to do.

"If someone would only meet him—" began Skinner thoughtfully.

"My dear Skinner!" gasped Alonzo.

"Oh, I only meant meeting him and putting him off the scent!" said Skinner, looking very sympathetically at Alonzo Todd. "Of course, it would take a brave chap. But it ought to be done. It could be done. But it's asking too much of anyone, isn't it, Todd?"

Alonzo shuddered as if a mild earthquake were agitating his spare frame. All eyes were on him. He looked as if he would have been glad to sink through the floor. Then the recollection of what his Uncle Benjamin had said to him came to his aid.

"I should be the last one to shirk a duty, my dear school-fellows," he said. "But is there no other way of circumventing this awful man?"

"He'll be on his way here from the station now," said Bulstrode, looking at his watch. "I wish I were at liberty! I'd soon put him off the mark. This is simply dreadful!"

"Oh, my dear Bulstrode, pray don't be put out like that! If it is to fall on me to save my fellows, I cheerfully accept the situation. My Uncle Benjamin told me cowardice was the worst of all vices. I will meet and defeat this villain!"

And the juniors simply stared at the heroic light in Alonzo Todd's eyes. They realised that on this occasion Todd's Uncle Benjamin was really helping them in a wonderful manner. They clapped Alonzo on the back effusively, praising his valour.

"Good old Todd!" said Skinner. "He's a plucked one, anyway! Three cheers for Uncle Benjamin! Hurrah, hurrah!"

"Thank you, my dear fellows!" said Alonzo, beaming on them. "The credit is indeed due to my dear respected uncle. I will act at once. He told me to do so always."

And to further cheers Alonzo Todd strode off to the gates like a giant refreshed with wine. If he had not been gratified with the praises of his Uncle Benjamin, he would perhaps have noticed that the cheers gradually changed to hilarious laughter as he got farther away. But the soul of Ajax had entered into Alonzo Todd.

Then the problem of getting past Gosling presented itself. But Alonzo was in luck. The porter was asleep. The Duffer of Greyfriars felt that he was in luck. The chance was too good to be lost. In another moment he was in the road. Putting on some speed, he got well away.

There was no one in sight. Alonzo began to think he was perhaps the victim of another joke. Then his heart throbbed wildly. There, not a quarter of a mile down the road, was a man hastily approaching the school. He carried a suit-case.

Alonzo's wits were scattered for the moment—that is to say, they were in a more than usually disordered state. But fool's luck is proverbial. Just as he was about to hide behind the hedge, with a view to pouncing on the man when he came abreast, he recollected that very likely the man would get the better of it. No. Why should he not entice this man somewhere, and get him safely under lock and key?

Alonzo glowed with triumph as the idea occurred to him. Yes, he would do it. But where? That was a poser for Alonzo. But he was in luck again. The box-room close to the Remove dormitory would do.

And Alonzo Todd strode forward to meet his "enemy." They met sooner than Alonzo would have preferred, despite his resolutions.

"Ah, monsieur! Good-day eet ees!" said the stranger, putting down his suit-case, and making the most elaborate of bows. "You are from ze Greyfriars, ees eet not?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

NEXT: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

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ONE
PENNY.

Alonzo was fearfully perturbed, but he managed to return the salute.

"And what ees your name? Ze name of monsieur who ees so kind as to meet me, I would?"

"Oh dear!" thought poor Alonzo. "He knows I came to meet him."

Alonzo's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

"Why, my boy ees eet zat you are afraid of me? Ha, ha, ha! I only come veez myself to relief Monsieur Charpentier. Ha, ha, ha! Come, tell me ze name of you!"

"Alonzo Todd" that individual managed to say in a faint whisper.

"Ah, ze funny boy! Monsieur Charpentier told me of you many times. Bon jour, monsieur! I am delight zat you show me ze way!"

"What a fearful crammer!" thought Alonzo.

But the mention of showing him the way brought Alonzo to his senses.

"I shall be very pleased to show you the way, sir," said he, realising to its full extent the awful meaning that underlay his words.

"Good eet ees! And you know all about ze college—eh?" "Yes," said Alonzo, in as near a return to his usual self as could be expected. "Please to follow me, sir."

They had been drawing nearer and nearer to the school all this time. They reached the gates. Alonzo's heart rejoiced as he saw that Gosling still slept like a top.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the new master. "He is having ze good time veez heemself!"

Alonzo's heart sank. The "villain" would surely wake Gosling, then all would be lost.

But they got through safely. Alonzo hastened on towards the stairs that led to the Remove dormitory. The journey seemed endless.

"How many of ze funny things have you done to-day, Monsieur Todd?" inquired the Frenchman suddenly. "You are ze life and soul of ze college—eh?"

"Funny things, sir?"

"Yes. Ze tings zat you do and mean it not as it is."

"Not as it is, sir?" replied Alonzo, hastening on.

"Ha, ha, ha! He ees ze parrot!"

"Parrot, sir?" said Alonzo, showing the way up the dormitory stairs. "I'm so sorry, sir, but I'm afraid I don't follow you."

"Ha, ha, ha! Ze funny boy! No, my boy; I am follow you!"

"Yes, sir," said Alonzo meekly, anxious only to get his prisoner under lock and key.

"Ma foi!" cried the Frenchman, catching sight of the beds through the open door of the dormitory. "I am put veez ze boys eet ees! Vhat ees zees?"

"Oh, no, sir! Not in there. This is your room, if you please," said Alonzo politely.

"Zat?" almost screamed the Frenchman.

The door that Alonzo held open revealed a little, dark room. It was lighted by one narrow window, and was littered with boxes and rubbish.

"Yes, sir. It is only temporary. I hope you will be better suited for the evening."

"Temporary!" exclaimed the new master excitedly. "Eet ees only feet for ze pig!"

And he walked into the little room and kicked over one or two boxes to show his contempt.

Alonzo's pulse beat wildly. Here was his chance indeed. In an instant he had banged the door to. Horror! There was no key in the lock! All his trouble had been for nothing. But what was that under his hand? A staple! The door was made to fasten on the outside. Quick as thought Alonzo clapped the loop over the staple. The "villainous abductor" of Miss Rosie was a prisoner.

There was no sound from within for a moment. Then the room echoed with hearty laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ze good shoke eet ees! Eet serves me right for asking you vhat funny zeenga you do to-day! Ha, ha, ha! Ze good shoke! But open ze door, Monsieur Todd! Ha, ze good shoke!"

"No, it is not a joke, you bad man!" said Alonzo unctuously.

"Eh? Vhat eet ees?" cried the astonished prisoner. "Not ze shoke? Open ze door—at once!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind," replied Alonzo Todd, in a much braver voice than he had possessed for the last twenty minutes. "You can't deceive me. I know who you are. I've heard all about you. You are the villain who took Miss Rosie away, and you've only come here to murder us!"

"Ah! Ze boy ees mad! Monsieur Charpentier vas right! I am lost!"

"And so you deserve to be! You naughty, wicked man—"

Alonzo got no further.

"Help, help! I am so prisonair of ze madman!" shouted the Frenchman. "Help, help!"

"You can shout as much as you like. It will not avail you, you monster!" said Alonzo.

And as the new master commenced to batter boxes and other things at the door he fled down the passage for his life.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Cruel Blow!

BULSTRODE doubled up in the passage with merriment. The practical jokers had watched Alonzo escort the Frenchman into the house from a safe distance. It seemed almost too good to be true, but Todd had done it. The idea of Todd's marching the new French master into a box-room and locking him in seemed inexpressibly comic to Bulstrode & Co. They roared and roared.

"My hat!" murmured Skinner. "There will be a row about this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it was really Bulstrode's idea," said Snoop, who was getting a little scared. "I—I only meant Todd to meet the chap and talk to him. But to lock a master up in a room is jolly serious—worse than locking Loder up—"

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode, beginning to feel a little uneasy himself. "Shut up! Todd won't give us away, anyhow."

"Of course not," said Ogilvy. "He's a champion ass, but he's not a sneak!"

"But he'll blurt it all out before he knows he's been faped, if there's a row," said Snoop. "Remember, it was your idea, Bulstrode—Ow!"

Smack!

The back of Bulstrode's hand caught Snoop across the mouth, and effectually stopped him. The cad of the Remove staggered back.

"You jolly well shut up!" said Bulstrode. "If there's a row, I jolly well know you'll sneak out of it, anyway!"

"Well, I suppose we shall own up if Todd gets into a row with the powers that be," said Ogilvy uneasily.

"Oh, rats!"

Bulstrode tramped away with his hands in his pockets. Skinner followed him. Skinner was feeling uneasy, too. He could not help realising that the jape had gone a little too far this time.

"We'd better see Todd," he said. "If he gives us away, it will be a licking for us, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"If he gives Quelch a chance at me, I shall get it hot," he said. "But if he does, I'll—I'll smash him!"

"That won't undo the licking."

"Rats!"

Bulstrode was evidently not in a humour to be argued with. The two practical jokers—neither now feeling very pleased with the joke—hurried along the Remove passage. They paused as they caught sight of Mr. Quelch.

The Remove-master was looking very angry.

"What is that terrible noise?" he exclaimed, catching sight of Bulstrode, and addressing him before he could escape.

"I—I don't know, sir."

"It seems to proceed from the box-room," said the Remove-master. "Has someone been locked up in a room for some silly joke?"

"I—I haven't done it, sir."

The Remove-master strode towards the box-room stairs. Todd was just dashing down, and he almost dashed into Mr. Quelch.

"Todd! Stop!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Todd.

"What is that noise up there?"

"That's the villain, sir!" panted Todd. "I've fastened him in, sir."

"What!"

"He can't escape, sir! I've fastened him in, and now all you have to do is to telephone for the police and have him arrested, sir."

Bulstrode and Skinner scuttled away. Mr. Quelch was staring at Alonzo Todd as if he had suddenly been petrified.

"Arrested!" gasped the Form-master, at last.

"Yes, sir."

"You have fastened someone up in the box-room, Todd?"

"Yes, sir; quite safe, sir."

"Who is it?"

"The French villain, sir; the circus man who kidnapped Miss Rosie, sir."

"Todd! Are you mad? I saw you crossing the Close with that gentleman; he is the new French master who is taking Monsieur Charpentier's place this week."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

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"Oh, no, sir. He is in disguise."

"D-d-disguise!"

"Yes, sir. He is really Lasalle, the desperate villain who kidnapped the Head's daughter, sir, and I've fastened him up, so that—"

"Are you out of your senses, boy?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "This French gentleman is a man I am well acquainted with."

"Oh, sir!"

Mr. Quelch dashed up the box-room stairs. He tore open the door, and a wild, gesticulating figure rushed towards him.

"Ha! It ees zat I am release!" gasped the Frenchman. "I have been ze victim of ze practical shoke, monsieur."

"I am aware of that, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I assure you that the joker shall receive the most condign punishment, Monsieur Leblanc. Pray accept my most profound apologies!"

The Frenchman waved his hands.

"Not at all, my dear Monsieur Quelch—not at all! It is enough. I am satisfy!"

"I am very sorry—"

"Not at all, monsieur."

"Pray follow me."

"Certainment. Viz pleasure."

Mr. Quelch conducted the Frenchman downstairs. Todd watched him with eyes of great alarm.

"Pray be careful, sir!" he exclaimed. "I was warned that—"

"Hold your tongue, Todd! Go and wait for me in my study."

"Yes, sir," said Todd meekly.

He obeyed. It was some minutes before Mr. Quelch came into the study. When he came in he fixed a stern glance upon the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Todd," he said, "what put the idea into your head that this gentleman was the kidnapper of Miss Rosie?"

"I—I was warned, sir."

"Ah! Who warned you?"

"Bulstrode, sir. Is it possible that he made a mistake?" asked Todd in perplexity. "If you are satisfied of this gentleman's bona-fides, sir—"

"Go and tell Bulstrode to come here."

"If you please, sir—"

"Go at once!"

Todd departed. He found Bulstrode in the lower passage, and tapped him on the shoulder. Bulstrode turned on him with a scowl.

"What do you want?" he snapped out.

"Mr. Quelch wants to see you, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"So you've given me away to him, have you?" he exclaimed.

"Not at all, my dear Bulstrode. I mentioned you as the source of my information respecting that desperate villain, and I presume that Mr. Quelch wishes to question you as to how you made the discovery."

"You fool!"

"My dear Bulstrode!"

"If I get a licking," said Bulstrode, in a low, savage voice, "I'll smash you! Do you understand that?"

Todd looked dismayed.

"B-b-but—" he stammered.

Bulstrode stamped away. He was in a state of smouldering fury. Todd remained standing near the doorway in a state of great perplexity. Finally, he followed Bulstrode, and waited for him outside the door of Mr. Quelch's study. It was dawning upon Alonzo now that he had been japed by Bulstrode & Co., and although he did not approve of their untruthfulness, he was far from wishing to betray them to the Form-master. He was most anxious to assure Bulstrode that he had not meant to give him away.

Bulstrode entered the Form-master's study with a sullen face. Mr. Quelch fixed his stern glance upon him.

"Bulstrode, you appear to have told Todd a most absurd story respecting Monsieur Charpentier's substitute, who has just arrived at Greyfriars," the Form-master exclaimed.

Bulstrode met his eyes steadily.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Why did you do it?"

"For a joke on Todd, sir."

"There have been too many jokes on Todd, Bulstrode. This shall be the last," said Mr. Quelch. "You have led him to treat a master of this school in the most outrageous and disrespectful manner. I am going to cane you, Bulstrode, as a warning to yourself and others. Hold out your hand."

Bulstrode set his teeth and obeyed.

When Mr. Quelch was in earnest, he had a way of laying on the cane which the juniors had learned to their cost. He gave Bulstrode four cuts on each hand, and each cut was a "terror." Bulstrode did not utter a single cry. He was as hard as nails; and he would have taken twice the punishment

without a word. But his ruddy face went white, and his lips were set till they seemed to become a thin, spiteful line.

"You may go," said Mr. Quelch.

Still without a word, Bulstrode went. There was black rage in his heart, black rage in his face. He was dangerous to meet at that moment—most dangerous of all to Alonzo Todd! And Todd was waiting to meet him!

"My dear Bulstrode—" began Alonzo anxiously.

Bulstrode did not speak. But his heavy hand came up—his fist, clenched, and as hard as iron, struck Todd full in the face. It was a terrible blow, and Todd reeled back from it helplessly, knocked flying by the fearful force of the impact. Crash!

The junior crashed back against the banisters, and fell to the floor. He lay where he had fallen, without a movement.

"There," said Bulstrode thickly, "take that! And—"

He paused.

Todd had not moved.

There seemed to be something strange, something unnatural in the way the lad lay, heaped together at the foot of the banisters.

"Get up, you fool!" said Bulstrode harshly. "What are you lying there for?"

Todd did not move or speak.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Remorse.

BULSTRODE stood looking at Todd—at his crushed victim, lying there wordless, motionless at his feet.

What was the matter with Todd? Why did he not get up?

"Todd!" said the Remove bully thickly. "Todd! Get up, you fool!"

No movement—no word! Was the boy breathing? He did not look like it, as he lay there, still, inert.

"Todd, Todd, old fellow, get up, there's a good chap! I—I didn't mean to hurt you!" And Bulstrode's voice had sunk to a low, husky whisper now.

But Todd did not move.

There was a step in the passage. Harry Wharton came up, and looked at Bulstrode, and then at Todd, and started violently.

"What's the matter with Todd?"

"I—I don't know!" muttered Bulstrode.

"Todd! Good heavens! What have you been doing to him, you hound?" shouted Wharton.

"I—I hit him. I didn't mean—"

"You bully!"

"I—I—"

Wharton bent over Todd. He lifted the junior's head. Todd's eyes were closed, and there was a trickle of blood from under his hair.

His face was as white as wax.

Bulstrode gazed at him in horror. All his rage, all his fury, had vanished now. He was sick with remorse for what he had done.

"Is he—is he hurt?" he muttered.

Wharton looked up.

"You villain!" he said.

"I—I didn't mean to hit him so hard. I—"

"He is stunned."

"But I—I— Ah!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "He struck his head against the banisters as he fell! I never thought of that! It wasn't my fault!"

Wharton did not reply.

"Bob! Frank!" he called out.

Mr. Quelch's door opened. The Remove-master had heard. He looked at Todd, and a change came over his face.

"Who did that?" he asked, in a terrible voice.

"I—I didn't mean—"

"Go to your study, Bulstrode, and wait there till I send for you," said the Remove-master.

"I—I—"

"Go!"

And Bulstrode went.

"Help me to lift him in here," said Mr. Quelch to Wharton. "The unfortunate lad! Good heavens, he is quite unconscious! Run to the Head's study, Wharton, and ask him to telephone for a doctor. Tell him that Todd has had an accident."

"Yes, sir."

Harry Wharton raced off.

By this time, news of the accident had spread, and a crowd was gathering outside Mr. Quelch's study.

The Remove-master acted promptly, and did what he could. He sent for water, and bathed Todd's injuries. There was a big black bruise on the forehead, just above the nose, where Bulstrode's fist had struck him. But the greater injury was on the back of the head, where he had crashed against the banisters in falling.

But in spite of Mr. Quelch's efforts, Todd did not regain consciousness. The Duffer of Greyfriars was not a strong lad.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

At the best of times he was frail. He lay insensible, dead to all his surroundings.

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, helped Mr. Quelch to carry him from the sofa to the school infirmary, where he was put to bed, to await the arrival of the medical man. All had been done that could be done, but he did not come to.

By the time Alonzo was in the infirmary bed, all Greyfriars knew what had happened.

A hush had fallen upon the school.

Fellows went about on tiptoe, and spoke in whispers, although Todd was too far away from the school buildings to hear them if they had shouted.

Todd had many peculiar ways. But he was a decent fellow, and had never had an ill thought about anybody, had never done anybody an ill turn.

And his many good qualities were all that the juniors cared to think of now.

Not a voice was found to speak in favour of Bulstrode.

The cruelty of what he had done was condemned on all sides, and would have been so condemned, even if the terrible result had not followed.

"The brute!"

"The cad!"

"The rotter!"

"The blackguard!"

They were the expressions the Removites used when they spoke of the Remove bully, and no voice said a word for him. What was there to say for him?

He had been punished for his own action, and in his rage had struck Todd in a brutal way—without intending to cause the accident that followed, certainly; but what he had done was bad enough.

There was a proposal from some fellows to fetch him out of his study, and rag him; but Wharton and a good many more vetoed it at once.

"Let him alone," said Harry. "If Todd turns out to be badly hurt, Bulstrode will be expelled—and that's enough. If he's seriously injured, Bulstrode may go to prison, for all I know."

"The proper place for him," said Nugent.

"Very likely; but it will be enough, without our ragging him. I don't suppose the poor chap is feeling any too comfy at the present moment."

"Well, that's likely enough," said Ogilvy.

"The likelihood is terrific."

Wharton was right.

Bulstrode sat alone in his study—alone, brooding and miserable—as miserable as it was possible for a human being to be.

He was alone, and likely to remain so. Tom Brown and Hazeldene, who shared the study, did not come there—they did not want to see or speak to Bulstrode. He was alone—condemned, avoided by all, and if he had left the study, he knew with what looks of disgust and horror he would have been greeted.

He sat there, while the slow minutes dragged by.

What had happened?

What was the matter with Todd?

Was he going to be seriously ill? Was he going to— Bulstrode dared not form the word, even in his mind.

Surely it could not be—surely that terrible thing, the most terrible of all, could not happen? Fate could not be so cruel!

He groaned aloud.

If he could but have recalled that blow—if he could have undone the hasty action of an angry moment! But the action once done is irremediable—the blow could not be recalled, and he who had struck it, had the consequences to face. What consequences?

He hardly dared to think.

While Todd lay senseless in the school infirmary, Bulstrode sat in his darkening study, alone, avoided as one plague-stricken, with dull remorse gnawing at his heart.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

In Danger.

TODD, the Duffer of Greyfriars, lay in a room with darkened windows.

The doctor—kind, fussy, little Dr. Short, of Friardale—was at his bedside, with Mr. Quelch and the Head.

They had watched the poor lad long and anxiously. But there was no recognition in Todd's face. There was no light in his eyes, which were now open, but blank in their gaze.

Todd did not know them.

He was half-conscious—that was all! His brain seemed to be dazed and numbed by the shock he had received.

Dr. Short had spoken in whispers to the Head of concussion of the brain; but he hoped for the best.

Uncle Benjamin had been wired to, and he had wired back that he was coming down to Greyfriars instantly, and that a famous London specialist was coming with him.

There was nothing to do but to await their arrival.

Meanwhile, Todd was to be kept quietly resting.

So the word went forth to the anxious, expectant school.

The evening was drawing on darkly, with a wailing of wind in the old elms, and round the roofs of the ancient buildings. Todd was in danger.

That was the news that thrilled through the school, and made every face quiet and grave.

In danger!

Their schoolfellow, whose simple nature and kind heart had endeared him to all—whose simplicity had made him the victim of so many practical jokes, for which he had never borne malice—was in danger.

The shadow of doom hung over his room; there were hushed voices and silent footfalls round his bed.

In danger!

The boys could hardly realise it. Only a few hours before, and Todd had been as bright and cheerful as the rest—talking of the next visit his Uncle Benjamin was to pay to the school.

And now—

Poor fellow, his uncle's next visit was coming only too soon, and under terrible circumstances!

"Poor old Todd!"

That was the general expression on the lips of all the Greyfriars fellows. Even Loder, of the Sixth, was sorry, and thought with a twinge of conscience of the many times he had ragged the kind, simple lad.

And Bulstrode?

He was still in his room, waiting in fear and trembling for the verdict!

He knew that the medical man was with Todd—he expected to know the worst very soon now.

But no one came to Bulstrode's study.

He was avoided, as if the room had been a plague-stricken den, and himself the uncleanest of lepers.

At last the Bully of the Remove could endure the suspense no longer. He felt that he would go mad if the dreadful solitude continued.

He rose from the seat into which he had flung himself, and went slowly out of the study with faltering steps.

He must have news of Todd—he must know the worst. Remorse and fear, like twin vultures, seemed to be tearing at his very heart.

Ogilvy was in the passage, talking in low tones to Mark Linley. Bulstrode walked towards them feverishly. They would know!

Linley and Ogilvy gave him one look, and then turned and walked swiftly away.

"Linley!" said Bulstrode hoarsely, hurrying after the Lancashire lad, and grasping his arm. "Linley! Tell me—"

Mark's eyes blazed.

"Don't touch me!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"Take your hand off my arm."

"I—Oh! I—"

Mark shook him off, and strode away. Bulstrode stood panting for breath. He understood how it was—the Lancashire lad was not alone in his horror. No one would speak to him now!

He went unsteadily down the stairs—unsteadily, as if he had been intoxicated. A group of juniors stood talking in the hall, but they walked away at the sight of Bulstrode.

"Wharton!" he called out huskily.

Wharton did not return.

"Wharton! For Heaven's sake tell me a word—tell me how Todd is!" Bulstrode cried, in a voice of agony.

Harry turned round.

There was a tone in Bulstrode's voice that went to his heart, in spite of the horror and scorn he felt towards the Bully of the Remove.

"Don't come near me," he said. "What do you want?"

"How is Todd?"

"The same."

"Hasn't he spoken yet?"

"No."

"Hasn't the doctor seen him?"

"Yes."

"What does he say?"

"He fears concussion of the brain."

Bulstrode groaned.

"It's not certain yet," said Wharton. "There's a specialist coming down from London, with Mr. Todd, by the eight o'clock train. I dare say he will be able to tell us something more definite."

The Bully of the Remove clasped his hands together.

"Oh, how can I wait!" he groaned. "I never thought—I

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never dreamed—of this! I—I never meant anything of the kind!"

"I suppose you never meant murder," said Wharton coldly, "but you've come jolly near to doing it, all the same."

Bulstrode shuddered.

"Murder! Wharton!"

"Manslaughter, then," said Wharton mercilessly. "What do you expect, when you hit at a weak, frail chap like Todd with all your force—a strong, powerful chap like you? What did you expect?"

"I—I didn't think. I was in a rage."

"You were a rotten ruffian and a cur!" said Wharton. "But it's no good slanging you. I don't want to say anything. You forced me to speak to you."

"I—I—"

"Oh, let me alone! Get away! I can't bear the sight of you; you make me sick!"

Wharton swung away.

Bulstrode put his hand upon the banisters to steady himself. He was sick with himself—sick with horror and self-loathing.

Why had he done it?

Oh, if this only turned out well for him, how careful he would be in the future! But—but if it turned out badly, if the worst came—

His very senses swam with horror at the thought. He groaned aloud in his misery. Wingate, of the Sixth, was passing, and he paused to look at the bully of the Remove with a hard, grim look.

"Are you satisfied with what you've done?" he asked.

"Oh, pile it on!" said Bulstrode miserably. "I deserve it all. I—I wish I were dead!"

Wingate's face changed.

"Don't talk like that!" he said sharply. "You've done badly enough, without talking rotten talk like that."

"I—I never meant—"

"I'm glad to see you're sorry, at all events."

"Sorry," echoed Bulstrode—"sorry! Oh, I'd have my right hand cut off to undo it, if I could!"

"But you can't. Why couldn't you think of that sooner, before you struck the poor lad down?"

Bulstrode only groaned.

Wingate passed on and left him. Bulstrode sank down on the stairs, in a mood of utter dejection. Several fellows passed and saw him there; but no one spoke to him, and all passed as distantly from him as possible.

The Remove bully did not start from his lethargy till there was a sound of arrivals, and Uncle Benjamin came in with a white-haired gentleman in a frock-coat and silk hat—the specialist he had brought down from London with him.

There was a great change in Uncle Benjamin.

The fat, jolly little gentleman, who had furnished so much fun for the juniors of Greyfriars, was pale and worn and anxious. It was evident that his affection for his nephew was very great, and that the danger Alonzo lay in had shaken him terribly. The sight of the kind old face lined with deep, gnawing care, sent a fresh thrill of remorse to Bulstrode's heart. There seemed to be no end to the misery he had caused to himself and to others.

Uncle Benjamin glanced at Bulstrode, and his face became very soft. He did not know that it was Bulstrode who was responsible for poor Alonzo's calamity. He fancied that the misery in Bulstrode's face was caused by anxiety for his schoolfellow. There were many anxious faces about him, but none so miserable as Bulstrode's.

Uncle Benjamin dropped his hand upon Bulstrode's shoulder.

"Bear up, my boy!" he said. "We must hope for the best."

"It was I that did it," said Bulstrode dully.

Uncle Benjamin started back.

"What! You?"

"I struck him."

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I didn't mean it. He knocked his head on the banisters, but—"

The old gentleman regarded Bulstrode in silence for some moments.

"Heaven forgive you!" he said at last.

Then he followed Mr. Quelch.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

After Darkness, Light.

GREYFRIARS waited in tense anxiety for the specialist's verdict. It did not come soon. The time passed on leaden wings. The juniors wandered about the passages, or sat miserably in their studies, or gathered in groups in the form-rooms. Under the strain of the

anxiety they could settle down to nothing, and all had been excused from evening preparation. What was to be the news from the sick-room?

Mr. Quelch came forth at last, and a score of pairs of eyes were fastened upon him at once, to read the truth in his face. The Remove-master was looking relieved.

"He's better, sir?" asked Harry Wharton.

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Yes; better."

"Thank goodness!"

"It turns out to be less serious than Dr. Short feared at first," said Mr. Quelch. "There is every hope that, with quiet and rest, Todd will recover; but if he takes a turn for the worse, it is feared that an operation may be necessary. That is all that can be said at present. I need not caution you all to be very quiet."

"We shall be careful, sir."

"The carefulness will be terrific."

The evening of anxiety was followed by a night of unrest for most of the Greyfriars fellows.

Bulstrode went to bed with the rest of the Remove, white and worn and weary. No one spoke a word to him, and he had not the courage to speak.

There was no sleep for the bully of the Remove that night. He lay, wakeful and weary, tossing from side to side, and ever before his mind was the white face of Alonzo Todd.

The face haunted him. It looked at him from the dark shadows, and when he closed his eyes he saw it still.

Would he ever forget it?

He was glad when the light of dawn stole in at the high windows of the dormitory and the rising-bell rang with a muffled peal.

Weary, unrefreshed, but comforted at least by the daylight, Bulstrode rose from the bed where he had hardly closed his eyes.

The juniors went down, and Harry Wharton's first action was to inquire after Todd. Mr. Quelch had comforting news to give.

Todd had passed a quiet night, and was now conscious and in possession of his senses. He was in a low and weak state, but the doctor had every hope.

Bulstrode was called into the Head's study in the course of the morning. He went there with heavy steps and drooping head.

Dr. Locke looked at him as much in sorrow as in scorn.

"Bulstrode," he said quietly, "I have heard the particulars. I do not think I need emphasize to you the cruelty, the baseness of your action."

"I know it, sir."

"If you have repented of your cruel act—"

"Oh, sir, I—I am horribly sorry!" said Bulstrode, in a choking voice. "I'd do anything to make poor old Todd well again. I would indeed!"

"I am glad to see that you are repentant, at least, Bulstrode," said the Head coldly. "If Todd recovers, you may escape all punishment—excepting, of course, that you can no longer remain at Greyfriars."

Bulstrode bowed his head.

"When Todd is fit to be moved," went on Dr. Locke, "he will be removed to his uncle's house. He will not be able to resume his studies here for a very long time to come. You are responsible for that, Bulstrode, and you may thank your good fortune that it is no worse—that you are not charged with crime! But you will be expelled from the school! You may go and pack your box now."

"Oh, sir—"

"Not a word! Go!"

Bulstrode tottered out of the study.

Mr. Quelch passed him as he went along the passage. The Remove master looked with something like pity at the bully's white, drawn face.

Mr. Quelch entered the Head's study.

"Todd wishes to see you, sir," he said.

Dr. Locke rose.

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"I will go at once."

He found Todd propped up on pillows, weak and white, but looking better. He was in full possession of his senses. The dazed, dull expression was gone from his face. It was evident that the presence of his uncle had done him good.

"You wanted to see me, Todd?" said the Head kindly.

"Yes, sir," said Alonzo, in a weak voice. "It's about Bulstrode, sir."

"Do not speak of that wretched boy, Todd."

"But I must speak of him, sir. I—I am afraid that you are going to punish him, sir," said Alonzo faintly.

The Head was silent.

"Is it so, sir?"

"Yes, Todd."

"You—you are not going to expel him, sir?"

"I have no alternative, my dear boy."

Todd panted for breath.

"Oh, sir, I—I should be so sorry to be the cause of Bulstrode's career being ruined in this way! And I can't help thinking of his parents, too, sir. I—I wish you wouldn't punish him on my account. I am sure that he never meant to hurt me so much. Could you forgive him, sir?"

The doctor whispered to the Head.

"It would be dangerous to excite him now, Dr. Locke. Accede to his wishes if you possibly can."

The Head hesitated.

"You really wish me to pardon the boy who has injured you so much, Todd?" he asked at length.

"Indeed, yes, sir! And I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin thinks the same as I do."

Mr. Todd nodded.

"We are told to forgive those who injure us," he said. "I think that Alonzo is acting in the right spirit, Dr. Locke."

"You will forgive him, sir?"

"I will not expel him," said the Head slowly. "You are a noble lad, Todd! Bulstrode shall be left to the punishment of his own conscience."

"Oh, thank you so much, sir!"

The Head quitted the sick-room, and a message was sent to Bulstrode by Harry Wharton.

Wharton found the bully of the Remove in the dormitory. Bulstrode had been packing his box, and his things were scattered about him, but Bulstrode had sunk down on his bed in an attitude of the utmost dejection. He looked up miserably as Wharton came in. A bitter smile curled his lips.

"So you've come to triumph over me," he said. "Well, I'm expelled. You'll have it all your own way in the Remove now. Goodness knows I wouldn't care, if only Todd were well before I went!"

Wharton's face softened a little.

"I haven't come to do anything of the sort," he said. "The Head sent me with a message. Todd has asked him to pardon you, and he's going to do it. You are not to be expelled after all."

Bulstrode sat silent for a full minute.

"Todd asked him?" he said at last.

"Yes."

"He's a splendid chap!"

Bulstrode said no more. But there was a new look in Bulstrode's face, and it occurred to Wharton as he left him that what had happened had made a great difference to the bully of the Remove. The bully's remorse had changed his character. It was probable that the Bulstrode of the future would be different from the Bulstrode of the past.

The next few days were anxious days for all the fellows who knew Todd. But the lad slowly mended, and ere the week was out all danger of a relapse was over, and the juniors were permitted to visit him in his room. They found him the kind, patient, sweet-tempered Alonzo of old.

Bulstrode did not dare to go, until Todd asked specially to see him. And then he went, and he sat by Todd's bed, talking with him in low tones for quite a long time. And when he left there were tears in Bulstrode's eyes, a fact which many fellows observed with silent amazement.

All through Todd's illness Uncle Benjamin had stayed at Greyfriars: and when at last the lad was well enough to be removed from the school, he went in charge of his kind uncle. But ere he went Todd's uncle stood a glorious feed at the tuckshop to all the Remove, and the whole Form walked down to the station to see them off. Alonzo waved a thin hand from the carriage window as the train rolled out of the station, and the juniors sent after the departing train a ringing cheer for Alonzo Todd and Todd's uncle.

THE END.

(Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled, "Harry Wharton's Downfall," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of the MAGNET in advance. Price One Penny.)

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THE MOST THRILLING ADVENTURE SERIAL EVER WRITTEN!

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 learns that Scaroff has built a submarine similar to his own, and, accompanied by Rupert Thurston, sets out on the track of the Russian. One day Lord, Thurston, and Horton, the diver, are walking at the bottom of the sea when Thurston strays from his friends. After walking about for some time Thurston is picked up by a submarine. When on board he is confronted by Scaroff who denounces him as a spy. Meanwhile, on the *Lord of the Deep*, Horton quarrels with the captain, a dwarf named Trethvick, and they engage in a fight with knives. The combatants are nearly exhausted when Lord suggests that they finish the fight with bare fists, but the dwarf refuses to do so.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Finish of the Fight—In Scaroff's Clutch—Ching-Lung, the Chinese Boy—A Tempting Offer Is Indignantly Refused.

Trethvick sprang at Horton, wild with anger and hot with drink. A strong arm parried the blow, and Trethvick's knife went spinning through the air and gashed a sailor's cheek. Horton uttered a laugh as he raised his own knife.

The dwarf was at his mercy.

Hearts stood still as the blow fell, and a wild cry of horror burst from Trethvick's lips. Without checking the downward speed of the blade, Horton jerked his wrist over. The haft and the diver's clenched fist fell with sickening force upon the dwarf's upturned face. He crashed to the ground, stunned, bleeding, senseless.

Ferrers Lord rose, and pushed the table aside.

"You are a man, Horton," he said, "and that was a manly action, when you could have killed him! I am pleased with you. Look after the captain, some of you, and put the place to rights! Come with me, Horton!"

Rupert Thurston opened his eyes after a short, uneasy sleep, and tried to rise. A chain clanked in the darkness, and dragged him back. He put his hands to his waist, and felt a tight belt of chain-steel, fastened by a heavy padlock. The Russian had fastened him like a dog in the narrow, gloomy kennel.

Thurston could hear the throbbing of the screws that set the whole framework of the vessel vibrating. He crouched on his bed of blankets, and thought over his position with wonderful calmness. The sudden appearance of the *Lord of the Deep* had given Scaroff the clue to his identity. Scaroff knew well enough now that his prisoner was not Lloyd Rupert, of Oxford, but Rupert Thurston, the friend of Ferrers Lord.

What would the Russian do?

Thurston recalled the fierce attack Scaroff had made upon him. He remembered, too, the blinding flash and the long darkness that had followed it. He must have been stunned by the shock, for his head still ached and he felt dazed and muddled. Who had fired the torpedo? For he was certain a torpedo had been exploded.

Was it Michael Scaroff or Ferrers Lord? Whatever had happened, it was clear that the *Tsaritsa* was uninjured. Where was the *Lord of the Deep*? These and a thousand other thoughts passed quickly through his mind. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"After all," he muttered, "Lord is too smart to be caught napping. Ten to one he fired the torpedo and gave up the pursuit in order to continue the search for me. It's a lucky thing the brute missed its mark, or it would have been all u. p. with this child! I'd like a smoke."

By lying flat upon his back at the full length of the chain, he could just reach the door with his heel. He hammered upon it, and it opened. A lantern flashed in his eyes, and

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the yellow, cruel face of one of Scaroff's Mongolians glared down upon him. The man grounded the rifle he was carrying, and growled.

"The yellow beast!" murmured Rupert. "They seem to have a certain respect for me, when they not only chain me up, but stick a man outside with a rifle to keep me from escaping. Here, you! I want a smoke."

He pointed to the cigarette the Mongol was smoking, and then to his own lips. The man grinned, and whistled between his fingers. A second sailor hurried up, and the gaoler muttered a few guttural words to him. He went away, and returned with a tray containing a glass of brandy-and-soda and a box of cigarettes, and a handful of wax matches.

"That looks more cheering," thought Rupert. "At least, they don't mean to deny me a few common luxuries."

The gaoler left the door open, and the light streamed in. Thurston took a sip of brandy, and then pushed the glass away. He was in a square, iron-walled room. On two sides the walls extended to the roof; but behind him it was only six feet high, and a faint light streamed above it. He heard a snort and a plunge of hoofs.

"Jupiter!" he thought. "That's a horse! Why, Scaroff goes one better than Lord, with a stable aboard his boat. Bah! I was forgetting his two animals—Trethvick and the ape. But what earthly use can Scaroff find for a horse?"

Suddenly the door was closed and barred. Rupert finished a cigarette, and lighted a second. All at once the hidden horse gave a plunge, and the light above the bulkhead grew brighter. There was a soft, scraping sound, and Thurston raised his head. Dimly above the bulkhead appeared a small, yellow face, and two beady eyes twinkled down upon the prisoner.

"Hallo, mistel white foreign debbil!" said a squeaky, boyish voice.

Thurston could not restrain a laugh as a quaint little figure loomed into view, and squatted on the narrow ledge of the bulkhead like a squirrel upon a branch. Even in the faint light he saw a ridiculously long pigtail, and recognised that his visitor was a Chinese boy.

"Hallo, yourself," said Rupert, "you little yellow monkey! Who are you?"

"Oh, me! Ching-Lung! Give me a cigarette!" And bending sharply forward upon his insecure perch, Ching-Lung caught the cigarette in his mouth. Then in some mysterious fashion a lighted match appeared between the toes of his right foot, and was conveyed by that foot to the cigarette.

"Well, that's certainly pretty tricky!" said Rupert, greatly amused. "Where did you learn that?"

As if by magic, the lighted cigarette disappeared into the mouth of Ching-Lung, and the squeaky voice said:

"Me tellible clever con-con-conjubbler."

"Conjurer, you mean," said Thurston.

"Yah, dat's it—conjurer. My ole man, he name Li-San-Ho, he tellible clever conjuror, and him teaches me. He dead, my ole man. He go one day to mandarin—savvy? Mandarin say: 'Now, you dirty old Li-San-Ho, people tellee me you tellible smartee conjuror. I velly muchee blokee, and wantee gold. Conjule me some gold, or else chopee, chopee goes your old fat head!'"

Thurston laughed again as the cigarette, still burning, reappeared on the tip of Ching-Lung's tongue, and was transferred from that position with wonderful skill to the tip of Ching-Lung's snub nose.

"And what happened then?"

"Oh, then," went on the Chinese boy, with an angelic smile, "my ole man's head go chopee, chopee! Excludes me!"

Hanging on to the bulkhead in some marvellous fashion, he seized the rim of Thurston's glass between his toes, and lifted it, without spilling a drop. He smacked his lips as he tasted the brandy.

"Velly good," he squeaked—"velly good! Good health, it gettee cold. I'm groom to de Mister Prince, but I no likee gettee cold. I'm groom to de Mister Prince, but I no likee him. He is a bad, wicked man, and he whackee, whackee poor Ching-Lung. I speakee lots of lingoes—Chinee, and Russing, and Englishee most beautiful."

The cigarette dropped from the tip of his nose comfortably into his mouth, and he puffed away.

"Have you heard the prince say anything about me?" asked Rupert.

Ching-Lung grinned broadly, and showed a magnificent set of white teeth. Then he rubbed his yellow hands together.

"He, he, he! De boss he's a funny ole man! He punches you in de eye, and den jumpee on your chestee. After dat he walkee up and downee velly fastee, and swear. Den he yellee: 'Take de dog away and chain him up! I'll settlee with him by-and-by!' He meanee like de mandarin say to my ole man. Likee so. He, he, he!"

Ching-Lung drew a yellow finger across his yellow throat, and giggled gleefully.

"You mean chopee, chopee—eh?" said Rupert. "What a delightful prospect!"

"Yah! Chopee, chopee! He's a bad man. What's your name?"

"Thurston," said Rupert.

"Allee lightee! I like you. Chinese boy come again sooner before the chopee part. Excusee me!"

Again the leg approached the ground, and the finger-like toes reduced Thurston's pile of cigarettes to about half its previous size. Then, with cigarettes tucked behind each ear, and half a dozen tied in the ribbon of his pigtail, Ching-Lung chuckled once more and vanished from his perch.

Thurston laughed outright.

"What a cute little urchin!" he mused. "If I have to stay here long I shall welcome his visits. Why, that lad would make a hundred pounds a week at any decent music-hall in London. I've heard about people who could use their feet as well as their hands, but this is the first time I really saw one. I wonder what time it is? Hallo! Where's my watch? I'll swear I didn't take it out of my pocket when I put on the diving-suit. That's strange. I must have lost it when Scaroff bowed me over."

He searched his pockets in vain, for the gold repeater was gone. If his eyes had been able to pierce the steel bulkhead, however, he would have seen that little Ching-Lung was in the act of performing a marvellous juggling feat, in which a saddle, a hayfork, and a gold watch took very prominent parts. But Thurston's eyes were unable, of course, to penetrate the partition.

Just as he had given up the search, the door again opened, and the gaoler entered. He freed Thurston's waist, and pointed outside. Rupert, understanding the gesture, rose and walked into the corridor. The Mongol led him to the badly-furnished saloon, and he sat down. The curtain was lifted, and Rupert caught a second glimpse of the iron-bound chest that had been stolen from the strong-room of the missing liner.

Then Michael Scaroff appeared, as neatly dressed and as handsome as ever.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Thurston!" he said, with a nod.

"Good-afternoon, prince!"

Scaroff drew up a chair, and leant one arm upon the table. "I am sorry if I treated you roughly," he said, "but the sudden discovery of the hand you were playing rather upset my temper. I am rather curious to know what you intended to do if your little plan had not miscarried?"

Thurston laughed. He had no reason for concealment.

"As a matter of fact," he answered, "I hardly know myself. Roughly, I had some vague idea of escaping as soon as possible, and of carrying to my chief all the news and some of your plans, if I could worm any of them out of you."

Scaroff nodded pleasantly. He looked handsomer and smarter than ever.

"I understand," he said. "Anyone in your position would have done the same. I swallowed your story only because I imagined Ferrers Lord hundreds of miles away. Even then I smelt a rat. It is curious that your chief should hate me so much—I mean, hate me personally. I robbed him, I admit, and I cannot expect him to bear me much goodwill."

"Let me put the matter of the robbery in a clear light, Mr. Thurston and then, perhaps, you will not blame me so much. You love your country, I suppose, and I love mine. To me the honour and power of Russia are as dear as Great Britain's honour and power are to you. Listen, then! If, as an Englishman, you learned that some Russian held a secret that would ruin your country and send it crumbling to the ground, would you call it a crime to steal that secret?"

Thurston started. He had never looked upon the matter of the theft in that light before.

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"But you did not stay at that," he answered boldly; "you took a man's life as well!"

"And why not? What is one life compared with thousands and tens of thousands? If our two countries had gone to war with the secret of this boat in Lord's possession, thousands of my countrymen would have been blown to the skies. I call the theft an act of patriotism. While the navies of both countries hold the secret, there will be no risk of war, for foes who are evenly matched seldom care to fight. Certainly, I had to use strong measures to cover my retreat, for my prize was too precious to risk. One moment, please!"

He crossed to another table, and returned carrying a heavy volume. As he turned over the pages, he said smilingly:

"I am just going to look you up in my black book. Ah, here you are, with photograph complete! 'Thurston, Rupert, Meredith Mansions, St. James' Street, London, W. Height, five feet eleven and a half; age, about twenty-one; dark hair; clean-shaven; grey-blue eyes. Remarks: Younger son of the late Sir Boyton Thurston, Bart., of Thurston Hall, Suffolk. Has income of about eight hundred, and no profession. Unmarried. Unable to discover how he became acquainted with Ferrers Lord. Is next heir to the baronetcy, after the present baronet's crippled son Julian.'"

Rupert had listened, dumbfounded. Pasted beside this typewritten description was his photograph.

"You have an excellent spy system, prince," he gasped.

"Yes," answered the Russian. "I was head of the police at home for several years before I succeeded to my estate, and therefore I know how to manage these things. To tell you the truth, this is the first time I have read this over or glanced at this excellent portrait of you. Come, Mr. Thurston, let us understand each other!"

Thurston had a weakness for judging people by their looks, but as he looked into the Russian's blue eyes, he swore inwardly to do so no more. They were honest and open enough to the cleverest judge of character.

"Yes," said the young man quietly; "let us do so by all means."

"Then tell me what your relations are with Ferrers Lord?"

Rupert smelt a rat at once.

"Briefly, they are these," he answered, accepting a cigar. "Ferrers Lord fished me out of the river just when the large amount of water I had swallowed was beginning to disagree with my stomach. I had nothing to do except loaf about London, and he was kind enough to offer me a few exciting adventures and a large salary. Up to the present my adventures have been rather too exciting altogether. I have to thank you for a broken arm, prince."

"Then there is no other bond between you?"

"None, except that I am getting rather fond of Ferrers Lord."

"Then, look here!"

The Russian raised the curtain, revealing the glittering treasure. Twelve massive chests, filled to the brim with bar-gold and specie, stood in the alcove behind the curtain. The lids of the chests were open, but the lettering on each had been painted out. The whole cabin reflected the yellow glare.

"Look, Thurston," said Michael Scaroff, "for you may never have the chance to look upon such wealth again! There are a hundred and fifty thousand pounds of English money in those chests—enough to bring in at least five or six thousand pounds a year. That is a fortune to most men, but it is nothing to me. Do what I tell you, and it is yours."

"Mine!"

Thurston sprang up, and advanced towards the treasure as if drawn by a magnet. He forgot that the treasure was the fruit of piracy, and stained, perhaps, with innocent blood. Terrible, fascinating gold! He riveted his eyes upon the yellow heaps, and Scaroff watched him with a cruel smile.

"Look!" cried the Russian again, splashing his hand through the hoarded sovereigns as a child dabbles in water.

There is some wild, horrible charm in the twinkle of gold that no sound possesses. Clink, clink, clink! The wily Russian well knew the power of the yellow dross that, when misapplied, is the root of all evil.

To make the sight more alluring and more fascinating, he had taken the sovereigns from their elaborate sealed wrappings with his own hand.

Thurston's eyes glistened with greed as he drew nearer. Scaroff held up his arm and waved him back.

"Not yet," he cried—"not yet! Here is a lordly fortune to be cheaply won—a fortune that even a millionaire would not refuse. Stand back, sir—stand back! Look at the rich, red gold! You have eight hundred a year, they say, and I offer you five or six thousand. It is a pleasant thing to be rich, Mr. Thurston!"

Again he plunged his hand into one of the chests, and let an avalanche of sovereigns trickle through his fingers. He was the tempter, and he imagined that his victim was already in his toils.

"Your price?" asked Thurston hoarsely.

"My price—eh? Bah! You have only to stretch out your hand to become rich for life!"

"Your price?"

Michael Scaroff let the curtain fall, and flicked the ash from his cigar.

"Come," he said, "we will have a bottle of wine, and talk it over! You are a man of the world, Thurston, and not a child, so I will speak plainly." He opened the door and shouted: "Ching-Lung, a bottle of Pommery!"

Rupert's Chinese friend brought the wine. Until he reached the door, salver, bottle, and glasses were carried balanced upon his chin; but he had arranged them properly before he entered. He was the picture of meekness as he uncorked the wine, but he winked knowingly at Thurston, all the same.

"Get out!" said Scaroff.

Ching-Lung vanished noiselessly, with several cigars in his pocket.

"Drink!" said Michael Scaroff, filling two glasses. "I wish you luck! As I was saying just now, you are a man of the world, and the world is a hard place, where nothing is obtained for nothing, as a rule. Sometimes, however, a man has a dazzling stroke of luck, and, if he is not mad, he takes full advantage of it. Your chance has come now, Thurston. Will you let it slip? Are you mad enough to throw such a chance away?"

"No, no! What must I do?"

Michael Scaroff drained his glass, and pointed to the curtain. This time it rose as if of its own accord. A strong beam of light was focussed upon the treasure, making a sparkle and quiver with intense brilliancy.

"That is yours," said the Russian, "if you will do what I ask. Think how young and strong you are, and how fitted to enjoy the pleasures that such wealth can buy. The cleverest of men are often old and decrepit before they amass a fifth or a tenth of such a fortune. You are in the confidence of Ferrers Lord. I will set you free at once, and you must rejoin him. Tell him—he knows it already—that I took you prisoner, and that you escaped. Then keep me posted as to his movements and his plans, which you can easily do. When, by your aid, I have trapped him, the treasure will be yours!"

Thurston shaded his eyes from the aching glare of the treasure.

"Give me proof," he said, "that you will treat me fairly!"

The Russian bit his lips and knitted his brows.

"Let me think. You want proofs—you want securities. Good! You shall have them! We are going south now, and to-night we shall land at Harwich and go together to St. Petersburg. Your bankers are certain to have agents there, and I will lodge securities with them in your name for a hundred thousand pounds. It is a just offer, for you can give nothing but your word in return."

"I am satisfied," said Rupert.

He stood up, with the yellow sheen of the gold upon his boyish face, and, dashing the wineglass into the grate, laughed aloud. The Russian stared at him, amazed.

"What is the matter?" Scaroff cried. "Are you mad?"

"Mad—no! I have listened to you, and now it is your turn to listen to me, Michael Scaroff! You have tried to tempt me to betray a friend with your ill-gotten dross! May it melt with you when the day of reckoning comes! That is all I have to say!"

Michael Scaroff did not move a muscle. The curtain fell, the light went out. The Russian knew that he had been fooled, and that Thurston's show of greed and eagerness was all assumed and acted. He smoked in silence for a time, and held the glass between his eye and the light.

"What do you intend to do with me?" asked Thurston.

"It is only fair to tell me my fate."

The Russian laughed softly.

"There is time enough for that!" he answered. "It will be nothing pleasant, you may depend. There is the door!"

Thurston bowed, and went out. The Mongol was waiting, rifle on shoulder, to conduct him back to the cell.

Ching-Lung Pays Rupert a Second Visit—Rupert Makes a Startling Discovery—The Message.

Rupert tried in vain to sleep, for sleep is generally the prisoner's only solace. It seemed to him that Michael Scaroff's fear of Ferrers Lord must be very real and very terrible for him to offer such a reward to get rid of his foe. Thurston had plenty of money to satisfy all his wants, but he could not banish the haunting vision of the

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treasure. A squeaking chuckle roused him from his reverie. It came from the throat of Ching-Lung.

"He, he, he!" tittered the Chinese boy. "Stillallee lightee—eh? No chopee-chopee yet—eh? No sore thloatee—he?"

He was perched in his old position on the partition, with one of the purloined cigars in his mouth. Thurston was pleased to have the quaint little rascal with him again, for he was lonely and low-spirited.

"Oh, the throat's right enough, Ching-Lung," he said. "You seem quite grieved about it—I mean, grieved to find it's all right."

"Oh, no, boss! Me velly solly to see chopee-chopee, except chopee ole Scaroff."

"You're not fond of him, then?"

Ching-Lung tittered uproariously at the question, and set his pigtail spinning round his head with a rapidity that threatened to break it off at the roots. Then, balancing the lighted cigar upon his nose, he said:

"Ole Scaroff velly bad man. He makes pletty gal cly and shliek. English gal, too—all lubly and white, and pinky cheeks. Yah!"

Thurston tried to spring up, but the chain held him back. A sudden thought had electrified him.

"An English girl!" he gasped. "Where is she, Ching-Lung? What is her name? Tell me, for Heaven's sake!"

Ching-Lung, with the calm ease of some "boneless wonder," scratched his head with the big toe of his left foot.

"What'll you give Chinese boy, Mister Foleign Debbil?" Thurston took out a half-crown, which the wily youngster tested with his teeth.

"How much you givee for facee of white gal?"

"Her face?" said Thurston, perplexed for a moment. "Oh, you mean her photo, I suppose? Here's another half-crown."

Ching-Lung opened his clenched hand and made a clutch at the air. Enough light came from the above partition for Thurston to see him pretty distinctly. A shower of coins, corks, and buttons fell into his dirty little hand.

"Firstee," squeaked the Chinese boy, "I'll tellee about de white gal. Some nights ago ole Scaroff yeltee likee mad; I go running, and dere I see de white gal blubbering. Ole Scaroff velly muchee politee, de ole ruffing! He tellee gal she allee lightee, and nobody hurt her. He gives her best cabin, and gettee maid for her. I sees her next day, and she velly pale. She not eat glub I takee, so Chinese boy eat it hisself."

Rupert was bursting with impatience.

"Her name," he said—"her name?"

"Me dunno," squeaked Ching-Lung. "She hatee ole Scaroff, but likes Ching-Lung. Dere's her facee."

"A light!" gasped Thurston, as a little, gold-framed miniature fell into his hand.

A match spluttered feebly, and its faint light flickered upon the miniature.

It was a picture of Lady Violet, the kidnapped niece of Ferrers Lord.

Thurston sat with his eyes riveted upon the portrait until the light died out. So Lady Violet was on board the *Tsaritsa*, like himself, a prisoner! It was all so strange, so wonderful, so amazing, that he could hardly realise it.

"Ching-Lung," he said, "I need not ask you whether you know the value of money, for you are a Chinaman. Would you like to earn a sovereign?"

The Chinese boy's gleeful titter was answer enough.

"Very good," went on Rupert. "I want you to take this to Lady Violet—the white gal, you know—and bring back an answer. Don't let anyone see it, or we shall get into trouble. Light another match."

Rupert found his pocket-book and wrote rapidly:

"Dear Lady Violet,—You will be amazed to learn that you have a friend on board this ship, like yourself—alas!—a prisoner, and unable as yet to lend you any assistance. Perhaps I am flattering myself in thinking that you will recollect me, for you only saw me once—on the night the model was stolen—at your uncle's house. We are in the power of the thief Michael Scaroff. Keep up your heart, and, if possible, answer this scrawl. I think we may trust the Chinese boy not to betray us.—Yours faithfully,

"RUPERT THURSTON."

Before he had time to properly fold the note, Ching-Lung's toes had abstracted it.

ANSWERS

"The sovereign will be yours when you bring the answer," said Thurston.

"Allee lightee, boss!" squeaked Ching-Lung. "And if ole Scaloff findee out, it's chopee-chopee den. He, he, he! Good-nightee, you funny foreign debbil!" And the Chinese boy vanished like a ghost.

Ching-Lung Receives a Thrashing—The Plan of Escape—The Craft of Michael Scaroff.

The flat-faced Mongolian brought Rupert an excellent breakfast soon after seven bells. Rupert's appetite was not of the best, but he forced himself to eat heartily. He had some vague hope that a chance of escape would present itself sooner or later, and it was an excellent policy to husband his strength. His elastic spirits took a good deal of damping. Though chained up like a wild animal in an iron cage, he had not lost heart.

As the day wore on he began to chafe with impatience at the prolonged absence of the Chinese boy. Day and night were almost alike on board the *Tsaritsa*, for only the conning-tower and the deck had ever known the full, bright rays of the sun since the launching of the vessel. Below, day and night alike, the electric lights flared perpetually in their glass prisons. It might have been midnight, or midday, for all he knew.

At last the welcome glow shone over the partition, and Ching-Lung appeared. The air was hot, and hard to breathe.

"Hallo!" said Rupert, with a heartfelt sigh of relief. "You're here at last! Did you give the lady my letter?"

Ching-Lung's pigtailed head drooped, and he wriggled like an eel.

"Chinese boyee velly badee!" he squeaked. "Oh, off'ly, tellibly badee!"

"What's the matter?"

With the ribbon of his pigtail Ching-Lung wiped a tear from each slanting eye.

"Me tellee," he squeaked, in melancholy tones. "Me go to de lady dis mornin' to fetchee shoes to cleance. I give white galees witch-writing, and she lookke and holler out. Den she do witch-writing and givee me. She sayee: 'Takee dis to ole foreign debbil.' I takee and juggle it up back of my coatee. Ole Scaloff lingee um bell likee mad. 'You yaller thief,' he sayee, 'you keeping my breakfast tillee cold!'"

Ching-Lung paused, and again wiped a second pair of teardrops from his eyes.

"Well," asked Thurston, burning with impatience—well?"

"Den," squeaked the Chinese boy, throwing up a match-box and striking a match upon it as it fell, "I goee likee mad to de cook. Just when I at ole Scaloff's doree I feelee the witch-writing comee wiggle-waggles downee my leg. I collar um with my toeee quick, and shovee him in de buttered toastee. He findee it, and den pore Chinese boy get a whackee-whackee."

Holding a burning end of a cigarette between his toes, Ching-Lung groaned mournfully. Rupert felt a keen sense of disappointment, but he was compelled to laugh. The idea of hiding her ladyship's note between two layers of buttered toast was really funny.

"Never mind, Ching-Lung," he said, "it can't be helped. You did your best, so here's your sovereign."

"Me no wantee it—me no takee it!" The little slanting eyes flashed strangely. "Me hatee old wicked Scaloff! I going lun away!"

"Do what?" asked Thurston, puzzled by the squeaky pigeon English.

"Lun away—vanioose—skedaddlum—takee Frenchee leave!"

Thurston started. If the Chinese boy could escape, why could not he?

"You mean you'll run away?" he said eagerly. "How can you escape from such a prison as this?"

Ching-Lung dropped like a cat to the ground and squatted before the captive. He pulled up the wide sleeve of his blouse and showed that his arm was black with bruises. His white teeth snapped viciously together.

"You waitee!" he whispered. "Me likee you, and me hatee de prince. Me Ching-Lung, de great conjuler. What-hoo, me mighty clobber boyee! Dis place smellee hottee, 'cause de breff almost allee use up."

"The breff?" said Rupert, puzzled once more. "What do you mean by that?"

Ching-Lung smiled a pitying way, and wagged his long pigtail sadly.

"You velly ignolant ass," he answered. "You not know how speakee your own lingo. De breff—savvy? De stuff allee round you no canee see. It de stuff you sniffee up your nose—de breff."

"Oh, the air! I've noticed it was getting choky and stifing. But what has that to do with it?"

Apparently from his left ear Ching-Lung produced two paper butterflies. A few puffs sent them fluttering round the

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 169.

NEXT WEEK: "HARRY WHARTON'S DOWNFALL."

cell like things alive. As they descended and poised themselves gracefully upon his fingers, he went on:

"Ole man Scaloff mighty clobber conjuler, too, but not so clobber as Chinese boy. He keep allee de breff in bigee steel bottles. He tinkke he hottee great lottee. He, he, he! Ching-Lung velly bad thistly, velly muchee dly one day, and he goee and findee bottles. He tink, 'Sum'ting gooddee to drink in dere,' and turn on de tappee of de flist. Whizee-whozee! Out comes only breff. Chinese boy almostee blowed awayee. He say to himself, 'No lubly lemonade in dere; only nasty wind. Tryee de next.' Whizee-whozee! Breff again. Ching-Lung tryee tlee more. Justee de samee—only breff. Den ole Scaloff gettee mad, and sayee de bottles leakee. We allee die of choke unless dey filled. Dey fillee to-nightee by pumpee-engine on deck. It take longee time—hours. When dey does it, Chinese boy skedaddlum. Savvy?"

Rupert looked at the mischievous little yellow imp, his nerves tingling with hope. The thought of escape—the everlasting dream of every prisoner—thrilled him. Penned where he was, he was powerless to aid Lady Violet. Once free, and with Ferrer's Lord, he could have every European port swarming with spies, and urge the millionaire to carry out the search with redoubled energy.

One thing the keen-witted young man had not forgotten—the diving-suit. He had noticed the greedy, exultant way in which Michael Scaroff had looked at it. If he could only destroy it or damage it before the Russian had time to find out its secrets. Perhaps it was not too late even yet.

"Ching-Lung," he said, "why can't I escape with you?"

The Chinese boy blew out a few rings of smoke, which floated back, unbroken into his mouth.

"You no can swim?" he squeaked.

"Oh, I can! I can swim like a fish."

"Allee lightee. What you givee me, den?"

Thurston shook his head.

"I've nothing but a few pounds to offer you here," he said; "but my master will pay you well if I escape. He hates Michael Scaroff, and he'll blow him and his boat to Pekin if he can catch him. I'm sure he'll take you into his service, and give you lots of money. Scaroff is running away from him now. My master is a great mandarin in his own country—much greater and richer than the prince. He has a dozen beautiful palaces, and yachts, and horses and carriages by the score."

Ching-Lung opened his mouth, and rubbed his yellow hands gleefully together.

"You sayee ole Scaloff runee away? You sayee he blow up ole Scaloff?"

"Certainly I do!"

The Chinese boy chuckled at the thought. He had been cruelly whipped, cruelly treated, and Rupert had struck the right cord.

"Allee lightee!" squeaked Ching-Lung, fondling a pink-eyed white rat, which in some mysterious manner had appeared from nowhere. "You nicee foreign debbil, and Chinese boyee likee you. You comee 'long me. Goodree-afternoon!"

Rupert seized one of his vanishing ankles.

"Wait a moment," he whispered, as he heard the soft footfall of the sentry. "You know how I came here when I was lost at the bottom of the sea. I had a diving-suit on. Do you know where it is?"

Ching-Lung nodded vigorously.

"He hungee up to dly. De blass patee on de locker outside de stable."

"If you can bring me the brass part for a minute," said Rupert, trying hard to disguise the eager trembling of his voice, "I'll give you all the money I have. I'll never forget you, Ching. Hurry up, and don't let anyone see you."

The active youngster was only absent a few seconds. Hanging like a monkey from a branch, he swung over the bulkhead, and, with a squeaky chuckle, clapped the helmet upon Rupert's head. Rupert's heart sank as he examined it. All the intricate mechanism of valves had vanished, and the helmet was merely an empty shell. It was too late! The secret was known.

"Whatee de matter?" squeaked Ching-Lung, hearing Thurston's sigh. "You lookke mighty down in de moufee."

"The thieving Russian has taken out the works!" said Rupert, clenching his hands.

This time Ching-Lung sighed, and a comic expression of sadness covered his little yellow face.

"Not him!" he squeaked. "Me velly solly, Mr. Foreign Debbl, but me not knowee you wantee dem. Me takee um alle out de molning. Dere um is."

A shower of valves, nuts, screws, and washers fell around Rupert's ears. He could have yelled with delight and hugged the little celestial to his heart. He did neither, for, with a whispered, "Me comee back plesently," Ching-Lung disappeared, taking the useless helmet with him.

"By Jove!" said Rupert. "The luck has changed. I should like to see Scaroff's face when he sees that helmet."

The day dragged slowly on. Thurston could not feel the vibration of the engines, and he naturally concluded that the vessel was at a standstill. Moment by moment the air grew more foul and more difficult to breathe. It seemed strange to him that Scaroff, who was both a skilled engineer and a clever chemist, had not some less clumsy way of obtaining air than storing it in steel cylinders. The truth was that the Tsaritsa, owing to the Russian's fear of Ferrers Lord, was launched long before she was complete. The apparatus for oxidising the foul air had not arrived in time, and, as yet, Scaroff was dependent upon a powerful atmospheric pump.

Once or twice the door opened, and the goaler looked keenly at his prisoner, and brought more wine and more cigarettes, and finally a comfortable chair, a candle, and an armful of books. But Rupert could not read. The thought of escape, together with excitement and suspense, made the print swim before his eyes.

"Bah!" he said at last, with a yawn. "I ought to take a leaf out of Lord's book, and worry about nothing. If I escape, I escape. If I don't, I must just stay where I am. What's the good of bothering?"

Something cold touched his hand, and he started with a shudder. It was only the nose of Ching-Lung's white rat. Rupert laughed as the little creature ran confidently up his arm, and sat there to wash his face. He fed it with a few fragments of wine-biscuits, and felt less lonely as he watched its queer pranks. It was certainly a highly-educated rat, and one of the gentlemen of its race, for it wore a pink ribbon round its neck, and walked on his hind legs.

At length, tired out, Ching-Lung's pet crawled into Rupert's pocket and went to sleep. Thurston loved animals passionately, and he looked upon the visit of the rodent as quite a happy omen. He grew quite high-spirited.

"You queer little boggart!" he said, caressing the head of his slumbering visitor. "It's quite good to see you. Great Scott! How beastly this air is getting! Ugh! If this goes on much longer I'll choke! How would it be to protest?"

He hammered the iron door with his heel. To his amazement, it opened, revealing not the yellow, flat-faced sentry, but the handsome figure of Michael Scaroff.

The Russian wore a black frock-coat that fitted like a glove, and neatly-creased trousers, and glossy patent boots. With his silk waistcoat and well-fastened tie, he looked ready for a walk in Hyde Park, or a lounge along Piccadilly. He was wearing an artificial arm.

"What is the matter, Mr. Thurston?" he said. "Do you need anything that my fools of servants have forgotten for your comfort?"

"I need air. This vile place is poisoning me."

"I am sorry," drawled the Russian, "but I am afraid you will have to wait like the rest of us. I have had a vexatious accident, and my store has leaked away. In an hour or so you will have nothing to grumble about, I assure you. I am going to leave you for a short time, but my servants are at your command."

"That's all very well," growled Thurston, a brilliant thought flashing across his mind; but I don't see the fun of being choked like a rat in a hole. Besides, your confounded servants don't speak English. What am I to do if I want anything? How am I going to make them understand?"

Scaroff pulled thoughtfully at his waxed moustache. Though gold had failed to tempt Rupert to betray his master, the Russian had not given up all hope. If he could only win the young man over, the advantage would be almost boundless. It was his plan to try his best to win Rupert over, to use him as a tool for a time, and then to fling him away.

"That is true," he said, with a nod. "You must forgive me for not thinking of this before. I have a young

Chinese brat here who possesses a smattering of your tongue. I will send him to you to act as messenger and interpreter. Everything I have to offer is at your disposal, except freedom. While you belong to Ferrers Lord, of course, I dare not let you have the run of the ship. Perhaps you will do me the honour of dining with me when I return. If I am very late, we will call it supper. Your own dinner is ready whenever you care for it."

With a bow, he turned away, and, as the door closed, he strode down the corridor, laughing under his breath.

"We'll try the fool with another bait," he muttered. "If he won't bite at gold, there are other things to do. That intercepted note has put a new light on affairs, and the girl is both rich and pretty. Perhaps you are madly in love, my dear Thurston. We shall see. And when I have squeezed you dry and trapped your master—bah!"

He laughed an ugly laugh as he strode into the saloon. In his cell Thurston laughed, too.

"You crafty hound!" he thought. "You treat me well now because you still imagine you will get me into your toils. What are you going to tempt me with now, I wonder? That was a good move about Ching-Lung, if he suspects nothing. Ugh! This terrible air!"

A moment later Ching-Lung appeared, not over the partition, but boldly through the door. His greeting was:

"Hallo, Mr. Foreign Dobbil, how's your pore feet?"

The rat heard the squeaky voice, and, scrambling out of Rupert's pocket, walked on its hind-legs towards its yellow owner. Ching-Lung flourished a key, and, scrambling over the bulkhead, locked the stable-door on the inside.

"You almost leady?" he squeaked. "We quite close to port, and old Scaroff going ashore. He, he, he! We'll go, too—savvy?"

"Good!" said Rupert. "I'd do anything to get outside of this hole. Do you think we'll manage it?"

Ching-Lung grinned, and threw a match towards the rat. The animal sat up like a soldier, holding the match as a rifle tucked under its foreleg. Then the Chinese boy produced a little pop-gun and took aim at the long-tailed warrior.

"Dat's a little lat," he squeaked, "and him namee Shakespeare Willyum. I shoot—popee!—and him no faller down, we no makee skedaddium. I shoot—popee!—and him fallen down, den we takee Flench leave. Popee!"

The cork popped, and the rat fell sideways, and lay still, with one pink, watchful eye fixed on the biscuit in Ching-Lung's fingers. With a chuckle, the Chinese boy held the biscuit to Shakespeare Willyum's nose, and the rat vanished.

"By Jove," said Thurston, "that's smart! Where's he gone to?"

"In your coat-pocket on de left," squeaked Ching-Lung, "having him glub."

And there, sure enough, as Rupert discovered as he cautiously inserted his hand, was Shakespeare Willyum.

It did not take long for Rupert to learn that the little yellow savage to whom he had taken such a strange liking had more than his share of wits about him. Ching-Lung was quite as crafty and quite as sharp as any little arab of the London streets. His quick ear was the first to catch the footfall of the Mongol sentry, and every time the sentry passed he smiled approvingly as he heard the Chinese boy's squeaky voice calling the prisoner names in the Tartar language.

"What are you saying?" asked Rupert, when Ching-Lung had almost squeaked himself out of breath.

The Chinese boy grinned. "Me leciteo lubly Chinese poem, 'bout de stars and de man in de moon," said the Chinese boy, without a blush.

Suddenly a puff of fresh, sweet air crept through the chinks of the door.

"By Jove," said Rupert, "we're afloat at last! I can smell the sea!"

(Another long instalment of this splendid serial story next week.)



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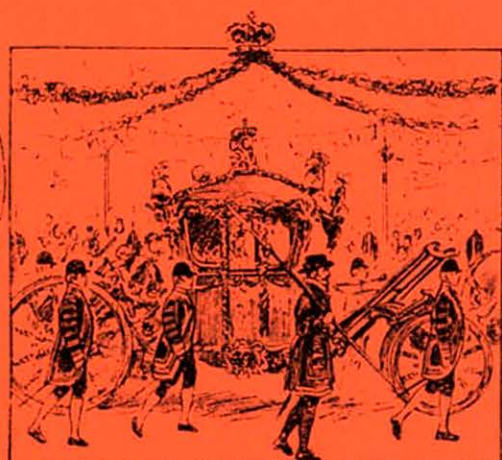
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