

"A FORBIDDEN CHUM!"

A GRAND, LONG, COMPLETE TALE OF SCHOOL LIFE.

The **Magnet** 1[¢] Library

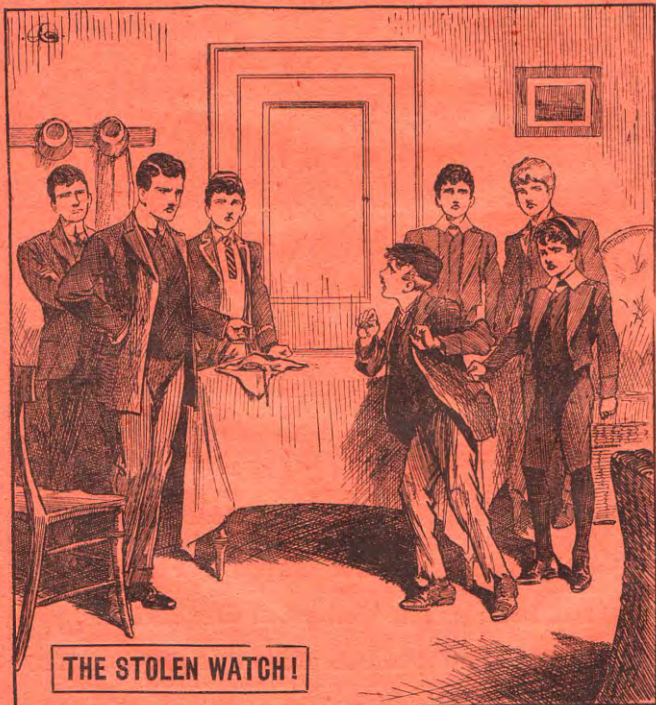
A Companion Paper to
"THE GEM" LIBRARY.
The Popular Thursday
School-Story Book.

Also in this issue
**SIDNEY
DREW'S
GREAT
ADVENTURE
STORY!**

No. 219.

The Complete Story-Book for All.

Vol. 6.



THE STOLEN WATCH!

(A dramatic scene in the splendid tale of school life contained in this issue.)



SENSATIONAL REDUCTIONS.

You can pick any cycle you like from our **ART LISTS**, it doesn't matter which it is, we will supply to you direct from our factory a brand new 1914 Coventry-built "QUADRANT" at Wholesale Trade Price. You will save all shop profits and, what is more, we will gladly arrange any terms from

5/- A MONTH.

We only charge 25 12s. for our Popular Model, listed at 40 12s., which dealers sell in shops at the full list price, and it is well worth it too. Other models at similar reductions.

We grant 10 days approval, give a 10 years' warranty and guarantee absolute satisfaction or refund of your money in full. 25 Gold Medals awarded. Thousands of Testimonials.

The QUADRANT CYCLE CO., Ltd.
(Dept. 3), COVENTRY. **5/- A MONTH**



MOUSTACHE!

A smart Manly Moustache grows very quickly at one penny per week. "Moustache" the guaranteed Moustache. Write for the "Moustache" Book sent in plain cover for 7d. Read now to—
J. A. DIXON, & Co., 42, Junction Rd., London, W.

A Real Liver Stimulation

GOLD WATCH FREE



A straightforward, generous offer from an established firm. We are giving away watches to thousands of people all over the world as a huge advertisement. Now is your chance to obtain one. **WRITE NOW**, enclosing P.O. 6d. and 4 penny stamps for postage, packing, &c., for one of our fashionable Ladies' Long Guards or Gent's Alberts to wear with the watch, which will be given FREE (these watches are guaranteed five years), should you take advantage of our marvellous offer. We expect you to tell your friends about us, and show them the beautiful watch. Don't think this offer too good to be true, but send to-day and claim a Free Watch. You will be amazed. Colonial Orders, 1/-—**WILLIAMS & LLOYD, Jewelers (Dept 10), 89, Cornhill Road, London, E.**

RED NOSES

Permanently Cured and Restored to their Natural Colour in a few days by a simple home treatment. Particulars free. Enclose stamp to pay postage. Mr. D. A. Temple (Specialist), 8, Blenheim Street, Oxford St., London, W.

5/- MONTHLY.

I am the ONLY man in the world who sells well-known high-grade Coventry Cycles at Pounds below Makers' prices. Brand-new 1914 HUMMER, ROVER, COVENTRY-CHALLENGER, REMINGTON, SWIFT, PREMIER, PROGRESS, QUADRANT, CANTOUR and SINGER cycles supplied at 5/- monthly.

Sent on approval and 12 YEARS' GUARANTEE GIVEN.

HIGH-GRADE COVENTRY CYCLES from 43 10s. Cash.

Edw. O'Brien, Ltd.
THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER, 11, 13, 15, COVENTRY.



SPORT.—The Sure Shot Outshoot, entirely new design, with supply of shot, 1/-, post free.—**WICKS BROS., NORWICH**

THE "WONDER OF WONDERS."



IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material or Camera and postcard for Samples and Catalogue FREE.—Works: **JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL**

BLUSHING.

FREE. In all saloons, particulars of a proved laser treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to Mr. A. TUCKER, Specialists, 8, Blenheim Street, Bond Street, London, W.

Rudge-Whitworth Britain's Best Bicycle

That Book is yours for the asking

and it will convince you of the superiority of the Rudge-Whitworth. It tells, in interesting fashion, the story of how Britain's Best Bicycle is made.

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales regularly rides his No. 1 Rudge-Whitworth Rudge-Whitworth.

That book tells why "Rudge-Whitworths are Easy to Ride. Easy to Buy. Easy to Pay For."

Let us post it now.

RUDGE - WHITWORTH, LTD.
(Dept. 311),
COVENTRY.



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL.



Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Will kill birds and rabbits up to 50 yards. Notable Bull Cartridges, 9d. per 100. Shot, 1/6 per 100. 100 birds or rabbits may be killed at a cost of only 1/-, Send for list.

CROWN CUM WORKS, 6, Whitnall Street, BIRMINGHAM

Applications with regard to advertisement spaces in this paper should be addressed: **Stanley H. Bowerman, Advertisement Manager, "PLUCK" SERIES, 6, Bouverie Street, E.C.**

3 New additions to "The Boys' Friend" 3d. Complete Library.

NOW ON SALE.

No. 187: "Under Japan's Flag."

A Stirring Story of Adventure during the Russo-Japanese War. By **DAVID GOODWIN.**

No. 188: "The Caravan Detective."

A Splendid, NEW, Long, Complete Story, full of Novel and Thrilling Incidents. By **S. CLARKE HOOK.**

No. 189: "The Fourth Form of St. Basil's."

A Rattling, Complete Story of School Life. By **HENRY ST. JOHN.**

Please ask always for **"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.**

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

A Grand School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.



A Complete School Story Book, attractive to All Readers.

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book, when finished with, to a friend.



A Forbidden Chum!

A Splendid New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bolsover Major Loses His Temper.

"GREAT Scott!"
"My hat!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if this isn't too thick for anything!"

Morning lessons were over at Greyfriars School, and the juniors had come pouring out of the Form-rooms.

Quite a crowd of them had gathered before the little letter-rack at the back of the hall, where letters for the Greyfriars fellows were stuck after the postman had delivered them, to be picked out by the fellows at their leisure.

Letters sometimes remained in the rack for days—even for weeks—when the fellows recognised the handwriting of affectionate relations whose missives were likely to contain only inquiries as to whether the recipients were going on in the way that they should go, and attending to their lessons,

and being good boys generally. But when a letter came from a pater or an uncle of a tipping disposition, it would be whisked out of the rack in next to no time. Fellows generally paused a moment to glance at the rack in passing, to see whether there was a letter of the latter nature for them.

On this especial morning the rack had been almost cleared; but one letter remained, and to judge by the grim and chuckles of the crowd of juniors, there was something about it that afforded them great amusement.

Some humorous youth had taken out the letter and pinned it up in a very conspicuous position, so that all could read the superscription with ease.

It was worth reading—or, so the crowd of fellows seemed to think. It ran:

"Master Ubert Bolsover, third form, gryffrises skool."

The spelling, as Bulstrode remarked, was quite original. And the handwriting matched it. Every letter had been painfully and carefully written, and was almost disconnected from the other letters. A pen, apparently, with a cross-nib had been used, and the ink must have been a peculiar mixture, to judge by its effect upon the coarse, cheap paper of the envelope. Upon the envelope, too, were big thumb-marks, which would have afforded easy clues to the writer had it fallen into the hands of a detective. And one corner was deeply stained with grease, and had a smell reminiscent of fried fish.

Certainly no letter so directed had ever been delivered at Greyfriars before, and it was no wonder that the juniors were amused and interested.

"It's for Bolsover minor!" remarked Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, with his sneering smile. "This is from one of his aristocratic friends in London."

And the juniors laughed.
"I like the spelling," Ogilvy remarked. "But I think the handwriting beats it. What a list!"

"Gorgeous!" said Snoop.

"Bolsover! I say, Bolsover! Here's a letter for your minor!"

Big, burly Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, came along the passage with his hands in his pockets and a frown upon his face. The grinning juniors made way for him to look at the letter, and watched his face to see its effects upon him.

His effect was evidently not pleasant. Bolsover's frown deepened to a scowl, and an angry light gleamed in his eyes. "Is that some rotten joke?" he demanded, glaring round at the grinning crowd.

Some of the juniors backed away a little. Bolsover was dangerous when he was in a bad temper, and he was very clearly in a bad temper now.

"No; it's genuine!" said Bulstrode. "It came by the post! We saw it there!"

"I spotted it when I took my letter," grinned Snoop.

"Funny, ain't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"From some old chum of your brother's, of course!" remarked Vernon-Smith. "I must say the connection does him credit!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Four juniors belonging to the Remove Form came down the passage, and stopped to see what was going on. They were Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull—the Famous Four of the Remove. They pushed their way through the crowd by a free use of their elbows.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo!" Bob Cherry ejaculated. "What's the joke here?"

"Something extra!" grinned Ogilvy. "A letter for Bolsover minor!"

"From an old chum of his in the slums!" Vernon-Smith explained.

"In quite original orthography!" chuckled Hazeldene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The four juniors looked at the letter. Harry Wharton frowned.

"Blessed if I see anything to carbininate about!" he exclaimed. "I suppose the chap wouldn't spell like that if he knew better, and he couldn't have had a good pen. Nothing funny in it, my sons!"

"Nothing at all!" said Frank Nugent. "Your mirth strikes me as asinine, my children. If you want something to cackle at, cackle at Snoop's exercises. He has had a chance of learning better, and he writes like a horse!"

"You let my writing alone!" growled Snoop. "My opinion is that it's a disgrace to Greyfriars for a chap here to have letters like that!"

"Well, it's a disgrace to Greyfriars to have you here, for that matter," said Bob Cherry, eyeing the sneak of the Remove with scornful eyes; "but Greyfriars has managed to survive it."

"Look here—"

"Oh, go and eat cake!" Bolsover minor couldn't help being less when he was a kid, and being brought up among poor folk, and I suppose it would be pretty rotten of him to break off with old friends because he's come into his own again!"

Bolsover major scowled. The fact that his young brother had been less as a child, and had dwelt in London slums until quite lately, when he was found again, was a thorn in the side of the Remove bully. His conduct towards his minor, when the latter first came to Greyfriars to be educated, had scarcely been brotherly. But the steady affection and loyalty of the little fellow had won upon Bolsover's hard heart, and he had grown very much attached to Hubert, though every now and then there would be an outbreak of the old spirit.

Bolsover major had taken his brother up, and was helping him on in every way he could; but when Hubert relapsed into his old Cockney dialect, or when there was any reminder of his slum days, then Bolsover major's temper was liable to give way under the strain.

Bolsover was not popular in the Remove, and many fellows upon whom his hand fell heavily, indemnified themselves by making allusions to his minor who had been brought up in the slums, and hinting that perhaps Bolsover himself had been through similar experiences—to account for his manners.

It was a very sore point with Bolsover major, and all the Remove knew it, and many of them gave him no opportunity to forget it.

The bully of the Remove jerked the letter down from the rack.

"Going to take it to Billy?" asked Bulstrode, with a grin.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled:

"TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

In this week's "GEM" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

Billy was the name Bolsover minor had been known by in his slum days, and it still clung to him at Greyfriars.

Bolsover snatched his teeth.

"Hang you! No!" he replied.

He took the letter in both hands, with the evident intention of tearing it to pieces.

Harry Wharton caught at his wrist.

"What are you going to do, Bolsover?" he exclaimed warmly.

"Mind your own business!"

"You are not going to destroy that letter!"

"Mind your own business, I tell you!" roared Bolsover.

"I'm going to do as I like with it!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"You're not going to do anything of the sort!" he said curtly. "That letter belongs to your minor, and you're not going to destroy it before he's had a chance of seeing it!"

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "Dash it all, Bolsover, play the game! You'd get into trouble if the Head saw you tearing up another fellow's letter!"

"Hubert isn't going to have letters from the brats he's left in the slums!" said Bolsover passionately. "Let go my hand, Wharton!"

"I won't! Your minor's going to have that letter! It's his!"

"Let me go!"

"I won't!"

Bolsover clenched his fist over the letter.

"Will you let me go?" he shouted.

"No!"

"Then take that!"

And with his clenched hand Bolsover struck full at Harry Wharton's face.

If the blow had reached its mark, Harry Wharton would have measured his length upon the stone flags.

But it did not. Frank Nugent's arm shot up, and Bolsover's fist was knocked upwards, and it missed its aim, and in another second Harry Wharton's strong grasp was upon the bully of the Remove.

Bolsover returned grip for grip, and the two juniors struggled furiously, tramping heavily upon the flags with their boots, while the other fellows gathered round in a ring.

Crash!

Bolsover, with a sharp grunt, dropped upon the floor, and as he fell, Harry Wharton bent over him, and dragged the letter from his hand.

"I'll give this to your minor," he said, quietly.

Bolsover staggered to his feet. His face was black with rage, and the juniors, not laughing now, drew back from him. Bolsover was capable of almost anything when his savage temper was roused.

"Will you give me that letter?" he demanded, thickly.

Wharton thrust the letter into his pocket.

"I'll give it to your minor!" he said.

"Give it to me!"

"I won't!"

"Hang you! I'll take it, then!"

Bolsover rushed at the captain of the Remove. There was a sharp cry from a junior along the passage:

"Care! Here's Wingate!"

Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, came up the passage with quick strides and an angry frown. Bolsover was too furious to heed. He flung himself upon Harry Wharton. But the strong hand of the Sixth-Former closed upon his shoulder, and he was whirled back as if he had been a baby. Even the burly Bolsover was little better than an infant in the grasp of the big Sixth-Former.

"What is this about?" demanded Wingate sternly. "How dare you fight here in the passage?"

Bolsover turned upon him savagely, as if he would hit out at the captain of Greyfriars himself. Fortunately, he stopped short of that. Wingate's eyes gleamed, and he tightened his grasp upon the bully of the Remove.

"What is it about?" he exclaimed angrily.

"He's got my letter!" muttered Bolsover hoarsely.

"You have a letter of his, Wharton?"

"No; it's a letter for his minor."

"What are you doing with it, then?"

"Bolsover can tell you."

"It's—it's a rotten letter from some brat in the slums, when Hubert knew when he was there," muttered Bolsover.

"I'm going to make him break off all connection with those people! You know he ought! And—I'm not going to let him have the letter. I think it's better not."

"It's no business of yours to think anything of the kind!" said Wingate. "It's your minor's own business, and you certainly shall not destroy the letter, Bolsover. Keep it, Wharton, and give it to Bolsover minor."

"That's what I meant to do, of course."



Bolsover grasped his minor savagely by the shoulder. "You'll put a slum brat before me, before your brother?" said Bolsover, between his teeth. "That's your thanks for me taking you up, and helping you, and trying not to be ashamed of your ways! Well, I'll remember that when I'm thrashing your pal, and I'll give him something extra for that!" "Percy, you can't—you sha'n't—" cried Bolsover minor. (See Chapter 3.)

Wingate released the bully of the Remove. Bolsover stood quivering with rage, his hands tightly clenched.

"And you will let that letter alone, Bolsover," said the captain of Greyfriars sternly. "If you make another attempt to destroy it, I will report your conduct to the Head. If your father allows this correspondence, it is not for you to interfere. Mind your own business. And take a hundred lines for fighting in the House, and go into the Form-room instantly and do them."

Bolsover choked with rage. But there was no choice in the matter for him. He turned and went back into the Form-room, Wingate's eye upon him. Then, when the Form-room door had closed upon the burly form of the Remove bully, the captain of Greyfriars turned to Harry Wharton.

"Find Bolsover minor, and give him the letter," he said. "I will, at once."

And Harry Wharton, with the letter in his hand, went to look for Bolsover minor.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Surprise for Bolsover Minor.

"O H, this is 'orrid!'"

Bolsover minor made the remark.

The fag was sitting in the Third Form-room, alone at the long oaken desk. The Third Form had been dismissed, but Bolsover minor was under detention, and he was labouring wearily over his task in the big deserted Form-room.

Not specially good-looking, but very pleasant-faced and THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

chubby, was Bolsover minor. It was so short a time since he had been Billy, the newsboy, in the streets of London, that he was far from having shed all his old manners and customs yet. He still dropped his "h's," especially when he was worried or agitated in any way, and he sucked his thumb in thoughtful moments in a way that brought down the wrath of Mr. Twigg, the master of the Third.

Mr. Twigg, the Form-master, knew Bolsover minor's peculiar history, and felt for him a great deal of sympathy; and he was usually very kind to the fag, and gave him a great deal of assistance out of Form hours.

Lessons were a great trial to Billy, and were likely to be so for a long time to come.

He was hard-working, and he tried to get on, and many good-natured fellows tried to help him; but it was all so new and strange to him, that a long time was required for the lad to get into the way of it.

Often, as he sat over his books, he thought of the free and lazy life of the slums, and contrasted it with life at Greyfriars, not always to the advantage of the latter.

In his poor days he had starved and frozen in the winter, but there had been times of plenty, when he had done well with the papers, and then he and his ragged chum, Tadger, would enjoy a feed of fried fish, wrapped in old newspapers, in the shelter of an arch, or by the warmth of some night-watchman's coke fire.

And in the summer, when the slums were smelling with weird smells in the hot sun-rays—they had not been unpleasant to the lad brought up in them—there had been fine nights, and exciting rows in the streets, and the delicious

"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

By FRANK RICHARDS,
Order Early.

excitement of seeing a criminal taken away by the police from Angel Alley or Pugg's Buildings.

It had not been all suffering, not all unalpiness, by any means. Billy, the newsboy, had not made wholly a happy change in becoming Bolsover minor of the Third Form at Greyfriars College.

Upon the whole, of course, he was glad of the change. He had found a father who loved him tenderly; he had found a brother who cared for him, in spite of occasional outbursts of irritable temper. In more material matters, he had plenty to eat, and plenty of good clothes, and plenty of pocket-money. He had found friends, too, for there were very few fellows at Greyfriars who were "down" on him because of his misfortunes. The very best fellows in the school had taken him up kindly enough, and the rest had followed suit. Even the fellows who twitted Bolsover, of the Remove, with his slummy minor, as they called him, had no quarrel with Billy himself. Snoop and Stott might taunt him sometimes, and sometimes Vernon-Smith, but he could almost say that he had no enemies in Greyfriars, and heaps of friends.

Yet sometimes his heart yearned for other scenes—scenes that would have made the Greyfriars fellows shudder—the narrow, dirty, foul-smelling alleys of the great metropolis, the corner public-house, with its glare of lights and paint, and its occasional rows, and the crowds, and the din, and the hurrying footsteps of the great city. And more than all else, for his chum of other days—dirty, ragged little Tadger, with his mop of uncleanly hair, and his shabby fingers and dirty finger-nails, and the huge trousers he wore, and the heavy boots, and the old man's coat clumsily cut down to a boy's jacket. Bolsover minor could remember him very clearly, and many and many a time when Mr. Twigg's voice was droning to him in the Form-room, or when he lay wakeful in the Third Form dormitory, the fog was thinking of Tadger, and wondering what had become of him.

And at last he had written to Tadger, feeling that he must know how his old chum was doing, and whether he was in want of money. It made the fog shiver to think that while he had expensive clothes and money for anything he liked, Tadger might be going dinnerless and supperless when the papers sold badly.

More than a week had elapsed since Bolsover minor had written to Tadger, and he had had no reply. He hardly expected one. Tadger was of the sloop and jettam of a great unruly city; he might have drifted far from Pugg's Buildings now. The letter had probably never reached him. He might not have been able to read it if it had, though Billy had been careful to write it in his largest and plainest round-hand.

Bolsover minor was not thinking of "old Tadger" at the present moment, however. Nor was he thinking of the contrast between Greyfriars and Angel Alley. He was thinking of the task before him, and he pronounced it "Orrid!"

Mr. Twigg had lost patience with Bolsover minor that morning. Billy was a harder worker than most of the Third, and a shining example to Tubb and Paget, his special chums, in that respect. But that morning he had amused himself by throwing balls of twisted paper at Tubb, instead of following with a sufficiently keen interest the amazing windings of a Latin verb, which Mr. Twigg was endeavouring to drive into the heads of the Third.

It was really too bad that Bolsover minor should waste time, when he had so much leeway to make up; and so Mr. Twigg thought. He had, therefore, given Bolsover minor a verb of the first conjugation to conjugate from memory before he left the Form-room, and Billy remained behind to do it when the rest of the Third marched out.

He groaned over the task.

"It's orrid!"

That was Billy's opinion of the noble tongue of Cicero and Horace. Billy was not of the opinion of the famous young lady who thought that she could have died happy if "she could but have known Cicero." If Billy had known Cicero, he would probably have been very rude and disrespectful to that respectable Roman gentleman.

For English presented many, many difficulties to poor Billy, especially in connection with the letter "h," and to add Latin to his difficulties seemed to him like looking for trouble.

Writing and blots and smudges mingled in awesome array upon the sheet before the detained fog. He had been left without books, to write out that dreadful verb from memory, in order to impress upon him to make better use of his time when lessons were going on. But Billy could have written out the "Iliad" from memory in Greek as easily as half the conjugation of our old friend "amo, amavi, amatum, amare."

He had romped through "amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant." There were no difficulties there. He slacked down considerably upon "amabam, amabas, amabat, amabamus, amabatis, amabant."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the "Juniors of St. Jim's," entitled: "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

amabatis, amabant." But he worked through them, with a liberal distribution of blots and smudges. The future tense, too, was struggled through, and Bolsover minor wondered what Tadger would have thought if he had been able to see him scribble "amabo, amabis, amabit, amabimus, amabitis, amabunt." There were nearly as many easures as words, but what did that matter?

But Bolsover minor's satisfaction was short-lived. He thought of the subjunctives and groaned.

He started slowly on the present perfect—amavi—and there he stuck. It was, as he said, horrid. He could hear the shouts of the other Third-Formers through the open windows from the sunny Close.

"Ow!" groaned Billy. "I can't do it—I can't! And if I do the rotten present perfect, there's the rotten past perfect, and then the bossily subjunctives. Ow! It's orrid!"

If it had been an extra exercise out of detention, his brother would have helped him. It would have surprised the juniors if they had known how many hours Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, spent in helping his young brother in the difficulties so new and strange to him. But here, Bolsover major could not help him.

Knowing that he could not get through his task, Billy sat idly, and chewed the handle of his pen, alternating that occupation with sucking his thumb.

"It's orrid!" he muttered despairingly.

He thought of the London streets, where he was frequently cold and generally hungry, where the sight of a policeman had always given him a certain terror, and he had sometimes had to fight pitched battles with other kids bigger than himself, who wanted to drive him off his bent. At all events, when he raced up Fleet Street with the latest editions under his arm, dodging under the noses of "bus horses and almost under the wheels of cabs, there had been no Latin verbs to conjugate. He wondered where Tadger was at that moment; having his midday meal of fried fish, perhaps, and extra potatoes if sales had gone well. The big Form-room seemed doubly empty and dreary to the lad as he thought of it. Alas! to the wretchedest, miserablest vagrant of the big city, the city is the city still—the Mecca, the place of all places, for the loss of which nothing else can compensate. The traveller under the sunniest skies, in the fairest regions of the earth, will find his thoughts turn again and again to the mighty Babylon—in the murmur of the Arno, and the lapping of the waves on the enchanted shores of Capri, he will hear again the rush and the roar of the great city.

"Oh, jest to test up Fleet Street again, and 'ear the kebs a-rattling, and—and to smell the fried fish outside the shop in 'Angel Alley!'" murmured Billy, as he sat over his unfinished exercise, and two unconscious tears formed on his lids, and rolled slowly down his face.

He leaned his head on his hands.

"Hallo, kid!"

Bolsover minor started up guiltily.

He hastily brushed his eyes with the back of his hands, and blinked at Harry Wharton, of the Remove.

His little rugged face turned crimson, as Wharton eyed him curiously.

"Detained?" asked Harry. "I've been looking for you everywhere, you young bounder."

Billy nodded glumly.

"I couldn't 'elp it," he said. "And I ain't got finished, and I've got to stick 'ere till dinner-time, Master 'Arry. I can't do it!"

"What is it?"

"Conjugate a blessed verb," said Billy, almost tearfully. "Course I can't do it! There ain't any blithering Latin verbs where I kum from."

Harry Wharton laughed.

SANDOW'S BOOK FREE!

Just published, a new book showing how Sandow won Health and Fame, beautifully illustrated, and explaining how every man and woman can obtain robust health and perfect development by exercise.

SPECIAL OFFER.

To every reader who writes at once a copy of this book: will be sent free.

Address: No. 18, SANDOW HALL, BURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.

In this week's "GEM" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"You'll get used to them in time, Billy," he said. "Let me help you. What have you got to do?"

"Amare," said Billy miserably. "That means to love. Ow! I don't love Latin verbs, I can tell you, Master 'Arry."

"Let's dig into it together," said Harry cheerily. "What have you done? Why, that's famous! It might be a bit delicate, certainly."

Billy grinned deprecatingly.

"I dunno 'ow the blots get there," he said. "Force of 'abit, I s'pose. But I never seem to be able to get rid of 'em. And Mr. Twigg gits rorty over blots more'n over almost anything else."

"It will come in time," said Wharton consolingly. "Keep your pen clean, and don't dip it too deep in the ink. Let's run through that giddy verb."

To a Remove—and the head boy in the Remove, too—"amo, amavi, amatum, amare" presented no difficulties. Billy's woeful little face brightened up wonderfully as Wharton took him on a personally conducted tour through the vagaries of the first conjugation.

"Think you can manage it now?" asked Harry.

"I—I'll try," said Billy doubtfully.

"By the way, I came here to bring you a letter," said Harry Wharton, taking it from his pocket.

Bolsover minor started.

"Letter for me!" he ejaculated. "Must be from father."

"Not from your father, I think," said Harry, smiling, as he laid the letter on the desk before the boy.

Billy looked at it, and grinned. He read the address which had caused so much merriment among the juniors of Greyfriars: "Master Ubert Bolsover, third form, greyfries school."

Certainly the elderly and respectable Mr. Bolsover would never have addressed a letter to that style to his younger son.

"My 'at!" ejaculated Bolsover minor. "It must be from Tadger!"

"A friend of yours?" asked Harry Wharton, with a smile, as he glanced at the flushed, eager face of the boy.

Bolsover minor nodded, and held the letter in his ink fingers, a new light in his face.

"Yes, Master 'Arry. It was very kind of you to bring it to me," he said gratefully.

"Not at all, kid."

"I reckon I'll leave that blessed amare! I can't finish it, anyhow," said Bolsover minor. "I'm goin' to read this letter now, if you don't mind, Master 'Arry."

Harry Wharton laughed, and nodded, and strolled out of the Form-room. Bolsover minor opened the letter by the simple process of inserting an ink thumb into the envelope, and tearing the flap open.

He dragged out the crumpled, dirty, blotted sheet within, and unfolded it, and puckered his brows over the ill-spelt, smudgy epistle. And as he read, the eager look faded from his face, and the letter fluttered from his hands and fell to the floor. Bolsover minor sat staring at it, as it lay, blankly.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Forbidden Friend.

"MY 'AT!"

Bolsover minor, of the Third Form at Greyfriars, uttered that exclamation in tones of the profoundest dismay.

"My 'at!"

In the fullness of his heart Billy had written to his old friend of Angel Alley. He had told him of his good luck, and had told him how he would like to see him again. But he had never thought of this reply. The thought that Tadger might find it possible to leave London and visit him had never even entered his head. But now—

Bolsover minor picked up the letter again, and read it over once more, more slowly and carefully than before.

"Deer Billy—I was jolly glad to see your letter. I thort you ad forgotten yore ole chum. Which I thinks of you jest as you see you does of me, and I de like prime to see yer once more, selp me. Course I understand wot you sez bout you can't leave school to come and see me, but I can leave London to come and see you, old pal. So I'm comin down to Greyfries to see you. Wot larks!—Yore ole pal, TADGER."

"My 'at!"

Bolsover minor blinked at the letter in dismay. It was just like old Tadger to want to see him, just as much as he wanted to see Tadger. But—but—but—

There were endless buts.

Greyfriars was a place strange and new to Bolsover minor. It was no place for Tadger to come to!

Tadger, with his ragged clothes and extremely dirty person, his snatches of Cockney slang, and his heart of gold—Tadger would be very much out of place at Greyfriars!

Bolsover minor could imagine the haughty horror with which even the porter at the school gates would regard the little ragamuffin.

Tadger at Greyfriars!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

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

There was nothing snobbish about Bolsover minor. He would have been glad to see his "old pal" anywhere, and under any conditions. But if Tadger came to Greyfriars, what would happen? He could see, in his mind's eye, the laughter and mockery of the boys when the queer little figure came in at the gates. And—and his brother. What would Percy say?

Bolsover minor shivered at the thought.

He had had little reason to love his brother, and yet he did love him, with a deep affection which all Bolsover's bullying had never shaken. And now Percy was coming round. Percy never bullied him now, and always helped him, and backed him up! But Percy Bolsover never could restrain his irritability at any mention of little Billy's old life, and if he saw one of Billy's old friends—

"Oh!" groaned Billy. "I almost wish I 'adn't never come to Greyfriars! Poor ole Tadger! He was a good put—one of the best! But they'll make him wriggle if he comes 'ere! I shall have to stop 'im coming."

Stop him coming! What would old Tadger think if he received a letter telling him not to come, when, in the simplicity of his heart, he had announced his intention of visiting his old chum at the big school? He would think that Billy was growing snobbish, that he was ashamed of his old friends!

Bolsover minor flushed red at the thought.

Then a new reflection came into his mind. How was he to communicate with Tadger. The reply to his letter had been long in coming. Probably the letter had been lost in reaching Tadger. Probably it had only reached him at all by chance. Another letter might not reach him. Tadger had very likely started already to pay his promised visit.

The boy groaned in spirit.

"He can't stop 'im now! Poor ole Tadger!"

He thrust the letter into his pocket, and quitted the Form-room. The unfinished exercise lay upon his desk. Bolsover minor was not thinking of that now. He must think this over, think what was to be done!

Tadger must not come! But if he did come, Bolsover minor would stand by him loyally against all the school, against even his brother!

"Hubert!"

Bolsover minor started at the sound of his brother's sharp voice.

"Hallo, Percy!" he said feebly.

Bolsover had just come out of the Remove-room, his limbs done, and he met the boy in the passage.

His face was dark, and his brows lowering. Billy could see that his brother was angry, and he wondered what was the matter. He did not know that Bolsover major had seen the letter.

Bolsover halted before the shrinking boy.

"You've had a letter!" he exclaimed harshly.

"Ye-es, Percy. 'Ow did you know?"

"Can't you put in an 'h' or two, you young ass!" snarled Bolsover. "I saw the letter on the rack, and I was going to tear it up, when I was prevented. Did Wharton give it to you?"

"Yes, Percy."

"Hand it over to me!"

Bolsover minor hesitated a moment.

"Hand it to me!" roared the bully of the Remove, holding out his hand. "By James, if you don't hand it over, I'll give you the licking of your life."

"I—I—it's my letter, Percy?" Only too well did the boy know with what an outburst of rage his brother would read the contents of that unfortunate letter from Tadger.

"Give it to me, you brat!"

"Ere it is, Percy!"

Bolsover minor timidly handed out the letter. His brother snatched it from him, and read it through without ceremony, his dark face growing darker and more savage the while. Hubert watched him in miserable expectation of the thunder-clap that was sure to come. It came!

"You—you confounded slum brat!" said Bolsover, between his teeth. "Don't you think that your upbringing is a disgrace enough to me without having your slum friends coming round the school as well?"

"I—I—"

"This fellow Tadger, what does he want?" hissed Bolsover. "Money?"

Billy flushed.

"E don't want nothing, 'cept to see me, Percy."

"What does he want to see you for?"

"We're ole pals," faltered Bolsover minor.

Bolsover laughed scoffingly.

"Old pals! A precious pal! He ought to be in a reformatory, and so ought you, for that matter! Look here!"

You're not to see this boy—what does he call himself—Tagder! Good heavens, what a name! What is his real name?"

"I dunno as he's got one." Bolsover tore the letter into fragments, and threw them along the corridor. His minor gave a little cry.

"So much for the letter," said the Remove bully savagely. "By George! It would serve you right if I wiped up the floor with you, you whelp!"

"Percy, I—I—" the big's eyes were full of tears—"I—I didn't mean to offend you, Percy, nohow. I wouldn't go for to do it."

"Yet you ask your rotten slum friends to come to the school and disgrace us both," roared Bolsover furiously.

"I—I didn't zackly ask him—"

"He's coming without being asked then!"

"N-n-not zackly," stammered Billy. "I told 'im I'd like to see 'im, but I didn't mean—you see, I never thought it possible he could come. But if he comes I'm bound to be civil to 'im, ain't I?"

Bolsover laughed savagely.

"Civil to him! I'll show you about being civil to him. If you want to save his feelings, don't let him come, that's all."

"I dunno as I can stop him. A letter mightn't find 'im in time."

"Then he will come?"

"I—I s'pose so!" mumbled Bolsover minor.

Bolsover gritted his teeth.

"Very well. I'll be on the look-out for him!"

He turned to stride away. Billy ran after him, and caught him by the arm. Bolsover savagely shook off his brother's hand, but he stopped.

"Well, what have you got to say?" he demanded harshly.

"Wot are you goin' to do, Percy?"

"What I've said. I'm going to keep a look-out for your precious friend from the slums. I'm going to meet him if he comes, and I'm going to prevent you and him from disgracing us! Do you understand? I'll get some of the fellows together—some that I can trust—and we'll duck him in the fountain if he comes past the gates, and then pitch him out into the road. I don't think that he'll come to Greyfriars a second time. What do you think?"

Bolsover minor gasped.

"Percy—Percy, you wouldn't do it!"

"Wouldn't I?" said Bolsover, with a savage laugh. "You'll see when your precious pal from Slumland gets here!"

"Tagder ain't done nothin'—"

"I dare say it's as much your fault as his. It will be a lesson to you," said Bolsover grimly. "I'll make an example of him. The cheeky whelp, to think of coming to a decent school in his filthy rags!"

"He don't know no better!"

"He will after he's been here, then."

"Percy, I—I— Don't be a cad! Don't touch Tagder! It's all my fault, anyway, but—but I can't 'ave 'im 'andled!"

"I don't see how you're going to prevent it," said Bolsover, with a sneering laugh.

"I'm going to stand by 'im!" said Billy sturdily.

"Against me?" roared Bolsover.

The tag was silent.

Bolsover grasped him savagely by the shoulder.

"Against me, you ungrateful brat? Answer me that!"

"I'm bound to stick by my old pal," said Billy miserably.

"You put that slum brat before me, before your brother?" said Bolsover, between his teeth. "That's your thanks to me for taking you up, and helping you, and trying not to be ashamed of your ways! Well, I'll remember it when I'm thrashing your precious pal, and I'll give him something extra for that!"

"Percy, you can't—you sha'n't—"

"Get out of the way, you young fool!"

His minor was clinging to his sleeve. Bolsover raised his hand, his great clenched fist descended brutally upon the tag.

"Take that, you young cad!"

Bolsover minor gave a low cry, and reeled away. The Remove bully, with a furious face, tramped away down the passage.

In a dusky corner of the great corridor, Bolsover minor remained alone. He leaned on the wall, his face buried in his arm, sobbing as if his heart would break.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tubb Disapproves.

"HERE'S Billy!"

W Tubb of the Third Form asked the question as the bell rang for dinner. The tags were crowding towards the house, and Tubb missed Bolsover minor.

"He was detained," Paget remarked.

"Oh, he's done those rotten verbs by this time, I should think," said Tubb. "But he ain't here. Let's cut along to the Form-room and see."

"Right-ho," said Paget, in his lazy drawl.

And while the rest of the Third crowded into the dining-room, Tubb and Paget made for the Form-room passage at a run. They were clumsy, Tubb and Paget of the Third, though a greater contrast could hardly have been imagined than existed between the plump, chubby Tubb, and the slight, dainty-featured Paget. Paget, who counted marquises and earls among his relations, had backed up Bolsover minor from the day that Billy arrived at Greyfriars to take his place in the Third Form there. Tubb had been much more aristocratic, and his prejudices against the little ragamuffin had not been easily overcome, and they cropped up again sometimes now. But upon the whole Tubb followed Paget's lead, and stood by the wait of Greyfriars. And the two of them were the acknowledged leaders of the Third Form—Tubb by reason of his size and strength, and Paget by reason of his coolness of head and keenness of intelligence.

The sound of a sob broke upon their ears as they entered the Form-room passage. Paget paused, and stared at Tubb.

"Blubbing, by gum!" he remarked.

Tubb snifled.

"Blubbing over rotten Latin verbs!" he ejaculated. "The young ass! As if it matters how you conjugate a rotten verb. Pah!"

"Here he is!"

They came suddenly upon Bolsover minor. He was outside the Form-room, leaning against the wall in a dusky corner. He did not see them approach, and he did not know they were near until Tubb clapped him on the shoulder. Then he started, and turned a sad little tear-stained face towards them. Tubb regarded him with immeasurable scorn.

"Blubbing!" he exclaimed.

"I—I ain't!" stammered Billy.

"Afraid of a licking from old Twigg?" demanded Paget.

"No; it ain't that."

"Done your rotten verb?"

"N-n-no."

"Well, it's no good blubbing over it," said Paget. "I really thought better of you than that, Billy. Keep your pecker up."

"It ain't the verb."

"You don't mean to say that old Twigg has been springing pronouns on you as well?"

Billy grimaced faintly.

"No, no."

"What's the row, then?"

Bolsover minor was silent.

"Big brother been bullying you?" demanded Tubb.

"N-no."

"Then what's the matter? Oh, I heard about your letter," said Tubb, recollecting. "The fellows have been chipping you about that?"

"No."

"Then what on earth's the matter with you?" Paget exclaimed impatiently. "I suppose you ain't blubbing because you've got a little pain in your little tummy, or anything of that sort?"

"Course I ain't," said Billy indignantly.

"Then tell us what it is. Out with it!"

Bolsover minor hesitated. He was sorely in need of friendly counsel, but he did not know how his friends in the Third would take the news that Tagder of Angel Alley was coming to pay him a visit at Greyfriars.

"I—I've had a letter!" he stammered, at last.

"That's happened before, and no bones broken," said Tubb sarcastically. "Is it somebody wants to borrow a quid of you?"

"No; Tagder don't want money."

"Tagder! Who's Tagder?"

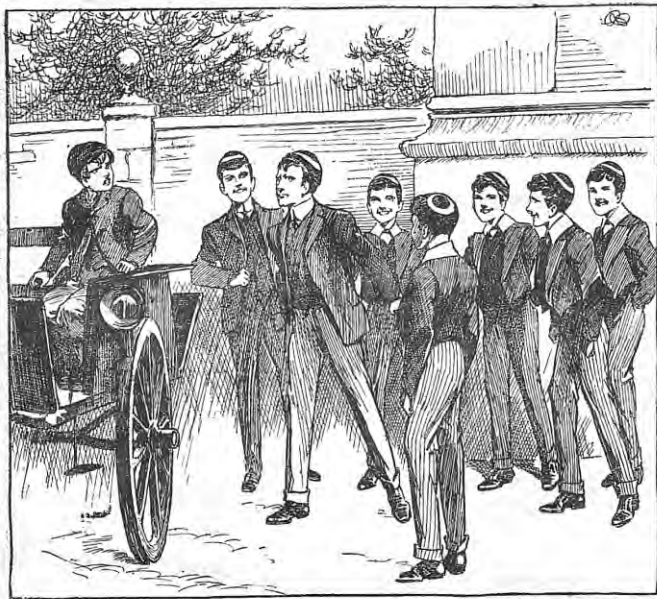
"Ole pal of mine."

"Oh!" said Paget, with a whistle. "Chap you knew when you were in—"

"In London," said Bolsover minor. "Yes, and a jolly good pal he was, too. Often and often he's shared his last brown with me."

"Good ole Tagder!" said Paget, with a grin. "And now he wants you to share your good luck with him, I suppose."

"Tain't that! I'd 'and it out, and welcome. He's coming here to see me."



Bolsover major glared at the little fellow sitting in the trap, his face almost convulsed with rage. "You! Who are you? What have you come here for?" he muttered thickly. "I—I'm Tadger!" faltered the boy. "I've come to see Billy." (See Chapter 9.)

"My hat!"
"Course, I want to see 'im," said Billy eagerly. "But—but Percy has cut up rough about it. He's tore up my letter!"

"Rotter!" said Paget sympathetically.

"He ain't a rotter," he said, "only—only he don't understand. I can't go back on an ole pal what has always stuck to me. Tadger is coming 'ere, and I'm going to stick to 'im. Percy says he'll rag me if he comes."

"You'd better stop him coming, then," said Paget drily. "I should jolly well say so," Tubb exclaimed indignantly. "I must say this is a bit too thick. Bolsover minor. We've taken you up, and looked over your giddy past, but it's a bit too thick to want to plant your slummy pals on us."

"Oh, cheese that, Tubb," said Paget. "You must see slummy chaps often enough when you go home to the family grocery in the vac."

Tubb turned purple. "My people don't keep a grocery!" he roared. "Well, the family pub, then!"

"You—you rotter, Paget! You know my people don't keep a pub!" spluttered Tubb.

"But you're right about this chap, Tubb," said Paget, unheeding. "He can't come here. He ought to have more sense. You see, Bolsover minor, as soon as it gets known in

Murderer's Alley—was it Murderer's Alley you used to live in?"

"Angel Alley!" said poor Billy.

"My mistake," said Paget blandly. "Angel Alley, then. As soon as it gets known in Angel Alley that you've found a rich pater, and are rolling in quids, it stands to reason that all the Angels will want to have a whack, and if you encourage 'em to come here, there will be no end of it. I should advise you to send this chap, Badger—"

"Tadger."

"Excuse me, Tadger. I should advise you to send this chap Tadger a postal-order for ten bob as a parting gift, and have nothing more to do with him."

"Good idea!" said Tubb, with a nod.

"Tadger don't want my money," said Billy.

"Oh, that's all rot," said Paget cheerfully. "He wouldn't tramp all this way from town if he didn't want something. You ain't so fascinating as all that, all on your lonesome, you know. He's after the loaves and fishes."

"Of course he is!" growled Tubb. "And anybody but a silly young ass like Billy would know it at once."

"He ain't!" said Billy.

"Rot!" said Paget. "Let him know at once that he can't come, that's all. It's really too thick. The fellows will make no end of a song of it."

"I mayn't be able to let 'im know in time."

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

"Then you'd better let your noble major rag him when he comes, as he wants to. It will be a lesson to him not to pay morning calls in the wrong place."

"Look 'ere, Paget—" "I agree with Paget," said Tubb. "We can stand you, Billy, but we're not going to swallow Angel Alley from end to end. You savvy?"

"I'm goin' to stand by old Tadger," said Billy sturdily. "Then you jolly well won't get us to stand by you," said Tubb angrily.

"Look 'ere, Tubb—" "That's final," said Tubb, turning away. "Your major's a beastly bully, but I think he's quite right in this. We don't want Angel Alley here."

"No fear!" agreed Paget.

"Look 'ere, I tell you—" "Oh, shut up, and come in to dinner, or you'll get lined!"

The subject was dropped as the fags went in to dinner. Tubb and Paget were both looking annoyed, and Billy realised, with a sinking at the heart, that he could not depend upon them for help. At the same time he was determined not to turn his back upon his old chum of his dark days. But where was he to turn for help?

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In The Hands Of The Bully.

BOB CHERRY came down the Remove passage arrayed in white, with a bat under his arm, and looked into the doorway of No. 1 Study. Mark Linley, with a cricket-ball in his hand, looked in over his shoulder. Wharton and Nugent were just finishing their tea, and they rose at the sight of the two juniors.

"Ready!" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Quite!"

There was a footstep in the passage, and a fag came along, and looked into the study. It was Bolsover minor of the Third. He glanced rather timidly at the Removers. Billy had first found friendship in No. 1 Study when he came to Greyfriars, and the chums of the Remove had always been very kind to the wail of the Third.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "What do you want?"

"I—I wanted to speak to Master 'Arry!" said Billy hesitatingly. "It's alright, I can wait if you're going to play cricket."

"Is it important?" asked Harry.

"No, it's alright; it can wait."

"Right-ho, then. We shall be in at dusk," said Harry.

But the fag's face was very wistful as the chums of the Remove went down the passage. He had come to Harry Wharton for advice, as he had often done in times of difficulty. Of late he had generally found a good counsellor in his elder brother, but in the matter that troubled him now, Bolsover major was no use. The fag dared not even broach the subject of Tadger to his major again.

Harry Wharton & Co. went downstairs, and Billy remained in the doorway of the study, hesitating. As luck would have it, Bolsover major came out of his study further up the passage, with Vernon-Smith. Bolsover had a bat under his arm, and was evidently going down to the cricket-field. The summer game held full sway at Greyfriars now, and the fellows were at practice at the nets every day. It was Bolsover's ambition to figure in the Remove eleven, and as he was a good slogging bat, though not a brilliant one, he had a chance of gaining his point, if he could impress his usefulness upon the captain of the Remove. Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove now, however, and he was likely to scan Bolsover's claims very sharply before letting him in. The Form-captain did not pull very well with the bully of the Remove.

Bolsover caught sight of his minor in the study doorway, and halted, frowning.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded roughly.

Billy coloured.

"Nothing, Percy!" he replied truthfully enough.

"Don't Percy me!" growled his brother. "You have come here to jaw with Wharton, I suppose, about your precious Tadger, and about me."

Billy was silent.

"Greyfriars is coming to something. I must say!" remarked Vernon-Smith to space. "It will be quite exhilarating to see Angel Alley coming along to visit Bolsover minor. We ought to get up an entertainment for them—something on the lines of a pleasant Saturday evening, you know—music and recitations, and a bun cack."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bolsover. "Look here, Hubert, you're not to see Tadger, or Badger, or whatever the cad's name is. Do you hear?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled:

"TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

In this week's "GEM" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"Yes, Percy," said Billy meekly.

"Well, are you going to do as I tell you?"

"I've got to see him, Percy."

Bolsover grunted his teeth.

"You mean that you're going to back up against me," he said savagely. "Mind, I won't have it. There's enough of the slum clinging about you still, without your slummy friends coming to Greyfriars."

"Look 'ere, Percy—"

"Oh, put in an 'L' for goodness' sake!" snarled Bolsover.

"You make me ill! I'm beginning to wish that the pater had never found you. It's jolly clear that a London slum is the proper place for you."

Billy winced.

"I'm sorry, Percy—"

"Well, if you're sorry, promise me that you won't see this cad Tadger."

"He ain't a cad."

"Will you promise me?" shouted Bolsover.

"I can't!"

"You mean you won't?"

"Well, I won't, then!" said Billy, with a flash of spirit.

"Look 'ere, I can't go back on an old pat because he's down on his luck. It wouldn't be cricket. I—I—"

"Cheeky young beggar!" said Vernon-Smith. "Give him a hiding, and have done with him. I wouldn't have a minor cheek me like that!"

"And I won't!" said Bolsover between his teeth. "I'll smash him first! I never knew such an ungrateful young scoundrel! Hubert, you've got to give me that promise."

"I can't!"

"We'll see whether you can't!"

Bolsover, his face black with anger, pushed his minor into the study. Vernon-Smith followed him in, grinning unpleasantly. The Bounder of Greyfriars was not a bully by nature, but there was a strain of cruelty in his nature, and he disliked the fag intensely. For since the brothers had been good friends all Billy's influence had been exerted to draw his major away from the evil influence of the Bounder of Greyfriars. And few fellows crossed the Bounder's path without being made sorry for it sooner or later.

"Hold the young cad over the table while I lather him, Smithy," said Bolsover, taking up a cricket-stump from a corner of the study.

"Willingly!" said the Bounder.

Billy backed away in alarm.

"Ere, I say—" he expostulated.

But he had no time to say more. The strong grasp of the Bounder was upon him, and the little fag was helpless in the hands of the Remover. Vernon-Smith swung him over the table, face downwards, somewhat to the detriment of the crockery that was still there. Cups and saucers rolled to the floor and cracked; but that did not concern the Bounder. It was not his property. He held the fag on the table with a grip of iron, Billy wriggling spasmodically in his grasp.

"Here you are!" said the Bounder laconically.

Bolsover major raised the stump.

"Will you promise me, you young cad?" he asked thickly.

"I can't, Percy!"

"Then take that!"

Lash! Lash!

A cry of pain broke from Bolsover minor.

"Oh, Percy, don't!"

Lash! Lash!

"Oh!"

The door of the study was pushed open, and Johnny Bull and Tom Brown looked in.

"You fellows ready—" Johnny Bull was beginning; and then as he saw what was happening in the study he stopped and stared. "You cowardly brute!" he shouted.

And then, with a spring, he was upon Bolsover.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Minor Says "No!"

BOLSOVER swung round from the table; but before he could defend himself Johnny Bull was upon him. Two strong hands grasped the bully of the Remove, and he swung round, spun off his feet, and hurled into a corner of the room. He fell with a crash, and a roar of pain broke from him.

Vernon-Smith backed away from John Bull's blazing eyes.

Billy, almost sobbing with pain, wriggled off the table, and stood upon his feet, squirming a little with pain.

"It's—it's alright!" he stammered. "I—I don't mind! Let my brother alone!"

"Oh, you shut up!" said Johnny Bull roughly. "Get out of the study!"

"But—but—"

"Get out, I tell you! Kick him out, Tom!"

Tom Brown took Bolsover minor by the shoulder and jerked him out of the study.

"Cut!" he said briefly.

But Bolsover minor did not cut. He was anxious about his major. It was curious that he should care—but he did.

Bolsover major was scrambling to his feet, his face black with passion.

"You rotter!" he roared. "I'll teach you to lay hands on me!"

And he hurled himself upon Johnny Bull.

Bull was quite ready to meet him. In a second the two juniors were grasping one another, and trampling round the study in furious conflict.

Vernon-Smith looked on, with lowering brows. He would willingly have come to his comrade's aid, for he was not troubled about any notions of fair play. But Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, was quite ready for him if he interfered—and the Bounder did not interfere. He had had experience once of Tom Brown's powers as a hard hitter, and he had no desire to repeat it.

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! went the fighting juniors, breathing hard and fast.

Johnny Bull was one of the few fellows in the Remove who had any chance of tackling the burly Bolsover with success; and perhaps, at any other time, he would have had the worst of it. But just now he was fired with anger and indignation, and seemed to have a giant's strength. He whirled Bolsover major round the study, hammering him all the time; and Bolsover was almost blind and sick with the blows, and his return blows were weak and wild.

Crash!

Bolsover major went to the floor, with Johnny Bull on top of him.

"Hang you!" he gasped. "Let me up! I've had enough!"

Johnny Bull set his teeth.

"You've not had enough!" he said grimly. "You're going to have some of what you're giving your minor! Lend me a hand to turn the big brute over, Tom; and young Billy shall give him the stomp."

"Good egg!" grinned Tom Brown.

Bolsover struggled furiously; but he was turned over, and Johnny Bull's knee in the middle of his back pinned him down. He turned a white and savage face towards the hesitating Bounder.

"Help me, you cad!" he gasped. "Chip in, can't you?"

Vernon-Smith made a move forward. Tom Brown turned upon him. Bolsover was helpless now—he could not move with John Bull's knee planted in his back.

"Come on, Smith!" said Tom Brown cheerfully. "I'm ready!"

The Bounder backed away again.

"Help me, Smith!" roared Bolsover.

"How can I?" snarled the Bounder.

"You coward!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"If that's the way you're going to talk, I don't see why I should stay and listen to it," he said.

And he coolly quitted the study and walked down the passage, humming a tune.

Johnny Bull looked round at Bolsover minor, and signed to him to come in. Billy obeyed, looking very white.

"Take that stomp!" commanded Johnny Bull.

"W-w-what for?"

"To give this brute what he was giving you!"

"I can't!"

"Why can't you?"

"I don't want to," said Billy.

"You young ass! It's the only way to stop his bullying!"

"I—I don't mind! Let him alone, Master Bull," said Billy pleadingly.

"I don't mind if he ragges me! It's my business!"

"It's our business, too!" said John Bull grimly. "Take the stomp, Tommy, as that young ass won't, and give this brute half a dozen with it."

"What-ho!" said Tom Brown promptly.

"Don't you dare to touch me!" shrieked Bolsover.

Tom Brown grinned.

"You'll see whether I dare or not!" he said.

He grasped the stump and raised it in the air. Bolsover minor sprang forward as the stump descended, and the blow dropped upon his arm, outstretched to save his brother from the just punishment.

Crack!

The slag gave a sob of pain.

"You—you young ass!" gasped Tom Brown, starting back, too late to prevent the blow from falling, for he had never dreamed of what the slag intended. "You silly young ass! You're hurt!"

He threw down the stump.

"You shan't 'it 'im!" muttered Billy, white to the lips.

"You young fathead!"

Tom Brown caught the slag's arm, and pushed back the sleeve. There was a deep red mark on the flesh deepening to black. There would be a big bruise there, Tom Brown knew, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

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

and he knew the pain the lash must have caused. His face was very red.

"You ass! You young ass!" was all he could say.

"Let him alone!" said Billy.

"But he was ragging you—"

"I don't care!"

Johnny Bull gave a short laugh.

"Oh, he's always like that!" he said. "Never mind, we'll let the cad off, as the kid doesn't want him kicked. Cut off, Bolsover minor!"

"You won't do anything to Percy?"

"No, you ass, we'll let dear Percy alone; but he won't let you alone, I think, if you're here when we let him go. He looks quite ratty about something."

"I'll go, Master Bull."

"You'd better."

Bolsover minor quitted the study. Johnny Bull waited till his footsteps had died away, and then he removed his knee from the back of the bully of the Remove.

"You can get up," he said curtly. "If you want this to go any further, I'm ready to have the gloves on with you in the gym, any time. I'm going down to the cricket now."

Bolsover lay sprawling. He could not rise for the moment; he was utterly spent with his struggling. Johnny Bull and Brown, without looking at him again, quitted the study. It was some minutes before the bully of the Remove rose, and then he did not go down to the cricket-ground. He was not feeling quite fit for cricket practice just then.

Johnny Bull was still looking rather flushed, and somewhat breathless, when he reached the junior cricket-ground. The practice was already going on.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Where have you been?"

"Looked into your study for you as we came down," John Bull explained.

Bob eyed him curiously.

"And you found a swollen nose there, apparently?" he remarked.

John Bull grinned, and rubbed his nose, which certainly was showing signs of the combat in No. 1 Study.

"I found Bolsover there, bullying his minor," he said.

"There was a scrap. That's all."

"Bullying his minor in our study?" Frank Nugent exclaimed indignantly. "The cheeky rotter! I thought the Bolsovers were getting on better lately, though."

"They seem to have fallen out."

"It's that letter, I suppose," said Harry Wharton, knitting his brows thoughtfully. "Bolsover is frightfully touchy about his minor's early connections. Is he coming down to the practice?"

Johnny Bull chuckled.

"I fancy not," he said.

"Well, take in your bat. Inks's going to bowl to you."

"The bowflessness will be terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, more familiarly known to the Greyfriars fellows as "Inky."

And Johnny Bull went in to bat. Harry Wharton looked very thoughtful during the cricket practice. He took a very great interest in Bolsover minor, and he had been glad to see him on better terms with his major; but that seemed to be at an end now. It was unfortunate for both parties that Billy's old pal had dropped up in that unexpected way, and Wharton wondered what would come of it.

It was dusk when the cricket practice ceased, and the juniors trooped into the School House.

Bolsover was standing on the House steps, with his hands in his pockets, and a sulky scowl on his face. One of his eyes was nearly closed, and his nose was very red, and his mouth had a peculiar sideways look. His scowl deepened at the sight of the chums of the Remove. He made a step forward in Harry Wharton's path.

"Just a word with you, Wharton," he said.

Wharton looked at him calmly.

"Go ahead!" he said.

"You're backing up my minor in that matter—"

"What matter?"

"About having his slum pals here."

"I haven't interfered in the matter at all, excepting to prevent you from destroying his letter," said Harry coldly.

"You had no right to do that."

Bolsover's teeth came hard together.

"Then you're not backing him up?"

"It's no business of mine, unless Bolsover minor asks me to chip in."

"And if he does—"

"I shall have to think about it, of course."

"I understand!" said Bolsover, with a sneer. "You'll back him up against me, and make capital out of it if you

can! Well, understand this—I'll make you sorry for it if you do! And if that shun brat comes to the school, I'll make him wish he had never been born!"

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders and walked on. He had no desire and no intention of entering into a dispute with Bolsover about it. He went into his study in the Remove passage, and lighted the gas. The study was not empty. Bolsover minor was there, waiting for him.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Good Ideas Not Wanted.

HARRY WHARTON glanced curiously at the flag. He could guess why Bolsover minor had come to him.

"Well, kid?" he said cheerily. "Sit down! Been waiting long?"

"No—no," said Billy nervously. "Do you mind if I close the door?"

Frank Nugent closed the door.

"Thank you," said Billy. The chums of the Remove looked rather awkwardly at one another. Billy's desire to keep his presence in the study from his brother's knowledge was plain. But the juniors did not quite like the idea of anything clandestine about the matter. But, although they had no fear of Bolsover, it was necessary to remember that Billy had.

"Well, go ahead, kid!" said Wharton, rather abruptly. "What is it?"

"You know I 'ad a letter to-day?" said Billy. "The one I brought to you? Yes."

"It was from an old pal of mine—chap name of Tadger," Billy explained. "He says he's coming here to see me."

Nugent whistled softly.

"I know it's awkward," said Billy. "Tadger don't understand that, or he wouldn't come! He's as good as gold, Master 'Arry! Percy has cut up awful rough about it, and he's going to rag Tadger if he comes; and the chaps in the Third seem to feel the same about it. I don't know wot to do! I wish I 'ad not wrote to Tadger now!"

"You want to see him?" asked Wharton.

"Yes; I want to."

"Then let him come. I'm sure the Head wouldn't mind—just for once, anyway," said Wharton. "You could ask his permission, and explain the facts to him. It would be a shame to hurt the chap's feelings if he's an old chum, and if he doesn't understand how matters are he might think you were getting snobbish now you've got on in the world a bit."

Billy flushed. "That's just wot I'm afraid of," he said. "Only—if it was possible—I'd rather he didn't come, on Percy's account. Only I don't think I can let 'im know. I've wrote a letter and posted it, but I don't think he'll get it. I think he'll be tramping from London, 'cause he ain't got any money to pay his railway-fare, of course. I reckon 'e left same time as he posted the letter to me, p'r'aps."

Wharton looked grave.

"It's an awkward business, with your brother cutting up so rusty about it," he said. "As for ragging the kid, that sha'n't be done if we can prevent it. He's done nothing to be ragged for, and he sha'n't be bullied."

Billy did not seem wholly comforted by that assurance. The protection of the Famous Four might be necessary for his old pal, but that would bring them into direct conflict with his major. And whichever side got the best of it, it would be very unpleasant for poor Billy.

"I—I thort you might think of something, sir," he stammered. "If I knew when Tadger was coming, I might meet him outside the school; but I don't! It's rotten! I don't want you to lay 'ands on Percy—he's my brother! But—but if the other fellers—Snoop, and Stott, and the rest goes for Tadger—"

"We'll jolly soon stop them!" said Harry Wharton.

Billy looked relieved.

"Thank you, Master 'Arry!" he said. "That's wot I wanted to know. And—when Tadger is 'ere, I can't take 'im into the Third Form-room—they'd rag 'im bald-headed! And—and I don't want my brother to see 'im if I can help it."

Billy paused.

Frank Nugent grinned a little.

"Do you mean that you want us to have him here?" he asked.

The flag coloured painfully.

"It's askin' too much, I know that," he stammered.

"No, it isn't!" said Wharton, kindly enough. "I've said

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the

Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled:

"TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

more than once that you can always come to me in a difficulty; and this is a difficulty, and no mistake! You don't mind if he brings the chup here, Franky?"

Nugent laughed.

"Not at all!"

"And I don't! Bring him, by all means, Billy! Let us know in advance if you can, of course."

"I will, Master 'Arry, so you needn't 'ave anybody else to see 'im—"

"I don't mean that, Billy. I mean so that we can be at home, and so that we can have some grub for him ready."

"You're a good sort, Master 'Arry!" said Billy huskily.

"I'd do anything for you!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's all right," he said. "We'll do anything we can. We don't want to be put in the position of interfering between you and your brother if we can help it, but we'll look after Master Tadger. You can rely on that."

"I don't know 'ow to thank you, sir!"

"Don't bother, then. It's nothing."

But the gratitude in Billy's face as he quitted the study showed that he did not regard it as nothing. Harry Wharton glanced at his watch.

"My hat! Time we got on to our prep!" he remarked.

"Yes, rather!"

But the chums of the Remove were fated to be interrupted again. The door opened, and a fat face looked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, get out, Bunter! We're no time for jaw now!" said Wharton curtly.

"You've got time for jaw with Bolsover minor!" said Billy Bunter angrily. "I should think I'm of more account than that dummy boulder!"

"That's where your thinker goes wrong, then!" said Nugent. "You're not! Buzz off!"

"I came to see you chaps on business. I asked Wharton for a little loan this afternoon, on account of a postal-order I'm expecting to-morrow morning—"

"Oh, blow your postal-order, and you, too! Get out!"

"Five bob would do me—"

"I haven't fivepence at the present moment," Wharton remarked. "Stony, my son! Do you understand that? I told you so once to-day!"

"Yes, I know; but I've got an idea," said Bunter eagerly. "I can suggest a way for you to raise some money."

"Go ahead," said Wharton, laughing. "I'll do it willingly enough! I'm hard up just now!"

"Your uncle gave you a gold watch your last birthday—"

"What on earth has that got to do with it?" demanded Wharton, in astonishment.

"I've often noticed it," said Bunter, unheeding. "It's a valuable one. Colonel Wharton must have given ten quid for it."

"More than that, I imagine. But what—"

"Well, for the sake of a fellow I like, I wouldn't mind taking the trouble— Look here, if you like to lend me your watch, I'll pop it for you!" said Bunter generously.

Wharton stared at him blankly.

"You'll—you'll what?" he gasped.

"I'll pop it!"

"Pop it?"

"Run it in, you know!"

"Run it in," repeated Wharton dazedly.

"Yes, Uncle Solomon—three brass baels. 'Vat can I do for you, shentlemens'?" said Billy Bunter, with a grin.

Wharton started to his feet.

"You young rotter! Clear out!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Of all the cheek—to ask me to pawn my uncle's watch to raise cash for you!"

"I—I—I'd pawn it for you!" urged Bunter. "I—I—I'd do more than that for a fellow I like—I would really!"

"Outside!" roared Wharton.

"But I say— Oh, really— Ow—"

Bunter did not finish. A strong pair of hands seized him, and he descended upon the linobath in the passage outside with a loud bump. Then the study door was slammed upon him.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "Yow! Beas! This is what comes of trying to oblige a fellow! Ow!"

Bolsover came along the passage, and almost stumbled over Bunter in the dusk. He glared down at the Owl of the Remove.

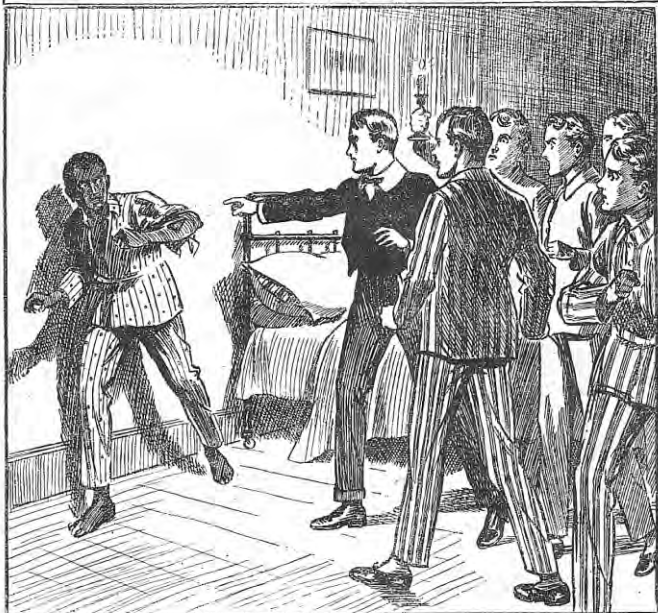
"What are you doing there, you silly ass?" he growled.

"Ow! Wharton's just chucked me out! Ow! I say, Bolsover, I wish you'd go in and give Wharton a kicking!"

Ow—Ow!"

"I'll give you one instead!" said Bolsover.

"Oh! Yar-o-h!"



As the bully's eyes rested on the Indian, he uttered a sudden cry: "Great Scott! Look!" His strange and startled tone caused the Shell fellows to stare at Kalouth's Das's exposed arm in amazement. "It's the red triangle!" shouted Gore. (An exciting incident in "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!" the splendid, long, complete school tale of the famous Chums of St. Jim's contained in this Thursday's issue of our companion paper, "The Gem" Library. Price One Penny. Please order your copy to-day.)

Bolsover was badly in need of someone to wreak his wrath upon just then. He started upon Hunter. The fat junior fled down the passage, with Bolsover's boots making rapid play behind him.

Biff—biff—biff!

Bolsover dribbled Bunter down the passage as if he had been a very fat football. The roars of the fat junior could be heard far and wide. Fellows looked out of their studies in amazement, and yelled with laughter.

"Ow—ow—ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter reached the stairs, and went down them four at a time. Bolsover paused on the landing, out of breath, and gasping. A wail from Billy Bunter floated up from below, and the Remova bully grinned. He went on to his study in a much more cheerful frame of mind. The kicking of Bunter seemed to have done him good. But Billy Bunter was not feeling cheerful. He rolled away, groaning, and reported him sincerely of having paid that visit to Study No. 1, to make that brilliant suggestion of raising money by "popping" Harry Wharton's gold watch.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were busy with their preparation. They worked away in silence for

some time, but both of them were thinking of Bolsover minor, as well as of their work. Frank Nugent broke the silence first.

"Poor little beggar!" he said.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"It will be jolly awkward for him—the other kid coming here!" he said. "I hope, for Billy's sake, that he won't come!"

"But if he does—"

"We shall have to look after him a bit, and keep Bolsover off the grass!"

"Right-ho! But it will mean trouble!" said Nugent prophetically.

And Nugent was right.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Catch for Coker.

COKER, of the Fifth Form, looked out into the Close of Greyfriars from the big doorway, and grinned good-humouredly. It was the day after that upon which Bolsover minor's famous letter had arrived, and it was a Wednesday—a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Coker, of

NEXT
TUESDAY:

'FOES OF THE FOURTH!'

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

the Fifth was in a high good-humour. Coker's aunt had come down very handsomely lately, and Coker was rolling in funds. When Coker, of the Fifth, was specially well off in the way of finance, he was accustomed to doing things in great style. For that afternoon, therefore, Coker disdained cricket, and turned up his somewhat rugged nose at the river and the boats. Coker was going to take out his chums—Potter and Green, of the Fifth—for a drive in a trap, and the trap had been sent over from the livery-stables at Court-field, and was standing outside the School House now, with a horse standing steady between the shafts, and a groom holding its head. Coker looked upon the sunny afternoon and the handsome trap, and was satisfied.

"All ready!" he said, looking over his shoulder. "Hurry up, you slackers!"

Coker had a red necktie on, and anyone unacquainted with Coker's gorgeous taste in colours might have imagined that it indicated a leaning towards Socialistic principles. But it didn't. Coker had never heard of Socialism, and he wore the red tie because it was startling, especially so against his purple waistcoat. Coker liked to catch the public eye. He had a riding-whip in his hand, not because he needed a riding-whip for driving a trap, but because it sounded well to his ears, and it was a mark of his class. He had the tail of his summer coat tucked into the back of his seat, and altogether looked very rakish and doggish, which it was his ambition and his pride to look.

"Good gee!" said Coker, who always called a horse a gee, because it smacked of the stable and of knowings. "We shall have a ripping time."

"Oh, good!" said Potter.
"Ripping!" said Potter. "My hat! I wish I had an aunt like yours, Cokey, old boy. I've got a whole set of uncles I'd swap for her."

Coker chuckled. His aunt was very fond of him, for what reason nobody had ever been able to discover. Coker tolerated her nobly, and allowed her to call him dear Horace, and even to kiss him on the forehead before the fellows. For, as he sapiently explained to Potter and Green, an aunt like that was no end useful to a chap.

Fellows gathered round to look on as Coker & Co. stepped towards the trap. Harry Wharton & Co. paused on their way to the cricket-field, with bats under their arms.

Billy Bunter came out of the School House and tapped Coker on the sleeve.

"I say, you fellows," he remarked, "if you're looking for a good driver—"

"We're not," said Coker. "We've got one, chap named Cokey."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Green and Potter dutifully.

"Oh, really, Cokey? I've had a lot of experience driving, and if you'd like me to come—"

"I wouldn't!" said Coker.

"Ahem! I'd come and sit in the trap, if you like, and let you drive."

"You are too kind, Bunter," said Coker cheerfully. "But that gee is a horse, not a locomotive, and I'm afraid your weight would be a little too much for him."

"Oh, really, Cokey?"

"Jump in, you chaps!"

"Want anybody else in the trap?" asked Temple, of the Fourth, very affably.

"No, thanks," said Coker, with equal affability. "and I'm not taking Fourth Form lads out, anyway. Jump in, Potty!"

Coker jumped in lightly, and gathered up the reins. Potter and Green were there, and they were away in the trap, and Coker cracked the whip. The groom let the horse's head go, and Potter took the trap out of the Close with great skill.

"Wouldn't care for me to drive, I suppose?" Potter suggested mildly, as the trap bowled down the lane.

"Couldn't trust you with this gee," said Coker.

"Oh, I can drive a treat, you know."

"I'll take your word for it."

"I wouldn't mind showing you."

"But I would," said Coker, with a chuckle.

And Potter sniffed and gave it up. The trap bowled down Friar-chase Lane, and turned into the broad high-road, and there Coker let the horse have its head. Coker handled the reins very well, and he was in a high good-humour with himself and everybody else on that sunny afternoon in early summer, and conscious of having outshone the other fellows by taking out such a handsome trap.

The long white road, dry and dusty, stretched before the trap, and half a dozen miles ran under the rattling hoofs in next to no time. Then Coker slackened down the pace a little, and stopped at last by a wayside inn. The horse made for the trough outside, to drink, and Coker inquired if his companions were thirsty.

"What-ho!" said Potter.

"Just!" said Green.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled, "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

"We can get ginger-pop and lemonade here," said Coker. "Jump down!"

Under the big tree before the inn, where the signboard hung and creaked, was a bench and a little wooden table. A wayward traveller was sitting on the bench, and the Fifth-Formers of Greyfriars eyed him with some distaste as they came to the bench. He was a lad of not more than thirteen, with a diminutive figure for his age, but a face that was strangely old for so young a boy. There was a bright keenness about it, a quick intelligence in the eyes, that told of better experience than usually fall to the lot of a lad of thirteen. His clothes were comical in their raggedness. He wore a pair of man's check trousers, rent and gashed in many a place, and an old coat clumsily cut down to his size. His boots would have disgraced any respectable dualheap, and the rag of a cap upon his towzled head had lost all the shape of a cap. He was evidently very tired, from the way he leaned back against the tree behind the bench, and his eyes were half-closed. There was dust all over him, and weariness in his looks.

"Nice sort of a trap to sit down by," growled Potter. The boy opened his half-closed eyes, and moved to the extreme end of the bench without a word. He did not seem to expect anything like civility from three well-dressed fellows who had driven up in a trap.

But Coker, high-handed as he was among his fellows at Greyfriars, and given to show and ostentation, had a kind and generous heart. He glanced over the little ragamuffin, and grinned good-temperedly.

"Hallo, young rats," he said, "where do you come from?"

The boy looked at him doubtfully.

"Walked," he said laconically.

"Landed?" asked Coker jestingly.

"Yes."

Coker stared.

"You've tramped from London?" he exclaimed, in amazement.

"A kid like you!"

"I ain't got no tin to pay the railway fare, sir," said the boy, with a grin that lighted up his tired face. "I left my cheque-book at home on the grand planner."

Coker laughed.

"Thirsty?" he queried.

"Ain't I just?"

"Have some ginger-beer?"

"Wot!"

"Four ginger-beers, please!" said Coker to the man who came to take his order. And the man stared at the little ragamuffin, and went away for the ginger-beer.

Potter and Green were not looking very agreeable. They were accustomed to allowing Coker to be leader, although they privately considered him a first-class ass. But taking up a ragged little tramp like this was really too much.

"What's the little name?" growled Potter. "If you hadn't been talking to him, the barman would have ordered that horrid little boulder off."

"I don't see why he shouldn't have a vest here, if he's walked from London," said Coker good-naturedly. "Poor little beggar!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Oh, shut up, Potty! Let the little chap alone," said Coker; and Coker's word was law to the Close. "He looks pretty dusty. What have you tramped down into the country for, kid?"

"Visit an ole pal," said the boy.

"My hat! Precious few of my pals would walk from London to visit me," said Coker, in wonder. "Can't see you doing it, Potty."

"Oh, rot!" said Potter.

"And where are you going?" asked Coker, his curiosity aroused.

"I believe it's some miles fuder on," said the little ragamuffin. "Praps you young gentlemen can tell me whether this is near Greyfriars."

Coker & Co. jumped.

"Do you mean Greyfriars?" exclaimed Coker, in astonishment.

"Yes; that's the name of the school."

"You're going to Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"See my ole pal."

"You—you've got a friend at Greyfriars College?" exclaimed Coker, unable to believe his ears, and staring blankly at the boy. But the little wail was evidently speaking in serious earnest.

ANSWERS

In this week's "GEM" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

"Yes, sir."

"What on earth's his name? You can't be a relation of the porter?" said Coker, in astonishment. "If you are, I'd advise you not to visit Goding in those togs. He won't be pleased, you can take my word for it." And Potter and Greene chuckled assent to that statement.

"My pal's a poppad at Greyfriars," the boy explained. "Oh, come off!" said Potter incredulously. "You can't expect us to believe that, you know."

"It's true!"

"Look here," exclaimed Greene angrily, "we belong to Greyfriars School. Now, have you the cheek to tell us that you're a friend of any fellow there?"

"Yes, sir," said the wait steadily.

"What's his name?"

"Bolsover."

"Bolsover! You're a friend of Bolsover, of the Remove?" gasped Potter.

Coker gave a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! I understand now. It's not Bolsover, of the Remove; he means Bolsover minor, of the Third. Isn't that it, kid?"

The boy looked at him.

"Is name's Ubert Bolsover," he said.

"That's it!" roared Coker. "This is one of Bolsover minor's old chums in the days of adversity, as they call 'em in the story-books. My hat!"

He was drinking his ginger-beer with evident enjoyment, and considerable noise.

"The chap who wrote that letter that the whole school is racking over," murmured Greene.

"Did you write Bolsover minor a letter, kid?" asked Coker.

"Yes, sir."

"What's your name?"

"Tadger."

"And—and you're going to visit young Bolsover? Did he ask you to?"

"Yes, sir; last-ways, he said he would be glad to see me," said the little ragamuffin, "and I'd like to see 'im. We was great pals when he was a noosboy like me."

The Fifth-Formers burst into a yell of laughter. The idea of this ragged little urchin visiting a Greyfriars fellow tickled their fancy. Tadger gazed at them in wonder. Quite plainly he did not see any cause for their excessive merriment.

"Who yer getting at?" he demanded, rather aggressively.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look 'ee—"

"Won't Bolsover major be pleased!" chuckled Coker.

And Potter and Greene roared louder than ever. Bolsover major was a thorn in the side of the Fifth. The Remove bully was so big and so powerful that he never hesitated to check the Fifth in the most open way. It was well known that he boasted in the Form-rooms that he could lick Coker, the biggest fellow in the Fifth, and for reasons best known to himself Coker did not put the matter to the test. Bolsover major was indeed big enough, and almost old enough, to be in the Fifth himself, and he did not care a snap of the fingers for the whole Fifth Form of Greyfriars, and not much for the Sixth, the mighty Sixth itself. A junior who was always cheeky, and often aggressively insolent, and who was too big and too good a boxer to be licked, was a thorn to the Fifth, and any chance of taking him down was likely to be as welcome to the Fifth-Formers as the flowers in May.

Coker chuckled gleefully.

"You fellows know how touchy Bolsover is about his minor's early connections," he said, sinking his voice so that Tadger could not hear. "He gets wild if there's the least mention of it. If he knew this kid was coming, he would walk miles to meet him, and hammer him into going back. I shouldn't wonder if he's keeping an eye open for him."

"If he knows he's coming, he jolly well is, I should say."

"This is where we came in," said Coker.

"How do you mean?"

"The kid looks tired, doesn't he?"

"I dare say he does," said Potter indifferently. "What's that got to do with us?"

"Only it would be simply decent to give him a little lift in the trap."

Potter and Greene started.

"That dirty ragamuffin in the trap with us!" ejaculated Potter. "If you come off your dog, Coker!"

"Not quite," said Coker coolly. "You see, if we drive him into Greyfriars, we plant him right on the school without giving Bolsover any chance to keep him away. We can set him down right on the steps of the School House, inquiring for Bolsover."

"My only hat!"

"What do you think of the idea?" grinned Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker turned kindly to the little ragamuffin.

"I suppose you're pretty tired, with hoofing it from London and sleeping under hedges, and so on?" he remarked.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

NEXT TUESDAY:

"FOES OF THE FOURTH."

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

"Oh, I can stick it out as far as Greyfriars!" said Tadger.

"Wouldn't you like a lift?"

"Yes, if I could get one."

"Well, here you are! We're going back to Greyfriars now, and we'll give you a lift in the trap if you like."

"You ain't gammoning?" said the boy doubtfully.

"Honest Injun!" said Coker. "Finish your ginger-pop, and jump in."

"Wot-ho! I'm on!" said Tadger emphatically.

"Bundle in, then!"

Tadger huddled into the trap. Potter and Greene mounted also, taking care to keep as far as possible from the extremely dusty little ragamuffin. Coker gathered up the reins, with a chuckle.

"I fancy there's a pleasant surprise in store for our friend Bolsover," he remarked. And Potter and Greene roared.

"Oh, he knows I'm comin'!" said Tadger. "I wrote and told 'im!"

"I mean the other Bolsover, my young friend," said Coker blandly. "There are two of them, you see—and we're specially interested in the other one. Although we are very glad to have the honour of giving a lift to a distinguished young gentleman like yourself, we are also thinking of our friend Bolsover major. Ain't he, you chaps?"

"We are!" grinned Potter.

And the Fifth-Formers roared.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Tadger Arrives in Style.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

A group of flannelled cricketers stood outside the little tuckshop in the corner of the Close of Greyfriars.

After strenuous efforts at the wickets, Harry Wharton & Co. were refreshing themselves with ginger-pop. They looked very ruddy and cheerful. From the cricket-field still came the merry click of bat and ball, where the other fellows were at practice at the nets.

"There was the sound of a cracking whip in the direction of the gates, and the juniors looked in that direction.

Coker's trap dashed in in great style, and Coker toiled it up towards the School House with his best skill.

But it was not at Coker, nor the trap, that the juniors stared. Their eyes were fixed upon a ragged little figure sitting beside Coker, and staring round in almost bewildered amazement at the wide, spacious Close, the green elm-trees, and the range of old grey buildings.

To Tadger, of Angel Alley, Greyfriars came as a complete surprise, and he made no effort to hide his amazement.

"My hat! Who's Coker got with him?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Where on earth did he pick that little coddler up?" said Johnny Bull, as he set down his glass on the table outside the tuckshop.

"Blessed if I can guess!"

"The blossfulness is terrific," purred Hurrey Janset Runt Singh. "The esteemed Coker seems to be starting in business as a philanthropist."

"Rather a phango for Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only Aunt Jemima!" exclaimed Nugent minor of the Second Form. "Here's a lark! Come and look at what Coker's caught!"

There was a rush of fellows towards the House.

Coker stopped the trap on the drive, outside the great door of the School House, with a flourish.

"Here we are again!" he exclaimed.

"Who's that with you, Coker?"

"Where did you dig that up?"

"Who's your friend?" asked Hoskins of the Shell, grinning.

"He ain't my friend," Coker explained blandly. "I'm merely an acquaintance of his. I found him coming to Greyfriars to visit Bolsover, and gave him a lift. That's all."

"To visit Bolsover?" yelled Ogilby of the Remove.

"Faith, and he's a queer visitor intirely!" remarked Micky Desmond.

"That's it," said Coker. "We gave him a lift; we couldn't do less, seeing that he is a friend of our respected friend Bolsover."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell for Bolsover. There was hardly a fellow present who was not delighted at the prospect of such an unpleasant surprise for the bully of the Remove. Bolsover's little ways had not made him popular.

"Where's Bolsover?"

"Call Bolsover!"

By FRANK RICHARDS, Order Early.

"He's on the cricket-field, I guess," remarked Fisher T. Fish.
 "Fetch Bolsover, some of you!" yelled Bulstrode.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Look here, this must be the kid for Bolsover minor," said Harry Wharton, coming up. "What's the good of fetching Bolsover major?"

But Wharton's voice was drowned in the roars of laughter. Half a dozen fellows had rushed off to fetch Bolsover, who was bating on the cricket-field.

In a few minutes the bully of the Remove made his appearance, his face black as midnight.

A yell of derisive merriment from the crowd greeted him.

"Here you are, Bolsover!"

"Here your friend!"

"I gave him a lift, as he was visiting you, Bolsover, dear boy," said Coker.

"Let's see 'em shake hands!"

"Better put on your bating-gloves again, Bolsover—his paw ain't clean!" yelled Gatty of the Second.

And there was a fresh roar of laughter.

Bolsover glared at the little fellow sitting in the trap.

Poor Tadger looked at him very timidly. He had never seen Bolsover major before, but he knew that this must be Hubert's brother. There was little resemblance between the brothers in features; but the name was enough, of course, to show Tadger who was before him.

Bolsover's face seemed almost convulsed with rage as he looked at the little waif.

"You! Who are you?" he spluttered thickly.

"I—I'm Tadger!" faltered the boy.

"What have you come here for?"

"I've come to see Billy."

"You cheeky young hound!"

"I—I didn't know it—it was such a big place," said Tadger, with a pathetic look that touched more than one heart, though Bolsover was quite insensible to it. "I thought it would be something like the old school I went to once—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I didn't understand—" faltered Tadger.

"It's all right," said Coker. "We ain't proud at Greyfriars. Chaps here don't turn up their noses at their old pals. Look how pleased Bolsover is."

The crowd yelled with laughter. It certainly required a wide stretch of the imagination to suppose that Bolsover major was pleased.

"You remember him, of course, Bolsover?" said Coker blandly.

"I don't know the cad!" shrieked Bolsover.

Coker winked.

"Oh, that's rather too thin, you know!" he remonstrated. "The kid has come specially to see you and your brother—old friend of yours, I understand, from the time when you used to live in the slums—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover clenched his hands till his finger-tips were purple. It was a favourite gibe among his enemies that he had shared his minor's early misfortunes and had been brought up in a slum. It was not in the least correct; but many fellows affected to believe that it was, simply for the sake of exasperating Bolsover. And he was so touchy on the subject that it was very easy to exasperate him.

He stood speechless with rage, while little Tadger blinked down at him very nervously from his seat in the trap. The waif did not seem to care to descend; it hardly seemed safe, by Bolsover's looks.

"Well, jump down!" said Coker. "Bolsover's waiting to shake hands with you."

"Shake hands with him, Bolsover!"

"Welcome your old pal!"

"Don't be a snob, you know. You can't turn up your nose at an old pal."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker lifted Tadger out of the trap. The lad stood upon the lowest of the steps, his face very pale.

Harry Wharton & Co. moved forward. It was a very good joke, from the point of view of the thoughtless juniors, and from the point of view of Coker & Co. But it was no joke to the poor little fellow who had been made the instrument of Bolsover's humiliation. It was more tragic than comic for him.

Bolsover made a rush at the boy.

"You young cad!" he shouted. "I'll teach you to come here! I'll—"

His grasp was almost upon the waif when Harry Wharton ran between. Bolsover was pushed roughly back.

"Hands off!" said Wharton sternly.

Bolsover choked with passion.

"Get out of the way!"

"You shan't touch that kid!"

"I'll—I'll—"

Words failed Bolsover, and he made a furious rush. But two or three strong pairs of hands grasped him, and he was whirled back, wildly struggling. In his present mood he might have done serious harm to the little waif if he had been able to reach him.

But with Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Tom Brown grasping him the bully of the Remove was dragged back, and his furious struggling was useless.

"Let me go!" he panted. "Let me go! I'll smash him! I'll—"

"No, you won't!" said Johnny Bull coolly. "You'll keep your paws off the kid, you bully; he's done no harm."

Harry Wharton dropped his hand kindly enough upon the shoulder of the little waif.

"You'd better come with me," he said quietly.

Tadger looked at him in frightened bewilderment.

"Yes, sir!" he stammered.

And while Bolsover was still struggling in the grasp of the Co., Harry Wharton led the little waif into the School House and up to No. 1 Study.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Old Pals!

TADGER seemed like a fellow in a dream.

The motive of Coker & Co. in giving him a lift in the trap to Greyfriars he did not understand; the excitement and laughter that had greeted him bewildered him. That Percy Bolsover was furious he could see, but he hardly understood the cause. The size and the venerable appearance of the great school buildings had dazzled the little waif of the slums—the crowd of well-dressed fellows, the long ranges of windows, the majestic elms, and the wide playing-fields—he had not been expecting anything of the sort. He had never dreamed that his old pal Billy had come into anything like this. Tadger would have given a week's profits on the sale of evening papers to be safe back in Angel Alley now. He did not realise yet how awkward his visit might be for his old chum, but he realised that it was very uncomfortable for himself.

Well-known
Schools -
in - - -
The United
Kingdom.

No. 10.
BRIGHTON
COLLEGE,
BRIGHTON,
SUSSEX.



Next
Tuesday:
TEMPLE
GROVE
SCHOOL,
EASTBOURNE.

Order "The
Magnet"
Library, 1d.,
in advance.



Lord Mauleverer sauntered up to the group of juniors, and Harry Wharton performed the introduction in due form. "Tadger, an old pal of Bolsover minor—Lord Mauleverer," he said. "Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, holding out his hand. "Very pleased to meet you! New kid—eh?" "He, he, he!" chuckled Tadger, much tickled at the notion. "No, I ain't a new kid, your lordship. I'm just an old pal of Billy's!" (See page 19.)

He walked dazedly into No. 1 Study, with Harry Wharton's hand still kindly laid upon his arm. Wharton knew what the little fellow was feeling like, and he felt for him keenly. If Wharton could prevent it, the roof of the streets should not have a bad time while his visit to Greyfriars lasted.

Tadger gazed round the study nervously. The plain little room, not very tidy, reassured him a little. It seemed much more homely than the stately buildings looked from the outside.

"Sit down, kid," said Wharton.

"Thank you, sir?" stammered Tadger.

But he remained standing.

Bob Cherry and Nugent and Johnny Bull came into the study, a little breathless, but grinning. Wharton looked at them inquiringly.

"Where's Bolsover major?" he asked.

"Lying on his back in the Close."

"Is he, ha, ha?"

"Better cut off and look for Bolsover minor, and tell him his friend's come," Frank Nugent suggested. "I'll go."

"Do, Franky."

Frank quitted the study. Harry made Tadger sit down, and then the chums consulted on the subject of a study brew. They were ready for tea themselves, after their cricket practice, though it was not really tea-time yet. But Tadger was pretty certain to be hungry and thirsty after his journey.

"Hungry, kid?" asked Wharton.

"N-no, sir," stammered Tadger.

Wharton smiled.

"Never mind; we're going to have tea. Your friend will be here in a minute. Nugent has gone to fetch him."

"Thanky kindly, sir!"

"Keep your pecker up, kid," said Bob Cherry. "You're all right here, and we're glad to see you. You're a guest in this study, you know."

"I—I thanky, sir!"

"I suppose you're tired?" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Yes, a little, sir," said Tadger diffidently. "Is—is Billy over?"

"He'll be here in a minute."

"I—I didn't go far to expect anything like this," said Tadger humbly. "I'm sure you young gents. is werry kind."

"Not a bit of it. We want to make you comfy, that's all."

"That big cove was Billy's brother, wasn't he?" asked Tadger.

"Yes; Bolsover major."

"What was he so rusty about?"

"Oh, he's always like that," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"He's a bully, you know—not at all like Billy. He goes for anybody when he's in a temper. You wasn't take any notice of Bolsover major."

"He didn't like me couin' here?"

"It doesn't matter what he likes. He's not the owner of Greyfriars. You're in our study now, and he can't get at you."

"Thanky, sir!" said Tadger—not very cheerfully, however.

Nugent came back into the study with Bolsover minor. The latter had just heard of the arrival of his old pal when Nugent found him, and he had been enduring considerable chipping among the Third-Formers. Nugent had brought

him off at once to No. 1 Study, leaving Tubb and Pagot and the rest to talk as they liked.

Tadger started up as Billy came in, his face flushing.

"Hello, Billy," he said timidly.

"Tadger, old man!"

Wharton made a sign to his chums.

"We'll go and see about the things for tea," he remarked.

"Good egg!"

And the Removites quitted the study. They understood that Billy and his pal would like to be left alone for a while. Wharton closed the door of the study outside.

"I'll go down to the tuckshop for the stuff," he said. "You chaps had better stay here, in case Bolslover major should come along. You never know what that brute will do."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

And Bob and Nugent and Johnny Bull remained on guard in the passage. Within the study there was a murmur of voices. Billy and his old pal had not after a long separation, and the meeting was awkward enough on both sides at first. Billy was glad—very glad indeed—to see Tadger, but the thought of his brother's wealth haunted him all the time; he was thinking of Percy more than of Tadger. And Tadger was still bewildered and a little frightened by his strange new surroundings.

"I didn't expect to find you fixed up like this 'ere, Billy," said Tadger, surveying, in admiration and awe, the neat, clean Eton suit and the white collar of his old friend. "You didn't look like that when I saw you in Angel Alley."

Bolslover minor grinned a little.

"There's been a change since then, Tadger," he said.

"My eye! There has!" agreed Tadger. "Where did you get that clobber?"

In the dialect of Angel Alley, clobber meant clothes. Bolslover minor had not yet forgotten the language of his early youth.

"My pater," he explained.

"Your what?"

"Father," said Bolslover minor. "Chaps here call their fathers pater."

"Wot for?" asked Tadger. "Wot does it mean?"

"It's a Latin word," explained Bolslover minor. "It means father."

"Queer idea to call your father pater," said Tadger, in surprise. "Don't they talk English at this 'ere school, then?"

"Yes, yes; it's a way they have, that's all," said Bolslover minor hastily. "How have you been getting on all this time, Tadger?"

"Orl right," said Tadger. "You bet, all the blokes in the Row 'ave been talking about your good luck, Billy. It's a blooming miracle!"

"It does seem like one," said Billy.

"You like bein' at this 'ere school?"

"Yes, rather—though I ain't forgotten old friends, Tadger."

"My 'al!" said Tadger. "I should like to see you comin' down the alley in that clobber, Billy! I s'pose you wear a silk 'at now?"

"Yes."

"A real silk 'at?"

"Yes," said Billy, smiling, as he remembered the time when a silk hat inspired him with awe. "Every kid here has them. A silk topper doesn't make any difference to a chap, Tadger. 'Ow are all the folks in the alley?"

"Ole Mike has been pinched," said Tadger, telling simply the news of his native place. "It was a gent's gold tucker. He's got three months."

"Has he?"

"Mother Bunn has gone to the works at last. Toddy Dodd has got that job in the fried-fish shop. He's a swell now, I tell you—wears a collar and cuffs on Sundays."

"I'm glad he got it," said Billy. "Wot about the Mnocher?"

"Oh, he's gone on tramp! Ain't seed him for weeks."

"Wot do you think of Greyfriars, Tadger?"

"It's a mighty big place," said Tadger, in an awed voice. "And the clothes the young gent's wears, they're stonin'! I s'pose you're a young gent, now, Billy?"

Bolslover laughed rather awkwardly.

"Yes, I s'pose so, Tadger," he said.

"I didn't think about it," said Tadger slowly; "but it wasn't quite cute of me to come 'ere. I never expected to see a place like this. Your brother don't like my comin'."

"Oh, that's all right."

"Look 'ere," said Tadger. "I ain't a ass! If you're likely to get into any trouble through my bein' 'ere, jest you tip me the word, and I'll bunk!"

"You won't go yet, now you're here," said Billy. "Some

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the

Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled:

"TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

In this week's "GEM" Library. Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

of the fellows take it as a joke, and—and others are—Never mind. But some of the chaps are jolly decent—like Wharton, who brought you in here, and Cherry and Nugent. They belong to the Remove."

"Wot's that?"

"The Lower Fourth Form. I'm in the Third. Course, I ain't up to Third-Form Form—but I 'ave lessons outside the Form-room, you see—only I'm too big to be put among the kids. I'm gettin' on all right, though. I s'pose I shall get to know orl about Latin verbs, even, in time," said Billy, with a sigh.

"'Ar'd work, ain't it?" said Tadger sympathetically.

"'Ar'd ain't the word for it. I've thought more'n once I'd rather be back sellin' pipers, along of you and Tommy Dodd. But I s'pose it's for the best, and my pater, my father is a reglar brick, Tadger! So's my brother Percy, only—only he's got a temper, you see, and he cuts up cussy at times. But don't you mind 'im. Hallo! 'Ere's the fellows!"

There was a tap at the door, and Harry Wharton came in with a bag in his hand. Nugent and the rest followed him in.

"Ready for tea?" said Harry cheerfully. "It won't be long now. All hands!"

And all hands set to work preparing tea.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Takes a Hand.

BOLSOVER MAJOR had been very roughly handled. After the juniors had left him, he scrambled up, as enraged as ever, but with very little breath left in him. The laughing crowd did not sympathise with him in the least. Coker & Co. had gone on their way rejoicing, and there were few fellows who were not laughing over Bolslover's discomfiture.

The bully of the Remove stamped into the house to get away from the laughter and the taunts. He knew that Tadger was in Wharton's study, and that he could not get at him again, but he was by no means satisfied to leave the matter where it was. If wishes could have killed, probably the career of the unfortunate Tadger would have come to a sudden ending in No. 1 Study at that moment. But they could not; and Bolslover, pacing up and down a deserted Form-room by himself, thought the matter out, and debated what he could do.

There were few to back him up if he had thought of raiding No. 1 Study, and pitching Tadger out of the house—which was his first idea. Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove, and the Remove would have backed him up, and certainly not Bolslover. Force seemed to be out of the question.

Bolslover thought next of appealing to the Head, or to Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. But what was would it be? Neither the Head nor the Form-master was likely to raise any objection to Billy receiving a visit from an old friend. If they had seen Tadger, doubtless, his rage would have shocked them, and they would have cautioned Bolslover minor about asking him to Greyfriars again. But they were not likely to do more than that.

Bolslover thought of Wingate, but Wingate would have taken the same view. Then the thought of Loder, the prefect, came into his mind, and he brightened. Loder of the Sixth was the special enemy of No. 1 Study, and he would be glad indeed to pay off old scores if he had a decent pretext for coming down heavily upon Harry Wharton & Co.

The thought was no sooner in Bolslover's mind than he acted upon it. He left the Form-room, and hurried to the Sixth-Form passage, and tapped at Loder's door. Loder was there, with Carne and Walker, and a slight haze of cigarette-smoke as Bolslover opened the door showed how they had been engaged. The black sheep of the Sixth looked angrily at Bolslover as he came in.

"You'd better learn to keep out of a prefect's study till you're asked to come in, I think, Bolslover," said Loder, reaching out his hand for a cane that lay upon the table.

"He's come to tell us about his young friend from the slums, I suppose," remarked Carne, who had witnessed the scene in the Close from his study window. "Very praise-worthy of you to keep up old friendships like this, Bolslover."

And the three seniors burst into a laugh. Bolslover's face was crimson with rage and humiliation.

"He's not an old friend of mine," he said savagely; "and you know that well enough. He's a young scoundrel my brother knew before he was found, and he's come here to disgrace us and get money out of Hubert."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Carne. "I don't see what

else you could expect. I must say it's a bit thick for your family to bring this sort of thing on the school."

"I want Loder to interfere," said Bolsover.

Loder laughed.

"It's no business of mine," he said. "You must settle your family troubles without my assistance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's been taken into No. 1 Study," said Bolsover, unheeding the laughter. "Harry Wharton and the rest are feeding him up, and taking him under their wing, just to annoy me. As a prefect, I think you ought to interfere and stop such things."

Loder started a little. He understood Bolsover's motive in coming to the study now. He exchanged glances with his companions.

"There's something in that," he said slowly.

"Quite so," said Carne, with an evil grin. "You ought really to stop Wharton from disgracing the school in this way, Loder, old man. It's your—ahem—duty, as a prefect."

Loder rose to his feet.

"If Wharton is doing anything derogatory to the school, of course I'm bound to interfere," he said. "A junior certainly has no right to bring ruffians into the place, to steal all they can lay their hands on. I'll come with you, Bolsover."

"Good!" exclaimed Bolsover eagerly. "Come on! They won't dare to resist a prefect."

"I'd like to catch them trying," said Loder.

In two minutes more, Loder, with Bolsover at his heels, was knocking at the door of No. 1 Study. The door was locked.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came Rob Cherry's powerful voice from within. "Who's there? If it's Bolsover major, you can go and eat coke!"

"Open this door at once!"

There was an exclamation inside the study.

"Loder, by Jove!"

Harry Wharton opened the door. It was impossible to disregard the summons of a prefect. Loder strode into the study, and Bolsover major, his eyes gleaming with malicious triumph, remained in the doorway.

Loder glanced round with a sardonic look at the scene in the study. Tadger, in his rage, was sitting in the armchair, and Billy stood beside him. They had been talking, more at their ease now. Wharton and the others had been preparing tea. The table was spread, and Bob Cherry was making toast, and Johnny Bull was attending to a frying-pan perched on the fire, in which rashers of bacon were cooking with a really appetising smell.

All the fellows looked round as the prefect strode in. They understood at once why Bolsover had brought Loder upon the scene.

"Very pretty, I must say!" sneered Loder. "Have you permission from the Head, Wharton, to entertain tramps in the school?"

Wharton flushed angrily.

"You have no right to insult our guest, Loder, prefect or not," he exclaimed hotly. "I'll thank you to get out of this study."

"I'll see one young friend out first. Juniors are not allowed to invite thieves and tramps into the school. He has probably stolen a watch or so already."

"I ain't a thief!" said Tadger indignantly.

"We've only got your word for that, my fine fellow," said Loder; "but thief or tramp, or whatever you are, you'll get out of this house at once. Sharp's the word!"

Tadger rose uneasily to his feet.

"Sit down!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

Loder turned upon him.

"Do you dare to disobey my orders, Wharton?" he shouted.

Harry met his savage look unflinchingly.

"Yes, I do," he replied. "You have no right to interfere with us here."

"And we won't stand it, either!" said Bob Cherry.

Loder's face flushed with rage. Study No. 1 had always been very difficult to deal with, but he had never expected open rebellion like this, even in that famous study.

"Get out of this room, you raged whelp!" he said menacingly, fixing his eyes upon Tadger.

Wharton pushed Tadger back into the armchair.

"Don't take any notice of the bully!" he said.

Loder gritted his teeth.

"If he doesn't get out I'll throw him out!" he exclaimed furiously. "Get in the way if you dare!"

He strode towards Tadger. The chums of the Remove showed quickly enough that they did dare. They lined up between Loder and Tadger.

"You won't touch him!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "That dare Bolsover has put you up to this, but he sha'n't have his way!"

"Get aside!"

"Rats!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

THE NEXT

TUESDAY:

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

Loder clenched his hands with rage, but he knew that it was useless to pit himself against four sturdy juniors when their tempers were up.

"Bolsover!" he rapped out.

"Yes, Loder."

"Go and fetch Carne, and Walker, and Valence, and any prefects you can find. Tell them that the juniors are disobeying my orders here."

"Yes, Loder."

Bolsover disappeared, grinning maliciously. For a moment the chums of the Remove looked at one another in dismay. They could not contend with half a dozen angry Sixth-Formers, that was quite certain. But Harry Wharton was equal to the occasion.

"Mr. Quelch is in his study, Franky. Buzz off and fetch him."

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

Loder stepped between Nugent and the door.

"Stay where you are!" he said harshly.

"I'm going out!"

"You'll stay here!"

"If you don't let Nugent pass, Loder," said Wharton, his voice trembling with anger, "we'll pitch you neck and crop into the passage!"

The juniors were already advancing, and Loder weakened. He could see that they meant to do it. He wavered, and Nugent stepped aside, and ran at top speed to the Remove-master's study. Loder's face was dark with rage.

"You shall pay for this, you young braggart!" he muttered.

The juniors did not reply. They wondered which would come first—Loder's reinforcements or the Form-master. In any case, they did not mean to have their guest ejected without a struggle. Bob Cherry picked up a cricket-stump in readiness.

There were footsteps in the passage, and Walker and Carne came in quickly. Valence followed them. Loder made a gesture.

"The juniors here refuse to have that tramp ejected," he said, anxious to get the matter settled before the Form-master could arrive. "Pitch him out!"

"What-ho!" said Carne.

"Stand back!" shouted Wharton, catching up the frying-pan. "Stand back, I tell you!"

The seniors paused. They had no desire to be smothered with hot grease and bacon, and Wharton looked desperate.

"Put that frying-pan down, Wharton!" shouted Loder.

"I'll break it on your head first!"

"If you dare—"

"Keeey back, then!"

"Oh, come on!" said Carne. "Collar the young cad!"

He sprang forward. He was sorry for it the next moment. The frying-pan swept through the air, and rashers of bacon and melted butter swamped in Carne's face. He reeled back with a spluttering yell.

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry. "Go it!"

There was a wild struggle the next moment. In the midst of it a sharp voice rapped out in the doorway.

"Stop this! Stop instantly, do you hear?"

Mr. Quelch had arrived.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover's Crime.

THE struggle ceased instantly. Mr. Quelch looked in with a stern brow and gleaming eyes. Nugent was panting behind him. Carne stood rubbing grease from his face and snorting. Loder, whose head was singing from contact with Bob Cherry's cricket-stump, was shaking with rage. He was too enraged to remember even the respect due to a Form-master.

"What is this disgraceful scene about?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, sternly.

"Ask that young scoundrel!" roared Loder, pointing to Wharton.

"Moderate your language, please, Loder," said Mr. Quelch sharply.

"The young villain—"

"Silence!"

"I tell you—" yelled Loder.

"Hold your tongue!" said the Remove-master angrily.

Loder sputtered into silence.

"Tell me what it is about, Wharton, since Loder cannot control his temper," said the Remove-master shortly.

"This chap has come to see Bolsover, minor, sir," said Wharton, panting. "Loder wants to turn him out. We're standing him a tea, and we want to look after him. He's doing us harm."

Mr. Quelch started as his glance fell upon Tadger.

"Ahem! I have heard something of this," he said. As a matter of fact, he had seen the arrival of Tadger from his

study window. "Bolsover minor should be very careful in inviting guests to Greyfriars without asking permission first. But since the boy is here he should certainly be treated with civility."

"He's a ragamuffin—a thief!" spluttered Loder.
"He is certainly ragged, but how do you know that he is a thief?" demanded Mr. Quelch sharply.

"Of course he is! They all are!"
"I ain't!" said Tadger.
"You have no right to make such a charge, Loder. Do you know anything about this boy?"

"Only from his looks—"
"He looks honest enough," said Mr. Quelch, glancing at Tadger again. "You are very wrong to make such a charge, Loder. It is infamous, and I think you will be ashamed of it when you are cooler. You know nothing whatever against the boy, and in any case you have exceeded your authority in this matter. Leave the study at once!"

"Go at once, or I will report your outrageous conduct to the Head!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.
Loder choked with rage. But there was no help for it; he dared not disobey the Form-master. He had lost his prefectship once before, and had had difficulty in regaining it.

He did not want to lose it again.
Without another word, but breathing fury, he tramped out of the study, and Carne and Walker and Valence followed him. Bolsover major, more enraged than the seniors, followed, too. Mr. Quelch gazed at the excited faces of the juniors, and smiled slightly.

"I will see that there is no more of this," he said. "I think you boys are quite right to look after this lad as he is here. Whether he should have come or not is another matter. But while he is here I should recommend you to lend him a change of clothes, and— and to take him to a bath-room. It will be better. That is all."

"Certainly, sir! And thank you very much!"
Mr. Quelch nodded, and left the study.

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.
"That's one in the eye for Loder!" he murmured. "Good bacon waster, but there's plenty more. That's a good tip about Master Tadger changing his clothes while he's here, too."

"Take him to the Third-Form dorm, while we're getting tea, Billy," said Wharton. "Your clothes will fit him."

"Yes, Master 'Arry."

"Two of you fellows go with him in case of trouble,"
Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull accompanied Bolsover minor and Tadger to the Third-Form dormitory. It was just as well, for they passed Bolsover major in the passage, and he gave them furious looks. If the two younger boys had been alone they would not have passed the Remove bully safely. As it was, he went into his study and slammed the door.

Tadger was looking very distressed.
"I s'pose I oughter go, Billy," he whispered. "I 'ad no idea of making all this trouble, you know. Let me slide."
"You shan't go!" said Billy. "It's all right."

"But look 'ere—"
"It's all right, Tadger," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We're jolly glad to get a chance of giving Loder one in the eye, and it was a treat to see the frying-pan fly on Carne. I'd 'ave given a week's pocket-money for that, anyway."

And Johnny Bull chuckled assent.

In the Third-Form dormitory Bolsover minor sorted out a suit of clothes for Tadger, and Bob Cherry obligingly filled a basin with water for him, and handed him a sponge and soap. Tadger hesitated a little; he was not accustomed to luxuries like those. But he saw what was expected of him, and he washed dutifully, and the wash certainly made a great deal of difference to his face.

A clean shirt and an old suit of Etons completed the transformation.

"My word!" said Bolsover minor admiringly. "You look a treat, Tadger!"

"I don't feel a treat," murmured Tadger, twisting his neck uncomfortably in his clean collar. "But it's alright."

"Leave your things here, and you can change back when you go," said Bob Cherry. "Now come and have tea. It will be ready by this time."

And they returned to No. 1 Study.

Fresh rashers were frying in the pan, and the tea was made, and the study looked very cosy and hospitable as they entered it. Wharton and Nugent started as they came in; they hardly knew Tadger in his new guise.

"Here you are!" said Nugent cheerfully. "Sit down and make yourself at home, old son."

"Thanky, sir."

Tadger sat down.
As a matter of fact, he was hungry after his tramp. He

had had little enough of food during his tramping, and stealing lifts in railway-trucks or hay-carts, on the way from London. He felt to with a good will.

The chums of the Remove were glad to see him at his ease. They had feared that the disturbance in the study would weigh on his mind. But Tadger was accustomed to storms in Angel Alley, beside which the scene in No. 1 Study was but as the ruffling of a lake by a gentle zephyr.

"That old cove was Al," said Tadger, thus referring to Mr. Quelch with unintentional disrespect. "Who was he?"
"Our Form-master, and one of the best," said Wharton.

"Have another rashter?"

"Thanky, yes."

"And another egg?" said Bolsover minor.

"Thanky, this 'ere is ripping! Better'n Angel Alley."

"Ain't it, Billy?" said Tadger, with a cheerful grin.

The door of the study opened, and the juniors looked round, prepared for hostilities. But it was not an attack this time.

Three or four Removeites looked in, grinning.

"What do you want?" asked Wharton.

"It's all serene," said Ogley. "We only want to have a look at your giddy guest. Where is he?"

"There's the giddy ragamuffin!" asked Bulstrode.

"Oh, go and eat cake!"

"But what have you done with him?" asked Russell, looking into the study.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bulstrode suddenly. "There's washed him—that's what it is! That's the chap! My kat, what a change!"

"Oh, get out!" said Bob Cherry.

"They got out, but all the time that tea lasted, visitors came

along the passage and looked into the study, curious to see the amazing guest. Tadger bore the inspection with great equanimity; he was, in fact, devoting all his attention to the food, which was such a feed as he had never enjoyed before.

"This is prime!" he remarked a dozen times. "This 'ere is prime!"

Tea was over at last, and a very happy meal it was to Tadger. By that time, nearly all the Remove, and half the Upper Fourth and the Shell, had looked into the study to see the ragamuffin, and had retired astonished by the change in his appearance.

"Mind he doesn't pick your pockets, you fellows," said Snoop, when he looked in.

Snoop intended to say more than that, but he had no time. A pat of butter delfs hurled by Bob Cherry caught him in the eye, and he roared and retreated. He did not return for more. But Snoop was the only fellow who made himself unpleasant. The other fellows all took Tadger's visit as a huge joke, and especially rejoiced in it as a joke up against the bully of the Remove.

Harry Wharton rose from the table at last. Tadger was finished; the good things left on the table no longer tempted him. He leaned back in his chair with a sigh of contentment.

"Prime!" said Tadger. That was all he could say. "It's prime!"

"Like to have a look round the school?" asked Wharton.

"We'll take you round Greyfriars, if you like, and you can see the cricket!"

"Thanky," said Tadger.

"Come on, Billy."

And the party quitted the study, and strolled out into the Close. Quite a crowd collected to follow them. Tadger was a subject of inexhaustible interest to the Greyfriars fellows. As they walked down to the cricket field, half the Lower School followed them. From the window of Bolsover's study, two savage eyes watched them go! Bolsover gripped his teeth as he watched.

His hatred for that ragged boy, who had never harmed him, was bitter and cruel. He felt that he hated his brother, now, at that moment, but not so much as the little wail who had been the unconscious cause of all the trouble. Bolsover had done all he could, and he had been felled and defeated, and the laughter and taunts of his Form-fellows still rang in his ears. His calling in of Loder had turned out worse than ever for him—it had failed—and Loder, in his fury, had turned upon Bolsover, and the Remove bully still ached from the licking the enraged prefect had given him. Aching, furious, with all the malice and uncharitableness in his heart, Bolsover watched the merry party in the Close.

"I'll make him suffer for it!" the Remove bully muttered through his teeth. "I'll make the young scoundrel sorry he came here—the ragamuffin—the thief!"

He started a little. The word had suggested something to his mind. It was something that made the colour blanch in his cheeks for a moment.

"Thief!" he muttered. "Of course he's a thief—they all

are! I shouldn't wonder if he's stolen a watch already! Loder thought so, too! If—if he could be found out—"

His thoughts went no further, but he quitted the study, his face rather white, and his eyes gleaming strangely. He glanced along the passage—there was no one in sight. With a stealthy tread he reached No. 1 Study, and stepped in and closed the door softly behind him.

The study was deserted. Only the fire remained burning low in the grate, and the tea-things, and the remains of the feed upon the table. Bolsover had seen from the window that Harry Wharton was still in his cricketer's flannels, and he opened the table drawer and looked quickly among the many odds and ends it contained. What he was looking for was there—a gold watch, with the monogram "H. W." on the case. In a moment it was in Bolsover's hand, and was slipped into his pocket. He was just closing the drawer when a tap came at the door, and it opened. Bolsover started, and turned an almost terrified look upon the door.

It was Billy Bunter who looked in, blinking through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—'Hallo!'"

Bunter paused and looked at Bolsover. The Remove bully burst into a laugh that sounded very strained.

"Hallo, Bunter! You've come to finish up the feed!" he exclaimed.

Bunter blinked at him. "Well, I don't see why I shouldn't have a mouthful," he said with an injured air. "They didn't ask me to eat—not that I wanted to come, of course. If they can feed a brat out of the gutter, I don't see why I can't have something. I suppose that's what you've come here for, anyway."

"Exactly," said Bolsover. "I was going to lug the tarts, but—"

"Halves!" said Bunter promptly. "Oh, you can have the lot," said Bolsover carelessly. "I just looked in as I was passing, that's all."

He swung out of the study. Bunter blinked after him. "Jolly queer, going without the tarts," he murmured. "I wonder what he was really here for? Going to play some trick on those rotters, I suppose, and I interrupted him!"

In the passage Bolsover paused, breathing hard, his face very white.

It was the worst of luck that Bunter should have caught him in the study; though he might have expected it, knowing the Owl of the Remove, if he had thought of it. He hadn't thought of it; he had been too busy thinking of other things. But he was committed now. He could not replace the watch with Bunter in the study; and the watch would certainly be missed when Wharton changed his clothes again and looked for it. There was nothing for it but to carry out his scheme—and his hesitation was only momentary.

He hurried up the Third-form dormitory. The house was deserted on that sunny half-holiday, and there was not likely

to be anyone to observe him. The rags Tadger had discarded lay upon Bolsover minor's bed. Bolsover, with a gesture of repugnance, picked up the ragged coat, and felt in the inside pocket. There was a soiled rag of a handkerchief there, and some broken fragments of biscuits, and several other articles. Bolsover thrust the watch deep into the pocket, and stuffed the other things on it, wrapping the handkerchief round it to deaden the faint sound of ticking.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Missing.

TADGER enjoyed that stroll round Greyfriars. Harry Wharton & Co. were with him, and his arm was linked in that of Bolsover minor. The crowd that accompanied them showed the greatest good-humour.

They stopped at last on the cricket-field, where fellows were still practising, though the sun was now going down.

"You play cricket 'ere, Billy?" asked Tadger, in great admiration, as he surveyed the stretch of level green, backed up by the pavilion and the old elms.

"Our ground a further on," said Billy. "This here is the Remove ground. That there is Lord Mauleverer's batting!"

Tadger caught his breath.

"A real lord!" he gasped.

"Yes, a real lord!" grinned Billy.

The elegant Lord Mauleverer was probably the worst cricketer on the ground, but he was the object almost of veneration in the eyes of the little wif. Harry Wharton called to him.

"Mauly, old man!"

"Hallo, my dear fellow!"

"Come over here. I want to introduce you to a friend."

"Charmed, dear boy!"

Lord Mauleverer tucked his hat under his left arm, and sauntered up to the group juniors. Harry Wharton performed the introduction in due form.

"Tadger, an old pal of Bolsover minor, Lord Mauleverer," he said.

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

He held out his hand. Tadger hardly dared to touch it.

"New kid?" asked Mauleverer.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Tadger, much tickled at the notion. "No, I ain't a new kid, your lordship. I'm just an old pal of Billy's."

"Begad!" said his lordship.

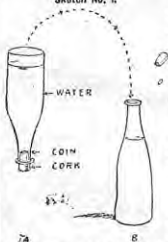
"And one of the best, too," said Lord Mauleverer sturdily.

"I don't doubt it," said Lord Mauleverer. "You're the kid who came in the trap with Coker—eh? Very pleased to meet you."

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY PUZZLE CORNER.

NEW FEATURE!

Sketch No. 1.



d'agram, and bring the bottom of it down on to the table fairly hard. The cork and the coin will then fly out and no water will be spilt. The air in the bottle is compressed by the sudden inversion and the bang on the table, and so forces out the cork and coin.

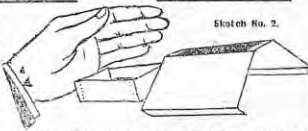
divide it equally between those two fathers and their two sons, but give nothing if less value than a penny to either of them." The schoolboy, who was a sharp lad, chuckled the half-crown and divided it equally among them. How was this possible? (The answers to the above puzzles will be printed, with an explanatory diagram to Puzzle No. 7, on this page in next Tuesday's MAGNET Library. Meanwhile, try to solve them yourself.)

PUZZLE No. 5.—Secure a wine or vinegar bottle and fill it with water to the beginning of the neck. Now place a threepenny-piece into the bottle, cork it, and ask your audience to take the threepenny-piece out without pouring off the water or touching the cork at all.

When you are asked to explain this trick, see that the cork is in the bottle just tightly enough to prevent the water coming out when the bottle is turned neck downwards. Turn the bottle upside-down and let the cork fall flat on to the bottom of the cork. One bottle is now in position "A" (see diagram). Hold it in this position with its mouth about six inches of the table, and then invert the bottle quickly in direction shown by arrow in diagram.



Sketch No. 2.



PUZZLE No. 6.—Open an empty wooden match-box at its joint. Place the cover on the table so as to form a little tunnel wide enough to allow the drawer of the box to pass through. Then place the drawer at one mouth of the tunnel, and ask your audience to blow the drawer gently through the tunnel till it is clear of the other end by about an inch, and then, while blowing from exactly the same position, to blow the drawer back again to the place it started from.

Sketch No. 2 gives the solution. The second part of the trick is performed by blowing against the palm of the hand whilst holding it immediately behind the drawer. The wind drives back from your hand, and back comes the drawer.

PUZZLE No. 7.—This is a most interesting puzzle, and consists of challenging any person present to construct a bridge of m glass to glass by means of the knives (see diagram) without moving the glasses nearer one another.

PUZZLE No. 8.—"Take this half-crown," said the schoolmaster at the school-breaking up, "and give nothing if less value than a penny to either of them." The schoolboy, who was a sharp lad, chuckled the half-crown and divided it equally among them. How was this possible? (The answers to the above puzzles will be printed, with an explanatory diagram to Puzzle No. 7, on this page in next Tuesday's MAGNET Library. Meanwhile, try to solve them yourself.)

"My eye, ain't he a real toll!" said Tadger in admiration, as they walked away, and Lord Madsilver went back to beating the air with his hat.

"You haven't seen the gym, yet," said Nugent.

And they marched Tadger into the gym. The lad's wonder and admiration knew no bounds, and his pleasure in the good luck that had befallen his old pal was untouched by a trace of jealousy or envy.

"It's prime!" he said, again and again. "Simply prime!"

They returned to the School House in the dusk. Fellows were coming in from the playing-fields and the river, but in his new clothes Tadger did not attract so much attention as he would otherwise have done.

"I suppose I shall have to be going," said Tadger regretfully. "I have no. 1 Study again. There was no trace of the feed left there now, excepting the crackeryware, and no trace of Billy Bunter."

"Have something more to eat before you go?" said Bob Cherry.

"Thanks, I've 'ad enough."

"Then take some of the tarts to keep in the train. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are those tarts?"

"Harry Wharton brought them," he said. "We'll get a fresh bag as we go out. We'll all see Tadger to the station."

"But I ain't goin' by train," said Tadger, in surprise. "Lor, it'd cost 'ups of money to take a ticket! I'm 'codin' it."

"You're not," said Wharton. "We're going to stand you a ticket."

"But I—I—"

"It's all right, Tadger, old man," said Bolsover minor, "you're going back to London like a swell, and you're going to take some grub in the train. I only wish you could stay 'ere, old pal."

"Wish I could," said Tadger. "But I fancy I wouldn't be in the right place 'ere. I'll 'ave to change my clothes now."

"You can keep those."

Tadger chuckled.

"Wot sort of a row do you think there'd be in Angel Alley if I went 'ome in this 'ere clobber?" he asked.

Billy coloured.

"I'd forgotten," he said. "P'raps you'd better go in your own togs, Tadger."

"Yes, rather," said Tadger.

"I'll take you up to the dorm, then."

Billy conducted Tadger to the Third Form dormitory, where the little wail donned his old clothes. Billy insisted upon giving him a coat to wear over 'em, and Tadger accepted the gift chiefly because he did not wish to make matters awkward for his new friends in walking with them in his tattered attire. With a new coat and cap, the little wail looked respectable enough save for his boots.

By the time they had come downstairs Johnny Bull had returned from the tuckshop with a bag of sandwiches and another of tarts. They were stuffed into the overcoat pockets, in spite of Tadger's protests that he wouldn't be 'ungry. Wharton and the others had gone to the Remove dormitory to change into their outdoor clothes, and they returned to the study in a few minutes more.

"Ready to start?" asked Bolsover minor. "There's good time to walk to Perle for the seven-thirty-five, and that catches the express at Courtfield."

"Quite ready," said Harry, opening the table-drawer to take his watch out. "It's—Hallo! Any of you bounders borrowed my watch?"

"No," said Nugent. "I saw you put it in there."

"It isn't here."

"Oh, it's under some of the things!"

Wharton sorted out the drawer. But the watch was not there, and he grew rather red in the face. He remembered seeing it change its distinctive when he changed into his flannels. But it certainly was not there now. As he stood fumbling in the drawer Snoop's unpleasant face looked in at the doorway.

"Hallo, going?" he exclaimed. "Mind your aristocratic friend doesn't take away any of your watches or purses with him!"

Snoop was gone, just in time to escape a loaf that Johnny Bull hurled at him. But the words were strangely opportune at that moment. A dead and awkward silence fell upon the fellows in No. 1 Study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER, Under Suspicion.

TADGER understood.

His ruddy little face grew very red, and he looked from one to another of the juniors in the study.

"You don't think I've took it?" he muttered breathlessly.

Wharton forced a laugh.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled: "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

"Of course not," he said. "How could you think of such a thing? Some chap has borrowed my watch, that's all. Don't mind what that utter cad said."

"You can search me if you like."

"I'm hardly likely to think of insulting you by doing anything of the sort," said Harry quietly. "The watch will turn up."

"Tadger's as honest as I am," said Bolsover minor.

"Of course he is. I'm sorry I looked for the blessed thing, only I was going to put it on, you see. I dare say Linley has borrowed it; he does sometimes. Let's get out."

The fellows moved towards the door. Missing the watch had made an unpleasant impression upon them all, but though a momentary uneasiness had struck them, they did not really suspect Tadger. True, the drawer had been opened several times while he was in the study, for spoons and things to be taken out of it; indeed, on one occasion Tadger himself had handed the sugar-tongs from among the odds and ends that filled it. But the lad looked honest, and they could not suspect him. Yet it was a mystery what had become of the watch. Wharton remembered clearly enough putting it there, and it seemed extremely unlikely that anyone would have borrowed it without asking permission. But courtesy to a guest forbade that the matter should be pursued further just then, though Harry, in spite of his assumption of indifference, was feeling decidedly uneasy.

It was the first gold watch he had ever possessed, and a valuable gold watch means a great deal to a schoolboy. "Pinching" was common enough in Angel Alley, and if anything was missed in that delectable locality, the first and most natural supposition was that it had been stolen. Tadger felt that the shadow of suspicion fell upon him, and it troubled him very much.

They passed out of the study, and at the end of the passage near the stairs they met Bolsover major. He looked at them with some surprise. It was really as if he had not expected to see Tadger on such good terms with Harry Wharton & Co. now.

"Missed anything?" he asked.

"Told your tongue, you cad!" said Bob Cherry.

Bolsover ground his teeth. He understood now that either the juniors had not missed the watch, or else they were determined to say nothing about it. It looked as if his scheme was to miss fire altogether. But it should not miss fire if he could help it.

"Well, if you haven't missed anything, I have," he said roughly. "I lost my purse when I was in your study."

"I don't believe you!" said Wharton quietly and decisively.

"If you lost it there you dropped it in the row, and it's there still," said Frank Nugent. "You can go and look for it."

"I will if you'll keep that kid here till I've found it."

"Tadger is going to catch his train."

"Tadger's a later train, and he's not going to take my purse with him," said Bolsover. "I believe he snatched it while I was in your study. I remember he pushed against me."

"You was punching Master Nugent, and I pushed you off," said Tadger. "I didn't touch your purse, sir. I wouldn't go for to do such a thing."

"He's all right, Perry," said Bolsover minor appealingly.

Bolsover gave his brother a steady look.

"Don't talk to me, you whelp," he said. "I don't want to have any more to say to you. I've done with you!"

"Percy!"

"Oh, shut up! Look here, you fellows, you're not going to take that young thief away till I've found my purse. There were ten shillings in it. If I find it in your study, he can catch the next train!"

"Get out of the way!"

"Or, if you want to save time, you can search him, while I look on. It's no good clenching your jaws at me, Bob Cherry—if you don't do as I say, I'll call Mr. Queech and leave it to him."

Harry Wharton breathed hard. He simply saw in this a desire of Bolsover to humiliate the little wail, and he did not believe for a moment that the Remove bully had lost his purse. But if Mr. Queech were called in, he would certainly direct that Tadger did not depart till the purse had been looked for. The chums of the Remove exchanged enraged glances. Bolsover had the whip-hand now.

"You're making up this yarn to make yourself unpleasant, you cad!" said Harry Wharton, between his teeth.

Bolsover shrugged his shoulders.

"Let the little cad have his pockets turned out, and I shall be satisfied," he said.

"I'm willin'," said Tadger at once.

"Tadger don't mind," said Billy. "Come back to the study, and we'll do it, and we can catch the train all the same. Tadger don't mind, do you Tadger?"

"Not a bit of it," said Tadger. "The young goat is

makin' a mistake, that's all. I wouldn't go for to pinch nothin'."

Harry Wharton hesitated. That was certainly the quickest way out of the difficulty, but he hated to let Bolsover have his way. But Billy was already leading his chum back to the study, and the juniors followed, chafing.

"I'll make you sit up for this later on, you unspeakable cad!" said Bob Cherry, in a low voice.

Bolsover sniggered.

"I'm willing, if he isn't a thief," he said.

"You know he isn't."

"I don't know anything of the sort, and you don't, for that matter. Loder thought he would very likely steal something," he said so.

"Loder's as big a blackguard as you are!" retorted Bob Cherry.

"Well, search the whelp, and we'll see!"

They entered the study. Tadger took off his overcoat, and unbuttoned the rag of a coat he wore underneath it. There was certainly no unwillingness to be searched on Tadger's part. Bolsover would have been better pleased if he had shown anger and indignation, as well he might have done. But Tadger lived in a land of suspicion and of petty thefts, and he was not hurt; only conscious of innocence, and ready to prove it by the most expeditious method.

There was a heavy step in the passage, and the captain of Greyfriars looked in at the door. The juniors all coloured under his sharp glance.

"What's going on here?" demanded Wingate.

There was no reply. Wingate looked at them sharply.

"Snoop says that something has been missed, and that the kid here is suspected of having stolen it," said the Sixth-Former. "Is that so?"

"The cad!" muttered Wharton. "I suppose he was listening in the passage."

"Is it the case?" demanded Wingate.

"Yes," said Bolsover promptly.

"No!" exclaimed Wharton. "Nothing of the sort. Bolsover says he missed his purse, but I firmly believe it's only another of his rotten tricks to rag the kid! But Tadger says he's willing to be searched to satisfy the brute."

"That would certainly be most satisfactory," said Wingate. "Snoop did quite right to tell me; it's a serious matter. I will see him turn out his pockets; though I certainly believe Bolsover is mistaken. The kid looks honest."

"I've never pinched nothin'," said Tadger.

Wingate nodded.

"I don't believe you have, kid. But if you don't mind turning out your pockets, it will make it impossible for anyone to say a word against you, you see."

"Orlright," said Tadger.

And he proceeded to turn out his ragged pockets. He missed the inner pocket of the old coat, and Bolsover drew attention to it at once.

"There's an inside pocket there!" he exclaimed.

Tadger coloured. As a matter of fact, he did not wish to show the dirty, torn scrap of a handkerchief in public. The clean handkerchiefs he had seen about him at Greyfriars had made him ashamed of that discoloured rag.

"There's nothin' there," cepting my 'anky and some biscuits!" he muttered awkwardly.

"Have it out!" exclaimed Bolsover.

"I—I don't mind—"

Without waiting for him to finish, Bolsover thrust his hand into the pocket, and dragged out the ragged handkerchief into view.

"Hallo, there's something in this!" he exclaimed.

"There ain't!" cried Tadger.

As if to answer him, a faint and muffled sound of ticking came from inside the folded and tied rag. It struck upon the ears of the fellows in the study like a thunderclap, faint as it was.

"Well, it's not a purse," said Wingate; "you're looking for a purse. It's a queer place to carry a watch, but you've not missed a watch, Bolsover!"

Without replying, Bolsover wrenched open the handkerchief. A gold watch was disclosed, and it did not need the monogram on it to show that it was Harry Wharton's. The juniors all knew it by sight.

"Good heavens!" muttered Wharton, pale as ashes.

Billy turned crimson.

Tadger stared at the watch dumbfounded. Wingate's face grew very stern and hard.

"Whose watch is that?" he said curtly.

Wharton's voice was dry and husky as he replied.

"Mine!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Guilty One.

BOLSOVER laid the watch upon the table.

The juniors stared at it dumbfounded. Bolsover minor gave a low, inarticulate cry. It was incredible to him—but he could not doubt his eyes. The missing watch had been discovered in Tadger's pocket!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

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

"Oh!" muttered Bob Cherry. "My hat!"

"That's your watch, Wharton?" said Wingate.

"Yes."

"How did it come into your pocket, kid?"

Tadger started as if from a hideous dream.

"I—I dunno!" he stammered. "I swear I dunno! Oh, sir, I swear I never pinched it! I ain't never pinched nothing!"

He looked from one face to another in pathetic appeal. Bolsover's eyes were gleaming with malicious triumph that he could not conceal. The juniors seemed stunned. Bolsover's eyes were wet.

"He didn't want that pocket turned out, you remember," said Bolsover major.

"Why didn't you, Tadger?" muttered Billy.

"I—I didn't want to show that rag," moaned Tadger; "that was all. I swear I never knew that the ticker was there!"

"You did not take it?" said Wingate.

"I swear I didn't!"

"Then how did it come into your pocket?"

"I dunno!"

Wingate's lip curled. "I'd just about your watch, Wharton?" he asked.

"Yes," stammered Harry. "It was in the drawer of the table here, and when I went to put it on, it was gone! But—"

"You did not think the boy had taken it?"

"I was sure he hadn't!"

"Was the drawer opened while he was in here?"

"Well—yes."

"It's clear enough," said Wingate. "There's no need to be hard on the little wretch. I dare say he's been brought up among people who'd as soon steal as breathe. You had better send him away at once; it was Bolsover minor's fault for having him here. Don't let it occur again, that's all! It would be unfair to punish him, after placing him in temptation. Let him go!"

Wharton breathed more freely.

"Yes—yes, he can go!" he said. "Goodness knows, this is a surprise to me. The poor kid doesn't know any better. We're going to take him to the station now!"

"The sooner the better!"

Tadger gave a cry.

"You think I'm a thief!" he exclaimed passionately. "I ain't! Billy, you don't believe that I pinched that ticker!"

"Oh, Tadger, old man!"

"I didn't do it!" shrieked Tadger. "I ain't a thief! Anybody as says I'm a thief is a liar! Wasn't I willin' to be searched? I dunno how that ticker come into my pocket, I tell yer, but it was there, and I dare say that bloke put it there; he's been after me all the time I've been 'ere!"

Wharton gave a start.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "This matter isn't finished yet. I believe Bolsover is quite capable of doing anything of the sort, if he had a chance. He hasn't given this poor kid a minute's peace since he came!"

Bolsover sneered.

"That's a likely story," he said. "I don't think you'll get anybody to believe. You all know jolly well that the kid pinched the watch."

"I didn't!" yelled Tadger. "I say I didn't! And I won't go, neither—I won't go till I know 'ow it came in my pocket! It's a plant, that's what it is! I know of coves who've been run in, and 'ad a watch slipped into their pockets on the way to the station. It's a plant!"

Wingate's face was very hard.

"It's no good telling a yarn like that," he said. "It's impossible!"

"I tell you it's the truth. I never pinched the watch!" yelled Tadger.

"I think we ought to look into it, Wingate. It's only cricket to give the kid every chance," said Wharton.

He closed the door of the study. Tadger's excited voice rang out in the passage, and he did not want a crowd to gather.

"You can do as you like," said Wingate impatiently.

"Bolsover, of course, denies having touched the watch."

"Of course," said Bolsover. "I don't think I ought to be called upon to answer an accusation like that. It's simply ridiculous!"

"Did Bolsover have any opportunity of putting the watch in the kid's pocket, if he had wanted to?" asked Wingate.

"Yes, certainly," said Wharton promptly. "Mr. Queek told us to change the kid into some decent clothes while he was here. His own clothes were left in the Third Form dorm, and anybody who liked could have got at them."

"Oh!" said Wingate, his expression changing a little.

21

NEXT TUESDAY:

"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

"Oh! That alters the case, of course. But where was the watch?"

"In this drawer," said Wharton. "It was there when we all went out together. Anybody who liked could have come into the study and taken the watch, and gone to the Third Form dorm, and put it in Tadger's pocket."

Bolsover blanched a little.

"What utter rot!" he exclaimed. "As if anybody would think of doing such a thing!"

"It was Bolsover who caused this search," broke in Johnny Bull's quiet voice. "He asked us if we'd missed anything. I remember. Then he said he'd lost a purse. I don't believe he'd lost his purse; I believe it was just an excuse to have the kid searched so that the watch could be found on him!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"Let's be quite certain that he has lost his purse, too," said Harry Wharton. "Tadger's been searched, so why can't Bolsover be?"

The Removs bully changed colour.

"You have really lost your purse, Bolsover?" asked Wingate.

"I believe so."

"Turn out your pockets!"

"What for?"

"To make sure about it."

"You are going to be searched, then?"

"Do as I tell you! Very well, if you won't, you can go through his pockets, Cherry! Turn them all out!"

Bolsover clenched his hands. But resistance was impossible. The chums of the Removs were ready to spring upon him, and anxious for a chance, too. Inwardly he cursed his stupidity. He had expected the loss of the watch to be traced to Tadger, and the story of the lost purse was only an afterthought, conceived on the spur of the moment, to make the search take place. Bolsover's purse was safe in his trousers pocket at this moment, and in another moment Bob Cherry brought it to light.

"Look there!" roared Bob Cherry. "He hadn't got it! He asked that yarn to make us search Tadger!"

Wingate knifed his brows.

"So you hadn't lost your purse after all, Bolsover?" he said, in an ominous tone.

"I—I thought I had!" stammered Bolsover.

"I suppose there's nothing to prove whether anybody came to this study while you fellows were out?" said Wingate.

"The tarts!" roared Bob Cherry.

Wingate frowned.

"What do you mean, Cherry. This isn't the time for idiotic jokes!"

"I'm not joking! Somebody came in and scoffed our jammies while we were out!" said Bob Cherry excitedly. "I suppose it was Bunter. Whoever it was, he didn't leave a crumb of our feed, so the meat must have been a good time. Bunter's always sneaking into fellows' studies after tea to pick up grub. If he was here a long time, he may have seen whether Bolsover—"

"I'm not going to stay here and listen to this rot!" said Bolsover, making a movement towards the door.

"Stay where you are!" said Wingate grimly. "Nugent, go and fetch Bunter here, and don't say a word about this till he gets here."

"Right-ho!" said Frank eagerly.

He ran out of the study. In a few minutes footsteps and an exulting voice were heard in the passage.

"I—I say, Nugent, I never took the tarts, really. I—I never went into your study. Owl! Owl! Yarosh!"

And Bunter, very flushed and angry, was propelled into the study, with Nugent's grasp upon his collar.

"Here he is!" said Nugent.

"Let him go! Bunter, did you come here while the fellows were out?"

"No—yes! There were only a few tarts! If Bolsover says I took them, he's telling fibs! I believe he had bagged half of 'em before I came in!"

"Was Bolsover here?" asked Wingate quietly.

"Of course he was! And I believe he bagged—"

"It's a lie!" yelled Bolsover.

"Hold your tongue, Bolsover! Now, Bunter, it's not a question of the tarts. I think the fellows don't mind you taking them. We simply want to know whether you saw anybody else in the study while you were here—whether any other fellow came?"

"Only Bolsover," said Bunter. "He was here when I came—that's all."

"I wasn't!" said Bolsover furiously.

"Oh, really, you know! You said that you had come to take some of the tarts, but that I could have them all," said Bunter, in amazement. "Don't you remember? You were standing at the end of the table, by the drawer. I—"

"I think it's pretty clear," said Wingate quietly. "Bolsover!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!" Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled:

has denied being here, but Bunter's evidence is quite conclusive."

"I never touched the watch!" faltered Bolsover.

"You cannot expect us to believe that either. If you hadn't, you wouldn't have lied about being here," said the Greyfriars captain. "You have laid a rotten, cowardly, dastardly plot to blacken that poor kid, who has never done you any harm."

"Oh, Percy!" sobbed Billy. "How could you?"

Bolsover glanced round the study. His guilt was known—fortune had gone against him.

Bolsover was not made for a plotter. A scheme which Vernon-Smith might have carried out successfully had gone to pieces in Bolsover's hands. He read fierce and scornful condemnation in every face but his brother's.

Billy was sobbing in utter misery. This was the brother he had respected and admired—this utter rascal, who had schemed to blacken an innocent lad with as cowardly a plot as the human mind could have devised.

Guilty Bolsover was, and guilty he looked; but physically he was no coward. His eyes blazed back anger for anger, and he threw up his head.

"Well, as you all know it, I don't care!" he said defiantly.

"I was determined to keep my brother out of the hands of that young rascal, and I thought that was the best way to do it. I'm sorry I suspected you, kid. And I'm ready to take the consequences."

"I shan't take you to the Head," said Wingate grimly.

"But I shall take you to my study, and give you such a thrashing as you've never had in your life before. You are a wicked young scoundrel, and not fit to breathe the same air with that poor lad you have tried to injure. I'm only too glad we've found out that you wore the rascal, and not he!"

And Bolsover was marched out of the study, with Wingate's grip on his collar, and he went without a word.

He was ten minutes in Wingate's study. And the Greyfriars captain kept his word. Bolsover had such a thrashing as he had never dreamed of; and when he came out of the study he was crawling with pain. But, severe as the punishment was, it was not so much as he deserved.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked to the station with Tadger.

Bolsover minor went with them, but he was very silent and miserable. The discovery of his brother's rascality had been a fearful blow to him.

Tadger had recovered his spirits by the time they reached the station; and as he stepped into the train he shook hands cheerfully enough with the chums of the Removs. Bolsover minor came last, and he held the wail's hand very tightly.

"I'm sorry for what's happened while you've been here, Tadger," he said. "It was rotten of Percy. But—but he doesn't know 'ow bad it was! I'm sorry, Tadger, old pal!"

"It's all right!" said Tadger. "I've had a ripping time—and so long as the young gents know I ain't a thief, I don't mind."

"We know you're as good as gold!" said Harry Wharton warmly. "And I hope you'll come to Greyfriars again, Tadger, and we'll give you a better time."

Tadger grinned a little.

"Thanky kindly, Master Wharton! But I know now that it ain't no place for me to come to. I didn't know that afore, but I know it now. Might as well ask you young gents to call on me in Angel Alley. Wouldn't do, you know. But I say, Billy, if you come up to London some time you'll give an old pal a look-in, won't you?"

"That I will!" said Bolsover minor.

The engine shrieked.

"She's off!" said Tadger. "Goodbye! We shan't see much of one another, Billy, old man; but we'll always be good pals, you and me—eh?"

"Always!" said Billy, gripping his hand again.

And the train rolled out of the station with Tadger; and he waved his hand from the window, and the chums of Greyfriars waved their caps in return, till it disappeared down the line, leaving Tadger back to the grim great city; and the Removs turned to walk back to Greyfriars.

It was not till the morrow that Bolsover minor saw his brother again. He saw him, but he passed him in the Close without a word.

Till that time Billy's faithful affection had seemed proof against every trial; but it was proof no longer. Between them now—and perhaps for ever—lay the memory of Bolsover's crime, when he forbade his brother the truest friend that ever breathed!

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete school tale again next Tuesday, entitled "Foes of the Fourth!" by Frank Richards. Please order your copy of "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY in advance. Price One Penny.)

Read the grand new story of the "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!" In this week's "GEM" Library. Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled: Now on Sale. Price One Penny.

through a sieve. Ashore, we can dig a trench or two, and sit behind it as 'appy as sweet arts at a picnic!"

"Unless the crocs disturb us," said Rupert.

"Plink-plonk, plink-plonk! I rang the rifles."

"Tom," laughed Ching-Lung, "you ought to be a Cabinet Minister!"

"He means a cabinetmaker!" murmured Barry. "He's got enough wood on his head to kape the business goin' for years and years!"

"Silence!" cried Ching-Lung. "Give your votes, lads! Shall we go ashore?"

Every hand went up. A bullet glanced from an iron bolt and smashed the skylight to atoms. Fragments of glass fell on them.

"That's what Oi calls paneel!" said O'Roonoy solemnly. "Oi think Oi've got a glassy luk in me eye. Can yez see a lump o' winder in ut, Joe?"

"Nothin' but green," said Joe. "There's plenty o' that. And there's two quints as well."

That playful bullet made it evident that it was more healthy to be ashore. The moon was waning rapidly; but, whatever happened, the travellers seemed to have far the best of the situation. Storland Sahib had plainly said that the moon was with Ferrers Lord. Then, knowing that the moon was ashore, why were they trying to shoot now, unless maddened by the loss of his boat?

The boat itself would have been dear at twenty pounds, and higher up the river the pirate of the hills could easily seize another. The weak law of Tibet was powerless to oppose him. Ching-Lung was of opinion that after a short time he would retreat, to nurse his hate and await a more favourable opportunity. Once ashore, well armed and well provisioned, it would take a couple of heavily-armed sampans at least to dislodge them. O'Roonoy declared that there were no sampans nearer than Chio-sar, eighty miles up the river. The river pirates—and there were plenty of them—never came so far west, for there was no traffic to tempt them.

"I don't think he'll have much more powder," said the prince. "He can't get at us, and this old bumboat isn't worth the trouble. We'll get the grub and rifles into the boats, and—"

"Couldn't we play a trick on him, Ching?"

"How?"

"When it's dark. It's the old trick of sticking a lantern on a raft and setting it afloat. He may think we're trying to scuttle away in a boat, and follow the light. In the meantime, we can skip ashore."

"It's good enough to try, anyhow."

They searched the boat for provisions. There was plenty of flour, dried flesh, salt fish, and curried milk. They also found boxes filled with an evil-smelling compound which Ching-Lung declared to be raw opium. The hideous opium traffic is a paying one, and doubtless Storland Sahib traded heavily in the deadly drug.

At the back of the old hatch Rupert's lantern disclosed three heavy iron-studded chests. He was going to attempt to open one, when a bullet whizzed merrily through a bulkhead and sang past his ear. Rupert felt less curious after that, and decided that the chests could stay where they were.

Storland Sahib had the sampans's range to a nicety, and was boring holes in her stern almost at every shot. One of the pirates was firing with a weapon whose report was unfamiliar. It had a deep, bellowing sound, and when the bullet struck the boat it sent the splinters flying. Barry christened the marksmen "Old Roarer," and longed for his own elephant-gun. Calculably, the elephant-gun was still on board the wrecked ship.

The moonlight grew paler and fainter. It was risky and unwise to go on deck. The boats hung in the bows, and the sampan stood high in the water. A further search disclosed saws, axes, and bits.

"We've got an hour to wait, sir," said Joe, touching his cap to Ching-Lung, "and she's as soft as cheese. I could easily take a slice out of her ribs, and the sahib would never know we'd left."

"Splendid, Joe!"

"Thank u, sir. Shall I do it?"

"Rather!" answered Ching-Lung. "We can load up the boats through the hole and get away. Start at once."

In a few minutes Joe had ripped the inner padding away, revealing the bare timbers. He soon got his bits and drills to work. The planks were eight inches thick, but they were very rotten, and when once room was made for the saw its teeth bit away the wood like so much cardboard.

Maddock relieved the carpenter, and Barry relieved Maddock. They speedily made a four-foot square in the sampan's prow. Then they hauled up the first boat, and loaded her with provisions and rifles.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

Read the grand new story of the Juniors of St. Jm's, entitled: "TOM MERRY'S PERIL!"

The sampan swung nose down to the current, and the trees of the island threw a heavy shadow. Once the moon fell, though the water was white with foam, it would be hard to detect the boat, even with the best of night-glasses. Still the firing did not relax. It was so accurate that they were sure the sahib had found the range and fixed the rides of his men immovably, so that they had only to reload and pull the triggers. The firing was quite mechanical. In such a case it was pull the trigger, and the rifle will do the rest, for it was impossible to miss.

Old Roarer began to get on their nerves. He hit the mast at every shot, and was gradually eating it away. Once Ching-Lung got on Prout's shoulders, and peered through the broken skylight to see how the moon was getting on. Old Roarer sent one of his pills just then, and a splinter sent the blood flying from Ching-Lung's nose. He fell upon the ottoman, which was very springy. It bounced him off head-foremost into O'Roonoy's waistcoat. They picked him up, and asked him what was the matter.

"I think I got a dandy shub!" murmured Ching-Lung, burying his nose in his handkerchief.

"And I got a Chinese cracker!" sighed O'Roonoy, sadly rubbing his stomach.

The men grined. They looked upon it all as rather good fun. One of the crew, who had fought in South Africa, said it reminded him of only one thing, and that was to have the Mausers plink-plinking again. Barry wanted to sing "Rocked on the Bottom of the Deep," but a dozen revolvers were drawn when he mentioned it. Barry coughed and sighed.

"Sorry as Oi am to disappoint yez, lads," he said, "Oi foind Oi'm sufferin' from a sore throat, and so Oi can't sing to-night. Ay yez lukes, O'll give yez that touchin' recitation 'The Bloomd Bargee; or, Why did he pawn his only glass eye?' Spake the wurd."

"Let's have it!" cried a dozen voices.

"No, no!" cried as many more.

"Order, lads!" laughed Ching-Lung. "We can't go yet. Pass the cigars round, and give us the 'Bargee.'"

"Hear, hear! Spout it out, Barry!"

Barry bowed low and got on the table. He cleared his bearded throat and glared horribly around him. Then he wiped away a tear and flung it from him.

Boom! went Old Roarer's gun.

"The tear dropped with a bit of a bang," grinned Thurston. "Go ahead, Barry!"

"The night was dark, the moon was pale,

"And the bargee called for a point of ale.

"He raised the tankard to his lip

"And, lo! he had a good long sip.

"And he swore hoie his lip, and he swore hoie his cye,

"That before the dawn a man should die!"

Boom!

"It was Old Roarer's rifle again. Barry shook his fist in the direction of the sound, and went on:

"Then he sharpened his keen, keen knife,

"For to murder a man and to take his life.

"The night was dark, and the moon was sad,

"And the murderer's heart with vengeance mad.

"So he hid in a wood where all was gloom,

"And the poor wretch came to meet his doom.

"Then the blade flashed white, and he hissed out —"

BOOM!

Old Roarer's rifle finished the poem. The loud boom ended the rhyme so well that the audience screamed with delight.

Barry scowled and got down in utter disgust. Nothing would persuade him to finish the poem. He said that if he could only meet Old Roarer for six seconds he would "take him to interrupt the fonnest reciter in the wurld with a dirty poggon!" The men were in fits of laughter for a good ten minutes.

"The night is dark enough now, boys," said Ching-Lung,

"And the moon is also pale."

"And don't I wish I could call for a pint of ale," said Maddock.

"I know one thing," grinned Prout—"before the dawn I shall be dry."

"Never mind," put in Rupert. "We're going to hide in a wood where all is gloom."

"And let's hope Storland Sahib will come along to meet his doom," said the prince. "Buck up, Barry! You're a great reciter, and the chap was only applauding you."

"If he'd only hit him there would have been some sense in it, and he would have made me his friend for life," said Prout. "Are you ready, sir?"

"Quite! Where's that wood you cut out? We'll try Mr. Thurston's idea first, and send a lantern adrift on it. Drive a nail through the bottom of the ghim, Joe, and then light up."

It was almost dark; but the seething water showed very white, for the shadow thrown by the wood was not so deep

new that the moon had gone. Cautiously they lowered the little raft. The light went dancing down the current. They watched for a time and listened. There were faint shouts.

"They've seen it!" said Ching-Lung gleefully.

"And they're after it, sir!"

The light spun round in a whirlpool, and for a few moments they fancied it was going to be sucked down. Then it spun away again, and grew fainter as it floated near the edge of the island. It got caught in a backwater. Again it was swept out into the current, and drifted towards the right bank.

"That's fine," said Rupert, "if it will keep there. They know jolly well that we would stick to the bank. Drifting along there will make it appear a boat."

"But they would hardly think we would be fools enough to show a light."

"Crack! Crack! Plink-plonk! Ching-Lung sat down and laughed. The shots came from the western point of the island. The ruse had succeeded. They were firing at the light."

"First boat out!" cried Prout.

They tumbled into her.

"Off you go!" said Prout.

The boat dropped away and pulled towards the island. The second followed it.

"Hello," said Rupert, "the light has gone!"

"All the better. They're blazing away still. Numbers!"

"One, two, three, four, five, six!"

"Then we can all leave by the next packet," said Ching-Lung.

"Here she comes!"

Leathery muscles drove the boat back against the current. The rest of the men lowered themselves through the hole. In five minutes they were on the island, and knee-deep in unexpected mud.

"Softish," said Ching-Lung.

"Fairly, old chap. Do you notice they've stopped shooting?"

"Show's their good sense. Isn't it jooey and sweetly dark? Oh, thunder!"

There was a thundering noise, followed by a splash.

"Ching," cried Thurston, "what the—?"

"It's all right," said a muffled voice. "I'm here!"

"Where?"

"In the mud. I trod on the face of a chap who was sweetly dreaming."

"On a chap! What are you drivelling about?"

"I'm not drivelling!" moaned the sad voice. "I'm scavenging—that is to say, I'm clearing the dirt off my noble form. I trod on a slumbering alligator, and before I could apologise I was down and he was up!"

Rupert began to pick his way more cautiously. He had often walked over flower-beds in the dark in England, but that was nicer than walking over the beds of dozing crocodiles with rat-trap teeth. He sighed with relief when he found himself on firm ground. He could hear the men talking ahead. There had been no firing for some time.

He gave a jump, and looked back.

Whizz-z-z!

Something blazed out red over the river, and a dull report was drowned by a wild crash.

"A shell!" gasped Ching-Lung. "A seven-pound shell!"

"As true a word as was ever spoke, sir!" growled Prout.

"I ought to know 'em. I've fired a few."

"But where have they got the gun from?"

"I can guess, sir," answered Maddock. "They had a couple of guns when they were after us in the sheds. When the shipwreck we never found 'em. They cleared off quick, and guns like them ain't bits of fluff."

"They buried them?"

"That's about the ticket, sir, or hid 'em in the wood. I'll rat my belt if they didn't. I seed a lot o' seven shells aboard the sampan, and every one had a British Government mark on. Look out!"

Crash! Another shriek and another flash of red.

"What are they firing at, at all?" asked O'Rooney.

Clearly, unless the shooting was utterly atrocious, they were not firing at the sampan. If they were aiming at the wood, they were slightly too high, for the shells were roaring far away. Still another shell came hissing over, and then all at once a brilliant light shone over river and wood. A rocket had exploded, and a shower of dazzling blue stars blazed in the sky.

Crash!

The shell exploded close to the boat.

"I've got it!" cried Ching-Lung. "They want to drive us into the boats and then pepper us. By George! Ru, this Storling Sahib is a beauty! You'll think so, too, if he finds out we've slipped him, and starts dropping these squibs among us."

A wolfish howl swept across the river as the stars died out.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

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

"They've missed the boats, sir," said Prout. "They've seen they've gone from below."

"And there's another thing," added O'Rooney, who could make as sensible a remark as anyone when he thought fit.

"Av he thought he was on the sampan, why didn't he shoot at her?"

That was a puzzle. None of the shells, except the last, had been directed at her, or anywhere near her.

"By Jove!" cried Rupert, "I have it! You know the big iron punks? People don't put coppers and culls in boxes like that."

"Treasure—eh?"

"I'm sure of it. That's why he's so keen after his miserable sampan."

"Thin, gentlemen," said Barry, "av ut's a case o' money, and Misther Storling, Esquire, is after that money, it's a man who knows that same blackguard till yez, is all love and kindness, to kape a bright eye fixed on yer life. Whin ut's money he's a rousin' terror. Oi know him, worse luck. He'll pull the island up boie the roots, if made bo, av he can't get at us any other way. Av any gentleman has a pen and ink, and can spell decently, O'll make me will on the spot. Gold, silver, or a long barrel! Av yez catch the croe that aces me, drop a tear on me grave, and remember to me credit that, whin Oi had a shillelagh in me hand, Oi never hit a man twice where wance would do. Kiss me!"

No one volunteered to kiss him. Though he spoke in his usual way (it was almost impossible to tell at any time whether Barry was joking or in earnest), all felt that there was something in his words. Ching-Lung rose to the occasion as usual.

"You brought the spades, Tom?"

"I did, sir."

"Then start to work and dig a trench. You ought to be able to go down a good way before reaching water."

"Folse fate at last," said the Irishman.

"That's plenty. Light the lanterns and screen them as much as you can. It's nasty work cutting trees in the dark, but we must do it. We'll soon have a bomb-proof shelter. For my own part, lads, I think ye're as safe as a big bank. When the chief comes along in the morning he'll make 'em scuttle like rabbits."

"Lights ahead, sir!"

They stared up the river through the trees, wondering what it could mean. A glowing light was dancing on the current. Another appeared in sight and still another. Behind that came six more—a dozen, twenty, thirty, forty. The whole river seemed ablaze with light. The floating fires came nearer and brighter.

"The island is as dry as tinder, Ru," whispered Ching-Lung, "and the reeds will blaze up like gunpowder! If one of those things grounds here, we'll be burnt out like rats!"

"I understand," said Rupert quietly. "But we have the boats."

"Yes, we have the boats."

There was something fascinating in watching the advance of the flotilla of improvised fireships. The dry reeds which fringed the island were as inflammable as petroleum. Like some swift corvette scouting before the heavier line of battleships. They saw that the fire was caused by a mass of moss, evidently drenched in some kind of spirit, and placed on few logs fastened together.

Would the fiery fleet pass north or south of the island?

Much depended upon that. If they passed to the north there was little danger. Their own experiment with the lantern had shown them that the tendency of the current on that side of the island was to drive floating objects towards the northern shore. Would they drift that way?

If they took the southern channel, breeze and current would certainly fling some of them, at least, ashore just where the weeds were densest and most sun-scorched. They watched spellbound.

"Hurrah!"

The first of the floating fires swayed for a second, as if uncertain which course to take, and was then flung swiftly to the left. Another came close behind it. It rocked to and fro, spun like a top, and then danced away down the north channel after its comrade.

They came thick and fast. A dozen of them whirled and circled together in the same eddy, throwing up a column of smoke. A dozen more raced down to join their fellows. They spun in the same wild, fiery dance. Here and there they tossed, gazed at by anxious eyes. Behind them came more and more.

Which way would they take?

Two broke out of the cluster, and sailed to the north,

The breeze had suddenly fallen, and could give no help. All depended on the fierce current now, and how the whirlpool, formed by some shallow above, would set free the floating flames.

"It's a loss-up," said Prout. "They're getting nearer the main channel at every spin."

"Hurrah!"

Three or four more took the northern path, and were whirled away. A drop would turn the tide. Slowly but surely the whirlpool was moving towards the southern bank. It began to recede again, carrying its blazing burden with it.

Crash!

A shell struck the water, and exploded as the very instant of its impact. The concussion caused by explosives affects water in many ways that are not fully understood. The mere report of a gun will shatter a waterspout at sea, in spite of the tremendous power of the whirlwind, which can raise hundreds of tons of water into the air and drive it along in the shape of a spiral column at great speed. An explosion under water will kill enormous quantities of fish; and it is said that if a gun is fired over the place where a drowned person lies, the body will rise to the surface.

The effect of the explosion on the whirlpool was amazing. The tossing water grew calm at once, and then whirled faster than before. Again the wolfish cry of triumph rang faintly from the bank. The whole flotilla was swept into the southern channel.

"It's all up now, sonny," said Ching-Lung. "Is the sahib smart, or isn't he?"

"Too smart, Ching, by half."

"O'twoid yow," growled O'Rooney. "Bring out that pen and ink. Oi want to make me will!"

The sky was red with the glare of the drifting flames. The fireships swept nearer the reeds. They could see each other quite distinctly.

"Give me an axe," said Ching-Lung.

Madlock put one in his hand. Three blows brought a tall sapling crashing down. Ching-Lung lopped away the branches, and took the pole in his hand. One of Storland Sahib's fireships was gliding towards the reeds. Ching-Lung waded into the water neck-deep, and with one push, sent it far into the stream.

At once three axes were cutting through the saplings, and as the slender stems fell, a dozen knives trimmed them. The men plunged through the reeds, and, entering the water, sent the blazing logs away into the current.

It was practically impossible, in spite of the light cast by the fires, for Storland Sahib's vultures to see an object as small as a human head; but doubtless the strange conduct of their messengers told them what was happening. The rifles "plink-plonked" with redoubled vigour, and bullets began to ricochet from the surface of the stream with spiteful regularity.

Then they tried a shell. It fell a hundred yards short, owing to a weak charge. The men took no notice of either Mautser or seven-pounder. They were spread along the whole southern side of the island, using their poles with great effect. They tried to forget that the stream was infested with alligators, and to hope that the flames would keep them at a distance.

Barry, with a cigar in his mouth, his helmet tilted over one eye, and his head just out of the water, looked very fierce for a man who wanted to make his will. Ten yards below him was Prout, and ten yards lower down still stood Madlock.

"Tom."

"Barry," said Prout.

"Ain't at strange that we should shikand so close to the foire and yet feel so cold?"

"It is," said Prout; and he hammered one of the fireships to atoms. "Is yer feet wet?"

"Dampish, Tom."

"So's mine," grunted the steersman. "How are you, Ben?"

"Fairly in it!" answered Ben from below. "Any more comin'?"

"Plenty—scores, dozens. They're just squirts!" 'em out. I see—"

What Prout saw stopped his mouth. It was the head of a crocodile, and the creature's nose was barely six inches away from his own. It looked at Tom in a hungry kind of way.

Prout was so staggered and stupefied that he could neither stir nor yell. He released his pole, and it floated away. The crocodile seemed to be examining the steersman's beauty with its two fishy eyes. It seemed to like him. A fleshpate came sailing along, and the brute opened its jaws.

The sight of the red cavern, edged with rows of white teeth, brought back Prout from his wanderings. Something

had to be done promptly, or trouble was certain. Tom shot out a wild howl, and, snatching a blazing log from the fire-ship, rammed it down the crocodile's throat.

"What's the matter?" asked several voices.

"I was only training a wild beast for the circus business," said Prout calmly.

"A croc—eh?"

"You bet. And he's the croc, with the sorest month in him in this district. I gave it him red-hot!"

Prout waded ashore to obtain another pole. The last of the fireships was driven safely out into the stream. It seemed very dark then. They shook themselves as they left the water, and wondered what would be the hill-pirates' next manœuvre.

"We'd better finish the shelter," said Ching-Lung. "I don't think he'll give in for a long time yet."

"O'knows it, sorr," added O'Rooney. "He'll never give in. Oi tell yow he's a snake for cunning, and a wolf for cruelty. There's somethin' aboard that sampan he wants, and Oi reckon he'll try for it!"

"Go home and eat sawdust, you old croaker!" growled Joe's boss.

"And give me yer head to say up, thin! Oi moight as well get the sawdust out o' that."

Joe grunted, and ducked involuntarily as a shell came screaming towards the island. It struck ground with a thud. There was no explosion.

"Old ammunition," said Rupert. "Jupiter! That bullet was close; it grazed my ear."

"And almost took the end off my nose," said one of the men.

Working in the dark was a disgusting task. Most of the sand shovelled out was tossed over someone. The layer of sand was not too thick, and beneath was black, evil-smelling mud. All the time the bullets buzzed around spitefully. That nobody had been hurt or killed was miraculously. The bullets came so thick at last that Ching-Lung ordered the men to shelter behind the trees.

"I say, Ching—"

"Yes, old chap."

"I think there's some dodge at the back of this," went on Rupert. "They're banging away for all they know. What has made them double the peppering all at once?"

"You think they're doing it to hide some trick—eh?"

"By Jove, I do! We'd better keep our eyes open."

The Mongols were pouring in regular volleys from the bank. The two extreme riflemen were about four hundred yards apart. Judging by the flashes, it was apparent that Storland Sahib had been strongly reinforced. Ching-Lung reckoned the enemy roughly to number about a hundred and fifty men.

Why was Storland Sahib burning precious ammunition at such a rate, and with such a small chance of doing any serious damage? It was the hottest fusillade the men had ever experienced. But the stout trunks of the trees offered secure shelter. Another curious circumstance attracted Ching-Lung's attention.

The bullets seemed to strike from twelve to thirty feet above their heads. It was absurd to think that all Storland Sahib's volleys, who had been firing magnificently before, could make this mistake. They were shooting high purposefully. But why?

Something must be happening on the other side of the island. They were volleys to keep the enemy from attempting to leave their shelter, and firing high so that the bullets could not strike their own comrades. No doubt they had got hold of a boat, and were trying to board the sampans.

Without a word, Ching-Lung hurried through the trees. Dark as it was, he could see the sampans tugging at its cables. The foaming water showed up its black outline.

He looked up the river. He fancied he saw a dark patch. It grew larger, and its course was too steady for any log, which would have been whirled here and there by the varying eddies. It was either a boat or a raft, and the odd firing of the hill-pirates was explained.

Ching-Lung made sure that his rifle was loaded. The floating object was too low in the water and too square to be a boat. It was a raft. It suddenly appeared to rise up on end, and for a moment Ching-Lung thought it had capsized. But it had not overturned. What he saw was a sail to steady it against the fierce current. Without such a check the raft would have been whirled away.

The sail brought it up till it was almost at a standstill, and then began to drop down the stream towards the sampans. Ching-Lung plunged through the reeds and mud, and warned his comrades.

"Don't kill any of them, lads," he said, "for one volley ought to scare them. They seem to be making for the sampans."

"There's eight or nine of 'em, sir," said the keen-eyed Prout.

"More—a dozen, I should think. Don't let them get too near, or they may cut the cables. Riddle the sail, if you can. They'll shoot past like grease lightning."

"Mayn't Oi just knock a hole in wan, sir?"

"No, Barry."

"Oh, be aisy, now," said the Irishman pleadingly, "and let me, Oi promise not to kill him. Jest wan, sir!"

"Not one. Who-oo! Let it rip!"

The raft was about ten yards above the sampan. A volley crashed out. Down fell the sail, and frightened yells echoed above the roar of the water. The raft, having lost the sail, was caught by the fierce current, and it swept on like a race-horse.

The next moment it struck the boat with terrific force, flinging its crew into the torrent. The sampan's rotten beams cracked.

"She's sinkin', sir!" cried Prout.

The sampan vanished after one lurch, and the water roared above her.

"Shelter, shelter, land!" yelled Ching-Lung.

Storland Sahib's wolves were not firing too high now.

The Attack Abandoned—A Miserable Night—Some Scaly Visitors—Gan-Waga and the Twins.

It was the last volley, and the last shell. Half an hour passed without a single shot being fired.

"Can he have clucked it up?" asked Ching-Lung.

"I believe he's had enough of it," answered Rupert. "And it's about time. I'm as cold as a corpse, and just as happy as a blind kitten."

"Oh, buck up! It certainly is cool and dampish. I'm going to undress."

"You'll kill yourself!"

"Not a bit of it, my son!" laughed Ching-Lung. "I've been feeling round, and I've found a lot of stuff just like raw cotton. There's tons of it growing here. I've got an idea of making myself a snuggery. Where's the lantern? And where are the matches? I'll risk being potted at."

The matches were inside the lantern. Ching-Lung entered the reeds. The soft, cotton-like stuff hung from tall stems, and there was an unlimited quantity of it. He gathered a huge heap, undressed, amid some laughter, and buried himself chin-deep.

"Great pip!" he said. "It's a joy! A feather-bed isn't in it!"

"Oh, lay me in me little cot, and kape me tribbles noise and hot, for Oi the nullgrubs have got!" said O'Rooney. "And gumbols on me funnybone! Bedad, sorr, yez looks swate!"

If Ching-Lung did not look sweet, he looked fairly comfortable, and—as O'Rooney put it—there was a rush for "stuff." The lantern bobbing among the reeds did not bring any bullets. In about an hour there was an astonishing scene in the little clearing. All the men were lying under piles of the cotton except Rupert and Prout, who had volunteered to keep watch.

"I see the stars have gone, sir," said Joe.

"And the wind is getting up, too," answered the prince. "Say, Barry, do you have any big storms in this part of the earth?"

"Sithorns, is it?" growled O'Rooney. "Whoy, Oi've had the hair blown off me head and the whiskers off me face afore to-day. The wind comes along tearin' mad, and all of a sudden. A man wants now to fade me yags, and he happened to yawn. Bedad! afore he could shut his ugly mouth the wind was on him, and it blowed down his throat so hard that it turrned him inside out! Another toime

"Choose it, Barry!" said Maddock.

"Does the man think Oi'd tell a lie?"

"No. But—"

"Well, let me spake. Whin ut blows in Tibet ut does blow. They have to fasten the houses down wid bir anchors. I wance seed a race between two houses, till they was lost on the horizon, and bedad! the people inside were attein' their dinner all the toime! They got so used to ut—"

(Ching-Lung sat up to listen. He heard a distant rumbling sound.)

"Re all the serpents Saint Patrick evicted out of Ireland, ut's on us!" roared Barry.

The murmur became a shriek. The trees began to lash and sway. And then a wild gust of wind hooted over the river. It tore away the beds of cotton.

"Collar yer clothes—collar yer clothes!" yelled the Irishman.

Some of the garments had gone already. The previous moment the men had been warm and snug; but now they were chilled to the marrow. The wind was like ice, and it hurled bits of stick with a force that struck their naked bodies like a whip-lash. They began to struggle into their clothes. Weighty branches were falling around them.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 219.

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

Then it began to hail, and some of the hailstones were as large as a hazel-nut. They covered down behind the trucks, deafened and blinded.

For five hours—hours of utter misery—the gale raged. Then the wind fell as suddenly as it had risen.

Battered, stiff, cold, and looking utter wrecks, the men crept out of their shelters.

The river had swollen, and had encroached upon the island. They stamped about to warm themselves. Then the sun shot up, and, wretched as they felt, they laughed when they saw each other.

"We are a pretty gang of tramps!" grinned Ching-Lung.

"Grub is the best medicine. It will warm us up. We'll get a fire on the go, and—"

"Where are the boats?"

With one impulse the men ran to the water's edge. One of the boats was there among the beaten-down reeds; but the other had vanished. There was some tea and bacon in the lockers, and enough biscuits for one meal. There was also a tin of corned beef; but no kettle, cups, or plates.

"It's a bit unlucky," said Rupert cheerily; "but it can't be helped."

The welcome rays were beginning to warm the men. Some went to look for a few dry sticks, and the others began to undress. O'Rooney touched Ching-Lung on the arm.

"Have yez noticed how fast the river is roisin', sor?"

"No."

"Well, notice, yer honour. Ut has come right over that atlick in the last five minutes. After a storm ut roises loike mad!"

"Bedad! Doesn't ut!" said Barry, shaking his head. "Often enough, sir—often enough. Oi don't say that ut will this toime; but ut'll bring us visitors."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Crocs, sor," answered the Irishman. "The current gets too strong for them, and washes them down loose droives. They always make a rush for here. Bedad, in flood-toime Oi've seen ut alive wid them! What did Oi tell yez? Luk at that!"

"Jeheosophat!" gasped Ching-Lung.

A string of dark objects floated on the rushing stream. They were the flat, ugly heads of a whole battalion of alligators. And they were making for the island.

The men had seen them also.

Some Scaly Visitors—Gan-Waga and the Twins—The Terrible Whirlpool.

"We might cheivy them off with a bullet or two," said Ching-Lung.

"It's hardly likely, sor. U' mance a long swim for them if they don't git ashore here. Faith, the dirty natives call this Crocodile—"

"What's that?" shouted Prout.

"A tree, Tom."

"But what's on it, sir?"

"A snake, by Jove!" cried Rupert. "And a monster!"

A mighty tree came rushing down, rolling over and over. Now and again a long, spoked wheel and throat were lifted. The snake was coiled round the thick trunk, and each roll of the tree carried him under water.

Snakes are fine swimmers, and this one swam magnificently. It was a huge python, but in Tibet it seemed far out of its latitude. He made direct for the island with all his strength. His head held high above the water.

"Prepare to receive a visitor, gentlemen," said Ching-Lung. "Crocodiles are bad, but they can't climb trees, and this chap can. It wouldn't be healthy for us to welcome him with the kiss of peace. Where are the rifles? Thanks, Tom! If I miss give him a volley."

He leveled the guns at the snake's swaying chest. The others stood ready. Then Ching-Lung laughed, and lowered his weapon.

"I am a selfish beggar!" he said. "I suppose you've never bagged a big snake, Ru? Shoot him, my boy, and add another specimen to your list. Bang away!"

"Thanks, old chap! I should like to say I've killed a python."

Rupert fired, and the crest went down again.

"You've missed, Ru. I saw the bullet hit the water. Try again."

A second bullet left the rifle.

"Good shot, sir!" cried a dozen voices.

"Clean as a whistle!" said Ching-Lung.

The great, writhing body was swept away by the tide. A half-submerged, stunted tree stopped its progress, and the snake dangled against it. The incident had made them forget the crocodiles. Alarmed by the reports of the rifle, they had sunk. But as O'Rooney, who knew the locality,

had said, unless they landed on the island they would have to swim for miles.

As the men turned to watch the snake twenty or more of the brutes crawled out of the river, and twenty or thirty others were close behind.

The water was black with them—seethed with them. Some were fifteen or sixteen feet in length. A shout of alarm and surprise from Gan-Waga made the men spring round. The island was being invaded.

"Shoot, lads—shoot!"

Five of the brutes died as the rifles cracked. The death of their comrades did not deter them. If the water continued to rise at the present rate Ching-Lung saw that within an hour there would not be ten square yards of dry ground on the island. They fired again, each man selecting one of the reptiles. The scaly hides might have turned the old-fashioned bullets, but they were no protection against the silver-nosed bullets of the Lee-Motors.

"By Jupiter!" shouted Thurston. "They're all round us!" The crocodiles were swarming upon every side. For countless years they had been absolutely monarchs of the island, and they were ready to fight for it. And then O'Rooney uttered a yell.

"Into the threes! For yez precious laves into the threes!" For a few seconds they did not understand him. It was crocodiles except the dead and wounded scuttled back into the deep water. A roaring sound filled the air. The astonished men stared up-stream, and saw a wall of foaming water rushing down upon them.

"To the threes—to the threes!"

The trees were stout and strong. They broke all records for fast climbing. Several rifles were left behind in the rush. Roaring madly, the great wave raced down and deluged the island, threatening to tear up the trees by their roots. None of the reptiles were to be seen. Anticipating danger, they had made for the deep water, for the rush would have hurled them against the trees and battered out their life.

The din was terrific, but it subsided in a few moments. The wave passed away. It had cleared the island of every reed, and even strong, well-rooted bushes had been torn up. The white wall of water had disappeared.

"Bedad," shouted O'Rooney, who was perched on a branch, "that looked wet!"

"Must be washin'-day!" said Joe. "Somebody left the tap runnin'!"

Ching-Lung looked down. Only a little patch of mud was visible. Though the wave itself had passed, the river was still rising. They had lost their boat also. That did not make them feel anxious, but he was slightly uneasy about the aeronaut. The prospect of roosting in a tree for an indefinite period was not pleasant.

It was possible, of course, to swim the river, but it was very hazardous, and that would mean leaving their rifles behind. And Storland Sahib might be waiting for them. The best plan, he thought, was merely to do nothing.

"It's no fun sitting up here like a pack of tailless monkeys," he said to Thurston; "but we've just got to."

"Well, old chap, it's better up here than that patch of mud. Hallo! Who's that?"

Gan-Waga dropped into the water. He had chosen a weak branch, and the branch had given way. The water was more shallow than Gan cared about, and when he struggled up he was a mass of mud. He sat down to wash himself.

"Did you dive on purpose?" inquired Barry.

"No, on my head, idiot!" answered Gan-Waga.

"Good for you, Gan!" said Prout. "Wash yer little face, put yer air in the middle, and come upstairs again. Why, what's he after?"

Gan Waga made a sudden snatch at something in the water. It eluded him, but after a second attempt, he caught a baby crocodile, about a foot in length. He placed the wriggling little reptile in one of his capacious pockets. Then his hand shot out again.

"Dat berry buterful," he gurgled as he examined the second capture. "I got twiss now."

"Mind they don't bite you!"

"Dey not bite!"

"What are you goin' to do wi' 'em?" inquired Maddock.

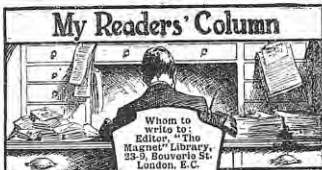
Gan winked as he began to climb a tree.

"Put 'em in a curo, gey 'em under a seed, and teach 'em to whistle," he said. "Dey'll sit on a porch an' warble beautiful. And when dey smile at 'em, dey make yo' feel good."

"Why don't you get a kennel for 'em, and chain 'em up?"

"Rats!" answered Gan Waga. "Dey are not dogs, but quite gentle. Yo' try, Thomas."

(Another splendid instalment of this grand adventure story in next Tuesday's issue of "THE MAGNET" Library. Price 1d. Please order your copy in advance.)



"FOES OF THE FOURTH!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Our next week's grand long complete story, under the above title, deals with the rivalry which rages between the juniors of the Remove Form at Greyfriars and those of the Upper Fourth. Harry Wharton & Co. are roundly japed by the Fourth Form Rivals, but in the culminating scene of the story of the Famous Four more than get their own back, and Temple, Dabney & Co. are forced to hide their diminished heads. My readers should ask their newsgents to-day to reserve them a copy of next week's MAGNET Library, containing "Foes of the Fourth!"

THE ANTI-"MAGNET" LEAGUE.

I have received a precious communication from one Maurice Hubert, of Liverpool, who signs himself "President of the Anti-Magnet League." From a mass of wild statements contained in this amiable fellow's ill-spelt and ill-written letter, the following is an extract:

"I have now formed a League, and I am proud to say that I have been the means of your losing one hundred and thirty-five readers!"

A record to be proud of, indeed, Master Maurice! An editor's life is not exactly a bed of roses at the best of times, but I am thankful indeed that my experience of lads of your kidney are few and far between. But just a final hint to you, Master "President." I trust that by means of your precious "League" no statements are circulated regarding THE MAGNET Library except such as are strictly accurate, otherwise I may be obliged to call upon you to prove any such allegations. I should advise you, quite frankly, to turn your attention to some more profitable occupation, but even if you don't take my advice, I don't think THE MAGNET Library will "shut up shop" just yet!

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

E. G. H. Dudley.—Hurree Singh is generally considered to be one of the Famous Four. I note your suggestion, but cannot make any definite promise in regard thereto.

M. J. G., and A. F. B., South Norwood.—Thank you for your letter. In regard to your questions, I must ask you to watch THE MAGNET every week, and see. It would not do for me to give the game away in advance, you know!

"Miff," Bristol.—Any newsgent will get you the "Hank Garden Beautiful."

Gertrude and Frank G., Glasgow.—I am not thinking of changing the arrangement of the stories in THE MAGNET at present, seeing that it has gained such an enormous popularity in its present form.

G. G. A., Melbourne, Australia.—Thanks for your letter. Improving your wind is, generally speaking, a matter of training yourself into good condition. You are quite right not to smoke. Have you tried running regularly every day, even if you can only manage a short distance at a time? You should avoid eating potatoes and other starchy foods. Sorry I cannot insert your request for a correspondent, for reasons which by now you will be aware of.

Frederick F., Luton.—Thank you very much for your nice letter, which, unfortunately, I have not got space enough to publish. I am very pleased to have your opinion of the two little companion papers.

Eric F., Walsall.—Thanks for your letter. I believe Messrs. A. G. Spalding & Bros., of 23a, Haymarket, London, W., publish a book on training, at a reasonable price. I wish you luck in your school sports.

Maggie McD., Cardiff.—Many thanks for your nice, sensible, and interesting letter. I am sure I will win you all the good luck possible in your new home across the sea. I feel sure, from the way you write, that you are the sort of girl to get on there, or anywhere else, for that matter.

THE EDITOR.

World's Record



On a 7 YEARS OLD "MEAD," which had covered 75,000 miles over all sorts of roads and in all kinds of weather, Mr. M. Planes—

Rode 34,366 Miles in 365 Days. (Authenticated by "Cycling.")

Broke the World's Long Distance Cycling Record.

Exceeded Harry Long's Amateur Record by 8,990 Miles.

Beat Hale's Professional Record by 1,887 Miles.

Defeated 650 Cyclists on New Up-to-date Machines.

And Won "Cycling's" Century Competition Gold Medal.

You can obtain on Ten Days' Free Riding Trial, Direct from the Works at Factory Prices, Without One Penny Deposit, Up-to-date Models of the All-Steel British Mead which broke the World's Record. Each machine is fitted with "Defiance" Puncture-Resisting (or Dunlop) Tyres, Flyer or Brooks' Saddle, Mead Frictionless Free Wheel, Double Butted Steel Tubes, Ribbed Steel Front Fork, and Ribbed Steel Seat and Chain Stays, Anti-Friction Chain, Centrifugal Bottom Bracket, Concave Hubs, Patent Hinge and Yoke Brakes, Mead Handlebar with Concealed Brake Levers (no exterior fittings), etc., etc.

£2 : 15 : 0 TO £6 : 19 : 6

CASH, EASY PAYMENTS ARRANGED.

WARRANTED 15 YEARS. Money refunded if you are dissatisfied. Mead Gold Medal Motor-Bicycles on easy terms at factory prices. Rider Agents Wanted. Write TO-DAY for free ART CATALOGUE and Full Particulars about Planes' unparalleled World's Record Ride.

MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. 44B, LIVERPOOL.

NEW NUMBERS.

3 New Additions to

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d COMPLETE LIBRARY.

NOW ON SALE.

No. 187: "Under Japan's Flag."

A Stirring Story of Adventure during the Russo-Japanese War.

By DAVID GOODWIN.

No. 188: "The Caravan Detective."

A Splendid, NEW, Long, Complete Story, full of Novel and Thrilling Incidents. By S. CLARKE HOOK.

No. 189: "The Fourth Form of St. Basil's."

A Rattling, Complete Story of School Life. By HENRY ST. JOHN.

Please ask always for

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. Complete Library.

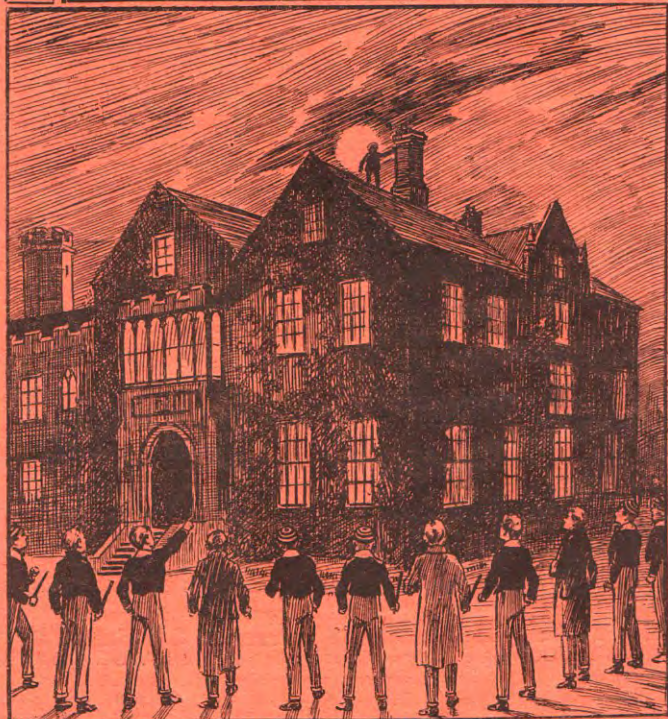
Below is a reproduction of this week's cover of our companion paper, "THE GEM" Library. Please order a copy of this popular school-story book to-day. Out on Thursday.

Complete
Stories
for ALL,
and
Every
Story
a
GEM!

The GEM

LIBRARY

No.
219.
Vol.
6.



THE GREAT BURGLAR HUNT AT ST. JIM'S! A MIDNIGHT ALARM!