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NEXT
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"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

A Grand School Tale of
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A delighted crowd gathered round the cricket ground. The Frenchmen, with their peculiar costumes and their good temper, and flow of French made a favourable impression. It was certainly an unique cricket match that was to be played—indeed, it was more unique than the Greyfriars fellows so far dreamed!

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Not Flattering.

"ALEXANDER—" said Frank Nugent thoughtfully. Bob Cherry's fork stopped on its way to his mouth, and a large piece of kidney remained, like Mahomet's coffin, suspended in mid-air. Bob Cherry stared blankly at Nugent, and Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh stared, too. The chums of Greyfriars were having tea in Study No. 1, in the Remove passage, when Frank Nugent broke the

silence, which for some minutes past had been broken only by the clink of knives and forks and the clatter of teacups upon saucers.

"What did you say?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Alexander—"

"You ass!" said Bob Cherry, in amazement. "Who are you Alexander? My name's Robert, Bob for short, and Wharton's name is Harry, and Bull's name is Johnny, and Inky's name is Inky. What do you mean by Alexander?"

"Alexander—"

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said Johnny Bull. "Pass the steak and kidneys, Bob."

"Alexander—"

"I've seen him like this before," said Harry Wharton. "It will soon pass off. I'll have some of the toast, Inky."

"Certainly, my worthy chum," said Hurree Janiset Ram Singh, passing the dish. "The toast is superbful. Our esteemed friend Nugent is talking out of his august hat."

"Alexander—" recommenced Nugent.

"Ass!"

"Alexander—"

"Quite blithering," said Bob Cherry. "If you're not quite off your silly rocker, Franky, will you explain what you mean?"

"You don't give me a chance," said Nugent indignantly.

"I was going to say, Alexander—"

"There he goes again!"

"Alexander, if you'll let me finish—"

"Jolly glad if you'd finish," said Bob Cherry. "If this is a joke, I don't see where it comes in. Pass the toast, and dry up."

"Alexander—"

"My only hat! He's understudying a giddy parrot that's only learned one word," said Johnny Bull.

"Alexander," pursued Frank Nugent, with calm determination. "Alexander the Great—"

"Oh!"

"Alexander the Great sighed for fresh worlds to conquer," said Frank Nugent victoriously.

The chums of the Remove stared at Nugent. Nugent sedately ate his toast and poured out a fresh cup of tea at the same time.

"You nine kinds of an ass," said Bob Cherry, in measured tones. "what are you babbling about? What are you springing Alexander the Great on us for? We don't want ancient history out of the Form-room. We get enough of it there, goodness knows!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Alexander the Great sighed for fresh worlds to conquer," said Nugent calmly. "I forget whether he sighed or wept, but it comes to the same thing. He had done in everybody he could get at, and then he sighed—or wept—for fresh worlds to conquer. I have been thinking—"

"What with?" asked Bob Cherry, with crushing sarcasm.

"I have been thinking that the Remove of Greyfriars are in the same position as Alexander the Great," said Nugent.

"Since the cricket season began we've licked nearly all the teams we've met. We've licked Highcliffe, and Courtfield, and Abbottford. We've beaten the Upper Fourth and the Shell at home here. The Fifth won't play us because they're afraid of getting it in the neck. Therefore, I remark that the Greyfriars Remove are in the same position as Alexander. We have conquered all the known world, and we sigh for fresh worlds to conquer."

"Go hon!" said Johnny Bull.

"Only, I suggest," went on Nugent, "that instead of sitting down and doing a weep, as Alec did, we should find a fresh world to conquer. Gentlemen—"

"Oh, pile in!" said Bob Cherry. "I can see you've got the talking-sickness. I'll pile into the steak and kidneys while you're gassing. Go on!"

Nugent laughed.

"Gentlemen of the Remove, I have the honour to propose a really ripping scheme, which will put the Remove right up to the top of the tree."

"Hear, hear, if you come to that!" said Bob Cherry, a little more amiably. "If it's something up against the Fifth-Form bounders I'm on."

"Same here!" said Wharton and Johnny Bull together.

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

"Very well! You are aware that we have played the Fifth Form at footer—"

"As we played in the eleven, I fancy we ought to know something about it," said Johnny Bull. "Is this some more ancient history?"

"You are aware," continued Nugent, "that the Fifth steadily refused to play us at footer, and were dodged into doing it by Vernon-Smith of our Form. Vernon-Smith played a rather rotten trick on Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, as we've heard since, and so got him to agree. We licked the Fifth at footer."

"Hear, hear!"

"They haven't forgotten it, and they have received our challenge to a cricket match with scorn and contempt."

"They funk it," said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I suppose they do," grinned Nugent. "But they stand upon their noble dignity as a senior Form, and decline to dream of playing the Lower Fourth-us! Now, instead of sitting down like Alexander to

weep or sigh, whichever it was he did, my idea is to play the Fifth at cricket, no less volens—that's Latin."

Harry Wharton shook his head a little.

"You're not proposing that we should shut Blundell up in a vault and keep him there till he consents, as the Bounder did?" he asked.

"No; that was rather too thick."

"Well, they won't play us."

"I think they will, if we work it—and we can work it in a way that will make them look the giddiest set of duffers that ever duffed," said Frank Nugent serenely. "I tell you I've thought it all out, and it's the biggest jape you ever heard of. We shall beat the Fifth at cricket and everything else—you know they've set up an Amateur Dramatic Society in opposition to ours? We shall beat them in that line, too."

"But how?" demanded the chums of the Remove together.

"We've challenged them, and they've refused," said Nugent. "So far as Blundell and Coker and the rest are concerned, the matter's ended. They won't meet a junior Form at cricket. Blundell said plainly, not if he knows it! But suppose they don't know it?"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Suppose they don't know it?" said Nugent mysteriously.

"Are you thinking of blindfolding them, so that they won't know whom they're playing?" asked Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"In a way, yes," said Nugent coolly. "What's the good of being amateur dramatists if we can't disguise ourselves?"

"Disguise ourselves!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Exactly! That's the idea. Suppose the Fifth Form received a challenge from a travelling eleven who found themselves in Friarale they'd jump at it. And if the travelling eleven were us—"

"Great Scott!"

"In disguise?"

"My hat!"

"We would enlighten Coker & Co. after the match," said Nugent. "Now, what do you think of the idea?"

And with one voice the chums of the Remove replied:

"Rotten!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Frank Nugent's Great Wheeze.

ROTTEN! The answer was very plain and very much to the point, and it did not leave much doubt as to the opinion of Harry Wharton & Co. Frank Nugent looked rather warlike. He had spent a considerable time in thinking out that idea, and working up the details of it, and this was certainly not a flattering reception to the elaborated result of his mental efforts.

"Well, you giddy asses!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"Oh, rotten!" said Bob Cherry. "It would be a ripping wheeze if it could be worked, but it couldn't. I suppose we couldn't play cricket in false beards? Yah!"

"The yahfulness is terrific!"

"Couldn't be worked," said Harry Wharton, with a shake of the head.

"I tell you I've thought it all out!" yelled Nugent.

"No good," said Johnny Bull. "But there's one thing you can do."

"What's that?"

"Pass the pickles."

"Fathead! Look here, you chaps; this is a big wheeze, and I've worked out the whole scheme before telling you," said Frank Nugent warmly. "It was a paragraph in the 'Daily Mail' yesterday that put it into my mind. Listen, and I'll read it out to you."

"I warn you that the steak and kidneys are going," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, rats!"

Frank Nugent took a folded paper out of the table drawer, and ran his finger over a marked paragraph.

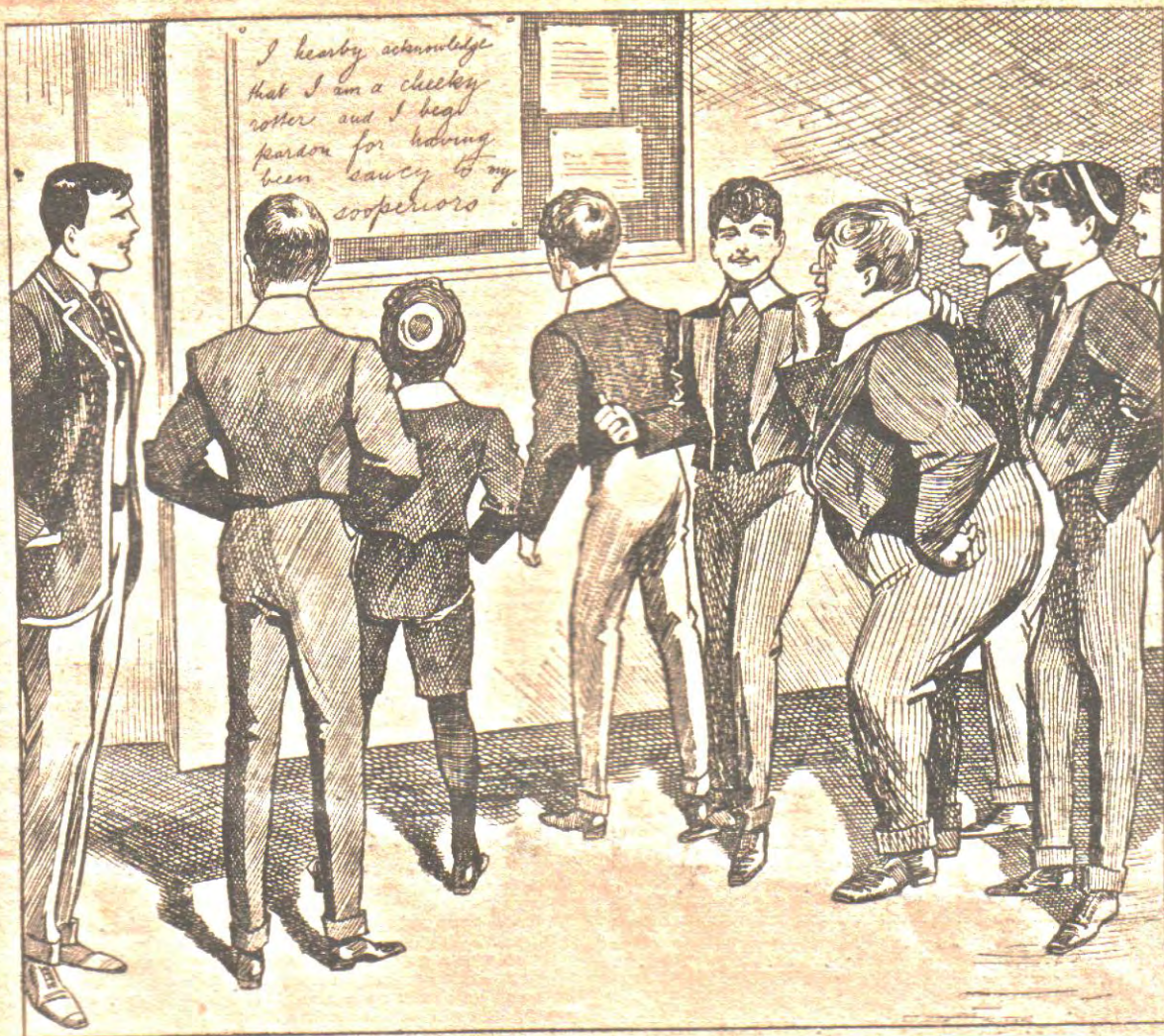
"Listen, you chaps! 'The French Public School eleven, captained by M. Raoul de Ponsac, has now returned to London from its successful tour in the North. The team, which represents the Lycee Bourbon in Paris, has been touring for some time, and playing matches with various English public school elevens. It is understood that M. de Ponsac's team will extend its tour into the South of England, and fulfil several engagements there with public school sides.' There!"

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I'd like to meet them with a Remove team."

"Couldn't be done. They're a senior team, and they meet only first elevens. But if the Fifth-Form committee here got a letter from their secretary, asking them to fix up a match, what do you think the Fifth would do?"

"Jump at it," said Bob Cherry.

"Exactly."



"Did Coker write that?" asked Wingate, pointing to the precious paper which Harry Wharton had pinned in the Remove passage, so that everybody who passed could see it. "Yes, rather," answered Harry Wharton. "Don't you know his hand? There isn't any other like that in Greyfriars." (See Chapter 4.)

"But are they coming this way?" asked Wharton.

"Not that I know of."

"Well, then—"

"That's all the more reason why the Fifth should receive the challenge," said Frank Nugent. "We get a whole holiday next week, and that's where we get our chance. Blundell of the Fifth gets a letter in French challenging him to meet the Lycee Bourbon eleven, and he jumps at it. How is he to suspect that a Remove team will have got themselves up as giddy French schoolboys, ready to come here?"

"Phew!"

"My hat!" said Johnny Bull. "It's a big idea. But—could it be worked?"

"Ain't we the Amateur Dramatic Society of Greyfriars?" demanded Frank Nugent. "Of course it could be worked! We can practise the French lingo, and practise the disguises, and get Monsieur Charpentier to help us concoct the letter to Blundell—of course, without letting him know what's on. Our giddy French master is always willing to help any kid who shows keenness to learn his giddy language. I think the idea's simply splendid."

"But the disguises—"

"We have disguised ourselves before. If we can play Julius Caesar, we can play French schoolboys. We can darken our complexions, in the first place, and pencil our eyebrows, and make our hair fuzzy, and dress queerly, and look French all over."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

"And then we can talk in French all the time. Ponsac's team can't be supposed to know much English."

"Good egg!"

"If it comes off, it will be the biggest jape we ever japed on the Fifth," said Frank Nugent, with a gleeful chuckle. "Only we shall have to keep it frightfully dark, of course, till it comes off."

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, hands up for the wheeze," said Frank Nugent.

Each of the juniors put his hand up. The idea was growing upon them, and there was no doubt that if it came off it would be one of the biggest japes ever played at Greyfriars School.

And it was a very keen wish of every Removite at Greyfriars to bring the Fifth Form down off their "perch," as they expressed it. Coker & Co. carried matters with a very high hand, and affected loftily to take no notice of rivalry on the part of the Remove. And this attitude was justly characterised by the Removites as "cheek." They had beaten the Fifth at football, and so the Fifth had no reason for refusing to play them at cricket, unless they were afraid of being beaten. And that was not a sporting reason.

To jape the Fifth into believing that they were playing a French public school team, to lick them, and to disclose the fact afterwards that the team they had played was the Remove eleven of Greyfriars—it would be the biggest joke of the season.

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

And the more the juniors thought of it, the better they liked it, and the keener they grew about the scheme.

They discussed it in low tones, in case there should be listening ears outside the door.

Billy Bunter of the Remove had a habit of happening to be near keyholes when discussions were going on. And it was necessary to keep the great scheme very dark.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry at last. "I believe it will work. And we shall have to put in some steady practice to get up our cricket to top-notch form, ready for meeting the Fifth."

"Yes, rather! Let's go down to the nets now; we've got a half-hour before dark," said Johnny Bull.

"Good! Come on!"

The chums of the Remove left the tea-table, and Wharton opened the door of the study. The juniors walked out, and as they did so there was a sudden rush of feet, and many hands seized them from all sides.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Turning the Tables.

"COLLAR them!"

"Got 'em?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" grinned Coker of the Fifth. "Bring 'em along, before the other young bounders are buzzing round us like giddy hornets!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were struggling furiously. They had walked right into the Fifth-Formers. Coker & Co. had been lying in wait in the Remove passage, and they had collared the juniors as soon as they appeared. There were half a dozen of the Fifth—Blundell, the captain of the Form, and Bland, and Coker, and Potter, and Greene, and Fitzgerald. The six powerful seniors grasped the Removites, and dragged them away in the direction of the Fifth-Form passage, in spite of their furious resistance.

"Rescue!" yelled the Removites. "Rescue—Remove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yank 'em along!"

"Rescue!"

"Help!"

Doors opened, and voices called in the Remove passage, Bulstrode, and Tom Brown, and Hazeldene, and Vernon-Smith, and Mark Linley, and Ogilvy, and Mauleverer, and Penfold came rushing in pursuit. But the Fifth-Formers had reached their own quarters now, and they dragged their prisoners into Coker's study, and the door was slammed and locked.

Harry Wharton & Co. were thrown in a row against the study wall, and the Fifth-Formers stood before them, grinning.

The Removites gasped for breath.

There were five of them against six seniors, so they had not much chance in a tussle, but they clenched their fists and stood ready.

"You rotters!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's the little game?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What have you got us here for?—You'd better unlock the door and let us out, or we'll wreck the blessed study!"

Coker roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! They're going to wreck the study. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fifth-Formers yelled in chorus.

"The fact is," grinned Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, "that we're fed up with Remove cheek, and we're going to make an example of you. You've had the unheard-of audacity to challenge the Fifth to a cricket match on the whole holiday next week."

"Yes, rather! And we'd beat you, too!" said Bob Cherry.

Blundell chuckled.

"You've been crowing because you pulled off a footer match by a fluke," he went on.

"It wasn't a fluke!" roared the Removites all together, in great indignation. "We beat you fair and square. And we'd beat you at cricket, too, if you'd meet us."

"Well, we're not going to meet you," said Blundell. "It would be rather too much of a come-down for the Fifth to play the Lower Fourth. Might as well ask us to play the Third Form. I dare say Bolsover minor would take us on with a team of fags!"

"Or Nugent minor & Co. of the Second Form!" suggested Potter sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now," said Blundell, "we've given you fags lots of lickings, but it doesn't do you any good. We're going to make you climb down."

"Rats!"

"We're going to make you write out and sign a paper," continued Blundell, unmoved. "It will be to this effect:

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

"We are sorry we have cheeked the Fifth, and we promise to be good little boys, and respectful to our elders, in future. You will have to sign all your names to that."

The Removites burst into an angry laugh.

"No fear!" said Nugent.

"You could chop me into little bits first, so far as I am concerned!" said Harry Wharton, his eyes gleaming. "You won't get me to write anything of the sort."

"Rather not!"

"The rather-notfulness is terrific!"

"Very well," said Blundell genially. "I don't want to over-persuade you. I simply advise you, for your own good, to sign the paper."

"Rats!"

"If you refuse——"

"We do refuse. Go and eat coke!"

"In that case, I am afraid that we shall have to rag you a little," said Blundell. "You see, it's our bounden duty, as seniors, to keep cheeky fags in their place. Once more, I advise you to sign the paper."

"Rats!"

"Gentlemen of the Fifth," said Blundell, looking round at his grinning companions, "I apologise to you for asking you to lay hands upon inky fags. I am conscious that an apology is needed."

"Hear, hear!" said Coker.

"But for the dignity of the Fifth, we must sacrifice our personal inclinations, and lay hands upon these inky, cheeky fags!"

"Lead on, Macduff," said Potter. "After all, we can wash our hands afterwards."

"A brilliant suggestion," said Blundell. "Gentlemen, the sagacity of our friend Potter has removed the only objection to ragging the fags."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

A terrific shock made the door tremble, and every article in the study shake. The Fifth-Formers swung round towards the door. Outside, the shouting voices of a crowd of Removites could be heard.

"Go it!" roared the voice of Penfold. "Smash it in!"

Crash!

"Go it, Bolsover—jolly lucky we thought of the coke-hammer!" yelled Ogilvy.

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The young asses!" gasped Blundell. "They're hammering at the lock with a coke-hammer! Go away, you young villains!"

"Yah!"

"We'll come out and scalp you!" roared Coker.

"Yah!"

There was a rush of feet in the passage, and a sound of wild conflict. The Fifth-Formers in the study grinned.

"Our chaps have come along," chuckled Potter. "They'll soon clear out the Remove kids."

The struggle in the passage was tremendous. But when shouts of victory rose, they were in the voices of the Remove. The Lower Fourth had evidently come up in great force, and the charge of the Fifth had been repelled.

Crash!

The coke-hammer came heavily upon the lock again. The door shook and trembled, but it did not give way. Blundell shrugged his shoulders.

"They can keep on," he remarked. "The Fifth will soon clear them off; and they'll have the prefects up if they make that row. Kids, are you going to sign that paper?"

"No!" roared Harry Wharton & Co.

"I'll write it out," said Coker. "They can sign it. If they don't sign it——"

"If they refuse to sign it, we anoint them with oil and soot, and rub it well in," said Blundell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Crash! Crash!

The grinning Coker drew a sheet of paper towards him on the table, and dipped a pen in the ink. In his large, sprawling handwriting and original orthography, he wrote out the paper for the Remove heroes to sign.

"I hereby acknowledge that I am a cheeky rotter, and I beg pardon for having been saucy to my superiors!"

"There you are!" said Coker, surveying his handiwork with considerable satisfaction. "I've written it pretty large, so that the fellows can read it when it's pinned up with these young bounders' signatures to it."

"You jolly well won't get our signatures!" said Harry Wharton.

"No fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific!"

"Very well," said Blundell, "roll 'em over, my sons, and we'll anoint them. And if that won't do any good, we'll lay

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into their hides with a cricket-stump. We're going to teach the Remove manners, somehow!"

"What-ho!" said Coker. "I think—"

Crash!

The lock on the study door flew into fragments, and the door dashed open. In an instant a wild and excited crowd of Remove juniors swarmed into the study.

"Rescue!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah, Remove!"

"Down with the Fifth!"

"Give 'em socks!"

"Rescue, Fifth!" yelled Blundell, as he was assailed by the swarming enemy, and borne to the floor. "Rescue! Ow! Help!"

But there was no time for rescue. The swarming Removites simply swamped the Fifth-Formers in the study. Blundell and Coker & Co. fought desperately, but they were borne down, and the juniors sprawled and rolled over them victoriously.

"Retreat!" said Bob Cherry, with a breathless chuckle. "The Fifth will be along in force soon—come on!"

"The paper!" shouted Wharton.

"The paper! What paper?"

"The one Coker wrote out!" gasped Harry, struggling to the table, and seizing the valuable document. "The paper is in Coker's writing, and it will look ripping pinned up for all the school to read."

Bob Cherry burst into a yell. He had not thought of turning the enemy's device against them in that way, and it almost threw him into hysterics.

"Ha, ha, ha! Collar the paper! Come on, before the rotters get it back!"

And, leaving the Fifth-Formers sprawling breathless and exhausted on the study floor, the Removites retreated from the study, Harry Wharton with the precious paper safe in his pocket. With yells of defiance the juniors retreated down the Fifth-Form passage, and back to their own quarters. And in the Remove passage, all the Remove gathered to read that paper written out in the well-known handwriting and spelling of Horace Coker, and to yell with uproarious merriment over it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Fall for the Fifth.

COKER & CO. staggered up, breathless and dusty, and furious. The study looked like a wreck; and Coker & Co. looked considerably wrecked, too. But they were not thinking just then of their bruises, and their torn trousers, and jackets, and rent collars, and rumpled hair. They were thinking of the valuable document the Removites had carried off in triumph from the Fifth-Form quarters. That document had been intended to cover the Remove with confusion; but without the Remove signatures to it, it was likely to have the exactly reverse effect. For it was in a Fifth-Former's handwriting—and everybody at Greyfriars knew Coker's sprawling "fist," and his wonderful spelling. It would count as a big triumph for the Remove, and Coker & Co. knew how the school would howl with laughter over it.

"You silly ass!" shouted Blundell, shaking his fist at the unfortunate Coker. "You shouldn't have written out the paper!"

"You told me to!" roared Coker.

"Oh, you're a silly ass! They've got it now——"

"You let them get it!" howled Coker.

"Look here——"

"Look here——"

"Hang it all, don't row here!" exclaimed Potter. "Let's get the blessed paper back, before they show it to all Greyfriars."

"Come on!" shouted Greene. "After them!"

And Coker and Blundell suspended their recriminations, and sailed out of the study, and the rest followed, and a crowd of Fifth-Formers joined them for a raid upon the Remove quarters, to recover the precious document.

But that raid was not to take place. The uproar in the Fifth-Form passage had brought Mr. Prout, the Fifth-Form master, out of his study, and he barred the path of the raiders, looking very angry indeed. Mr. Prout was a very good-natured master, and often deaf to disturbances; but there were limits, and those limits had been reached now.

"Stop!" the Form-master exclaimed, holding up his hand. "Where are you boys going?"

The whooping crowd halted in confusion.

"We—we—we're just going to see Wharton, sir," stammered Blundell. "That's all, sir."

"Indeed! Quite on a peaceful visit, I suppose?" said Mr. Prout sarcastically.

"Ahem! We—we——"

"You see, sir——" said Coker.

"It's like this, sir——" began Potter.

"I see that there has been a disgraceful disturbance," said Mr. Prout severely. "These Form disputes must cease, or at least, be kept within bounds. Go back to your studies at

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ONE
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once! Any boy belonging to my Form who sets his foot within the Remove passage to-day will be reported to the Head!"

"Oh, sir!"

"The young beggars have just raided us, sir!" roared a furious Fifth-Former.

"Indeed! Did they raid you unprovoked?"

"Ahem! You see, sir——"

"Well, we raided them first," said Coker, who had an unhappy habit of blurting out facts. "We thought we ought to put them in their place, sir."

"I quite understand," said Mr. Prout. "You raided them, and they raided you, and the matter must end. I do not approve of these disturbances. Go back to—to your quarters at once; and, remember, not a boy belonging to the Fifth is to enter the Remove passage. He will be severely punished if he does."

Mr. Prout waved his hand majestically, and Blundell and Coker & Co. turned back. They had no choice in the matter. Mr. Prout turned away, and spoke to several prefects on the subject, warning them to keep an eye on the Fifth, and see that there was no raiding of the rival studies. Coker & Co. returned furious to their quarters. For that evening, at least, there was no chance of recovering the document. The juniors were not likely to bring it out of the safe precincts of the Remove passage.

In their studies, the raging Fifth-Formers could hear yells of laughter proceeding from the Lower Fourth quarters. They knew the cause of them, and they ground their teeth and vowed terrific vows of vengeance.

Harry Wharton had pinned the precious paper up in the Remove passage, where everybody who passed could read it. Needless to say, fellows came from far and near to read it, as soon as the news spread. There was a constant passing of juniors of all the Lower School to and fro in the passage, and they roared over the document. The document was funny enough in itself, simply from the point of view of the orthography.

"I heartily acknowledge that I am a cheeky rotter, and I beg pardon for having been saucy to my superiors."

It was no wonder the juniors roared. Nugent minor came up with half the Second Form to read it, and Bolsover minor and Paget and Tubb of the Third brought up a host of inky fags to enjoy it. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth roared as they read it. Even the Shell fellows, who generally assumed an air of patronage towards the Remove, chuckled gleefully over that confession of defeat on the part of the Fifth. It was not very long since Horace Coker had passed up out of the Shell, and he had become—as Hobson of the Shell indignantly declared—more Fifthy than the Fifth themselves. And so Hobson and the other Shell fellows enjoyed that document immensely.

Wingate of the Sixth strolled along to see it, when he heard about it. Courtney and Walker came with him. The three seniors stared as they read the paper, and chuckled.

"Did Coker write that?" asked Wingate.

"Yes, rather!" replied Harry Wharton. "Don't you know his hand? There isn't any other writing like that in Greyfriars."

Wingate laughed.

"Nor any other spelling, I think!" grinned Courtney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But how did you get him to do it?" asked the captain of Greyfriars, in amazement.

"Quite of his own accord," said Bob Cherry. "We were in the study with him, but he wrote that out quite of his own accord."

"Quite!" said Frank Nugent.

"Blessed if I can understand it, then!" said Wingate suspiciously. "It was a queer thing for Coker to do."

"Coker is a queer fish, anyway!" remarked Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After this the Fifth will have to get their ears down," said Johnny Bull. "Having acknowledged us as their superiors in writing——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate chuckled, and walked away to the Fifth-Form passage. He looked into Coker's study and found Coker & Co. almost raving.

"You asses!" said Wingate. "What did you write out that paper for? You'll never hear the end of it. The whole school is going into hysterics over it!"

"It was Coker!" roared Blundell.

"It was Blundell's idea!" roared Coker.

"Well, it lets down the Fifth!" said Wingate. "You ought to have a certain amount of regard for the dignity of a senior Form, you know."

Blundell spluttered with rage.

"That's just what we had!" he snorted. "That was why

that ass wrote out the paper. It was for the kids to sign, but they got away without signing it, and took the blessed paper with them!"

Wingate roared.

"Blessed if I see anything to gurgle about!" snapped Blundell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wingate. "This is too rich! I should recommend you to leave those Remove kids alone, Blundell. They're above your weight! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Wingate left the study, still laughing. The Fifth-Formers glared at one another. They were in a furious mood.

"It was Blundell's idea in the first place!" growled Coker. "I thought from the first that it was a rotten, idiotic idea, but I didn't say so!"

"Rats!" growled Blundell. "It's all your fault!"

"I'm not captain of the Form!" sniffed Coker. "If I were I shouldn't let the Fifth down like this."

"It's you that's done it!" yelled Blundell.

"Bosh! It's you!"

"Look here, Coker; if you want a thick ear—"

"I want all the thick ears you can give me!" said Coker defiantly.

"By George! You shall have them, then!" shouted Blundell, jumping up.

"Come on!" bellowed Coker.

"Here, hold on, you chaps!" gasped Potter. "What's the good—?" But the angry Fifth-Formers did not listen to the peacemaker.

They grasped one another, and whirled round the study, hammering and trampling and gasping in mortal combat. Potter and Greene and Bland dodged out of the way as best they could. In the midst of the uproar the study door opened, and Mr. Prout looked in with a frowning brow.

"More fighting!" he said angrily.

The combatants separated. They stood gasping and panting, and rubbing their glowing faces and half-closed eyes, and looking sheepishly at their Form-master.

"Blundell, go to your study at once, and write out three odes of 'Horace,'" said Mr. Prout severely. "Coker, you will stay here and do the same. I am ashamed of you."

And the heroes of the Fifth grunted and obeyed.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not Cricket.

THE document in Coker's handwriting remained pinned up in the Remove passage all that evening, and it was not till nearly bedtime that Potter of the Fifth succeeded in getting possession of it. He bribed Billy Bunter of the Remove to purloin it, by the promise of a dozen jam-tarts; and Bunter brought it to Coker's study late in the evening. The Removes missed it when they went up to bed, but they did not mind very much; the paper had served its purpose. All Greyfriars knew it by heart now, and the fags in the quad, chanted it under Coker's study window, and howled it at him from the passages.

Although the Fifth had explained and explained, till they were hoarse with explaining; how the paper had come to be written, the school preferred to believe that Coker had of his own accord acknowledged the Remove to be his "soopieriors," and the wonderful way he spelled the word appealed to the school very much. The Remove went victorious to their dormitory, and the Fifth went to theirs furious. Coker & Co. were turning all sorts of plans over in their minds to get even with the rival Form, but it was very difficult to think of one that would work. The Removes were very wide awake, and very much on their guard.

Coker & Co. attempted a dormitory raid that night, but they found the door of the Remove dormitory locked; that move had been anticipated and guarded against. The Fifth-Formers returned to their beds in a very bad temper. They did not look amiable when they came down in the morning, either. Their defeat was weighing upon their minds, and the grins of the whole school exasperated them. As they went into the dining-room to breakfast, Coker bestowed a majestic frown upon Harry Wharton & Co.

Bob Cherry wagged a reproving forefinger at him.

"Now, don't be saucy to your soopieriors, Coker!" he admonished.

There was a ripple of laughter in the room, and Coker clenched his fists wildly. But for the presence of the masters he would have hurled himself upon Bob Cherry on the spot. But that could hardly be done in the dining-room. Coker went to his table breathing sulphurously.

After morning school the Removes went down to the cricket-ground for the usual practice. Coker & Co. gathered

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round the ground to look on, with truculent looks. Frank Nugent regarded the Fifth-Formers rather uneasily.

"Looks to me as if there's going to be trouble on the cricket-ground," he remarked.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Oh, they won't interfere with us here!" he said. "That would be rotten!"

"I think they're ratty enough to do anything!" said Nugent.

"Well, they'd better not, while we've got our bats handy."

And the Removes played. The Fifth were gathering round the ropes in force, and they indulged in uncomplimentary remarks concerning the Lower Fourth play. The Remove cricket, as a matter of fact, was quite up to the mark, and they had beaten the Upper Fourth and the Shell hollow, and were quite confident that they could beat the Fifth if they were given a chance. Wharton and Bob Cherry were splendid bats, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Dick Penfold and Nugent were splendid bowlers. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, who seemed to be able to do anything he liked, and to do it well, was equally good with the willow and the leather. As a rule the Bounder did not take to sports; but he was at practice now, and he was bowling with wonderful skill. Wharton's wicket fell, and Bob Cherry's, and Nugent's, and Tom Brown's. It was due to the extra good bowling, but the Fifth, as they looked on, preferred to take the view that the batting was very bad, and they yelled derisively.

"They call that cricket!" roared Coker. "Why, a fag ought to be able to bat better than that with a tent-peg! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorused the Fifth.

Bob Cherry gave them a glare.

"Come and try it yourselves, if you think you can bat against that bowling!" he shouted.

The Fifth-Formers laughed in derision.

"Not worth our while!" said Coker loftily. "Go on; you're amusing us! This is as good as a circus!"

"Better!" said Potter. "I've never seen anything in a circus as funny as Remove batting. There goes Ogilvy's wicket! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, go and cackle somewhere else!" said Harry Wharton.

"Buzz off!"

But the Fifth refused to buzz off. Vernon-Smith bowled again, and instead of sending the ball down to the wicket, he let it go towards the ropes. It bounced up and caught Horace Coker on the chest with a sharp tap. Coker staggered back with a gasp, and sat down violently on the grass.

It was the Remove's turn to laugh—and they did.

"Ow!" gasped Coker.

"How's that?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Out! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Field that ball!" shouted Vernon-Smith.

Coker fielded it. He picked it up and hurled it at the Bounder, who dodged just in time, and the ball flew past him.

"Stop that!" shouted Wharton angrily. "You dangerous ass, Coker! You ought to have more sense! Get off our ground!"

Coker did not get off the ground; he came on it, instead. He rushed upon the pitch, and the Fifth followed him. Their rush scattered the Remove cricketers.

There was a wild melee upon the pitch.

Wickets were torn up for the stumps to be used as weapons, and bats were brandished in the air.

But the seniors carried all before them.

They bowled over the juniors, trampled the pitch, and finally retreated, leaving the junior cricketers sprawling on the field of play.

If the Fifth could not pit their brains against the Remove, at all events their strength was superior, and they had won that tussle, such as it was.

Bob Cherry sat up in the grass and rubbed his head.

"Oh, the beasts!" he gasped.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Yaroop!"

Wharton jumped up, his head aching from a hard knock, and his eyes gleaming with anger. The pitch was a wreck; it would require a great deal of rolling before it was fit to be played upon again.

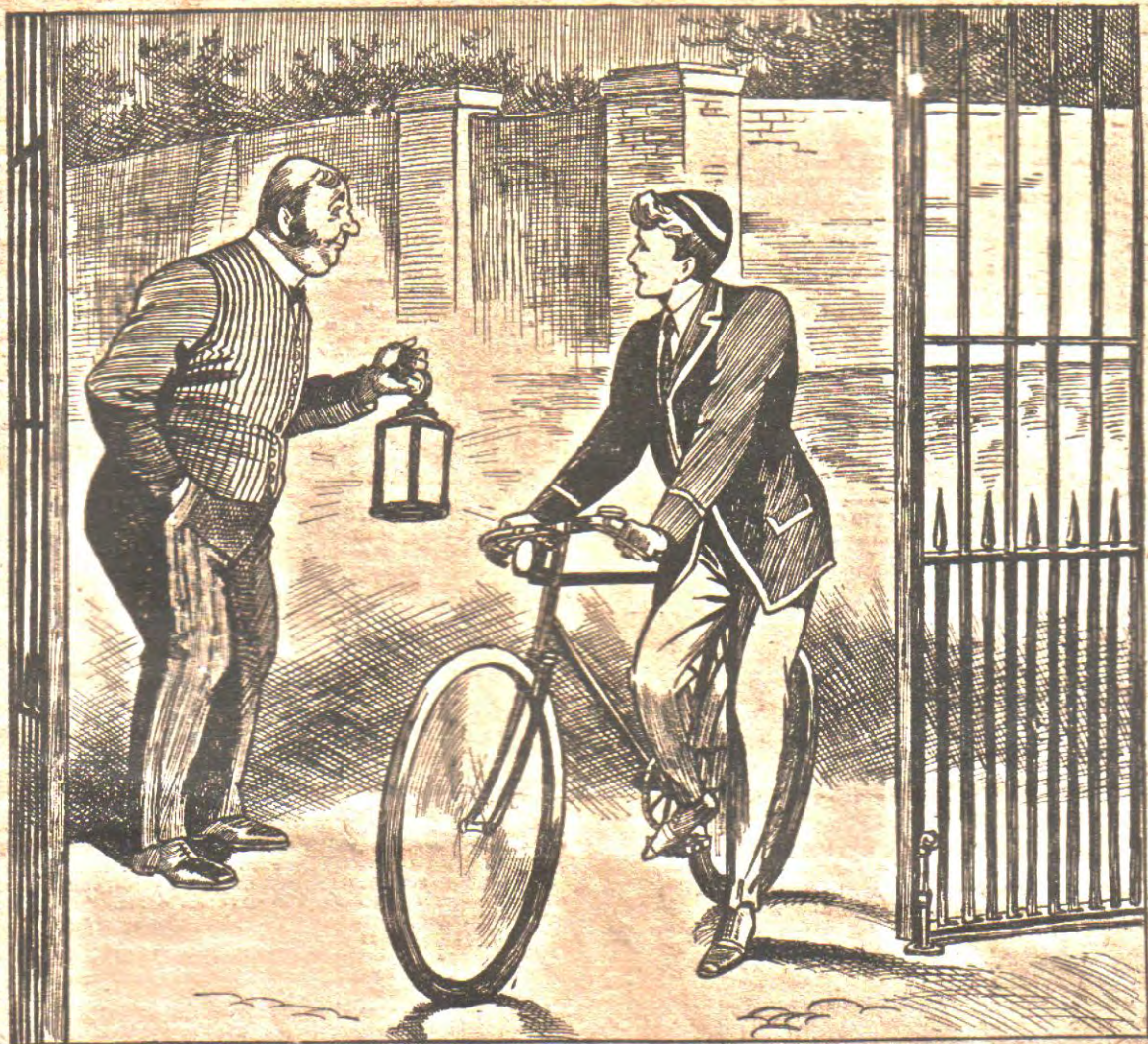
"The cads!" Wharton exclaimed hotly. "This isn't playing the game."

Bob Cherry groaned.

"Ow! Coker is a beast! I was biffing him with a stump, and the utter rotter snatched it away and biffed me with it! Ow! What an awful rotter!"

"Oh!"

"Gree!"



The dusty cyclist rang at the bell of the gates of Greyfriars, and Gosling, the porter, came grunting out of his lodge to let him in. "Oh," said Gosling, as his light gleamed upon Bob Cherry. "Oh! it's you, is it!" "I believe so, Gossy," said Bob Cherry, cheerfully. "If you'll lend me a looking-glass I'll make sure." (See Chapter 9.)

"Never mind," mumbled Nugent; "we'll make them sit up on Wednesday afternoon. Ow!"

And the unhappy cricketers picked themselves up, their practice over for that day.

They were greatly troubled with aches and pains during afternoon lessons, and Mr. Quelch, their Form-master, noticed an unusual number of signs of deadly conflict about his Form.

When they came out after lessons in the afternoon, the Fifth met them in the passage, with grinning faces.

"Going to play cricket again?" asked Coker genially.

"We'll come and watch."

"Don't be saucy to your superiors," said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going to teach you kids not to crow," said Coker.

"I can warn you that you're going to have a high old time until you learn your place, and keep in it."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

The Removites did not feel much inclined for cricket practice just then. They had too large an assortment of aches and pains. Harry Wharton & Co. retired to their study, to have tea and discuss the great wheeze Frank Nugent had propounded against the Fifth. The more the juniors had reflected upon that wheeze, the more they liked it, and several more of the Remove had been taken into the scheme, and had given it their whole-hearted sympathy and support.

"The Fifth know about the French eleven coming down to this district," Frank Nugent remarked. "I heard Blundell

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.

say yesterday that Ponsac's team was going to play Abbot's Seniors, and he said he wondered whether Wingate would send them a challenge to play Greyfriars First."

"It would be a feather in the cap of the Fifth to get a challenge from Ponsac," grinned Bob Cherry. "I can imagine how they would strut if they got a letter from an eleven like Ponsac's, asking for a match."

"And they'd jump at the chance," said Johnny Bull.

"The jumpfulness would be terrific."

"The only question is about the disguises," Harry Wharton said thoughtfully, "and I don't see why it shouldn't work. By the way, does anybody know the name of the French team's secretary?"

"Blessed if I do!"

"I don't see that it matters," remarked Nugent. "When we write the letter we couldn't use the chap's name—that would be too thick. But I don't suppose Blundell knows the name, either, so we can sign what we like."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly.

The juniors stared at him.

"Well, wherefore the cackination?" demanded Nugent.

"I'll sign the letter, with my name—that will be all fair and square and above board," said Bob Cherry.

"Ass! They know your name, don't they?"

"Not in French!"

"What?"

"Cerise is French for cherry, and it's a French name,

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early,

too," said Bob, grinning. "If a letter comes to them signed 'Henri Cerise,' that will be all right. My other name's Henry, you know—Robert Henry Cherry."

"Good egg!" exclaimed Wharton, grinning. "Of course, we couldn't sign a letter with another fellow's name—that wouldn't be quite the thing. But there's no reason why Bob shouldn't write a letter in French, and sign his name in French, if he chooses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's get the letter written," exclaimed Nugent. "We shall want a dictionary, and a grammar, and a fearful lot of brain-power on the job. Lower Fourth French isn't quite up to correspondence!"

"Wouldn't the chap write in English, though?" said Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I know—but it will seem more convincing if the letter is in French. The Ponsac team sec. may not know English. Besides, Coker & Co. would never dream that we wrote a letter in really good grammatical French! We've got to be careful to pull the wool over their eyes."

"Good egg! Let's get it done!"

The tea-things were cleared off the table, and the juniors locked the study door, and gathered round eagerly for the task. A French dictionary and a French grammar were brought out, and Harry Wharton took up the pen, and gnawed the handle of it as a preliminary. It was a matter that required much careful thinking out.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Brain Work!

"HOW do you begin?" asked Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"Monsieur!" said Nugent.

"Dear Monsieur—"

"That would be 'Cher Monsieur,'" said Harry Wharton, wrinkling his brows in thought. "I don't see why that shouldn't do. 'Cher Monsieur—'"

"Make it up in English first, and then translate it into French," suggested John Bull.

"Good!"

"The letter will have to come by post," said Wharton reflectively, "and the reply will have to be sent somewhere. We shall have to arrange for a letter to be received for us in Abbotsford town, and kept to be called for."

"That's easy enough," said Bob Cherry. "We can have it sent to the Abbotsford Arms. That's a likely place for the French team to put up at if they came to this quarter, and we know the landlord—he supplies us with brakes sometimes when we go over to Abbotsford. And it's too far away for the Fifth to give them a look in. One of us will have to go over to Abbotsford and post the letter, to get the right postmark on it. We can post the letter, and arrange about having the answer received and sent to us under cover at the same time—to-morrow afternoon will be the best time."

"That's all right."

Wharton's pen moved quickly enough in his own language. He wrote the letter in English, and the juniors read it over.

"Dear Sir,—Would you be good enough to arrange a cricket match with us for next Wednesday? Please reply by letter to this hotel.—Yours sincerely, HENRI CERISE."

"I suppose that will do, if we get it into French," said Harry.

"If!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"We'll do it," said Nugent. "Begin with 'Voulez-vous'—that's always easy."

Wharton's pen moved on the paper again.

"Voulez-vous—next?"

"Voulez-vous jouer—will you play?" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Voulez-vous avoir la bonte," said Johnny Bull.

"Will you have the goodness—that sounds better," agreed Wharton. "What next?"

"De faire un jeu de cricket!" suggested Nugent.

"H'm! Is that all right? Faire means do or make—"

"Yes, but they use it in that sense."

"H'm!"

"Let's have Linley in," said Bob. "He knows more French than we do—he's mugged it up for a rotten scholarship."

"Good; go and yank him in."

Bob Cherry hurried out of the study, and returned with Mark Linley. The Lancashire lad was only too willing to help, but, as he explained, scholarship French was not quite the same French that was used in France, any more than Lower Fourth French was.

"Never mind; two heads are thicker than one," said Bob Cherry. "Wire in and see what you can make of it."

"Voulez-vous avoir la bonte—" began Linley, nodding.

"La or le?" asked Johnny Bull anxiously. "No good making a mistake over the genders. They decline the

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article in that rotten language, and it comes easy to them. A mistake about that would give the whole show away. Is bonte masculine or feminine?"

"Blessed if I know!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Look it out in the dictionary, Franky, and see whether bonte is a lady or a gentleman."

Nugent turned over the pages.

"Lady!" he announced.

"Good; la bonte, then," said Wharton. "Voulez-vous have—I mean avoir la bonte—How do you go on from there, Marky, old man?"

Mark Linley thought it out.

"De nous engager dans un jeu de cricket," he suggested.

"Lemme see; that means for us to engage in a game of cricket," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose they always put their sentences backwards in that way?"

Linley laughed.

"Yes, I think so."

"It sounds all right," said Wharton. "If we did French as well as this in the Form-room, old Charpentier would be pleased with us."

"He wouldn't take it for the kind of French he was brought up on, though, perhaps."

"Well, the Fifth weren't brought up on French, you know. This has only got to satisfy Coker & Co., not a giddy Frenchman."

"Yes, that's true."

"Voulez vous avoir la bonte de nous engager dans un jeu de cricket," repeated Wharton, with considerable satisfaction.

"That certainly sounds very nice. Now, about the date. What's their giddy name for Wednesday?"

"Merky something."

"Mercredi," said Mark Linley, with a smile.

"And what means next?"

"Prochain."

"Le Mercredi prochain," repeated Wharton, writing it down.

"They don't put a capital letter to the names of days," said Mark.

"Oh, good!" Wharton crossed out the capital M. "Queer beggars, ain't they? I suppose mercredi is a man, not a girl?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, that's right, masculine—le mercredi, not la," said Mark, laughing. "That's all right, and the adjective must be masculine, too. You've got it right."

"Lot of blessed trouble for nothing, these giddy genders!" growled Bob Cherry. "Why can't they all learn English, and drop that tommy-rot?"

"Repondez s'il vous plait," went on Wharton. "Does that want a circumflex somewhere?"

"Yes, over the i in plait."

"Good! I had better say 'to this hotel.' How do you do that? Look out hotel in the dic., Franky, and see whether it's a girl or a boy."

"Masculine, with a circumflex over the o," said Nugent.

"Then it will have to be ce hotel, not cette hotel," said Wharton, looking rather worried. "Cette hotel sounds much better, to my mind."

"Put in a t," said Mark Linley. "It's a silent h, you know."

"Oh, I see! Cet hotel!"

"That will do, anyway."

"Repondez s'il vous plait a cet hotel," said Wharton slowly.

"That doesn't sound to me as well as the beginning, but it will do for Coker, anyway. Now, about the signature. I believe French people shove in a lot of politeness at the end of a letter. Words are cheap, you know."

"A vous sincerement," suggested Johnny Bull.

"Too short."

"Toujours a vous, then."

"Too chummy."

"Something about salutations," said Nugent. "That word's the same in both languages, thank goodness. We've had stuff on this subject from old Charpentier, but I'm blessed if it sticks in my head."

"Rescue, Marky," said Bob Cherry.

Mark Linley laughed.

"I think I can work that for you," he said. "Under the circ., I think the Frenchman would sign it—receive my most distinguished salutations—or, as they put it in French, receive my salutations the most distinguished. That's easy enough to construe."

"Recevez—that's second plural, all right," said Frank. "Recevoir, to receive—je recois, tu recois, il recoit; nous recevons, vous recevez, ils reçoivent—with that little, taily thing under the e to show that it isn't a c but an s."

"Recevez, mon salutations—" began Johnny Bull.

"Off-side," said Nugent. "You want a plural pronoun for a giddy plural noun."

"Oh, blow their plurals."

"Recevez mes salutations les plus distinguées," said Wharton. "If salutations is feminine—is it?"

"Yes,"
"Then distinguished will have to be a feminine, too."
"Yes, and plural, to agree with the noun."
"My hat, it's like fitting in a giddy puzzle," said John Bull. "Recevez mes salutations les plus distinguées."

"Hurrah!"
"Now write out the whole giddy thing, and let's hear how it sounds," said Bob.

"Here you are!"
Wharton read out the whole letter. It certainly sounded very workmanlike when it was completed.

"Cher Monsieur—Voulez vous avoir la bonte de nous engager dans un jeu de cricket, le mercredi prochain? Repondez s'il vous plait a cet hotel—"

"You ought to say by letter, though," said Johnny Bull. "You don't want to risk that fathad, Coker, buzzing over there on his bike, and finding there's no Frenchmen there."

"Oh, good!"
Wharton made the correction, and started again.

"Cher monsieur—Voulez vous avoir la bonte de nous engager dans un jeu de cricket le mercredi prochain? Repondez s'il vous plait par lettre a cet hotel."

"Recevez, Monsieur, mes salutations les plus distinguées,—"
"HENRI CERISE."

"Secretaire."
"We appoint you secretary now, on the spot, to make that all right, Bob," said Wharton. "Now, I think that's ripping."

"First chop!" said Johnny Bull.
"I suppose they'll know—ahem!—I mean they'll think it comes from Ponsac's team?" said Mark Linley.

"Oh, yes. There isn't any other eleven of French public school chaps touring the country. It wouldn't be likely that a second team would turn up about here. If they think it's genuine at all, they'll take it as coming from Ponsac's team. Besides, it said in the local paper yesterday that Ponsac's team was coming to Abbotsford, and they would be bound to be at the Abbotsford Arms."

"Yes, it's all serene."

"We'll post the letter on Saturday in Abbotsford, the same time that we make arrangements with the landlord of the Arms about receiving the reply," said Wharton thoughtfully.

"Blundell will get it Monday. If he got it before Sunday he might go over; but that will leave only Tuesday. Besides, we ask him here to reply by letter, and he'll know that the French team will be busy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll buzz over to Abbotsford to-morrow, and write this letter on the hotel paper, to make it look more natural," said Bob Cherry. "I'll use a squirty pen to disguise the writing—not that they know my hand, anyway."

"Good egg!"
And so it was arranged.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. A Letter for Blundell.

WINGATE of the Sixth wore a thoughtful look as he came out of the Sixth-Form room on Monday. He signed to his chums, Courtney and North, to follow him into his study. There was the local paper of Friardale on the table, and Wingate pointed to a marked paragraph in it.

"Read that!" he said tersely.

Courtney and North read the paragraph. It was written in the best style of the enterprising journalist who was editor, reporter, and compositor of the "Friardale News."

"We hear that the French Public School team, from the Lycee Bourbon, is shortly to visit Abbotsford to play Abbotsford School. We hope that Monsieur de Ponsac may be induced to play a match with one of our local teams, which would be well worthy of his steel. Either Greyfriars or High-

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

cliffe, or Friardale Town, could put an eleven into the field worthy to meet our friends from across the Channel, and such a match would do much to strengthen the enthusiasm for the Entente Cordiale."

Courtney grinned.
"Yes, I suppose the Entente Cordiale would be bucked up enormously by a cricket match on the village green at Friardale," he remarked.

The captain of Greyfriars laughed.

"Yes, that is rather thick," he remarked. "But it's a good idea, all the same. I've been reading up the matches played by that French team, and they seem to be well up in cricket. They've played a good many English public schools, and pulled off a good half of the matches. It would be a feather in our cap to play them."

"Good egg!" said North. "I shouldn't wonder if they have all their dates booked up in advance, though."

"The Head would give us a special holiday to meet them, if we couldn't arrange it for the holiday we have this week," said Wingate. "I suppose we couldn't do that, as there isn't time before Wednesday. But the Head is an old sport, and he would play up on a special occasion like this."

"Might try, anyway."

"We could make up a team quite as good as anything that Eton and Winchester could turn out," said Wingate, "with seven or eight of the Sixth, and three or four of the Fifth, our first eleven is a big team."

"Put it to the committee."

"Get some of the fellows in, then," said Wingate. "We'll jaw it over at tea. Bring in Blundell of the Fifth, we should want him."

"And Coker!" grinned Courtney.

"Ha, ha! No; I'm afraid there wouldn't be any room for Coker, of the Fifth, in a team that was wanted to win."

The senior cricket-committee soon collected in Wingate's study. Blundell was the only member of it that belonged to the Fifth. Greyfriars was a great cricketing college, and every Form had its own eleven; but when the school put a team into the field, the players were selected from both Fifth and Sixth. It was rather a sore point with the Fifth that they generally contributed only two or three members to the First Eleven. They were under the impression that they could easily have found five first-class players, at least, if not six or seven. But on that subject Wingate's word was law.

The idea of sending a challenge to the French team from Greyfriars seniors was received with unanimous approval. Blundell, of the Fifth, was the only one who had any criticism to make.

"How would you make up the team?" he asked.

"Same as usual for our matches," said Wingate. "We could easily pick up eleven good men to meet the county, if we wanted to. And the French fellows aren't up to county form or anything like it."

"The fact is," said Blundell argumentatively, "the fellows in my Form think they get too much cold shoulder on these occasions."

"Sorry for that."

"They think the Fifth ought to have a better show, you know."

"When you are captain of Greyfriars, Blundell, you can pick the whole giddy eleven out of the Fifth, if you like," said Wingate. "While I'm captain, I'll select it according to my own judgment, if you don't mind."

"That's all very well—," began Blundell.

"Of course it is," said Courtney. "Now, about sending a challenge—"

"Hold on!" said Blundell. "I haven't finished yet. If we meet the French team, it will be a match a bit out of the common, and the Fifth will be awfully keen on it. I think they ought to have a good show."

"Oh, bother!" said Wingate impatiently.

"We've got some good men in the Fifth," said Blundell obstinately. "There's Potter, and Greene, and Bland, and myself; that's four. Then what about Fitzgerald and Hawkins?"

"Make up an eleven, while you're about it," suggested Walker.

"Well, I could do that," said Blundell defiantly. "As a matter of fact, we've already talked it over in the Fifth, and we were thinking of sending the French team a challenge on our own when they come to Abbotsford."

"Rot!" said Wingate sharply. "If a challenge goes from Greyfriars, it must go from the school eleven, not from a Form team. You know that."

"Well, if we leave it to the school team, we ought to have a show," said Blundell sulkily. "I think we ought to put in five men at least."

Wingate frowned.

"I shall select the team, and pick out the fellows I think

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

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most of," he said. "I sha'n't leave out a good man, whatever Form he's in. I'd play a Shell fellow, or a fag in the Remove, if he were good enough."

"Of course, that would be rot!" said Blundell.

"Oh, would it?" said Wingate, his eyes beginning to gleam. "If that's your way of thinking, perhaps you'd better get off the committee."

Blundell rose to his feet.

"I'll do that soon enough, if you like," he said.

"Oh, sit down, and don't be an ass!" said Courtney pacifically. "The Fifth will have as good a show as usual."

"In a special match like this, we're entitled to a bit better show than usual," said Blundell. "I'm not thinking of myself; I have my cap in the First, anyway. But—"

"Do you want Coker put in?" grinned Walker.

Even Blundell laughed.

"Well, no," he said. "Coker's no good, I know. But—"

"We shall send the challenge, and if it's accepted, I shall make up the team," said Wingate. "That's all I can say, Blundell."

"Well, I think we ought to have a look in, that's all," said Blundell.

And he left Wingate's study looking very dissatisfied. Coker met him in the passage, with a rather excited look.

"I say, Blundell, there's a letter for you."

"Is there?" grunted Blundell. "Well, I've had letters before, fathead. Nothing to get excited about, that I can see."

"But this is from a French chap."

"Eh?"

"And the postmark's Abbeotsford."

"Oh!"

"Looks to me as if it might be from the Ponsac crowd," said Coker excitedly. "If they're opening communications, you know, it might be a good chance to get up a match with them. It would be gorgeous if we could fix it—a match between the Fifth and the Froggies. It would be one in the eye for the Sixth if they were passed over in that way."

"My bat!" ejaculated Blundell. "It would, and no mistake! I've just had a jaw with Wingate about making up a first eleven to meet the Frenchies, and he's going to be skinny with the Fifth, as usual."

"Doesn't he want to put me in?" asked Coker.

"Ahem! No. How do you know the letter is from a Frenchy?"

"It's addressed to Monsieur Blundell."

"Oh, good! It must be from Ponsac's sec., then."

Blundell dashed away to get his letter. He jerked it down from the rack, and opened the envelope by the simple process of inserting his thumb in it. His eyes danced as he glanced over the letter. It was written in a thin, angular hand, and in French.

"Great pip!" roared Blundell. "It's in French."

"From Ponsac?"

"Yes."

"And what does it say?" exclaimed Potter, coming up excitedly.

"It's a challenge."

"To the school?"

"No; to the Fifth—to us!"

"Great Scott!"

"I must go and show this to Wingate before they get any further with their giddy discussion," ejaculated Blundell, his eyes gleaming. "Come on!"

And he dashed away to Wingate's study with the letter in his hand. The Sixth Form cricket committee were deep in discussion of ways and means to meet the French team, when Blundell burst into the study, with Potter and Coker at his heels, all of them ablaze with excitement. Wingate stared at them in astonishment.

"Hallo! What's the row?" he demanded.

"Sorry the Fifth won't be able to take part in a school match against the Frenchies," said Blundell, with crushing dignity.

"Eh? Why not?"

"Because we're meeting the French team on our own."

"What!" exclaimed Courtney.

"I've told you you're not to send them an independent challenge from the Fifth Form," said Wingate, with a grim frown.

"It's not necessary; they've sent us a challenge," said Blundell airily.

"Rot!"

"Here it is!"

"They couldn't have!" exclaimed Wingate angrily. "It's an insult to the First Eleven for them to send a challenge to the Fifth Form instead of to the school."

"Read it, then!"

Wingate took up the letter, and the other Sixth-Formers looked on at his shoulders and read it with him.

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THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Fifth are Quite Pleased.

BLUNDELL & CO. looked on, grinning. They regarded the way Wingate ran the senior cricket club as high-handed. They felt that the Fifth had been too much left out in the cold. And consequently they were more than elated at the crushing "whack" to the dignity of the Greyfriars captain and his committee. It certainly wasn't flattering to the First Eleven to be passed over like this in favour of a Form team. It was just as if the French players had heard of the wonderful prowess of the Fifth players, and selected them as opponents from an opinion that they were a better eleven than that made up of combined Fifth and Sixth.

Wingate's frown deepened as he read the letter, and the other Sixth-Formers looked decidedly glum.

The letter was written upon the hotel paper of the Abbotsford Arms, and it ran as follows:

"Cher Monsieur Blundell.—Voulez vous avoir la bonte de nous engager dans un jeu de cricket, le Mercredi prochain? Repondez s'il vous plait par lettre a cet hotel."

"Recevez, Monsieur, mes salutations les plus distinguees,

"HENRI CREISE,

"Secrétaire."

"What do you think of that, you Sixth Form bouncers?" chortled Coker. "That shows that the Froggies have heard of our form in the Fifth, and they want to meet the best team Greyfriars can put in the field. Shows their sense. None of your old First Elevens for them. They want the best, and they mean to have it."

Wingate threw the letter upon the table.

"It's rotten bad form," he said. "The challenge ought to come to the school, and not to a Form."

"Perhaps they don't understand that," suggested Courtney.

"They ought to; they belong to a Lycee themselves," growled Wingate. "Well, if they want to meet the Fifth, let 'em. I dare say they don't want to risk a licking; that's most likely the explanation."

"Yes, very likely," assented Walker.

"Oh, rot!" said Blundell warmly. "We shall give them a jolly stiff match, I can promise you that!"

"Oh, go and eat cake!" said Wingate crossly.

"No objection to our playing them, as they've challenged us, I suppose?" asked the Fifth-Form captain, with a grin.

"Not so far as I'm concerned," said Wingate. "They can come here and play the fags in the Second Form if they want to."

"Oh, don't get ratty!" said Coker. "You see—"

"Buzz off out of my study," said Wingate. "I'm fed up with the Frenchies, and with the Fifth, too! Shut the door after you!"

The Fifth-Formers retired from the study in great glee. They left the Sixth-Form committee looking very blue. It was, as Coker had gleefully declared, one in the eye for the Sixth, and the Sixth naturally did not feel gleeful about it. To be passed over in this way in favour of a lower Form was humiliating in the extreme.

Blundell carried the letter in triumph to the Fifth-Form passage. A crowd of Fifth-Formers gathered in Coker's study to hear it read. Although French was a regular subject in the curriculum at Greyfriars, Fifth-Form French was not in all cases equal to the strain of that letter, but Blundell translated it word for word. The glee and satisfaction of the Fifth knew no bounds.

"Faith!" exclaimed Fitzgerald. "The Sixth will have to sing a little smaller now!"

"What-ho!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're really the top Form at Greyfriars so far as cricket is concerned," said Coker modestly. "I've been practising a late cut myself that would surprise some people."

"Ahem!" murmured Potter.

"The Sixth have got one in the eye, and it serves them jolly well right," said Blundell. "Just before Coker told me this letter had come I was talking it over with Wingate in his study, and they were gassing in their usual way about it. They wanted to put in only three of the Fifth, or four at the most, if they met the Frenchies."

"Rotten!"

"And now here comes a challenge from the French team, addressed to us personally," chuckled Blundell. "It's enough to make the Sixth sing small."

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll accept it, of course," said Blundell. "You can reply, Potty, as secretary. They should really have written you, but I suppose they didn't know who was our sec. They must have heard my name."

"Heard of your cricket, old man," said Bland, with friendly flattery. "Perhaps some of them may have read an account



"Hand her up!" said Mr. Harris, leaning over the wrecked carriage-door to receive the fainting lady. The exhausted Figgins made a desperate effort, and lifted her up for the sporting gentleman to grasp. Mr. Harris seized her in his fat hands, and drew her into safety at last! (For the above incident see our popular companion paper "THE GEM" Library, which contains a splendid complete tale of the chums of St. Jim's, by Martia Clifford, entitled "FIGGIN'S POLLY!" Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

of how we whopped Highcliffe Fifth. Your name was in the local paper for getting a century."

"Yes, that's how it is," said Greene.

Blundell beamed.

"Yes, I suppose that's how it was," he agreed. "It's very flattering to think that Pensac and his team have heard of me through my play. But I suppose that's the only explanation."

"Better answer at once," said Potter, taking up a pen. "It's lucky they challenge us for Wednesday. I suppose they've got to know it's a whole holiday here."

"Oh, yes; they'd have a list of public schools, you know, and would know which days the whole holidays come on."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Going to answer in French?" asked Coker.

"H'm!" said Potter.

"English will do," said Blundell hastily. "It stands to reason that some of their team can read English. That chap Cerise writes in his own language, so why shouldn't we?"

"Quite so!"

"Most likely he reads English, but doesn't venture to write THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.

in it," said Potter, "just as we can read French, but don't want to commit ourselves writing in it. Anyway, I think English will be best, and if they don't understand they can get somebody to translate."

"Yes, that's all right."

And Potter, greatly relieved that his secretarial duties did not require him to navigate among the reefs of an unknown tongue, sat down to pen the letter.

"How will this do?"

"Read it out," said Blundell.

"Dear Monsieur Cerise,—The Fifth Form of Greyfriars feel greatly honoured by your letter, and will be delighted to meet you in a cricket match. We propose to pitch stumps at ten o'clock on Wednesday, and will expect you Wednesday morning."

"That's all right," said Blundell. "Sign it politely, with salutations and things. Froggies set a lot of store by gas of that kind."

"Right you are!"

And the letter was written out carefully in Potter's best

NEXT
TUESDAY.

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

hand, and sealed in an envelope, and addressed to Monsieur Henri Cerise, Abbotsford Arms, Abbotsford, and posted in the school letter-box.

And the Fifth Form rejoiced.

All Greyfriars knew, before half an hour had elapsed, that the Fifth Form had received a challenge to meet the French eleven from the Lycee Bourbon in Paris, the famous French school team that was touring the counties. And the Fifth Form, as Bob Cherry had foretold, strutted. And when the Remove saw them strutting with pride over that cricket challenge they retired to their studies to shriek with merriment.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Beaucoup de Satisfaction.

THAT the Fifth Form had swallowed the challenge whole, as Bob Cherry expressed it, was perfectly evident to the plotters of the Remove. The "side" that Blundell & Co. put on was well-nigh insufferable. It led to rows between the Fifth and the Sixth, and but for Wingate's command of his temper, it would have led from words to blows. To the Sixth Blundell & Co. were blandly patronising. To the lower Forms they were lofty and condescending. The Shell writhed under their lofty patronage, and the Upper Fourth squirmed. The Remove took it good-humouredly—at all events, those members of that famous Form who were in the great secret.

"I suppose you won't think of playing us now, Blundell?" Bob Cherry remarked, when he met the great man in the Close on Tuesday.

Blundell looked at him in great amusement.

"Play you?" he said. "Ha, ha, ha! We're going to play the French team—the travelling eleven from Paris, who have beaten Eton and Harrow."

"A big order for you," Bob Cherry remarked.

Blundell sniffed.

"It would be a big order for some teams," he said, evidently thinking of the Greyfriars First. "I think we shall manage it."

"Wingate's eleven would be hard put to it, you know, to beat them."

"I dare say!" said Blundell scornfully.

And Bob Cherry retired chuckling. What Blundell would have said if he had known the real identity of "Henri Cerise" could hardly be imagined.

That day a letter was received in Wharton's study, enclosing one from the landlord of the Abbotsford Arms, delivered there for "Monsieur Henri Cerise." Monsieur Henri Cerise, otherwise Robert Henry Cherry, opened the letter in Study No. 1 before a select gathering of Removites. It contained, of course, the reply from Potter, the secretary of the Fifth-Form cricket club, and accepting the challenge from Monsieur Cerise.

Bob Cherry burst into a wild roar as he read it.

"Oh, this is too, too jolly rich!" he gasped. "I wonder what Potty would say if he knew that the letter was to me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and it would make 'em wriggle!" remarked Micky Desmond. "Sure, they won't be able to look anybody at Greyfriars in the face when it comes out."

"It won't come out till after the match," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Then instead of going back to Abbotsford in a brake we shall stay here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-hafulness is terrific!"

"We shall have to make up the strongest team we can," said Wharton thoughtfully. "Unfortunately, Inky will have to be left out. His beautiful complexion would give him away first shot."

"The unfortunateness is terrific," said Hurree Singh; "but I shall be on the esteemed ground to cheer."

"We must keep it dark at present," went on Wharton.

"Even most of the Remove must be kept in the dark till afterwards. Fellows like Bunter and Snopce might sneak, and some of the chaps might blab it out carelessly."

"Yes, rather! You can't be too careful."

"I suppose we've got to write a reply to this?" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes—in French."

"Oh, my hat! Fetch Marky in again."

Mark Linley and five or six other fellows lent their aid in the concoction of the reply to Potter. They turned it out very much to their satisfaction, and Bob Cherry cycled over to Abbotsford to post it.

It was a long cycle ride to Abbotsford, and Bob Cherry missed calling over that evening, and was late for locking-up. In fact, it was close upon bedtime for the juniors when a tired and dusty cyclist rang at the bell at the gate of Greyfriars, and Gosling, the porter, came grunting out of his lodge to let him in.

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"Oh," said Gosling, as his light gleamed upon Bob Cherry through the bars of the gate—"oh! It's you, is it?"

"I believe so," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "If you'll lend me a looking-glass, Gossy, I'll have a squint into it to make sure."

Gosling snorted.

"I've got horders to send you in to Mr. Quelch," he said.

"Well, horders are horders, I suppose. Let me in."

Gosling unlocked the gates, and Bob Cherry wheeled his machine in.

"Wot I says," said Gosling, "is this 'ere——"

"Go hon!" said Bob.

And he wheeled his machine away to the bicycle shed, and put it up, and then went into the School House to report himself to Mr. Quelch. The Remove-master looked at him very severely as he came in, tired and dusty.

"What has made you so late, Cherry?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I overstay my time, sir," said Bob.

"You have been cycling?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, take two hundred lines, and don't let it occur again!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. It won't occur again, sir," said Bob Cherry.

Certainly that was quite correct. The same peculiar state of affairs assuredly was not likely to arise again. And Bob Cherry, quitted the Remove-master's study, very glad that Mr. Quelch had not questioned him more closely.

He hurried up to Study No. 1 in the Remove passage. Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting for him there.

"All serene?" asked Wharton eagerly.

"Yes; ripping! I've got two hundred lines."

"Oh, never mind the lines. We'll all do our whack at them," said Nugent. "You posted the letter all right?"

"Yes," grinned Bob Cherry. "Blundell will get it some time in the morning. And the brake is to be ready for us when we want it in the morning, and waiting for us near the wood. We can get into our rig in the old priory, and get into the brake and drive to Greyfriars just as if we'd come from Abbotsford."

"Good egg!"

"It will be a gorgeous wheeze," said Wharton. "We've got to be careful not to get bowled out, that's all. We shall have to talk French to-morrow, and not too much of that, in case our accent gives us away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry's little escapade did not even reach the ears of the Fifth. Blundell & Co. did not concern themselves with such trivial matters as a junior being late for locking-up. They had no idea that Bob Cherry had been to Abbotsford, and if they had known it they would never have dreamed of his motive in going there.

The Removites were in great spirits that evening.

All the resources of the Remove Dramatic Society had been called upon for the disguises, and the intended impersonators of the French eleven had done a good deal of practice within locked doors. Clothes and other necessities had had to be purchased, and the money had had to be spent freely; but it was worth it for the jape on the Fifth. Lord Mauleverer, who was the richest fellow in the Remove, had cheerfully contributed a five-pound note, and the other fellows contributed according to their means, and quite enough money had been raised. The new purchases were smuggled in very secretly. Not that the Fifth were likely to discover anything. Blundell and Coker & Co. were chiefly occupied just now in the contemplation of their own greatness, and they had no attention to bestow upon such insignificant persons as the Remove.

The next day being a whole holiday, there was no preparation that evening, and the chums of the Remove spent the time in rehearsing their parts within the locked door of Study No. 1.

They went to bed in great spirits, anxiously looking forward to the morning.

The Fifth were looking forward to the morrow, too, very keenly.

Blundell had made up his team, and there had been much argument as to whether Coker should be played. Finally, Coker had secured a place in the eleven. Although Coker was generally regarded as a duffer, he had a great deal of influence in the Fifth. He was rich, and he was a powerful fellow, ready to fight anybody at a moment's notice—or without a moment's notice, for that matter. Added to these great qualities, he was very generous and good-natured, and had many friends. Blundell, somewhat against his better

ANSWERS

Amus—like the former communication—and was in French.

Blundell was keen to see the reply from the French secretary in the morning. He expected a reply to Potter's letter, though one was not really essential. But it came to hand all right, and the Fifth-Formers opened it in the hall, with an interested crowd of fellows round them.

It was written upon the hotel paper of the Abbotsford Arms—like the former communication—and was in French.

"Cher Monsieur Potter, —J'ai reçu votre lettre avec beaucoup de satisfaction. Nous arriverons chez vous à dix heures du matin.

"Recevez, monsieur, mes salutations plus distinguées,
HENRI CRISE (Secrétaire)."

"Construe!" called out Bob Cherry, as if he were a Form-master; and there was a laugh.

"Blundell, nothing loth, translated the letter aloud to the listening crowd of fellows of all Forms.

"Dear Sir,—I have received your letter with much satisfaction. We shall arrive at your place at ten o'clock in the morning."

"Good!"
"Hurrah!"
"What price playing the Remove now?" grinned Coker.
"I rather fancy we've got bigger orders on hand. What?"
"What-ho!" grinned Potter.

And the Fifth-Formers prepared for that great cricket match in a state of the greatest elation.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Ici on Parle Français.

BLUNDELL nodded patronisingly to the chums of the Remove when they came out, soon after breakfast, with bags in their hands. Harry Wharton & Co. looked as if they were booked for an excursion—which they were entitled to make if they liked, as it was a whole holiday at Greyfriars.

"Aren't you coming to see the match?" Blundell asked.
"It will be something extra special, you know. —You don't often have a chance of seeing a French Public School eleven at Greyfriars. You'd better not miss it."

"Oh, we shan't miss seeing the French team if they come," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

The Fifth Form captain stared at him.
"What do you mean by 'if they come'?" he demanded.
"They're coming! They'll be here at ten o'clock in the brake from Abbotsford."

"Then we'll be here, too," said Harry Wharton.
"Well, I recommend you not to miss it," said Blundell good-temperedly. "It will be a good match."

"Yes," said Coker; "I'm playing, you know."

The Removites chuckled.
"Then it will be worth seeing," said Frank Nugent.

"Ducks' eggs will be cheap to-day."

And the Removites walked away laughing, leaving Coker furious.

"Those young rotters mean to ignore the match, when all the rest of the school will turn up to see it!" said Potter.

"Like their cheek, I say!"

"Oh, they'll come sneaking in in time for the match," said Blundell. And Blundell certainly was right there.

"Going to miss the match?" demanded Temple, of the Fourth, meeting the Removites in the Cloze.

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Don't take much interest in Fifth Form cricket as a rule, but we shall turn up for this match," said Johnny Bell.

"It's something extra special!"

"You'll have to get in, then," said Temple. "The Frenchies get here at ten o'clock. They're pitching stumps early as it's a one-day match."

"Yes, I know. Knock in the eye for the Sixth, isn't it?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney, of the Fourth. "Wingard tries to keep his temper, but everybody can see that he's frightfully ratty about it. —He's refused to umpire."

"We're all going to gather round and give the Froggies a cheer when they come in," said Temple. "Entente Cordiale, you know."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "We shall be on hand if we possibly can, you can depend on that. We wouldn't miss it for worlds!"

And the heroes of the Remove walked out of the gates of Greyfriars.

The school was in a state of great excitement. For once a Form match was of greater importance than a school match.

The Fifth had got ahead of the Sixth, and the fellows of the top Form had to hide their diminished heads. It was a

EVERY
TUESDAY,

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proud day for Blundell and Coker & Co., and they made the most of it. They strutted about the Cloze in their flannels in great style, and the juniors, glancing back as they left the school, caught a last glimpse of Blundell walking with his nose very high in the air, his arm linked in Bland's, whose nose was also considerably elevated. The heroes of the Remove chuckled gleefully as they tramped down the road.

"Pride goeth before a giddy fall!" said Bob Cherry.

"There will be a surprise for the noble Fifth later on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The surprisefulness will be terrific!"

"Buck up!" said Harry Wharton. "We haven't much time to spare. We've got to turn up at Greyfriars at ten o'clock, all ready for Temple, Dabney & Co. to cheer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were fifteen Removites in the party, and in the secret. Hurree Janiset Ram Singh had only come to lend a hand in the disguising. His Oriental complexion made it impossible for him to take part in the impersonation of the French eleven.

The juniors plunged into the wood, and soon reached the ruined priory, which was a place quite solitary enough for their purpose. Hurree Janiset Ram Singh ran off to ascertain that the brake from Abbotsford was in readiness, and returned to announce that it was already waiting near the road.

Harry Wharton & Co. set to work without delay.

The bags they carried were opened, and the contents rolled out upon the mossy flagstones of the old priory.

Looking-glasses were set upon the shattered masonry, and the juniors whipped off their Eton clothes and changed into the new garments they were to wear as members of the Bourbon Lycee, of Paris.

They had selected somewhat striking garments. They did not know exactly what kind of clothes the travelling French eleven would be wearing, but as the Fifth-Formers did not know either, that was not a matter of great consequence. Harry Wharton & Co. had spent a holiday in France, and they had some ideas of the French manners and customs, and they had used their eyes in watching the clothing. Everything was of a somewhat bold design and exaggerated cut—longer jackets, and tapering waists and flapping skirts, and trousers that bared round the thighs, and ended like penguins at the boots. Exaggerated bits of gay design adorned their collars, and they wore straw hats, with enormous brims and tricolour bands.

The make-up of the faces was a more trying task.

The faces were washed over carefully to bring them to a yellowish tint, which was used as the groundwork for the make-up.

Little skilful touches here and there had a wonderful effect in altering facial appearance. Eyebrows were made bushy, and darkened, and eyelashes tinted, and false hair worked in with the real in a very skilful way on the juniors' heads.

No beards or moustaches, as Bob Cherry regretfully observed, were possible; but the disguise was quite good without those aids.

The fact that the Fifth would never dream that such a joke was being played upon them made it all the easier.

After the disguising was done, the juniors stood round and looked at one another, and chuckled.

The result was very satisfactory.

They had a remarkably Frenchified appearance; in fact, they looked more French than the French themselves, as Vernon-Smith observed.

Their complexions were very dark, but, as Nugent pointed out, some French people were as dark as Italians, and there was nothing really surprising in that. And the darker their skins were, the less likely they were to be recognised as fair-skinned English boys.

"Well, I think it's ripping!" pronounced Bob Cherry.

"Splendid!" said Nugent.

"The rippingfulness is terrific!"

"Better get into the brake," said Wharton, looking at his watch. "We've only got a quarter of an hour before we're expected at Greyfriars."

"Yes; hurry up!"

And that decidedly queer-looking contingent walked out of the old priory.

Their own clothes were left concealed in a recess there, ready for conveyance back to Greyfriars afterwards.

In the road near the wood the brake from Abbotsford was waiting.

The driver was in his seat, chewing a straw, and he looked round and touched his hat, and stared a little at the sight of the party.

The man had simply been told that he was to pick up a party there, and he knew none of the circumstances. He

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.
NEXT TUESDAY: "THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

knew some of the heroes of the Remove by sight, and so they felt a little nervous as they passed under his eyes. It was the first test of the efficacy of their disguise. But there was no sign of recognition in the man's face.

"You be for Greyfriars, sir?" he asked.

"Parlez-vous Francais?" asked Wharton, with his best accent.

The driver stared.

"Hey?"

"Est-ce que vous parlez Francais?"

"My heye!" said the driver. "Master 'Urree Singh, wot is 'e torkin' about?"

The nabob grinned.

"He is asking you if you speak French."

"Lor, no!"

"Allez!" said Wharton, as the party mounted into the brake.

"Eh?"

"Allez, s'il vous plait."

"There ain't no alley 'ere," said the driver, looking mystified. "This 'ere is the 'igh-road, the reglar turnpike, mounseer."

"He means go on," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Then why can't 'e say so?" demanded the driver. "Plain Henglish is good enough for me."

And the driver put the brake in motion.

In the clear, fine summer's morning the vehicle bowled gaily along the road, and the party were in high spirits. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remained behind. His presence in the brake when it arrived at Greyfriars, of course, would not have done. The driver had instructions to land his cargo, so to speak, at the gates of the school, and drive away immediately. Wharton did not want him to get into any chance talk with the fellows, which might lead to the discovery of the fact that he had picked his passengers up in the wood, instead of bringing them from the Abbotsford Arms.

The juniors had their cricket-bags with them, and by a wonderful stroke of forethought, Nugent had hunted out some old luggage labels, left on bags and trunks after the juniors' holiday long ago in Paris, and had stuck them on the cricket-bags. "Gare du Nord" and "Gare de Lyons" were very prominent to the view, and added wonderfully to the genuineness of the whole bizney, as Bob Cherry put it.

The juniors were very careful to talk in French all the way, both for practice and for the driver's benefit. The gates of Greyfriars came in sight just as ten was booming out from the clock-tower.

A crowd of fellows could be seen in the road, watching for the new-comers.

There was a cheer as the Abbotsford brake came in sight.

"Here they are!"

"Hurrah!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Distinguished Visitors.

THE brake stopped outside the gates of Greyfriars, and the juniors clambered down. Their bags were handed down after them, and Wharton slipped a gratuity into the driver's hand.

The man touched his hat, and turned his horses in the road.

"Good-bye, mounseer!" he said.

"Adieu, mon ami!"

And the brake rolled away.

The French eleven entered the gateway of Greyfriars amid a cheering concourse of juniors. All Greyfriars delighted to do the French eleven honour.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip-pip!"

"Vive la France!" shouted Temple, of the Fourth, between enthusiasm and a desire to air his French. "Vive l'Entente Cordiale!"

"Hurrah!"

Harry Wharton paused, and lifted his broad-brimmed French straw hat.

"Messieurs—" he said.

"Hurrah!"

"Messieurs, I speak your noble language a small——"

"A little," hinted Temple.

"Oui, oui! I speak your noble language a little, and I thank you from the extremity of my heart. Messieurs, je vous remercie. Nous sommes enchantés."

"Faith—" began one of the French cricketers; but another of them pinched him, and he broke off abruptly.

"Je suis très heureux de voir votre grand école!" said the French captain.

"Hear, hear!"

"Et nous serons ravis de vous jouer dans le je de cricket."

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

"What does he mean, Temple?"

"He'll be delighted to play cricket with us, and they are very happy to see this great school," said Temple, elated.

"Hurrah!"

"Vive la France!"

"Vive l'Entente Cordiale!"

And the French cricketers marched on in a regular triumph, with the juniors and some of the seniors trooping round them, and waving their caps and shouting.

"Mon seul chapeau!" Bob Cherry murmured to Harry Wharton. "This is all right, hey?"

"Tout bien, you ass!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, I mean tout bien."

Blundell, of the Fifth, was standing in all his glory by the cricket pavilion, with the rest of the Fifth Form eleven, arrayed in spotless flannels.

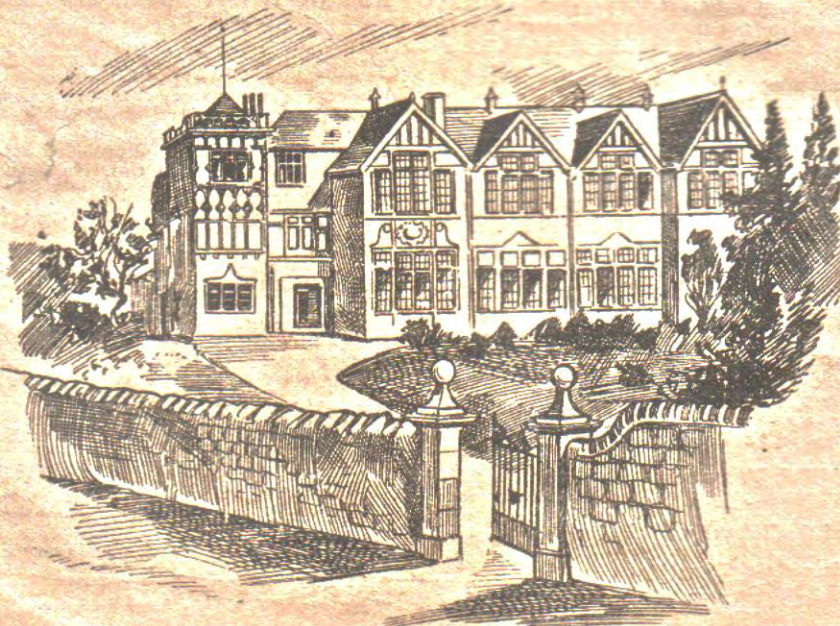
Blundell greeted the French cricketers with great impressment.

He had been mugging up French for the occasion, and he

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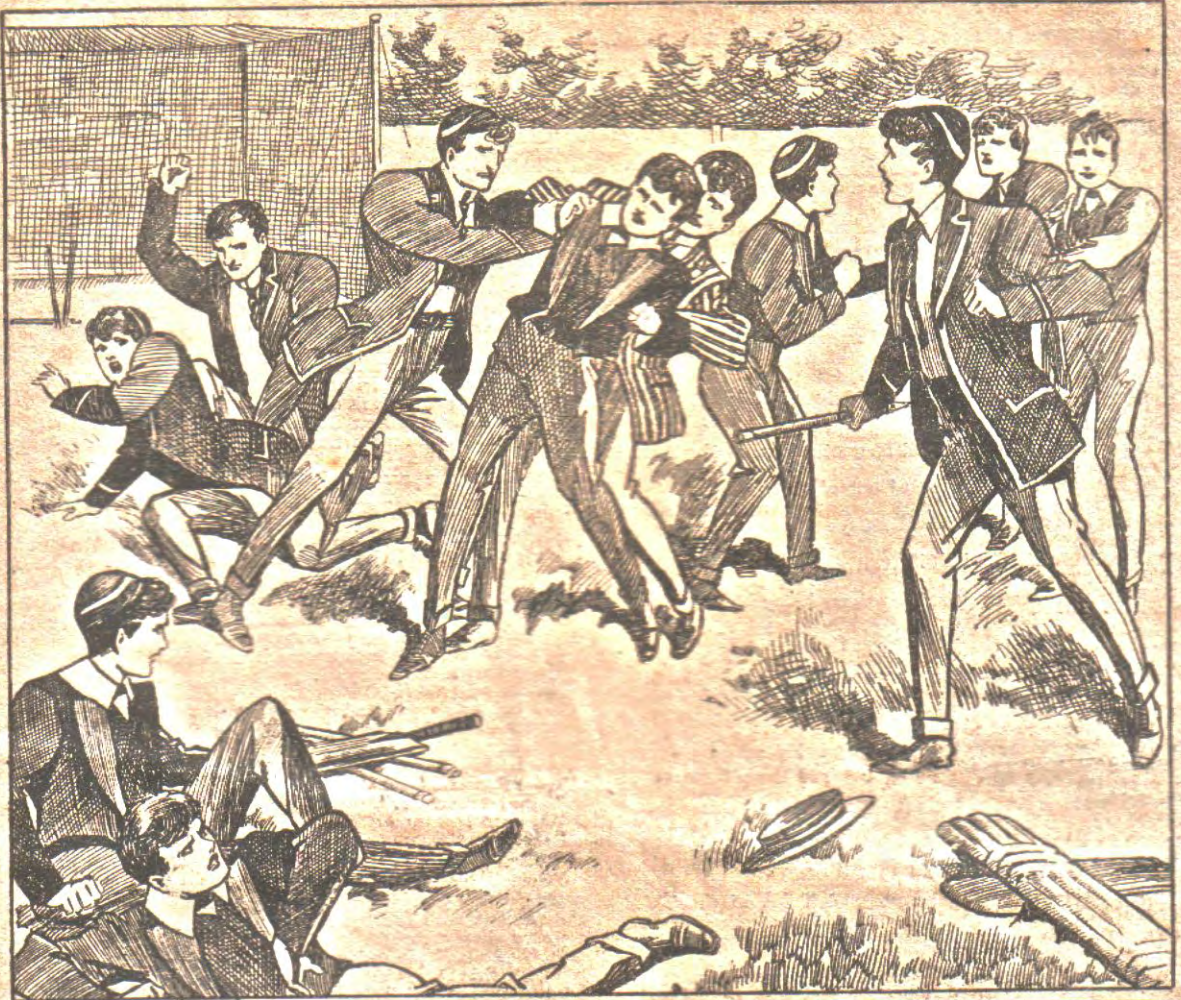
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Coker, followed by the Fifth rushed upon the field scattering the Remove cricketers. There was a wild melee, and wickets were torn up to be used as weapons. If the Fifth could not pit their brains against the Remove, at all events their strength was superior! (See Chapter 5.)

had prepared a little speech in that language to welcome the strangers to Greyfriars, a really neat speech, which was a little weak in the verbs and the genders, that was all.

"Monsieur Ponsac?" he asked.

Wharton bowed deeply, and raised the enormous straw hat.

"Donnez la main!" said Blundell.

Wharton shook hands with the Fifth Form captain.

"Nous sommes—" began Blundell. "We are—that is to say, nous sommes—comprenez?"

"Parfaitement, monsieur."

"Nous sommes tray glad to voir you here," said Blundell, plunging into a delightful mixture of French and English. "We are tres delighted et honoured de recevoir votre challenge to a jeu de cricket. Nous shall try to donner you a jolly good jeu."

Some of the French cricketers seemed to be suffering from internal pains as they listened.

"I don't speak very good French," said Blundell hastily.

"Je ne parle pas le Francais assez bien pour—pour—pour talkee-talkee, you know."

"Oui, oui, monsieur."

"But you savvy what I mean?"

"Parfaitement."

"And we'll have a jolly good game."

"Tres joli, l'espere, monsieur."

"You speak English?" asked Coker.

"Oui, oui, quelquefois," said the French captain.

"What does he mean by kelkerfor, Petty?" whispered Coker.

"Sometimes," grinned Potter.

"Oh, I see!"

"Mais je prefere de parler en Francais, s'il est a votre gre," said Monsieur Ponsac.

"Exactly," said Blundell, who hadn't an idea of what that meant, owing to the Frenchman speaking so quickly. "It's a very fine day for cricket—you're quite right."

Ponsac stared.

"Mais, je n'ai pas dit que le jour est beau!" he exclaimed, j'ai dit—

"Oui, oui," said Blundell. "Parfaitement."

"Mais, monsieur—"

"Parfaitement," repeated Blundell, holding on to that word, as it were, like a sheet anchor. "All right. Je comprends parfaitement. Allong donc! It's time the stumps were pitched."

"You chaps are ready?" asked Coker.

"Vous etes pret?" asked Potter loftily.

The Frenchman grinned.

"Oui, oui!"

"Good, then—come on!"

A delighted crowd gathered round the cricket-ground. The Frenchmen, with their peculiar costumes and their good-temper, and flow of French, had made a favourable impression. It was certainly an unique cricket match that was to be played—indeed, it was more unique than the Greyfriars fellows so far dreamed.

Ponsac et Cie!—otherwise, Harry Wharton & Co.—went to their dressing-room to change into flannels.

They retained the broad-brimmed straw hats with tricolour bands round them, however, when they went into the field of play.

The spectators at once observed how small the French players were in comparison with the Fifth.

Indeed, as Hobson, of the Shell, remarked to Hoskins, they didn't look so big as the average run of Shell fellows at Greyfriars.

"Quite so!" said Hoskins, in wonder. "But these chaps have played Eton and Winchester, and beaten them."

"Jolly clever of them to do it, then," said Hobson. "They didn't do it on their size, anyway. Why, there's only one chap there as big as I am."

"Yes, the chap they call Cerise."

"I wonder what their play will be like?" said Temple, of the Fourth, to his cronies. "I like them, you know. There's something very frank and open-hearted about those chaps—they are so thoroughly French."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I've heard one or two of them make remarks among themselves in English," said Fry, of the Fourth, thoughtfully. "They spoke very good English, too."

"Well, I suppose they learn English in a big French lycée," said Temple.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Here they come!" shouted Nugent minor, of the Second Form. "Hurrah!"

The French players streamed out of the pavilion.

A loud cheer greeted their appearance on the field. Greyfriars was quite enthusiastic about them.

"Hurrah!"

"Vive l'Entente Cordiale!"

"Bravo!"

Monsieur de Ponsac raised his straw hat gracefully to the cheery greeting of the Greyfriars crowd.

Then he tossed for choice of innings with Blundell.

Blundell won the toss, and elected to bat first, and Monsieur Ponsac sent out his men to field.

The crowd watched them with interest. They looked no bigger than juniors, certainly, as they dotted the green expanse in their spotless white. The French skipper soon showed that he knew how to direct his team; and the players that they knew how to be directed. It was plain at once that the French eleven would be handled well. Blundell went in first to bat with Bland, and a little cricketer with a very dark complexion and curly, black hair took the leather to bowl. Minus his complexion and his black hair, the bowler would have been known as Dick Penfold, of the Remove.

"Just going to begin!" murmured Tabb, of the Third. "Hallo, here comes Wingate to watch! Wingate is awfully ratty about this, you know. He was going to send a school challenge to the French team."

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, came down to the ground with Courtney, to watch the match begin. His face was calm and reserved. But an expression of surprise came upon it as he glanced at the French fieldsmen.

"Those mere kids the French team!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, French chaps are rather small, you know!" said Courtney.

"They don't look as if they could beat Eton."

"My hat, they don't!"

"But they did, Wingate," said Hobson, of the Shell, "and my opinion is that they're going to beat the Fifth. I'd like to tackle 'em with a Shell team."

Wingate laughed.

"And you'd have liked to tackle 'em with a Sixth-Form team, eh, Wingate?" sniggered Billy Bunter, of the Remove.

Wingate boxed his ears, and Bunter sat down violently upon the grass, and gasped. The Greyfriars captain walked away with Courtney. Meanwhile, Blundell and Bland were beginning to bat, and all Greyfriars was looking on with keen attention.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Great Game.

THE French bowler was very keen. Blundell kept up his wicket, but the third ball gave him a 3, and then Bland faced the bowling. The ball came down like pepper, and Bland played a late cut a little too late.

Clack!

The middle stump was out of the ground, and the balls were down.

"How's that?" roared the bowler.

"My hat!" ejaculated Temple, of the Fourth. "That's good English enough?"

"Out!" shouted the crowd.

"Walk away, Blandy!"

"What price ducks' eggs?" howled the Remove spectators.

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Bland carried out his bat.

Coker took his place at the wicket. Coker came in with a swagger. He was a big fellow, and sometimes slogged with success, and he fancied himself very much as a batsman. He took up his position at the wicket, and lived through the rest of the over.

The Fifth were one down for 3, when the field crossed over. Ponsac-Wharton signed to Frank Nugent.

"Francois!"

"Oui!"

"Prenez la balle."

"Oui, oui, mon brave!"

And Francois, otherwise Franky, took the ball, and went on to bowl against Blundell. The Fifth-Form captain was batting well, and, as a matter of fact, he was a very good batsman, quite up to playing in Greyfriars First. But his partner at the wicket was a very dangerous man—to his own side. The disguised Removeites knew that they would have a hard task with Blundell, but they hoped to get him run out by his partner. And Coker was exactly the kind of batsman to fall into a trap of that sort.

A single run by Blundell gave Coker the batting.

Coker squared himself to it.

Francois Nugent sent down a tempting ball, and Coker swiped at it, and sent it travelling at express speed through the slips.

The fieldsmen ran, and Coker ran, and the batsmen crossed, and made their run good, and then Coker started again.

Blundell was a little doubtful, but the field did not seem to have the ball, and he ran, and they crossed in the middle of the pitch.

Then a fieldsmen straightened up with the leather in his hand, and it came straight as a die for the wicket Blundell was making for.

Blundell felt, rather than saw it coming.

He put on a terrific spurt.

But he was too late.

His bat was a yard off the crease when the ball came in from the hand of Captain de Ponsac, and knocked the wicket to pieces.

Crash!

"How's that?"

"Comme va cela?"

"Hurrah!"

"Out!"

"Viva la France!"

Blundell glared at his wicket, and glared at Coker, and glared at the cheering crowd. Then he walked off towards the pavilion with feelings too deep for words.

Coker simply purred.

He had made his end good, and he was all right, and he reflected that it was simply marvellous that the Fifth should have chosen Blundell for captain instead of himself. Coker attributed that to the well-known obstinacy of human nature.

Potter came in to join Coker. Coker called to him cheerfully along the pitch.

"Back up, Potter, old man, and we'll make the fur fly."

Potter grunted.

"Make the wickets fly, you mean," he growled.

"Back me up," said Coker. "Leave the hitting to me, and you do some stone-walling, old man. Think of the side, you know."

"I think you're thinking of enough side for a whole team," growled Greene, from the ropes. And there was a laugh.

"Bravo, Francois!" shouted De Ponsac. "Tout va bien!"

"Oh, bong!" said Francois.

"Jolly bong!" said Henri Cerise. "My only ha—chapeau! Je crois que cela is ripping."

Coker let himself go again to a tempting ball, and sent the leather with much exactitude right into the hand of De Ponsac at slip, just as if he had intended to send it there.

Smack!

There was a roar.

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

"Vive! Vive Ponsac!"

Harry Wharton-Ponsac sent the ball up into the air, and caught it again as it came down with a smack into his palm. Horace Coker looked at him in great amazement.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

The umpire grinned.

"You're out, Coker!" he said.

"H'm! Blessed if I understand it!" said Coker. "I suppose it was a real catch. I'm blessed if I get on to it, that's all!"

"Well, you're out. Buzz off!"

And Coker, very perplexedly and reluctantly, buzzed off. Blundell gave him a frown as he came up to the pavilion.

"Mighty ripping show you're making for the Fifth!" he growled.

Coker stared at him.

"I've made quite as good a show as you have, anyway!" he exclaimed.

Blundell snorted.

"Oh, go and sit down! Next man in!"

Greene drew on his batting gloves.

"Do what you can, Greene, for goodness' sake!" said Blundell imploringly. "Don't let those giddy Frenchies wipe us out for a dozen runs. You won't be in so much danger now that Coker's out!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Greene.

"Look here, Blundell!" began Coker wrathfully.

"Oh, dry up!"

Greene went in to the wickets. Greene and Potter between them kept the game up for some time, and runs began to pile for the Fifth, and Blundell's face cleared somewhat. The Lycee Bourbon bowlers were not to have everything their own way after all. But the bowling was certainly very good, and the fielding was excellent. Harry Wharton was a good cricket captain, and he had insisted upon his team perfecting themselves as much as possible in those branches of the game, knowing how much depended in any match upon good fielding. The tendency of many cricketers to make a good figure at the wicket, and to lounge through the fielding, was severely checked in the Remove eleven. A fellow who was not good at fielding was not admitted to the team, whatever else he could do.

The consequence was that the field did not miss a chance at a catch, and the ball, however far it went, was always recovered quickly. Runs were minimised, and the batsmen kept in a state of alertness all the time, and they did not venture to take risky chances.

The Fifth-Form score was at 25 when Greene was caught out by Francois, and Fitzgerald took his place at the wicket.

Potter was the next to fall, being stumped by the wicket-keeper after taking—or nearly taking—3.

The innings had lasted nearly an hour when the Fifth were six down for 40 runs, quite as much as they could have expected to do against the team from the Lycee Bourbon, but nothing like what they would have expected to do against a Remove team.

"We're getting on to their style of bowling, though," said Blundell to Potter, as they stood watching the tailing off of the innings. "We shall get ahead of them better in the second innings."

"Yes, I hope so," said Potter. "They're little demons—little but good. I'm not surprised that they beat Etou now."

"They won't beat us!" said Coker.

"You'll stop them, of course!" said Blundell sarcastically.

"I'll try," said Coker modestly. "I've been practising a daisy late cut that will surprise some of the fellows."

"It will surprise them if it stops the ball, I've no doubt," growled Blundell. "How I came to be ass enough to play you I don't know!"

"How the Fifth came to be asses enough to play you is a jolly big mystery, too!" retorted Coker.

Click!

The fall of another wicket cut short the argument, which was threatening to become personal and rather excited. There was a cheer from the crowd.

"Well bowled!"

"That's the chap they call Francois," said Temple of the Fourth. "He's got a dangerous ball he gives them sometimes—a bit like the way Nugent of the Fourth bowls. He got me out with it in the Form match."

"Oh, this chap is heaps better than Nugent of the Remove," said Fry, with a sniff.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Temple nodded.

"There's no comparison, of course," he said. "I was only saying that the chap has a style something like. His delivery seems the same. He's about Nugent's size. But, of course, Nugent of the Remove couldn't bowl like that to save his life."

"No fear!"

"Begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "I think the Remove play is quite up to what these French chaps are doing, you know."

There was a roar of laughter from all who heard his lordship's remark.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, that is too rich!" roared Temple. "Fancy the Remove playing the Lycee Bourbon! Imagine Harry Wharton & Co. standing up to those chaps! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fourth-Formers roared at the bare idea.

"Speaking of the Remove bounders, where are they?" said Fry, looking round. "I should have thought they'd be here to watch a special match like this."

"They said they would be," remarked Temple.

"Well, I don't see them."

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EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"No; they're not here! Hallo, there goes Smith major's wicket!"

"Well bowled!"

"Hurrah!"

"Vive la France!"

The Fifth-Form innings was decidedly petering out now. One by one the fag-end of the batsmen fell, and the tenth wicket was down with a total of 70 runs. Upon the whole, Blundell felt that his men had not done so badly against the famous French team. The Sixth had expressed a very decided opinion that the Fifth-Form eleven would be wiped right off the ground, but that certainly had not happened. Seventy runs was by no means a poor total.

And as it was not yet time for lunch, the pitch was rolled a little, and the heroes of the Lycee Bourbon went in to bat.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's French is Not Understood.

GREYFRIARS had been very much interested by the French bowling and fielding. Their interest intensified now that it was time for the French boys to bat. They had heard a good deal of the batting of Monsieur de Ponsac, the Lycee Bourbon cricket captain, and they expected to see great things; and it was well known at Greyfriars, too, that the strongest point about the Fifth was their batting. At bowling they were mediocre, and their fielding was decidedly poor. If the French fellows could bat at all, therefore, they had every chance of piling up runs.

"Their skipper is going in first!" said Temple.

"Hurrah!"

"And that chap Cerise."

"Queer name for a chap," said Fry.

"Yes; it means strawberry, or something, in English," said Temple, with an air of great wisdom.

"Bravo, Strawberry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two batsmen raised their wide-brimmed straw hats in response to the cheer that greeted their appearance, showing their heads of thick black curls. All the French cricketers seemed to have thick black curly hair. The two French fellows looked very fit and very alert as they took their stand at the wickets. Blundell sent on Potter to bowl. Potter was the best bowler in the Fifth, though Coker kindly offered his services for the first over. Coker was, in fact, rather pressing about it. He was, as he explained to Blundell, anxious for things to open well for the side. If the innings opened with the fall of a French wicket, it would hearten up the fellows. Blundell glared at Coker, as he explained this, as if he would eat him.

"Is that why you want to bowl?" he demanded ferociously.

"I don't want to," said Coker loftily. "I'm thinking of the side, that's all. If a wicket went down in the first over it would have a big moral effect on the team."

"The pavilion window might go down if you bowled, or one of the fieldsmen!" snorted Blundell. "I don't think the wickets would be in much danger. For goodness' sake, shut up!"

"Oh, very well! I was only thinking of the side," said Coker.

"Go and eat coke!"

And Potter bowled the first over against Ponsac-Wharton—to give him both his names—who was batting at the pavilion end.

Potter rather prided himself upon the trickiness of his bowling, but in the course of the first over he discovered that he was dealing with a batsman who was quite up to all his trickiness.

The first four balls were knocked away with ease, and the fifth was sent over the boundary, with a big hit that elicited a shout of applause from the crowd. The sixth and last ball of the over was knocked away through the slips for 3, so that the French skipper still had the bowling when the field crossed over.

"That chap can bat!" said Temple of the Fourth, with the air of an oracle. "He recalls some cricketer I've seen before. Hayward, I think."

"He's good—jolly good!" said Fry. "This team would have given the first eleven some trouble if they had played them instead of the Fifth."

"Begad, he bats well," said Lord Mauleverer. "He reminds me something of Wharton of ours."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to laugh at in that!" said Lord Mauleverer. "He's got a way with him very like Harry Wharton."

Temple & Co. roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Mauly, old man, you're too funny for words."

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.
Order Early.

Whether he was like Harry Wharton of the Remove or not, the French skipper was certainly batting extremely well. His partner at the wickets, Henri Cerise, was very good—especially at stone-walling and backing up his partner, which he did in the most thorough and self-denying way. No chance of shunning on his own account tempted Henri Cerise to run any risk of shortening that partnership. He backed up his chief loyally, and between them they piled up runs at a great rate.

Twenty, for no wicket, was soon scored, and the batsmen seemed well set by this time, and it looked as if the bowling could not touch them.

Blundell began to look rather worried. It was pretty clear that the two bats would still be in at the luncheon interval. Coker nudged the Fifth-Form captain.

"Would you like me to take an over?" he asked.

Blundell growled impatiently.

"Oh, shut up, for goodness' sake!"

"Well, I don't like to see the game going like this," said Coker.

Half-past twelve was the time fixed for lunch, and when the half-hour chimed from the clock-tower of Greyfriars, the French team were thirty-five runs to the good, without the loss of a wicket.

Then the play terminated for the time, and the guests of Greyfriars were taken in to lunch.

A really handsome lunch had been provided by the school—on tables set under the old elm-trees in the quad—and the cricketers enjoyed it immensely.

Although the game was going against the Fifth, they had plenty of hope yet, and, anyway, it was a great distinction to have played the team from Paris, and they could not grumble if they were defeated by a team that had beaten Eton and Winchester.

Monsieur Raoul de Ponsac was seated next to Blundell, who was extremely polite to him. All the Fifth-Formers, indeed, were wonderfully courteous to their visitors from across the sea. They wanted to show the French chaps that polished manners could be found in England as well as in France.

Billy Bunter of the Remove joined in the lunch. He was not invited, but that was a trifling detail that did not matter in the least to William George Bunter. He calmly took a seat at the table, blinking most amiably at Blundell through his big spectacles, and perhaps he was too short-sighted to see the glare that Blundell gave him in return.

Coker half rose, to kick the Owl of the Remove out, but Potter pulled him down into his seat again.

"No rows before the French chaps, Coker," he whispered. And Coker granted assent.

"Yes, I'll have some of the chicken," said Billy Bunter, very audibly. "I say, you fellows, I'll talk to these chaps in French, if you like. It will be a pleasure to them to talk in their own language, and I'm a dab at French, you know."

Blundell grunted.

"When I was in Paris," resumed Bunter airily, "I acted as interpreter to the fellows who were with me—Wharton and the rest, you know, of my Form. Wharton's French was simply rotten. He's rather a silly ass at most things, you know! Did you speak, Monsieur de Ponsac?"

"Non," murmured Monsieur de Ponsac.

"Wharton begged of me to help him out when there were any difficulties cropping up," said Bunter. "They would have been perfectly helpless without me. Vous voulez que je parle en Frongais, monsieur?"

Monsieur de Ponsac stared at him.

"Est ce que vous m'avez parlé?" he asked politely.

"Wee, monseer," said Bunter, in magnificent French.

"Jay demanday, si vous voulez que je vous parle ong Frongsay?"

"Pardon me," said Monsieur de Ponsac politely. "I do not much English understand."

There was a cackle round the table, and Billy Bunter turned red.

"But I was speaking in French!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"Eh?"

"Jay parlay ong Frongsay, monseer."

"Ah! You speak, perhaps, Italian or German?" suggested Monsieur de Ponsac. "I shall be happy if you speak in my language."

"Look here—"

"But perhaps you do not know French—you ne connaissez pas cette langue?"

"I was speaking in French!" yelled Bunter.

"Mille pardons. Mais je ne comprends pas."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "He doesn't recognise your French as French, Bunter."

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Bunter snorted.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "I speak with the very best Parisian accent. When we were having a holiday in Paris, Wharton used to beg of me to talk to the French chaps. I was the only fellow in the party who could do it."

"My—my—mon seul chapeau!" ejaculated Henri Cerise.

"Oui, oui; je vous ai vu dans Paris, monsieur."

"Eh?"

"He says he's seen you in Paris," said Potter.

Bunter blinked at Henri Cerise.

"Oh, good!" he exclaimed. "You were in Paris when I was there, I suppose. Where did you see me, monseer?"

"Dans le Jardin des Plantes," said Monsieur Cerise.

"Eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Potter. "That's the Paris Zoo! Was he in a cage, monsoo?"

"Oui, oui; le petit monsieur, ou un de ses parents," said Monsieur Cerise.

"I say, you fellows, what does he say?"

"He says he saw you or one of your relations in a cage in the Jardin des Plantes!" grinned Potter. "In the monkey-house, you know!"

"Oui, oui; chez les singes," said Monsieur Cerise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter turned the colour of a beetroot.

"Why, you froggy ass—," he exclaimed wrathfully.

"Order!" exclaimed Blundell angrily.

"Well, the blessed frog-eating bouncer—Ow!"

Coker had risen, and he seized the Owl of the Remove by the back of the collar, and jerked him away from the table. Billy Bunter roared and wriggled, and the French cricketers howled with laughter as he was dragged away in the powerful grasp of the big Fifth-Former. Coker half dragged and half carried him as far as the pavilion, and dumped him down there in a squirming heap.

"If you come near the table again, I'll squash you!" said Coker impressively. And he returned to the lunch.

Billy Bunter sat up, gasping and snorting, and blinking through his big glasses at the retreating form of Horace Coker.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Beast!"

But he did not return to the lunch.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing.

LUNCH over, the French team resumed their innings. Blundell & Co. spread themselves out to field, and Blundell signed to his men to field deep. He had already learned that the French fellows were hard-hitters.

Monsieur de Ponsac and Monsieur Cerise were still at the wickets, and they showed every intention of remaining there.

Potter and Greene did most of the bowling, and they were the best bowlers that the Fifth could produce, but their best friends could not say that they were first-class.

The Fifth had done their best when they were batting, and now they appeared to be doing their worst—certainly, at all events, the show they made was poor.

Their fielding was bad—there was no other word for it—and the bowling was decidedly mediocre.

Blundell changed the bowlers, but he might as well have left them as they were. They could not touch the wickets. Coker implored Blundell, almost with tears in his eyes, to send him on to bowl, and Blundell finally declared that if Coker did not shut up he would punch his head. Tempers were growing sharp in the Fifth-Form team. The cheers of the crowd that greeted every successful hit of the French fellows were beginning to get on the Fifth-Formers' nerves.

Potter put in a word for Coker at last. Potter had bowled till his arm was aching, and he had done no good. He spoke to Blundell as the field crossed over once more.

"Give Coker a chance," he said.

Blundell bowed.

"Ass! He can't bowl!"

"I know he can't," said Potter. "But there's such a thing as fool's luck, you know. He can't play footer, but he kicked a winning goal for us once. The Frenchies can handle our bowling as easily as anything, but an imbecile like Coker might puzzle them. Might try him for one over."

Blundell grinned. He could not help it.

"All right. Give Coker the ball," he said.

And the ball was tossed to Coker. Coker caught it, and accepted the task with an air of injured but forgiving dignity.

"You ought to have done this before," he said.

"Oh, shut up, and bowl!" said Blundell.

And Coker went on to bowl. Whether it was fool's luck, or whether the actual badness of the bowling took the batsman by surprise, he said—or perhaps, as Potter suggested, it was a miracle. Anyway, Coker clean bowled Henri Cerise first ball, and the first wicket of the French eleven went down.

There was a yell round the field—a yell of amazement.

"Well bowled, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

"My only hat!" gasped Blundell. "I'll believe you next time, Potty. There is such a thing as fool's luck, and no mistake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Francois, alias Frank Nugent, took Monsieur Cerise's place at the wicket. His batting was more active than Monsieur Cerise's had been. He did less stonewalling, but he backed up his chief quite as well.

And the French skipper seemed inexhaustible.

The Remove fellows had always been very proud of Harry Wharton's batting, and his friends had often declared that he could have batted with distinction against the Sixth, or against the county, for that matter.

And to-day Harry Wharton was playing the game of his life.

He was in his very best form, and feeling perfectly fit, and he seemed tireless, and it was impossible to take him by surprise. He gave chances, certainly, which extra good fieldsmen might have availed themselves of. But there were no extra good fieldsmen in the Fifth-Form eleven—in fact, their fielding was where they showed up the worst. Such fielding as they could put in did not worry Monsieur de Ponsac, and his wicket was impregnable to the bowling.

Those of the Remove who were in the secret of the identity of the French players were beside themselves with delight.

They clapped and yelled and cheered enthusiastically, and many of them at times came very near shouting out Harry Wharton's name. But they stopped, fortunately, short of that.

"Bravo, Ponsac!"

"Hurrah!"

"Well hit!"

"Go it!"

"Knock 'em sky-high!"

And the whole of the Greyfriars crowd joined in the ovation to the French batting. Temple of the Fourth declared that he had never dreamed that French chaps could ever pick up cricket like that. The spectators ceased to wonder that the team from Paris had beaten Eton and Winchester. Wingate of the Sixth came back to the ground, attracted by the report of the wonderful batting that was going on.

Wingate clapped and cheered as loudly as any.

"Those chaps would have given the school eleven a tussle, Courtney," he remarked to his chum. "They're above the weight of the Fifth, I think."

Courtney nodded, with a grin.

"I fancy they are," he said. "After this, we sha'n't hear so much from Blundell about playing more Fifth-Formers in the first eleven."

"I should say not. Their fielding is rotten."

"And their bowling wouldn't take prizes," grinned Walker.

"Some of them can bat, but they can't do anything else," Wingate remarked. "It was sheer side for Blundell to refuse to play the Remove. That chap at the wicket—Ponsac—is first-class, you fellows. I don't know that I could bowl him."

"There goes another boundary!"

"Hurrah!"

"Well hit, sir!"

"Well hit, mossos!"

"They're over the hundred now, for one wicket," said Walker.

"The Fifth don't seem to be getting a look-in," grinned Wingate. "Serve them jolly well right for tackling a job that would have been stiff enough for the First Eleven!"

"What ho!"

Francois's wicket went down at last, and he retired when the French score was at 101.

Another batsman came in, who, if deprived of his curly black hair and thick eyebrows and dusky complexion, might have been recognised as Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. But no one recognised him now—save as a good batsman. The Bounder was playing the game of his life to-day as well as Wharton, and the two bats worked in perfect harmony. The runs piled up at a rate that was simply alarming.

"Hundred and fifty!" chortled Temple of the Fourth. "The Frenchies will have to declare, or the innings will go on till time for stumps to be drawn."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Blundell was looking very grim. It was quite clear by this time that the French batting was too strong for the Greyfriars bowling or fielding, and that the visitors, if they chose, could keep possession of the wickets all the afternoon. If they chose to do so, the match would be an unfinished one.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.

Then it would count as a draw, but all Greyfriars, of course, knew that it would be a victory for the visitors.

But it was not the intention of Ponsac et Cie. to leave that loophole for the Fifth Form of Greyfriars.

Four wickets were down when the total of the innings came to 200, of which exactly a century belonged to the skipper.

And then Monsieur de Ponsac approached Blundell with a courteous smile and a bow.

"Nous allons declare, Monsieur Blundell," he remarked.

It was soon known round the field.

The visitors had declared for a total of 200, with only four wickets down.

It was time for tea, and after tea the Fifth Form had a chance of making what they could of their second innings. If they made more than 130 runs they would force the French team to bat again, but nobody expected that the visitors would be called upon to bat any more. Even Blundell, determined as he was to fight the match out to a finish, felt that he had bitten off more than he could chew in tackling the team from Paris.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. Putting the Stopper On.

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Captain de Ponsac glanced round. At the tables set on trestles under the trees the cricketers were having tea, and the French team, at least, were in the highest of spirits. Billy Bunter tapped De Ponsac on the shoulder, and blinked at him very significantly through his big spectacles as the French youth turned his head.

"Vous desirez quelquechose?" asked Monsieur de Ponsac.

Bunter grinned.

"I've got something for you, monsieur," he said.

"Parlez Francois, s'il vous plait."

"Oh, I dare say you can understand my English," said the Owl of the Remove.

A slight look of uneasiness came into the eyes of the French skipper. He fixed a very penetrating glance upon the Owl of the Remove.

"Allons," he said.

"I've got something for you," said Bunter; "it's a little note. You'd better read it by yourself, monseur."

"Eh hein."

Bunter passed a folded paper into the hand of the French cricketer. Monsieur de Ponsac unfolded it, and read, written in English, in Bunter's sprawling handwriting:

"I know you, Harry Wharton!"

The paper was instantly crushed in the French youth's hand.

Harry Wharton was master of himself—something in Bunter's manner had warned him of what was coming. He was prepared, and he knew that the Owl of the Remove had been spying, as usual, and had found him out somehow, and he knew, too, that Bunter meant to make terms. It was not of much use expecting Billy Bunter to play the game.

Monsieur de Ponsac rose from his seat.

"Not finished tea?" asked Coker.

"Merci, oui; j'ai fini," said Monsieur de Ponsac. "Je veux faire une petite promenade avec mon ami ici."

"Don't let Bunter worry you," said Blundell.

"C'est bien, Monsieur Blundell. Allez avec moi, Monsieur Cerise."

"Toute suite," said Monsieur Cerise.

And Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry walked away from the tea-tables with Billy Bunter, one on each side of the fat junior.

They strolled in a leisurely way round the pavilion till that building hid them from the general view.

Then Monsieur de Ponsac turned fiercely upon Bunter.

"You spying cad!" he muttered.

Monsieur Cerise looked astonished.

"I say—" he began. "I—I mean, je vais dire—"

"No good now, Bob. That fat cad has bowled us out!"

"My chapeau—I mean my hat!" ejaculated Monsieur Cerise.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"I'm the only chap at Greyfriars who has bowled you out," he said. "Most of the fellows have remarked about your being away from the ground, but nobody's jumped at this. You can't take me in, you know."

"Nobody else has been spying, you mean," said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "By Jove, I've a jolly good mind to jump on you!"

"Bump the cad!" said Bob Cherry savagely.

Bunter blinked at them.

"Hands off!" he said. "If you lay a finger on me I'll yell out, and give you away to all the school!"

The two Removites glared at Bunter. Dearly they would have liked to hurl themselves upon the fat junior and bump

him till he howled for mercy. But it would not do. They were in the power of Billy Bunter. A word from him, and the whole game would be given away, and they would be exposed before they had had the chance of finishing that great cricket match, and the jape on the Fifth would fall flat.

Bunter knew that he was master of the situation, and he grinned at the exasperated Removites, not in the least afraid of being bumped for his sins this time.

"How did you find us out, worm?" asked Bob Cherry at last.

The fat Removite chuckled.

"I happened to look into your dressing-room—"

"Happened?"

"Well, I looked in," said Bunter cheerfully. "I happened to see some things, and I happened to hear some of you talking."

"You awful rotter!"

"Well," said Bunter, with an injured look, "I haven't given you away, anyway. I'm an awfully loyal chap, and I don't mean to say a word unless—"

"What do you want, you beast?"

"Well, this is how it is," said Billy Bunter, with an air of extreme confidence. "I'm expecting a postal-order on Saturday, but I'm a bit short of money now. Would you fellows mind cashing the postal-order in advance?"

"How much do you want, you cad?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"How much, ask? We shall have to get back— Hallo, hallo! There comes Temple to jaw! Get along!"

Temple & Co., of the Fourth, came strolling round the pavilion. There was a look upon Temple's face which showed that he intended to air some more of his French. Monsieur Ponsac and Monsieur Cerise linked arms with Billy Bunter, and strolled away with him. Temple called after them.

"Hallo! Vous avez fini le tho, mes amis?"

"Oui, oui," said Monsieur Cerise. "Le petit Buntair va nous montrer les cloîtres. Je vous prie nous excuser."

"What does that mean?" asked Fry.

Temple explained.

"The little Bunter is going to show them the Cloisters," he said. "All serene, Monsieur de Cerise. Au revoir!"

And the two French cricketers strolled into the Cloisters of Greyfriars with the Owl of the Remove. They exchanged glances as they went. In the solitary and silent old Cloisters they were able to deal with the spy of the Form in a way that Billy Bunter had no suspicion of, if he did not come to easy terms. In the old Cloisters they vanished from the sight of the Greyfriars fellows, and politeness kept Temple & Co. from following them any further.

They paused in the midst of the old Cloisters, where a flagstone in the cracked pavement indicated the entrance to a vault below. Anybody dropped into the vault had no chance whatever of getting out again without help from above, and once the heavy stone was closed, his cries could not reach the upper air. On a celebrated occasion, Vernon-Smith had imprisoned Blundell of the Fifth there, till the Fifth Form captain consented to meet the Bounder's team in a football match. It was the recollection of that incident that was in Harry Wharton's mind now. Billy Bunter stood fairly on the iron-ringed flagstone, blinking at the two juniors it was in his power to betray.

"Now, how much do you want to hold your tongue, you fat cad?" asked Harry Wharton sharply.

Bunter frowned majestically.

"I really don't think that you ought to put it like that, Wharton. I'm sincerely sorry that you should take the matter in this spirit, because it may force me to speak. What I want you to do is to cash a postal-order for me in advance. Quite an easy thing for you to do. One good turn deserves another, you know."

"How much?"

"If you like to ask me how much the postal-order is for, I will tell you," said Bunter loftily. "I decline to have the matter put upon the footing that I am getting money out of you. I trust I have some sense of personal dignity."

Wharton breathed hard through his nose.

"How much is the postal-order for, then?" he asked.

"Five pounds."

"What?"

The juniors had expected the fat Removite to say ten shillings. But Billy Bunter evidently intended to make hay while the sun shone.

"You needn't hand it all to me now," said Bunter. "Give me your word of honour to pay me to-night, and that's all right. Lord Mauleverer will lend you the money if you like; and John Bull has lots of tin, too. You see, this is an extra big postal-order I'm expecting, from a very rich titled friend of mine—"

"You backmailing rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, unable to contain his disgust. "You will finish up in prison some day."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You can have five shillings if you like," said Wharton quietly.

Bunter sniffed.

"Of course, I shall pay you back, when the postal-order comes," he said. "I want you to understand that quite plainly. I should utterly refuse to be under any monetary obligation to you. But at present I must ask you to oblige me with the temporary loan of five pounds—till my postal-order comes. It may be a few days."

"It may be for years, or it may be for ever!" sang Bob Cherry softly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Nothing less will do?" asked Wharton.

Bunter shook his head decidedly.

"No. You see, you fellows—"

"Yes, I see— Collar the cad, Bob!"

"What-ho!"

Bob Cherry's powerful grasp descended upon the Owl of the Remove. Bunter had no chance to struggle, and no chance to yell. Bob Cherry gripped him by the back of the neck with his left hand, and clapped his right over the fat junior's mouth. Billy Bunter gave a gurgling gasp.

Harry Wharton wrenched up the flagstone by the iron ring. It rolled back, disclosing the dark aperture of the vault below. Bunter, struggling and gasping spasmodically, was lifted bodily, lowered into the opening, and dropped gently. There was a deep grunt as he landed on the floor below.

A fat, furious face looked up at the two juniors.

"We'll send somebody to let you out immediately after the match," said Wharton.

Bunter opened his mouth for a yell for help; and as he did so, the heavy flagstone clamped back dully into its place. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grinned at one another across the gap.

"I think we've put the giddy stopper on Bunter this time," said Bob Cherry. "An hour in that vault will do him good. He can reflect on his sins."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Monsieur Cerise and Monsieur de Ponsac strolled back unconcernedly to the cricket-field, where they found the cricketers preparing for the second innings of the Fifth.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Side.

BLUNDELL & CO., looked very grim when their second innings commenced. They had to make a hundred and thirty runs to force the enemy to bat again; and as they had made only seventy in their first innings, it did not seem likely that they would do it. But they meant to make a big effort. Coker, with his usual generosity, offered to open the innings with Blundell, in order to inspire the Fifth by a display of really good batting at the start—an offer which was declined with a snort. Potter and Bland opened the second innings, and Francois Nugent bowled the first over for the team from Paris.

If Blundell hoped that the French bowling and fielding would grow less keen as the day wore on, he was disappointed. The Gauls seemed as keen as mustard, towards the close of that arduous day. The sun was sloping down towards the west, but there was plenty of time for the Fifth Form innings, if it did not last any longer than their first. And from the way it opened it looked as if it would not last so long.

The bowling was very keen, and Monsieur de Ponsac was wonderful in the field. He caught Bland out for four, and ten minutes later a smart return from the long field knocked Potter's wicket to pieces. Two down for seven was the Fifth Form score, and it was not encouraging.

Matters looked up a little when Blundell went in. Blundell was really a good bat, and he was very much on his mettle now; and this time he was careful not to have Coker for a partner. Batsmen came in, and left again; and Blundell remained at the wicket, piling up runs for his side at a good rate.

But the other fellows had little chance.

As the sun went westward, the keenness of the crowd seemed to increase as they watched. The general opinion was that the French team would win on a single innings, and probably with a good many runs to spare.

Wingate and the Sixth Form fellows had been playing on their own ground, but when their play was over they came along to watch the finish of the Fifth Form match.

Although they wanted, naturally, to see a Greyfriars team win, they could not help feeling a little satisfaction at observing that Blundell & Co. had taken on too big an order in engaging the team from the Paris Lycee.

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"They aren't up to the weight of the French chaps," Wingate remarked, more than once. "It will be a licking for Greyfriars, but it will be a lesson for the Fifth."

"And they need it!" grinned Walker.

"Six down for forty," said Courtney. "Blundell will never be able to make the Froggies bat a second time."

"I should say not. It's all over bar shouting."

The shouting certainly was not over. Every smart piece of fielding, and every falling wicket, was greeted with cheers by the spectators. All Greyfriars was on the ground now; there were hardly half a dozen fellows absent. They were crowded thickly round the ropes, and some enterprising juniors had even climbed into the branches of the elm-trees near the ground to obtain a better view.

The Removees stood in a crowd, cheering the French players enthusiastically. Some of them were in the secret, and knew who Ponsac et Cie. were—and all of them knew that their old enemies the Fifth were getting badly beaten—and that was enough to make them enthusiastic.

"Seven down for fifty," said Bolsover of the Remove, with a chuckle. "My hat! Blundell must be feeling sick by this time."

"He's still batting, though, begad," remarked Lord Mauleverer.

"Wait till Coker comes in," said Leigh, grinning. "He will run Blundell out fast enough."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wharton and his lot have missed a jolly good thing," Bolsover remarked. "It's jolly queer they should have cut this match. I haven't seen the Bounder about to-day, either. I wonder what's become of those chaps?"

"Gone on a picnic, perhaps," suggested Vane.

"Queer idea to go on a picnic, when there's a match like this going on at Greyfriars!" said Bolsover. "There's fifteen or sixteen of the Remove gone out for the day. And Temple says that Wharton said he wouldn't miss this match for anything. It's queer!"

"There goes Fitzgerald's wicket!"

"Eight down for fifty-two! Hurry!"

"Well bowled, Francois!"

"Bravo, Froggy!"

Another batsman came in. The batting went on, and runs came in slowly. But Blundell's partner was caught out by Monsieur de Ponsac, and Coker, last man in, came to join Blundell. Coker looked at his captain more in sorrow than in anger as he passed him, going to the wicket.

"We've got to get about eighty between us, at least!" he said.

"And we shall get eight—perhaps!" said Blundell. "Don't run me out."

"Look here," said Coker. "This is no time for personal jealousies, or for a chap trying to shine on his own. I call upon you, for the sake of the Fifth, to back me up. Do some steady stonewalling, and give me a chance to score."

"I'll give you a thick ear if you don't shut up!" roared the exasperated Blundell. "Go to your wicket and dry up, you frabjous ass!"

"Look here—" said Coker.

Blundell took a grip on the cane handle of his bat, and he looked so dangerous that Coker left his remark unfinished, and gave a snort and walked to his place. The bowling was against Coker, and Francois took the ball in hand. Coker squared himself to face the bowling, and adopted a kind of attitude reminiscent of Ajax defying the lightning. But if Ajax could defy the lightning, Horace Coker certainly could not defy the bowling. The ball came whizzing down, and Coker's swipe missed it by inches, and his leg-stump went whirling out of the ground.

Francois gave a yell.

"How's that?"

And the umpire chuckled.

"Out!"

"What price ducks' eggs, Coker?" yelled the Remove spectators, with one voice.

Coker frowned.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ducks' eggs are cheap to-day!"

"Good old Coker!"

"Yah! Go home!"

The innings was over. Coker carried out his bat majestically, quite as if he had deserved very well of his form, instead of having knocked on the head Blundell's last chance of scoring again. Blundell gave him a look that was very expressive, and would probably have made some remarks, too, far from polite in their nature, but for the presence of the other team.

"Hundred and twenty-two, against two hundred and an innings!" grinned Temple, of the Fourth. "This is where the Fifth hides its giddy diminished head!"

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo, Froggies!"

"Vive la France!"

The team from Paris had won the match by an innings and 78 runs! It was a complete victory. There was no mistake

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about that. There was still ample light for an hour's batting, if there had been any batting to do.

"Well, you've beaten us, Monsieur de Ponsac!" said Blundell, as cheerfully as he could, to the French skipper. "But it's no disgrace to be beaten by a team that's licked schools like Winchester and Eton."

The French skipper smiled.

"Ah! But you have made a grand battle," he said. "Especially the wonderful Coker! Quel grand homme, Monsieur Coker!"

Coker purred.

"Glad you admire him!" said Blundell, in amazement.

"We think Coker is an ass!"

Coker ceased purring.

"We have enjoyed the day wonderful!" said Monsieur Henri Carise. "Nous avons etes enchanter! Vraiment, mon cher!"

"Oui, oui, oui!" chorused the French cricketers.

"We like to play you another jeu de cricket one some other day after," said Francois gracefully.

"If you stay in England, we should be jolly glad!" said Blundell eagerly. "If you have time to fix up another match—"

"Oui, oui. Nous jouons le samedi. All si vous voulez."

"This Saturday?"

"Oui, oui, Monsieur Blundell."

"It would have to be a half-day match," said Coker.

"We have only a half-holiday on Saturday, you know."

"Single innings," said Blundell.

"Oui, oui. Nous serons enchanter."

"Good, then! It's a go!"

"When is your brake coming round?" asked Potter.

Monsieur Ponsac shook his head.

"Il ne vient pas."

"Is it coming? Going home by train?"

"Non. Il ne faut pas aller par chemin de fer."

"But—but you're not going to walk home, then?" said Blundell, in amazement. "It's a jolly long walk to Abbotsford!"

Monsieur de Ponsac smiled.

"Non! We go not to Abbotsford again."

"Oh, I see! You're staying somewhere else to-night?"

"Oui, oui. Vous avez raison."

"Better go in and change now," said Monsieur Carise—

"I mean, il faut changer."

"Oui, oui. Allons, donc."

And the French cricketers went into their dressing room.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER. The Triumph of the Remove!

"Ha, ha, ha!" That was the first remark the French cricketers made when they found themselves alone in their dressing-room.

"Beaten the Fifth!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Licked Blundell & Co.!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's ripping!"

"Gorgeous!"

"First-chop!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The door opened, and a dusky face looked in and grinned. It belonged to Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. Bob Cherry grasped him and dragged him in, and waited round with him in exuberant spirits.

"We've done 'em in the eye!" he exclaimed. "We've licked the bouders hollow! Now we're going to change! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Change back into Britishers!" grinned Francois. "I shall be glad to become Franky again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Et moi aussi!" chuckled Henri Carise. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The hickfulness of the esteemed Fifth has been great!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "And their ragefulness when they discover the facts will be terrific!"

"Buzz along to the cloisters and let Bunter out, while we change, Luky," said Wharton, laughing. "The fat boulder tumbled, and was going to give us away, and we dropped him into the vault under the Cloisters. He's been there ever since. Run and let him out. He can talk all he likes now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-hafulness is terrific!" grinned Luky. And he hurried off to release the Owl of the Remove from his place of confinement.

Meanwhile, the juniors changed.

They had gone into their dressing-room to change, but the change was to be more extensive than the Fifth Forsters sup-

posed. They dressed again in the exaggerated clothes they had worn as French fellows when they had arrived at Greyfriars. But they washed off their complexions, and scrubbed their eyebrows clean, and took off the false hair that was mixed with their own, and scrubbed their hair clean of the dye that was upon it.

Then Harry Wharton & Co. were revealed.

From their feet to their necks they looked like the French team that had been playing the Fifth. But above their collars, now, appeared the faces of the heroes of the Remove. When they emerged from the pavilion the effect upon the crowd was likely to be startling. They enjoyed it in anticipation.

"Better bring along a stump or a bat each, in case the Fifth should get ratty," grinned Monsieur Cerise.

"Good egg! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Remove chaps are all on the field, and so are the Sixth," chuckled Harry Wharton. "The Fifth won't be able to mob us, and I don't care if they do! They've been done brown—taken in all along the line, and they've played the Remove at cricket, and fixed another match for Saturday afternoon."

And the Removites yelled with laughter.

The sound of their merriment escaped from the pavilion and reached the ears of some of the crowd gathered round it, and surprised them. The Greyfriars fellows could not guess what the French team found to laugh at so heartily. But the Removites were learning. It had been arranged that as soon as the match was over the whole Remove should be let into the secret, so as to be ready for a row if the Fifth cut up rusty. And the fellows in the know were telling the other fellows now, and the amazed Removites were yelling over the jape as loudly as Monsieur de Ponsac and his team inside the pavilion.

Harry Wharton glanced over his followers when the changing was finished. He could not help grinning at the sight of the French clothes, surmounted by English faces.

"You chaps all ready?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on, then!"

And they marched out.

Outside the pavilion the Fifth Formers were waiting for them, and nearly all Greyfriars with them. A fat junior had just come scooting from the direction of the Cloisters, looking very dusty and muddy and exasperated. He burst into a yell as he came up.

"I say, you fellows, you've been taken in! Those French chaps—Oh, there they are!"

The French chaps were in sight of all now, and Bunter's information came a little too late to be of any use.

All eyes were turned upon Harry Wharton & Co.

For a few moments amazement held the crowd dumb.

They could only stare.

Coker was the first to find his voice.

"Wharton!"

"The Remove!"

"What does that mean?"

"I say, you fellows," piped Billy Bunter, "I knew it all along! They're disguised as French chaps. They ain't Ponsac and his team at all. They're the Remove, and it's a jape on the Fifth!"

"What!"

Blundell & Co. could not disbelieve their own eyes.

But they seemed inclined to.

They stared at the grinning Remove players, dumbfounded. Wingate, of the Sixth, burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! A hoax, by Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

"A hoax!" gasped Courtney, rubbing his eyes. "They're the same chaps who were playing—the French chaps—but

they're the Remove kids! My only summer hat! It's a Remove jape on the Fifth, and the French team haven't been here at all!"

"Oh, my aunt! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Speech!" yelled Lord Mauleverer, in huge delight.

"Speech from the victor! Begad!"

"Pile in, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton held up his hand.

"Messieurs mes amis—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put it in English now, you ass!" yelled Bolsover.

"Gentlemen, we are the Remove! The Fifth Form declined to meet the Remove on the cricket-field, and so we came in disguise as a giddy foreign team, and japed them into meeting us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then—then you're not Ponsac!" gasped Blundell, whose wits worked rather slowly. There was a yell of derision at the Fifth Form captain's remark. It was pretty evident by this time that Harry Wharton was not Ponsac.

"No, I'm not Ponsac," said Harry, laughing; "I'm myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm Wharton, of the Remove, and these are my team. We're not the Fifth, and licked them. We're meeting them again on Saturday, by Blundell's own suggestion."

The crowd yelled hysterically.

"We jolly well won't meet you again!" shrieked Blundell.

"Just as you like about that. We've licked the Fifth before all Greyfriars, and shown the school that we can do it."

"Hurrah for the Remove!"

"This is where the Fifth climb down," said Bob Cherry.

"Vous allez la-bas, messieurs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dear!" said Wingate, wiping his eyes. "These young villains will be the death of me, I think. I never heard of such a jape! Ha, ha, ha!"

Blundell did not laugh. It was a defeat for the Fifth which they could never live down. In spite of all their lofty refusals, they had played the Remove after all, and they had been beaten—hopelessly, by an innings and a big margin of runs. There was no getting out of that. Blundell was furious. He made a sudden rush at Harry Wharton, with his fists clenched.

But the Removites closed round their leader, and Blundell was hurled back. He staggered up from the grass.

"Go for them!" he roared. "Lick the cheeky young bouncers!"

Wingate and several prefects strode upon the scene. The captain of Greyfriars held up his hand authoritatively.

"Stop!" he exclaimed. "No rows here! You've japed the Remove often enough, you Fifth chaps, and you can't grumble if they've japed you in turn. Better take it calmly, and treat it as a joke."

"Faith, and it's a ripping joke, if you could only see it!" chuckled Micky Desmond. "Sure, you Fifth fellows would simply roar if you knew what asses you look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"H—H—H—" gasped Blundell. "Oh, let's get out of this!"

And he strode off the field, followed by his discomfited eleven. He left the whole school roaring behind him, and cheering the Remove.

The Anglo-French eleven were escorted to the School House by a yelling, cheering crowd, juniors and seniors mixed, all wildly excited. And that day, and for some time afterwards, the heroes of Greyfriars were Harry Wharton & Co.—alias Ponsac et Cie.—the Amazing Eleven!

THE END.

NEXT TUESDAY.

A grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, by FRANK RICHARDS, entitled:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

ALSO

A thrilling instalment of SIDNEY DREW'S most popular serial,

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Rupert Thurston,
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BY
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DREW.**



(READ THIS FIRST.)

Wishing to explore the practically unknown land of Tibet, Ferrers Lord, millionaire, makes up a party, including Prince Ching-Lung, Rupert Thurston, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and a number of the crew of the Lord of the Deep, to travel with him across Tibet to Kwai-Hal, the capital of Ching-Lung's province in China.

The party, conducted by an Afghan guide named Argal-Dinjal, have just crossed the Himalayas into the Forbidden Land, when, on reaching a Tibetan village ruled by an Irishman named Barry O'Rooney, they are attacked by the notorious pirate and outlaw, Storland Sabib, and band of his ruffianly followers. Things are looking serious for the party when they are rescued by Ferrers Lord's wonderful aeroplane, the Lord of the Skies. They are flying over the crater of an extinct volcano, when the engines suddenly stop working, and they are sent hurtling down through the crater into an underground lake. The damage caused is so great that Ferrers Lord gives up hope of ever getting the aeroplane out of the cavern. Hal Honour, the engineer, however, makes a strange promise, and says that within two months he will rescue the whole crew. Punctually to the hour, Honour fulfils his promise, and the miniature aeroplane rises from the black crater into the sunshine above with the first load of passengers, consisting of Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, and O'Rooney. The aeroplane rescues the remaining members of the crew, and goes back once more for Ferrers Lord and the stores. On the return Ferrers Lord decides to continue the journey to Kwai-Hal by motor-car, which Hal Honour undertakes to build. To get the material they have to return to the underground cavern. While the engineer is constructing the car, Ching-Lung, Thurston, and some of the crew go to explore the cave. They camp on the sulphurous floor of the cave, and leave their fire burning. As they are returning they find that their fire has spread, and threatens to spread through the whole cavern. Ching-Lung decides to dam a river that flows near by, and so flood the cave.

(Now go on with the story.)

"Hal Honour Saves the Cavern from Fire."

"You see, my son," Ching-Lung explained, "there are more ways of catching a rat than the method of pulling him out of his hole with a corkscrew."

Rupert Thurston shook his head doubtfully.

"Will it work, Ching?"

"How do I know? I mean to try."

"Throie, throie, and niver say doie."

As the chap with the chopper and saw remarked

Whin he tackled his wote's first poie!"

After this beautiful quotation, Barry looked round with a beaming smile that turned to a sickly one. Prout and Maddock had drawn their revolvers.

"Where shall I put the bullet, Ben?" growled Prout—"through his heart or his head?"

"Heart," said Maddock. "There's nothing in his head bar wood!"

Barry sank upon his knees, and clasped his hands.

"Spare me, noble gentlemen," he sobbed. "O! am too young to doie—too young, and too, too fair."

"We can have no mercy," said Maddock. "Can we, Tom?"

"None!"

"But—but spare me till Oi've paid me wather-rate!" moaned Barry. "Ut is but a little thing Oi ask. Oi cud not lave the wurld wid a debt on me sowl. Promise to spare me till thin."

"Did you ever wash in the water?"

"Niver—niver!"

"Or drink it?"

Barry fell back in an apparent faint at the idea of drinking water. The aeroplane settled down, and, putting up their weapons, the two men sprang out. They were on the edge of the subterranean stream. On either side of it rose the two tall rocks Ching-Lung had noticed. The water moved sluggishly, but it did move. A single glance showed the prince that his plan had every chance of success.

Even here they could smell the fumes. If the fire increased the cavern would become uninhabitable for human beings in a few days. Something must be done to check the spread of the flames, or Hal Honour's scheme would be ruined.

"Get some crowbars and a drill, Tom."

Prout came back with bad news.

"There ain't a single tool aboard, sir, barrin' two hatchets and a saw."

"What a nuisance! We'll have to go back and fetch them, that's all. If this isn't put an end to it will be all over. It's a close shave, now."

Fortunately, it was not necessary to travel slowly on the return journey. The little aeroplane flew merrily through the gloom, until at last the twinkling lights of the arc-lamps gleamed through the darkness. Barry lisped:

"Twankle, twankle, little shtar,

Loike a pickle in a jar.

Whin the—"

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

Prout seized Barry by the throat, and shook him.

"H-h-help!" stuttered the Irishman. "A t-thafe is t-thy-in' to s-stale me—me diamond p-pin."

"I'll steal your life if you give us any more of that."

"Choke him!" said Maddock.

The aeroplane sank on the beach, and Ferrers Lord met Ching-Lung and Thurston. The millionaire looked grave at the news they brought.

"It is very serious," he said; "but if it is possible to flood the cavern Honour had better take charge of the affair. I'll speak to him."

The engineer was as black as coal, for he worked both with head and hands. He went on filing a piece of metal as he listened. Then he pulled down his shirt-sleeves.

"All right," was his short answer. "I'll see."

Tools were carried on board. He waved Ching-Lung aside with a smile. There was no room for the prince. Hal Honour wanted his own half-dozen picked workmen to accompany him.

"This is what I call the kick-out," said Ching-Lung. "Very well, old chap. All success!"

The aeroplane sped away. Just an hour later a dull, crashing, grinding roar rolled up out of the blackness. Another hour passed before the headlights of the airship appeared. It sank, and Hal Honour again rolled his sleeves over his elbows, and picked up the file.

"All right," he said again, and his file began to scrape.

"Well," muttered Ching-Lung, as he turned away, "of all the hard-working, big-brained, silent—"

"Chingy," said Gan-Waga's plaintive voice.

"What is it?"

"Want a taller cangle, Chingy. Me awful empty insides!"

"A cangle, nicebug? You shall have a pound of eangles, if you like. Go to a certain gentleman named Maddock. Look out for a person with a face like a door-scraper, and you'll find the man. Tell him from me to provide you with a pound of candles and a bottle of olive oil to wash them down."

Gan-Waga did not require to be told more than once. The good-natured bo'sun, who had charge of the stores, quickly supplied his wants. With a look of rapture on his yellow face Gan-Waga dived into the lake, made a delicious meal, drank half a pint of oil, and then, rolling over on his back, with only nose, eyes, and mouth above water, he sank into a sweet, dreamless sleep.

Thurston and Ching-Lung Recall Something that Scares Them Badly—The Treasure-Seekers—A Shower of Gold—Among the Wildfowl—Excitement Ahead.

The affair of the treasure he had discovered and buried in the bank of the Sang-po River had completely left Ching-Lung's memory. He only recalled it when they were at supper.

"Well, I don't particularly want the money," said Ferrers Lord, "but I think we have as much right to it as Storland

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Sahib has. We can divide it up among the men, and if you like to go for it, Ching, you may do so, unless Honour wants you."

The engineer shook his head.

"Then we'll toddle off in the morning—eh, Ru?"

"I shall be only too jolly glad!" answered Thurston. "I must confess I like fresh air and sunshine."

"And we'll take the usual gang—Prout, Maddock & Co. It seems a bit brutal, though, to do all the playing, and leave Honour and just a few others to do all the hard work. Are you sure we can do nothing to help you?"

"Certain," answered the engineer. "I only want trained mechanics."

"Well, you needn't be so haughty about it just because you can make a tenpenny nail!" laughed the prince. "Have a cigar, and pass the coffee-pot. I went on board the wreck just now, and heard someone snoring like a school of grampis—or is it grampuses? I looked over the side, and spotted Gan-Waga sweetly dreaming."

"In the water?" asked Honour, who was not very familiar with the Eskimo.

"You bet. If he could only get a lump of ice for a pillow, all would be joy for Gan. I've seen him fast asleep aboard the Lord of the Deep many a time, and still smoking a cigar. Good old iceberg! He's a wonder!"

"You're not thinking of sending him back to Alaska, Lord?" put in Thurston.

"Not he," said Ching-Lung. "Gan has nothing to do with Lord at all. He is my particular property, and I will resent any interference with revolver and sword."

The millionaire smiled.

"Under those circumstances, I had better be silent," he answered. "I do not want a duel, though I think we would be a pretty even match."

"Could you do this?" grinned Ching-Lung.

About ten yards away O'Roonney was lying in the sand, reading a water-stained volume which Prout had lent him. A candle stuck in an empty bottle gave the requisite light. It was a very exciting book, with a picture on the front of a fierce man in a short skirt, making another man walk the plank by sticking a cutlass into his leg. The thrilling title was "Carolo, the Corsair; or, The Buccaneer's Doom." Barry had got to the part where the hero was tied to the mast. He read on breathlessly:

"Tell me where you have hidden Mariana!" hissed Carolo through his clenched teeth.

"Never! I scorn your threats," cried our hero, in firm, manly accents.

"Then you shall die!"

Bertrand did not wince. The pistol was pressed against his forehead. With a fiendish smile, the heartless corsair pulled the trigger.

Barry had reached the bottom of the page. He had given up the hero for lost. Ching-Lung drew his revolver, and took aim at the candle.

Bang!

The bullet took the top off the candle, and in his excited state Barry thought he was shot as well as the hero of the tale. He yelled. Then he heard peal after peal of laughter.

"Who did that?" said Barry, burning with indignation. "Tell me his name!"

"I think you must have stuck your candle in a ginger-beer bottle," said Ching-Lung sweetly. "That gassy stuff often bursts bottles."

"Never mind!" growled Barry. "Ev Oi knowed who did ut, Oi'd give him ginger!"

"Hush!" said Ching-Lung. "Let not your angry passions rise, but cork them down."

"Oi'd bottle the villain up!" roared Barry. "Bedad! Can't Oi sit down in me own private library, wid me own electric light, and rade me own book, widout bein' shot at boie a haythin blaynards? Oi'll compose a poem on the rogue, and publish it in—"

"Not that, Barry," moaned Ching-Lung. "Do anything but that! Murder the man outright, but don't—oh, don't!—write a poem about him. Here, catch this cigar, and be merciful as you are strong."

Barry relighted the candle, and sullenly went on with the thrilling narrative. He was pleased to find that the hero was not killed, but escaped to hunt the corsair to his doom.

Soon after eight on the following morning, with a last warning to Ching-Lung to be careful, Ferrers Lord vaulted from the aeroplane's deck, and the little vessel began to mount the shaft.

Ching-Lung managed her well, for he was amazingly quick at learning anything. The management of the aeroplane was really very simple. There was no puzzling array of levers to cause trouble. They cheered when he cleared the shaft, and they saw wood, river, and plain stretched out below them in the fresh morning sunlight.

Down glided the gallant little aeroplane, leaving the realms

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of everlasting snow behind her. The air became warmer, to the disgust of Gan-Waga, to whom cold was a pleasant tonic. The river had sunk to its usual level.

They passed over the village and the belt of trees, and followed the course of the stream. Ching-Lung told them to load their rifles. Then, all at once, a look of dismay and horror settled on his face.

"Ru!" he gasped.

"What is it, old chap?"

"That—that man I—I tied to a tree. I—I forgot all about him."

Rupert turned white. Ching-Lung meant the old man who had been Storland Sahib's spy. They had fastened him to a tree on the verge of the wood, his hands and feet securely tied, and his mouth gagged. Had they left him to die a horrible death of slow starvation? The very thought made them both shudder.

"I'm going to look," said Ching-Lung hoarsely. "Good heavens, Ru, how could we forget the miserable wretch? If he's dead, I've murdered him!"

"He's dead enough, unless he managed to escape," said Thurston bitterly.

Ching-Lung sent the aeroplane soaring back over the tree-tops. Barry simply granted when he heard their reason for returning, but the other men did not take the matter so lightly. Ching-Lung's face was very white as he ran towards the wood. He knew exactly where they had left their hapless prisoner, but he was almost afraid to part the branches.

He dreaded to come upon a horrible sight. The ants would quickly perform their ghastly work on anything dead, after the vultures had had their fill. No vultures were to be seen. Perhaps they had left nothing but a skeleton dressed in tattered rags.

Conquering his dread, Ching-Lung pushed his way into the wood. Nothing was there except a few shreds of torn silk, the fragments of Rupert's scarf. The man had either escaped or been rescued.

A leaden weight was lifted from Ching-Lung's heart. He came out of the wood like a human wheel, spinning across the ground head over heels.

"All right!" he yelled, finding his feet. "He's got away! We're not ready for the gallows yet."

"Thank goodness!" said Rupert fervently. "I should have dreamed about it till my dying day!"

"Bedad!" growled Barry. "Av yez axed me, Oi could have towid yez. Yez can't tote 'em fast enough, and yez can't do 'em nohow. Av coorse, he wint. Nothin'll kape 'em in the same spot tin minutes, bar killin' 'em. Whin Oi first came here they used to rob me right and left; but, troos, I couldn't catch 'em. Wan noight Oi waited wid a big club. Purty soon a knife started to cut a hole in the winder, that same winder bein' made of oiled paper. Gintlemen, Oi got ready for a shmoite, Oi can tell yez! Afther a bit a head came in at the hole, and Oi shmoite."

"You made the thief dance, didn't you, Barry?"

"Bedad, no, sor! Oi shmoite all roight; and, be jabers, Oi did the dancin', for ut nearly knocked me fist to bits, and ut broke me best shillelagh! Ut was a wooden head I hit. The thafe stuck it in to see av anywan was about afore he put in his own. Oh, yes, Oi shmoite! But Oi had me arm in a sling for a wake afther that jarrin', Oi can tell yez!"

The story raised a laugh, and was an excellent example of the cunning of the Tibetan natives. Barry declared they were crafty enough to steal a man's teeth when he was asleep without waking him; but Barry's yarns were often pretty tall ones.

Ching-Lung had some difficulty in finding the place where he had buried the treasure. Since the flood had subsided the appearance of river and banks had altered in an extraordinary fashion. He could hardly believe that the clear, quiet pool had been the terrible maelstrom, from whose greedy maw he had escaped only by a miracle. The bank, too, into which the beam had been driven, was ten or twelve yards from the edge of the stream.

They looked in vain for some open place to bring the aeroplane to ground. The trees and bushes were too dense.

"Run her across there, Tom," said Ching-Lung, pointing to a tall tree.

"The one like a scaffold-pole, with a tuft of whiskers on top of it, sir?"

"That's the gentleman. We can get close to it without any risk of getting the branches mixed up with the machinery. Nicely, Tom, nicely! Overboard with the tools!"

A rope was given a turn round the stem of the tree. Maddock dropped a couple of shovels and a pickaxe, and then Ching-Lung twisted his legs round the trunk, and slid groundwards, lighting a cigarette on the journey.

Thurston made the descent next, and then Joe, Maddock, and Gan-Waga followed, leaving Prout and O'Roonney to take care of the ship. The treasure-seekers made for the bank.

"Here's the place," said Ching-Lung, as he drove a shovel into the soil. "There's a little Bank of England underneath."

"The ground looks disturbed," said Rupert. "I hope they haven't been before us."

"I hope not! Hear that?"

The shovel struck something hard. Maddock and Joe began to breathe hard and fast, and stared at the ground with bulging eyes. There was magic in the very thought of hidden treasure. Even Thurston was greatly excited. Gan-Waga alone showed no interest. He did not care about money. Perhaps if it had been a box of tallow-candles, instead of a chest of money, Gan would have dug with tooth and nail to obtain it.

"O-o-oh!" gasped Maddock.

"A-ah!" panted Joe.

"Goold—goold! Bright, rid, glittherin', glamin' goold!" roared Barry from the aeronef's deck.

Barry, in his excitement, leaned forward so far that he avoided a trip overboard by a miracle only.

The next moment Ching-Lung lifted his shovel, revealing a dozen coins glittering in the soil it held.

Joe and Maddock could not restrain themselves. The gold-fever had seized them. They made a rush for the hole, and sent the earth flying with their hands.

"Luk at the murtherin' thaves!" yelled Barry. "Pull 'em off, or they won't have enough to buy a penny smoke!"

"Out of it!" said Ching-Lung.

Prout and Joe dug harder. Ching-Lung jerked Joe out by the leg, and Gan-Waga brought Maddock to a sense of reason by putting his foot on his neck and driving Ben's face a couple of inches into the soft, moist soil.

The two men looked so utterly ashamed of themselves that Rupert sat down and screamed.

"Sarch 'em," cried Barry, "and foind out how much they've pocketed!"

But Joe and Maddock had not pocketed a single coin. The remark was an insult to their honesty. It was sheer excitement that had compelled them to dig.

In ten minutes the whole of the treasure was unearthed.

"Drop the purse, Tom," said Ching-Lung.

Prout lowered a sack over the rail of the aeronef, and all hands set to work to fill it with coins.

"Right, Tom! Haul away!"

Barry and Prout seized the rope. The treasure was heavier than they expected. The others watched the ascending sack as it swung slowly upwards.

"Ut's moighty hard worrk raisin' money, isn't it?" growled Barry.

"I've always found that," answered Prout.

"But ut's easy enough to drop ut—"

The weight at the end of the line was removed, and, having nothing to pull against, Prout and the Irishman sat down with a thud. The sack had burst, and the coins rattled down in a golden shower. Many rolled into the river, and were beyond recovery unless dived for.

"What's happened?" growled Prout.

Barry thoughtfully pulled in the rope.

"Tom," he said, "we've got ut."

"Got what?"

"The sack," sighed Barry.

Those below began to collect the scattered wealth. They were all down on their hands and knees, crawling about like so many great reptiles, and stuffing their pockets with gold.

Prout repaired the sack with his sailor's needle. This time they wisely decided not to put too much strain on it. They sent it down twice instead of once, and a cheer was raised when the treasure was safe aboard the aeronef.

To gain the vessel caused some difficulty, and took some time, for Maddock and Gan-Waga were not good at climbing trees. Ching-Lung showed them how to scale the tree by using their belts and pressing their feet against the trunk. They succeeded at last, and were hauled aboard.

It was barely ten o'clock, and a magnificent morning. Champagne was handed round to celebrate the success of the trip.

"Well, Ru," said Ching-Lung, "we've broken the bank by digging a hole in it, and we've got the whole day before us. What shall we do? I don't fancy the coal-mine just yet."

"How about a run east to have a look at the country?"

"Anything you like, and anywhere you like."

The aeronef swept along above the silver Sang-po, making splendid speed. There was little or no breeze. To the north lay a wide stretch of marshy land, and Ching-Lung sighed as he saw the great flocks of waterfowl. A few of them would have formed a welcome addition to the larder.

"We were giddy goats not to bring some shot-guns," said the prince. "Rifles are no good for those chaps."

"It is a bit of a nuisance, old chap," answered Rupert.

"I've got an absolute longing and craving to taste a wild-duck, or even a fishy, oily goose. Should we go back and get our guns?"

"Too far."

Gan-Waga had a sad look in his eyes. He was thinking of goose-grease.

"By Jove," said Ching-Lung, "there's the carronade!"

"So there is. But have we any powder?"

The carronade was a brass weapon, about two feet long, and was only intended to be used for signalling. It was mounted in the prow. It was of the usual description—a muzzle-loader, fired from a touch-hole. A search brought to light several canisters of coarse black powder, but no shot.

"We'll make something do for shot, if we have to use our buttons," said Ching-Lung. "Hurrah! Here are some fishing-weights and a whole lot of small screws! Out with your knives, lads!"

The lead plummets and sinkers only wanted cutting into small pieces, and knives were soon busily engaged on the task. Ching-Lung loaded the carronade with powder, using paper for his wads. The improvised shot was rammed home over the powder, and the gun primed.

"The wretched thing will scatter like a blunderbus," Ching-Lung said Rupert.

"I know it will. It would plaster the side of a house all over at a ten yards' range. We can only try our luck. If we get near enough to a flock, we ought to make a ripping bag."

While these operations were in progress the gallant little vessel had remained suspended over the river. Prout ran to the wheel, Ching-Lung stood, cigarette in hand, waiting his chance. Like some bird of prey, the aeronef sank over the marshes and began to sweep along.

"Duck, and geese, too, in there!" cried Rupert.

He pointed to a mass of high reeds through which patches of water shone. Wildfowl could be seen scuttling into shelter. Terrified by the aeronef, they were afraid to rise, just as a kite in the shape of a hawk will keep even the wildest part-ridges from taking to flight until the sportsmen are quite close to them.

"This place is alive wi' 'em, sir," said Joe. "They're in the thick part yonder now. I've counted thirty or forty on 'em."

"Go easy, Tom," said Ching-Lung. "Get your barkers ready. Steady—steady!"

The aeronef barely moved. Maddock, Joe, Rupert, and Gan-Waga levelled their revolvers.

"Fire, lads!"

Bang, bang, bang, bang! rang the shots. There was a roar of beating wings. The air was full of startled wildfowl. Terrified by the reports of the revolvers, they rose in a grey, screaming crowd ahead of the aeronef.

The glowing end of Ching-Lung's cigarette touched the priming of the carronade.

Boom! The little gun belched out a charge of lead and steel. A cloud of white smoke rolled back across the deck of the aeronef, and for a few seconds it was impossible to see the result of the shot. They rushed to the stern-rail.

"Good enough, sir—good enough!" cried Joe delightedly.

Seven fine, plump ducks and three geese had been brought down. Gan-Waga retrieved them from the swamp, and came on deck covered with mud almost to the waist. They were doubtful about the geese, from an eating point of view; for the stomach of one, which Gan-Waga opened, was filled with half-digested fish.

"Seven ducks won't go far with our lot," said Ching-Lung.

"We must try for some more."

They flushed a second flock a few miles further on, and again the carronade acted gallantly. This time it brought down eleven.

"That will do," said Ching-Lung. "They'll all be able to have a taste now; and we're not shooting for sport, but for the pot. Gentlemen, I feel that I have done myself proud."

"So you have, my boy. It's twenty past eleven. They won't feel anxious about us before supper-time. I wonder if we're near a town or any big village? I'll ask Barry."

According to Barry, the nearest town was about twenty-four miles away, on a tributary of the Sang-po. It contained about twelve thousand inhabitants.

"Up's called Lhaksnav," said Barry, "and there isn't a wicker hole in the woide, woide wurld. The rogues who live there are roipe for any badness, and land in glove wid Sthorland Sahib. A lot o' thim are river-pirates, but they carry on their swate thrade hoigher up the river."

"I should like to see the place," said Thurston. "We ought to get there in about forty minutes."

"Easily. Put her over a point, Tom."

Prout gave the wheel a turn, but the aeronef did not realise expectations. That was the fault of Barry's reckoning. His twenty-four miles turned out to be tremendously long ones.

"He meant leagues, not miles," said Ching-Lung. "Have you ever been to Lhaksnav, Pat?"

"Barry, av yez plaze," said O'Rooney. "Barry's me name, sor—not Pat. Oi have niver had the joy of visitin' "

the delightful spot, but Oi have heard of it. It's filled with splendid hotels, museums, free libraries, cathedrals, golf-links, picture-galleries, theatres, music-halls, public baths, football-grounds, laundries, and jam-factories. The lord mayor wears gilt-edged trousers—"

"Give him something to eat and stop his mouth," put in Joe.

"They have fireworks every night," went on Barry, "and the fountains squirt regular. Brass bands come out to welcome all strangers, the barbers shave their customers with silver razors, and—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Joe. "Give it a dog-biscuit to gnaw at!"

"Anything else you would like to know?" inquired Barry cheerfully.

"We'd like to hear the date they let you out of the mad-house," said the carpenter.

"Who," answered Barry, "where's your memory? Didn't we come out the very same day, Joe?"

Joe grunted and turned away. Then Barry laid one finger on his nose, and winked at Gan-Waga.

"Have Oi ever told you what Joe was in the lunatic-asylum for?"

"Barney, huh?" said the Eskimo.

"Horrible barney! He thought he was a winkle," said Barry solemnly, "and he was always trying to pick himself out with a pin."

Barry's statement caused a roar of mirth.

Ching-Lung shaded his eyes from the sun and looked ahead. "Give me the glasses," he said. "There's something over there."

"Houses, sir."

"Hovels," said Ching-Lung. "That must be the place. Have a look, Ru."

Thurston took the glasses. He saw a collection of huts clustered on the side of a sloping hill. The little town ran down to the edge of the stream, and even overlapped it, for many of the hovels were built over the water on piles.

"That's Lhaknav, right enough," he said; "but I don't think it would be safe to descend. They—"

Rupert sprang forward.

"Anything amiss, Ru?"

A dull sound rolled up from the direction of the town.

"That's a gun!" gasped the prince. "There's a row on, and we're going to be in it. What can it be, Barry?"

"It comes to me," said Barry, "that Mister Storland Sahib has started his revolution."

"But we thought all the people would side with him."

Barry scratched his head.

"Oi thought so, too, sir; but we can't tell. A revolution is little good in Tibet without plenty of killing and destruction. He may be knocking the town to bits just to let the others see what'll happen as they don't respect him. Oi can't see anything else for us."

Guns were rattling loudly in the distance.

The Little Aeronet Captures the Town of Lhaknav.

Prout put the lever to full speed ahead. The attack on the town was being delivered from the top of the sloping hill. They could see the smoke of the guns already. The river was crowded with sampans and small boats.

"I say, Ru," muttered Ching-Lung, his eyes sparkling, "what a treat it would be to drive the Sahib off!"

"But wouldn't it pay you better to let him alone?"

"Not Storland Sahib, Ru. A revolution in Tibet might help me a lot, but not with Storland Sahib at the head of it. It would give the Chinese Court something to think about, and it might put me in favour again."

"I don't understand how."

"I would offer to help to quell it," answered the prince. "I could have my troops over the border long before the Imperial troops had time to arrive."

"You know best, Ching," said Thurston seriously; "so don't do anything rash."

"I'll try not to."

A hot fight was going on. Evidently the Sahib had not expected such resistance. Something extraordinary and unlooked for must have occurred. The firing on both sides was vigorous. On the river two fleets of sampans were blazing at each other.

Ching-Lung had made up his mind.

"I shall have a smack at the Sahib, Ru."

"All right, Ching!"

Rifles were loaded. The aeronet was right over the town before she was seen. Wild, frightened shouts rent the air. She headed for the hill and soared above its crest. Her appearance caused a wild panic. The gunners abandoned their guns, and fled. A troop of mounted men turned and

galloped away, flinging down their rifles and throwing looks of terror behind them.

On the river sweeps were got out, and sails raised. The two fleets of sampans moved down-stream. The people poured out of the streets like ants, and made for the open country. One volley was fired after the retreating horsemen, and then Ching-Lung leaned against an upright and laughed till the tears came.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha! We've scared the whole lot of them! Fancy it! I don't think there's a soul left in the place. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the brass bands, Barry?" grinned Joe.

"Oi fancy they've blown themselves away!" chuckled Barry.

"I hope the lord mayor has left his gilt-edged trousers behind," said Prout. "I'd like a pair to give my tailor for a pattern. And I'm on those silver razors."

"Me want see butterful fountains squirt," gurgled the Eskimo. "Hope dey not runned 'way!"

The panic was complete. As far as they could discern, not even a dog remained in the town. The ignorant people must have imagined that the aeronet was some supernatural monster. Nothing else could account for such an absolute panic.

The little vessel grounded on the hill-top.

"It's a pity we can't collar those seven-pounder guns!" said Ching-Lung regretfully. "But they are too heavy. We'll borrow their breeches, anyhow; and, unless the Sahib can replace them, those guns won't be a great lot of use to him."

There were five guns in all. The breeches were taken out, making it impossible to fire the weapons. The men thought it a rich joke. They had captured a whole town without spilling one drop of blood. A good many corpses were lying about.

"It was pretty warm while it lasted," said Thurston. "Do you think it safe to go into the town? Some of them may still be hiding in the houses, and they might blaze at us from the windows."

"I shall chance it," said Ching-Lung, chuckling. "Gan-Waga wants to see the fountains squirt."

"If I didn't see them gilt-edged trousers, sir," said Mad-dock, "I should feel that life was only an empty dream. And then Joseph there wants the silver razors. We mustn't disappoint him."

The last of the sampans had disappeared. Ching-Lung, Rupert, and O'Rourke drew their revolvers and walked down the hill, the aeronet keeping about twenty yards above them. Gan-Waga and Joe had their rifles ready.

The streets were dirty and narrow, and strewn with garbage and filth. Here and there they came on more dead bodies. The smell of the rubbish-heaps was revolting.

With the aeronet guarding them, they neared the heart of the town. Here the houses were of a better and richer class. They came upon shops, eating-houses, Buddhist shrines, and a Tibetan theatre, which Barry pointed out to them.

"So they call that a theatre, do they?" said Rupert.

"They do, sir," answered Barry. "Some of the plays go on for weeks at a stretch. Oi mean the same play. They sell the tickets by the yard."

"Let us go in," suggested Rupert.

It was a squalid place, lighted from above.

There were no seats, and the stage was in the centre. On a low table they discovered a number of the most hideous masks human eyes had ever seen. Ching-Lung put on one of them.

"O' lukes handsomer than his real face, doesn't it?" said Barry.

There was nothing to interest them, so they made for the street again. The next building was a gambling-den. Rupert uttered a cry of loathing and disgust as he looked in. The walls were splashed with blood, and two Mongols were stretched dead on the floor, the head of one almost severed from the body.

"Only a fight over fan-tan," said O'Rourke, "and two men killed. That's a regular thing in Tibet."

Rupert closed the door. "He had seen quite enough. I'll go aboard again," he said. "There's just room enough for the aeronet to descend. Joe can stretch his legs, instead."

Joe was only too pleased to hand his rifle to Thurston. Had they cared to take advantage of their position, they could have loaded the aeronet with loot from the shops. But they touched nothing except some fish, and for the fish Ching-Lung left a coin worth twice the value of what was taken.

The town was quite abandoned. They entered several houses. Barry's libraries, golf-links, and public baths were conspicuous by their absence—especially the baths. They met a few pigs, and the sight of a big black sow with a litter of plump porkers squealing round her made Joe forget his inborn honesty.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.
Read the grand new story of the
Juniors of St. Jim's, entitled:

"FICCY'S FOLLY!"

In this week's "GEM" Library.
Now on Sale. 1d.

"Sucking-pig, Barry!" he muttered, smacking his lips.
"Suckin'-pig is real bliss!" said Barry. "Don't tempt me, Joe—don't!"

"What are you mumbling about, boys?"

Barry and Joe pointed longingly at the litter.

"Suckin'-pig!" they said, in a breath.

Ching-Lung looked at the old sow. She was a great, lean monster with wrathful red eyes.

"You can have a couple if you can catch them," he said.

"But I'll have no shooting—a bullet ruins a little porker."

"Pig, Tom!" grinned Joe, glancing up at the aeroplane.

"Pig, Gan!"

"Butterful, butterful!" gurgled the Eskimo.

Barry had known Tibetan sows before, and he was not quite keen about making the capture. The sow seemed quiet and trustful. She ambled along, grunting, but she kept one red eye on the men behind. Joe went forward on tiptoe, and made a snatch at the nearest porker.

The pig squealed hideously as he seized it.

"Hold it while I get another, Barry," said the carpenter.

Barry removed his gaze from the sow for a second in order to take the kicking, squealing porker. It was fatal. The sow charged like an infuriated bull. It hurled itself between Joe's legs, and the carpenter took a short trip skywards.

Even then the force of the charge was not expended. Barry followed Joe into the air, and their heads met with a crack. They fell together on the hard, hard ground, most of the breath being knocked out of their bodies.

The sow and the porkers turned the corner and trotted away.

"B-Barry!" panted Joe, rubbing himself.

"Y-yes, Joe!" sighed Barry. "O'm here in b-bits."

"I don't like sucking-pig."

"Nayther do Oi!" groaned Barry sadly. "Ut always knocks me up."

"The knockin' up isn't so bad; it's the comin' down that pains," said Joe mournfully. "Ah, me!"

No sucking-pigs were added to the larder that afternoon. They felt all at once that sucking-pig would give them indigestion. After a time they got tired of exploring the dirty town, with its numerous scents and rubbish-heaps, and climbed on board the aeroplane.

"The dirty hole!" said Rupert, looking back. "I don't think much of your capture, Chingy."

"Well, old chap, it wasn't exactly a Paris or a London," admitted Ching-Lung, "but it's a fair sample of a Tibetan town. You mustn't expect too much. We ought to come again to-morrow. The people will have got over their fright by then, and crawled back. I'd love to see them scuttling."

Both laughed at the recollection of the Tibetans' headlong flight. Ching-Lung flung the breechblocks of the guns overboard, and they splashed into the river.

"There were some soldiers in the row," he said; "so it seems to me they must have got wind of the Sahib's little game at Lhasa, and sent the troops down here. Fina troops they are, too! They never fail to make the enemy run, but they take good care every time that the enemy doesn't catch them." He laughed again. "Look at Barry O'Rooney rubbing his head," he added. "Say, Oirish, that's a nice bump you've got."

"O'm glad yez loike it," sighed Barry.

"I love it. Is it tender?"

"As tender as wet tissue paper, sir. Oi'll niver stale another pig whin his mother is lookin'. That lady pig had no sense of decency, and no respect for grey hairs. Bedad, av Oi can get me helmet to fit in less nor a fortnight, Oi'll present each of yez wid a lock of me hair, nicely toiled wid blue ribbon, curled at the inds, and delicately scented."

"How sweet of you!" grinned Prout.

"Dere's 'air!" said Gan-Waga. "Yo' silly old lumpy 'ead! Get yo' locks cut."

"Don't be flippant, Gan."

"Wot flippant, Chingy? Me not met him afore."

"Flippant, Gan," said the prince, "is pertness, impudence. Fat Eskimo should not be flippant."

"I not fat."

"No, you're a shadow, a bean-pole, a feather, a bit of fluff. It's a wonder you don't drop down the plughole when you take a bath. You'd make a fortune as a living skeleton in a penny show, my oil-barrel. When you turn sideways, you become invisible to the naked eye. Poor, thin, fading, Gan-Waga!"

Gan-Waga grinned. Though he had lost flesh in the long journey over the Himalayas, he had regained all he had lost and a good deal more during the previous few weeks.

"He don't get enough to eat, that's what it is," said Maddock.

"O think ut must be the candles he ates that makes him so loight," said O'Rooney solemnly. "Oi always found there was somethin' loight about a candle."

Groans loud and deep answered him, and Gan-Waga sobbed into his hat.

"What is ut at all, at all?" asked Barry.

"You made a 'orrid, miserable pun!" roared Prout.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 223.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE ROAD TO RUIN!"

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

"Did Oi, now? Oi don't rimember whin?"

"About candles and light, you idiot!"

Barry scratched his head, and smiled.

"So Oi did," he answered. "But yez needn't get waxy about it."

They groaned again. The aeroplane was travelling at a comfortable pace, and there was no disagreeable rush of wind. Barry sat down on the deck with a piece of chalk in his hand to compose a poem, and Ching-Lung gave them a few tunes on his whistle. The music he got out of that wretched piece of tin was extraordinary. Gan-Waga hammered an accompaniment on a kettle.

"Look here, Gan," said Ching-Lung at last. "Can you sing?"

"Me not know."

"Why not, trainoil?"

"Nehber not try wid yo'," answered the Eskimo. "Used sing joyous at home, most butterful."

"Have a go now, then."

"Good 'nough," beamed Gan-Waga. "Sing Eskimo lubly song."

The men sat down to listen. Gan-Waga coughed, and then opened an enormous mouth. Then he let out one howl, and, with a deep moan, O'Rooney sank back into Maddock's arms.

"Ow! put a muzzle on ut!" he cried wildly. "He's broken me best rib!"

"Oh, dry up!" said Ching-Lung. "Fire it out, Gan, and take no notice of him. He's jealous of your voice."

"Is ut a voice? Bedad, Oi thought ut was a railway accident."

"Order, order!"

Gan opened his mouth again, and what he yelled sounded something like this:

"Onkashima Tehakakikak Yam-yam-yam!"

Chikak chakak yoo-book, yam-aam!

Kikkik kik kikkik okok tehak yam-yam!

Kikkik kikkik kik—"

"Oh, kick him, kick him, do!" shouted Barry.

"Yam-yam-yam-yam!" sang Gan-Waga. "Chikak-yam—"

"Oh, murder, let me dole! Oi'm in wake hilt, and Oi can't bear ut! Nail ut up! Nail ut up! Oi shall not be wid ye long, so for the liv' of marcy lit me last moments be peaceful."

Barry had buried his head in an empty keg, and was kicking wildly.

"That's a lovely song, Gan," said Ching-Lung—"lovely indeed!"

"And beautifully sung," added Rupert, smiling. "I like the 'kicking' part."

"Thrills you to the soul, doesn't it?" said Ching-Lung.

Gan-Waga beamed upon them proudly.

"Knowned yo' like him?" he said. "I sing another, hunk?"

"Er—er—not now, if I were you, Gan," answered Ching-Lung hastily. "You—er—"

"We wouldn't like you to strain your voice," said Rupert.

"Voice him all right. Not hurt bit. I start now, hunk."

Barry pulled his head out of the tub, took off his coat, and turned up his sleeves.

"Good-boie, Tom," he said huskily, as he wrung the steersman's hand. "Good-boie, Ben. Good-boie, Joe. Good-boie, gentlemen. Oi'll lave me watch an' money behind. Av the watch won't tell the toime, ut's useful for hammerin' in nails wid. Forgive those salt tears. Good-boie, an' fare-well!"

He imprinted a kiss on Prout's bald head, and strode tragically to the side.

"Where are you going, Barry?" laughed Rupert.

"O'm goin' to lape into the abyss, sor."

"Don't you think you'd better wait till we can get a feather-bed for you to fall on?" said Ching-Lung.

"On further thought, Oi think Oi'll wait," said Barry. There was a slight breeze against them, which retarded their progress a little.

A lusty chorus, growing louder and louder, warned the toilers of the cavern of the aeroplane's approach. They took up the strain, and the notes rang over the dark water and through the hollow chambers of the gloomy pit:

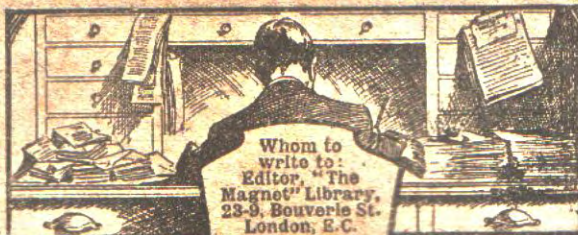
"Home, boys, home, and it's home we ought to be;
Home, boys, home, in the old cuntry!"

The little aeroplane swooped down through the everlasting dusk, and settled on her bed of sand.

(This thrilling adventure serial will be continued in next Tuesday's issue of "THE MAGNET" Library. Order in advance. One Penny.)

By FRANK RICHARDS,
Order Early.

My Readers' Page.



GRAND,
NEW,
WEEKLY
FEATURE.

NEXT WEEK'S STORY:

"THE ROAD TO RUIN."

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Next Tuesday's grand, complete story of the boys of Greyfriars will appear under the above title, and in it my readers may confidently anticipate a powerful and moving tale from the able pen of Frank Richards—a tale of schoolboy temptations fought and overcome. All "Magnetites" will enjoy reading

"THE ROAD TO RUIN."

A WORD OF THANKS.

I have lately been in receipt of many valuable criticisms and suggestions from my readers, which I have found very helpful to me in my efforts to make the attractive powers of "The Magnet" Library still stronger, and in default of being able to write to each one of my numerous willing helpers personally, I wish to take this opportunity of thanking them one and all for the practical interest they have shown in our grand little story paper.

"GORDON GAYITES" STILL CLAMOURING.

As I mentioned in the Chat page of our companion paper "The Gem" Library, the number of letters which continue to pour in upon me clamouring for a revival of the famous Gordon Gay stories in some form or other, has caused me to devote much thought on the subject. I have talked over the matter with Mr. Prosper Howard, who is ready and anxious to get to work upon his favourite characters again, and hints at a plot which is likely to make a real sensation, and provide a story which will put all the past exploits of the famous chums of Rylcombe Grammar School completely in the shade. As soon, then, as I am assured, without the possibility of a mistake, that the great majority of my readers really are in favour of a new Gordon Gay story, "Magnetites" may look forward to a further and more definite announcement on the subject.

RIDDLES FOR READERS.

The following collection of witty riddles has been sent me by a reader—Gordon R., of Workington—who has my best thanks for his interesting contribution.

What kind of face should an auctioneer have?—A for-bidding face.

Why has a greedy man a short memory?—Because he is for-getting.

Who is the oldest woman?—Ann Tiquity.

Why is a tailor like a lawyer?—Because he always likes a suit on hand.

Why is a fender like Westminster Abbey?—Because it contains the ashes of the grate (great).

Which is the biggest fool in a circus—a riding-master or a clown?—The riding-master, because he has not enough sense to be his own fool, so he pays someone else to be his fool for him.

Why is a set of dice like a king?—It is nothing without it's thrown (throne).

What difference is there between forms and ceremonies?—You sit upon one, and stand upon the other.

Why is a pig the most sensible animal?—Because he noses everything.

What young woman will make a bad wife?—Mistrust (Miss Trust).

What is the difference between a married man and a widower?—One kisses his missus, and the other misses his kisses.

Why does a railway-clerk cut a hole in your return ticket?—To let you pass through.

I'm in both corners of your eye.

But if the weather snows or blows

No one will dare deny.

I'm on the tip of each man's nose?

—Answer: letter E.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Hilda W., Clapton.—Thanks for your nice letter. I am, of course, much flattered by your suggestion, but I am too modest to suppose that the publication of my photograph would interest my readers much.

D. P. G.—Thanks for your card, but I am afraid that what you request in regard to "The Boys' Friend" 3^d. Library books cannot be arranged.

E. I. (Harbledown, near Canterbury).—Thanks for interesting letter. I will bear your suggestions in mind.

Mrs. J. G. G. (Awahuri, N.Z.).—I am much obliged for your letter, and will perhaps see what I can do before long in the way of a competition such as you suggest. You must remember, however, that by far the larger proportion of my readers reside in the British Isles, popular though "The Magnet" Library is all over the world.

H. L. (Johannesburg).—Thank you for your idea, which is an excellent one, and has been suggested to me by a number of my readers.

R. B. (Mildmay Park).—I am afraid I cannot depart from my rule and insert your advertisement on this page. I am, of course, quite aware of the facts you mention in your letter.

HOW TO REPAIR A CRICKET BAT.

When the mending of the simple cracks in the cricket-bat has been completed, as advised last week, it is time to turn to the repairing of the compound cracks—i.e., those that run cross the grain. These are hard to mend, and great care must be exercised. Binding them with beeswax whipcord is the best method of preventing the cracks from further spreading.

Take a length of whipcord, thin, but strong, and beeswax it thoroughly. When this is ready for use take the bat in the left hand, and place the handle under the armpit. This makes a very secure hold. Now take the cord, and place about two inches along one of the edges of the bat, and start binding. Unless it is done tightly, it will be of no use whatever, because as soon as it is used it will work loose and come undone again.

To wind the cord round the damaged part, it is much easier to turn the bat instead of winding the cord round, as a steady pull can be kept on the cord, and the whole winding will be tighter. Keeping the layers of cord perfectly flat, wind it until about all but two or three inches of the damaged part is covered. Then take another piece of cord, a few inches long, double it, and place it on the back of the bat so that the loop end will project a little way when the binding is finished. Continue the binding, and when done sufficiently slip the end through the loop left for that purpose, and tie securely in a small knot. If there is a small piece over, it can either be cut away, or tucked under the binding with a penknife. The next thing is to see that the binding is perfectly flat. If not it can be pushed into position with some fairly sharp-edged tool, taking care, of course, not to cut it. When you are sure that it is perfectly flat, beeswax the whole once again, and put it aside to set. The fact that the longer it has to set the better it will be, should be borne in mind, so that the repairing can be done some time before the bat is likely to be needed.

Now, a few words with regard to the batting-gloves. If these have been taken care of during the winter, they should not need much repairing. The most common blemishes are cracks in the rubber, which are often due to neglect. If the rubber has become hard, the gloves are practically past repairing, and may as well be thrown away. It must be remembered, however, that all cracks are not fatal. Surface-cracks can be mended by a thin coating of the ordinary rubber solution, which can be bought at any cricket-gear makers. If the rubber tubing has broken away from the body of the glove, a thin piece of tape should be run through the tube, and the whole thing solutioned on to the glove.

THE EDITOR.

5!
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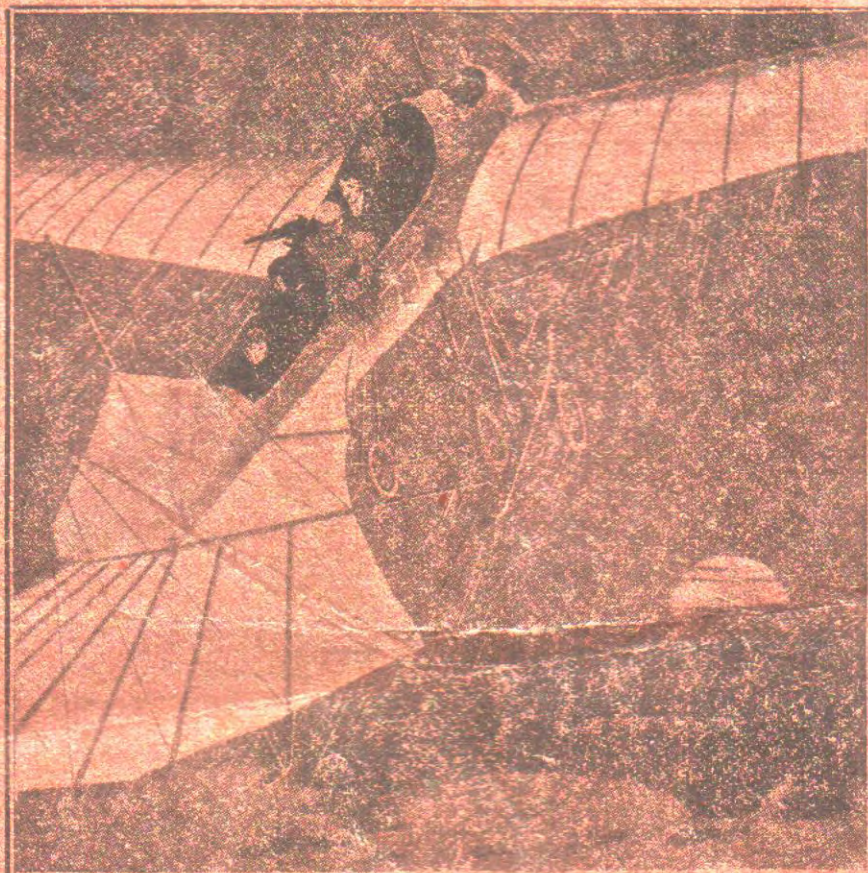
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