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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Something Up—and Something Down.

"THERE'S something up!"

Bob Cherry of the Remove made that announcement as he sat upon the corner of the table in No. 1 Study in the Remove passage, and swung his long legs. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, who were trying to write at the other end of the table, glared at him in exasperation. It was not easy to write with the table jolting, and keeping time with the swing of Bob Cherry's legs. But Bob Cherry did not notice it. He was thinking of other things.

"There's something up!" he repeated, with conviction.

"There'll be something down in a minute, you ass!" said Nugent darkly.

Bob Cherry glanced at him absently.

"There's something up!" he said for the third time.

Harry Wharton laid down his pen with an air of patient resignation.

"Well, what is it, Bob?" he asked.

"Something wrong with the Head."

"I thought so," said Nugent.

"Oh! You've noticed it?" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes. A chap who will sit on a table and jaw when two fellows are trying to write out impositions must have something wrong with the head," said Nugent. "I've noticed it about you for a long time. Does it run in the family?"

"Why, you ass—" began Bob Cherry warmly.

"I should recommend you to see a doctor," said Nugent calmly. "Go and consult a specialist. Go and lie down. Go and eat coke! Go—anyway!"

"Look here, you silly ass! I'm not talking about my head—"

"You're talking out of your hat, anyway. I've got nearly thirty more lines to do for old Quelch before we can get down to the cricket!" exclaimed Nugent. "You've made my last dozen lines look as if they were written in German! Get off!"

"Blow your lines—"

"We've got to get to the cricket, Bob," said Harry Wharton patiently.

"Blow the cricket?"

"What!"

"I tell you there's something up!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "There's something wrong with the Head—"

"Well, go and consult a mental specialist. It's no good coming to us with complaints of that sort. Perhaps he'll amputate it for you. I hope so. Get off!"

"There's something wrong with the Head of Greyfriars, you chump! I tell you, there's something up with Dr. Locke. Didn't you notice him in chapel this morning? He was looking as worried as—as—as"—Bob Cherry paused for a sufficiently strong simile—"as—as old boots!"

"I've never noticed old boots looking worried," said Nugent. "I've noticed that they look worn, but not worried."

"And I heard Courtney say to Wingate that in the Sixth Form-room this morning he was absent-minded, and seemed to have something on his chest—"

"Cough, perhaps."

"Ass! And I've just passed him in the Close," went on Bob Cherry. "He looked so bothered that I said, 'I hope you are well, sir,' when I raised my cap. And what do you think he said?"

"Told you to run away and play?" suggested Nugent.

"No, fathead!"

"Rot!" said Nugent emphatically. "I don't believe the Head would say anything of the sort. He would say, 'No, my boy,' or, 'No; I am a little indisposed to-day.' But he wouldn't call you by your right name in that way—"

"You chump!" roared Bob Cherry. "I didn't say the Head said 'No, fathead.' I was saying that to you. The said Head—I mean, the Head said—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He said, 'Impossible, my dear child!'" said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"Eh?"

"I tell you he did! He had a kind of far-away look in his eyes, and he said, 'Impossible, my dear child!' He was thinking of something else, of course. He didn't mean to call me a dear child."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should say not. Didn't you ask him what he meant?"

"No, fathead! I saw that he was worried, and left him alone. That was tact!" said Bob Cherry indignantly.

"Oh, good!" yawned Nugent. "When you've cultivated your tact a little further, you may learn that it isn't tactful to sit on a table and jolt it when fellows are writing, and to jaw when they're doing lines. It's enough to worry the Head to have a chap like you going about the school without a chain on. I know it worries me."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bob Cherry. "The Head's got something on his mind. He's in trouble again. You know, he was in trouble some time ago, over a beastly moneylender, and Newland helped him out of it. The whole school knew all about it. The Head is an innocent old duck, you know!"

"You'd better let him hear you call him an innocent old duck," grinned Wharton.

"Well, I'm saying this to you—not to him. He's a jolly good old sport, and I think we ought to back him up!" said Bob Cherry with dignity.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm willing to back him up," he said. "We'll always back up the Head. But even if he is bothered about something, Bob, I don't see what we can do, except be extra good little boys—ahem! The Head isn't likely to confide his little troubles to us, and ask our advice, you know—really."

"I know that!" said Bob Cherry crossly. "I'm not thinking of going into his study and asking him to make a clean breast of it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I think it's up to us to do something."

"What the dickens can we do?" demanded Wharton.

"How should I know?" demanded Bob in his turn. "A Remove chap helped the Head out of a scrape before. I shouldn't wonder if it's that giddy moneylender again! Some of the fellows say, too, that he's been worrying over having to expel Valence. You remember the chap who was mixed up with the poachers, and got sacked for it?"

"And serve him jolly well right!" said Nugent warmly.

"Well, yes; but the Head's a tender-hearted old bird, and I'm sure it weighs on his mind," said Bob sagely. "Valence wasn't worth bothering about, I know. But the Head would bother over Bunter or Snoop, if he had to sack them."

"Do you want us to go to Valence's home with a bag, and bring him back?" demanded Frank.

"Don't be an ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "This is a serious matter. I regard the Head as an innocent old bird, and we've got to look after him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"There's something up, and it's up to us to see what's the matter, and set it right," said Bob Cherry.

A ruddy face looked in at the doorway, and a cricket-bat banged on the floor to attract attention.

"You chaps coming down to the cricket?" demanded Johnny Bull of the Remove.

"Yes, if Bob will give us a chance," said Wharton. "We sha'n't be able to do our lines now, and that means a row with old Quelch this evening."

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Blow the lines! I tell you, there's something up—"

Frank Nugent and Harry Wharton rose to their feet, and, with a quick grasp on the edge of the table, tilted the end, so that Bob Cherry shot suddenly to the carpet.

Bump!

"Yarrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent. "And now there's something down!"

And the chums of the Remove, catching up their cricket-bats, hurried out of the study, and dashed down the passage with Johnny Bull, all three of them laughing loudly. Bob Cherry sprawled on the floor of the study, gasping.

He jumped up in a rage.

"You silly asses!" he roared. "You frightful fat-heads—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came back from the passage.

And then the juniors were gone. Bob Cherry snorted once more, rubbing tenderly the parts of his person that had come into violent contact with the study floor. Then, with a very wrathful countenance, he followed the chums of the Remove out of the School House.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Fellow who was Expelled.

WINGATE, the captain of Greyfriars, was standing on the steps of the School House, talking to Courtney of the Sixth, when the juniors came out. The two seniors were looking very serious; indeed, Arthur Courtney had a deep frown of perplexity upon his usually sunny face. They did not notice the juniors, but Harry Wharton & Co., who had business with them, stopped, and coughed to attract attention. But they coughed in vain. Wingate and Courtney were deep in discussion.

"I don't see that anything can be done," said Wingate restlessly. "Valence was proved to have been mixed up with the poachers, with Griggs, who was sent to prison. He's there yet, and a lot of fellows say that Valence ought to be there with him. He was a rotter all round—a rotter to go out poaching at night with a ruffian like Griggs, and a rotter to give evidence against Griggs when he was caught. There ought to be honour even among thieves. It seems to me that Valence got off jolly cheap in only being expelled from Greyfriars."

"Well, I know that—" said Courtney.

"And I never could understand your sticking to him as you did," said the Greyfriars captain irritably. "He never did you any good. You got him out of a scrape once over this same rotten poaching, and he was a cad to you afterwards."

"I know that, too. But—"

"But what, then?"

"It's a rotten thing to be sacked, and I've heard from Valence since that he's had a beastly time with his people. His father's awfully down on him."

"No wonder!"

"And—and Violet is cut up about it," said Courtney, colouring. "She made me save him before, and I couldn't save him this time. She was crying over it when I saw her."

Wingate shifted uneasily.

"Rotten cad to do anything to make a girl cry!" he grunted.

"Well, yes," agreed Courtney. "I'm not standing up for Valence. But Vi sticks to him. You know what girls are. She thinks her brother was led into it. She would be bound to believe that, anyway. And—and she wants him to have another chance."

"But we can't do anything. The Head's not likely to let the fellow come back to Greyfriars, and, anyway, we couldn't suggest it."

"That's what I told Vi I would do."

"The Head will shut you up pretty sharp, I think."

"Ahem!" said Harry Wharton.

"Ahem!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ahem!" said Nugent.

Three emphatic ahems passed unnoticed.

"Suppose some of the Sixth went to the Head, with you to lead them?" said Courtney. "I'd come like a shot. Suppose we told the Head that Valence wasn't such a bad sort of a chap, only weak, and easily led, and—and gave it as our



"It was my duty to expel your brother from the school, and it is my duty not to permit him to return," said the Head quietly. "I cannot alter my decision. It is impossible." There was silence in the study. Violet Valence's eyes were brimming now. "Then—then there is no hope?" she muttered at last. (See Chapter 5.)

opinion that if he was allowed to come back he'd run straight? We could undertake to keep him in order."

Wingate grunted.

"I shouldn't like to undertake anything of the sort," he said. "I couldn't keep that rank outsider in order. And how could I say to the Head that he's not such a bad sort of chap when I know jolly well that he's as bad as they make 'em?"

"The Head respects your opinion——"

"Because he knows I won't tell whoppers," said Wingate bluntly. "And it would be telling an extra big one to say that I think Valence ought to be allowed to come back to Greyfriars, for I don't think so."

"If you saw Vi——"

"I jolly well don't mean to see Vi!" said Wingate promptly. "Valence's sister would twist me round her finger as easily as she does you. I never could say 'no' to a girl, and you know it—I don't see how any decent chap could. So I'm jolly well not going to run the risk—that's flat!"

"Ahem!"

"Ahem!"

"Ahem!"

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Wingate heard the ahemming at last, and turned round irritably.

"What do you confounded juniors want?" he shouted.

"Well, I like that!" said Frank Nugent indignantly. "Didn't you tell us you were going to give us some bowling—you and Courtney—and that we were to remind you?"

"Oh, yes, so I did!" said Wingate, mollified. "Let's get on the ground. Come on, Courtney."

"I—I——"

"Oh, chuck thinking about Valence—you can't do him any good! Come down to the cricket," shouted Wingate.

Courtney shook his head.

"I can't. Vi's coming here this afternoon."

Wingate jumped.

"Valence's sister coming here?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"To see the Head."

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Wingate. "I'll get out of the way, then."

"You won't come with me to the Head?"

"I can't. I would if I could, and I'm sorry; but I can't

say that I think Valence ought to be allowed to come back to Greyfriars when I know jolly well that he ought to be in a reformatory!" growled Wingate. "Come on, you kids."

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances as they walked away from the School House with the captain of Greyfriars. They left Courtney looking very glum and miserable on the steps. Although Valence of the Sixth had treated him very badly, Courtney's old friendship for the black sheep of Greyfriars was not quite dead. And he had promised the expelled fellow's sister to do what he could to help her brother. He had hoped to enlist Wingate's sympathy and help. Wingate was Courtney's best chum, but some things, as he had said, were outside friendship. And backing up the former black sheep of the Sixth was one of them.

"So that's it!" murmured Bob Cherry, who had joined his chums. "That's what the Head was looking worried about. He knows Miss Valence is coming to see him."

"I shouldn't look worried if she were coming to see me," grinned Nugent.

"Ass! He knows she's coming to ask him to take her brother back. And he can't do it, and he doesn't like to refuse. That's why he said 'Impossible, my child!' when I spoke to him. I knew I wasn't the child."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Valence's sister is a jolly decent girl," said Harry Wharton. "He ought to be ashamed of himself for worrying her. The Head won't let him come back, that's a cert."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What's the matter now, fathead?"

"Here she is!"

A graceful girl was coming down the gravel path towards the School House. Wingate caught sight of her at the same moment as the juniors, and he stopped, and coloured, and looked inclined to run. The girl was directly before him, and had seen him, and he could not avoid her without rudeness. But Wingate would have given a very great deal to avoid that meeting, for Wingate, big and powerful and muscular fellow as he was, and as firm as a rock in dealing with other fellows, was as wax in the hands of the opposite sex. The suspicion of any tear would always have been more than enough to break down his stoutest resistance.

"Cut for it!" whispered Johnny Bull, with a grin.

Wingate stared at him angrily.

"We'll cover the retreat, Wingate, old man."

"Shut up, you cheeky young rascal!" Wingate raised his cricket cap to Miss Valence. The juniors did the same. Violet Valence nodded to them, and spoke to Wingate.

"Oh, I am so glad I have met you," she said. "I want you to help me."

"Yes, Miss Valence," said Wingate feebly.

All the gruffness of his voice in speaking to Courtney was gone. Wingate's tones for softness rivalled the cooing of the dove now. The juniors grinned as they observed the change.

The Greyfriars captain made a gesture.

"Cut off, you kids!" he said.

"What about the bowling?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, another time!"

"All serene!"

And the juniors, raising their caps again to Miss Valence, walked away. Wingate walked towards the School House with the girl, and they joined Courtney on the steps. Bob Cherry indulged in a chuckle.

"Poor old Wingate's in for it," he murmured. "He'll be begging for Valence on his knees before the Head soon."

"Blessed if I wouldn't do the same if Miss Vi asked me," said Frank Nugent; "but I fancy the Head will be tough. Look here! We're done out of our bowling over this blessed Valence chap, and Wingate has promised us that giddy bowling for days and days. Let's get out for a stroll, and we'll catch Wingate when Miss Vi has done with him."

"Good egg!"

The chums of the Remove strolled out of the school gates. They were all looking very thoughtful. Valence of the Sixth had been far from popular among the juniors, but they had felt sorry for him when he was expelled. Being expelled was a serious enough matter to make them sorry for any fellow. They could imagine what a time Valence had had at home since he was sent back to his people in disgrace.

"But he was an awful bouncer," said Johnny Bull. "It wasn't only the poaching—though that was bad enough. But he used to go down to the Cross Keys in Friardale, and he made bets with Banks, the bookmaker, who hangs out at the Cross Keys. Lots of the fellows knew it."

"So does Loder of the Sixth, but he hasn't been sacked," remarked Nugent. "Lots of the fellows know that, too."

"He hasn't been found out," said Wharton. "When the Head knows Loder as well as we do, it will mean the order of the boot for him. I wonder whether Valence came down here with his sister? I suppose he will be anxious to hear the verdict."

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"I know what the verdict will be in advance," grinned Bob Cherry. "The Head will say, 'Impossible, my dear child!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I expect he's waiting about for Miss Vi to come out," said Nugent, and he glanced up and down the lane, half in expectation of seeing the well-known figure of the expelled Sixth-Former. "My hat! There he is! And—and who's that with him?"

Upon the stile by the roadside, where a footpath led into the wood, within two hundred yards of the gates of Greyfriars, Valence was seated. A man was leaning upon the stile by his side, smoking a thick cigar—a man in loud clothes of a sporting cut, with a bowler hat cocked on one side of his head, and a gold-headed cane under his arm. He was a man who was frequently seen about Friardale and Courtfield and Pegg, and was generally to be found at the Cross Keys Inn—Mr. Banks, the bookmaker.

The juniors halted in sheer surprise.

That a fellow who was making a desperate effort to get re-admitted into the school from which he had been expelled should be reckless enough, and blackguard enough, to meet one of the worst of his old associates almost within sight of the school gates astounded them.

"Well, if this doesn't beat the whole deck!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Muddy!

BOB CHERRY'S sudden exclamation caught the ears of the bookmaker and the fellow sitting on the stile. Both of them looked round quickly, and Valence turned crimson, and Mr. Banks frowned surlily.

The juniors hesitated for a moment or two; and then Harry Wharton strode towards Valence, and the other fellows followed him.

"So you've come back here, Valence!" said Wharton grimly.

Valence stared at him.

"I'm waiting here for somebody," he said. "And I want none of your cheek, you cheeky lug!"

"Same old Valence!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You're waiting here for your sister, and she's gone to beg you off from the Head," said Harry Wharton hotly; "and while she's gone you're meeting this retter! You're trying to make the Head believe that you're going to turn over a new leaf, and this is how you're starting it."

Valence scowled.

"I met Mr. Banks here by accident—" he began.

"And I advise you to pick your words, Master Wharton!" said the fat bookmaker, with a very ugly look. "I ain't used to bein' called names. For tuppence I'd lay this 'ere stick across your shoulders!"

"You'd better not try!" said Wharton. "You and your stick would go into the ditch together if you did! Don't you know that a master or a prefect might come along any minute, Valence, and see you talking here?"

"I—I didn't want to," said Valence. "Mr. Banks saw me here and stopped to speak, that's all. There's no harm in it."

"No 'arm at all," said Mr. Banks. "I jest stopped to pass the time of day, that's all. But I don't want any cheek from you young rascals. Set of cheeky young brats—that's wot I call yer!"

And Mr. Banks, with a snort of contempt, walked away down the lane in the direction of Friardale.

Valence drew a deep breath of relief when he was gone. It was plain enough that at that moment, at all events, he was glad to be rid of the presence of the bookmaker.

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"I—I say, you needn't jaw about this in the school," said Valence uneasily. "It—it was quite a chance meeting. I told Banks it wouldn't do for him to be seen talking to me, but he would stop. Don't say a word about this in Greyfriars; it would only do me harm if I come back."

"You say you wanted to get rid of him, and he wouldn't let you alone?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Yes!" said Valence eagerly. "You see, he used to know me. I—"

"Yes, we know all about that. You didn't want to meet him here—honour bright?"

"Honour bright," said Valence.

"Good! Then we'll jolly well give him a lesson about bothering Greyfriars chaps," said Harry Wharton. "He very nearly got Hazeldene of our Form expelled once, and we haven't forgotten it. Come on, you fellows."

"What are you going to do?" exclaimed Valence, in alarm.

"We're going to show Mr. Banks that he mustn't hang about Greyfriars."

"But I say, you mustn't touch him—you—"

"Kats!"

Harry Wharton & Co. turned away and tramped after Mr. Banks.

Valence slid off the stile and made a couple of steps after them and paused. The weak, irresolute nature of the expelled senior was very clearly shown in his manner. As he stood hesitating the juniors disappeared from sight round a bend in the lane, and Valence did not follow. He remained, pale and troubled, by the stile.

Mr. Banks had reached the cross-roads by the time the juniors of Greyfriars came up. In the centre of the cross-roads was a signpost, and at one corner was a weedy, slimy pond used by cattle from the adjoining field. Mr. Banks stopped and stared at the Greyfriars juniors, reading mischief in their looks. He laid a strong grasp upon his heavy cane.

"What do you want?" he growled.

Mr. Banks was evidently in a bad temper. There was an odour of spirits about him, which hinted that he had called in at places of refreshment upon his afternoon stroll. His attire, too, was not so resplendent as was his wont, and it looked as if luck had not been with Mr. Banks of late. The huge gold watchchain he generally wore across his gaudy waistcoat was gone, and his coat was shabby. There are ups and downs enough in the lives of the ill-advised individuals who follow racing for a living, and Mr. Banks was apparently experiencing some of the downs just now. And it had not had a pleasant effect upon his temper.

"We want a word with you," said Harry Wharton coolly.

"You've been warned off Greyfriars before. It was you, as much as anybody, who helped to get that ass Valence expelled. You nearly did the same for Hazeldene of the Remove. You've got to keep off the grass, Mr. Banks—you've got to let Greyfriars fellows alone. Do you savvy?"

The bookmaker scowled savagely.

"You cheeky young whipper-snapper!" he said between his teeth. "Get out of my sight, or I'll lay this stick across you!"

And he lifted the cane threateningly.

Harry Wharton did not move.

The man looked dangerous enough, but the captain of the Greyfriars Remove was not afraid of him.

"Are you going?" shouted Mr. Banks furiously.

"Certainly not!"

"Then take that, dash yer!"

Swish!

The cane descended savagely.

The blow was sudden and savage. It caught Harry Wharton across the shoulders, and he reeled back, with a cry of pain.

"You brute!" shouted Bob Cherry.

He made a spring at the bookmaker.

Slash!

Mr. Banks evidently did not care what harm he did. He slashed with the cane at Bob Cherry's face, and had not the junior caught the blow upon his arm he might have been seriously hurt.

Bob Cherry gasped as his arm dropped to his side, numbed and paralysed by the fierce blow.

"Oh, you cad! Oh!"

Mr. Banks had no time to use the cane again; for Nugent and Johnny Bull were upon him like tigers, and the cane was wrenched from his hand and flung over the hedge. The fat bookmaker, spluttering with rage, struggled in the grasp of the Greyfriars juniors.

Harry Wharton, his face pale as death with the pain in his aching shoulder, shouted to his comrades:

"Collar the cad! Down with him!"

But Mr. Banks, fat as he was, was a powerful, thick-set man, and the two juniors could not handle him. As they clung to him they were swung to and fro like dogs upon a stag. But Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton chipped in in a few seconds more, and in the grasp of the Famous Four the bookmaker went to the ground, with the Removites sprawling over him.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Banks. "Ow!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Pin the cad down!"

"Got him!"

The fat bookmaker struggled furiously, and the juniors had all they could do to hold him.

"Chuck him into the pond!" said Wharton between his teeth. "He wants a ducking to cool his temper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a whirl the fat rascal was dragged towards the pond at the corner of the road. He resisted fiercely.

"Ow!" he roared. "I'll 'ave the law on yer! Don't you dare to do it! Yow! Leggo! Look 'ere, you lemme alone! Ow! Grooooooop!"

Splash!

Lifted by four sturdy pairs of arms, Mr. Banks was flung bodily into the pond, and he disappeared into the slimy waters with a mighty splash.

"Gr-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars juniors roared with laughter as the bookmaker rose to the surface again. The pond was not deep—not more than three feet—and Mr. Banks's head and shoulders came well out of the water as he found his feet. But his aspect was pitiable. Mud and green slime and ooze clung to him; he was festooned like a mermaid, and spluttering with wrath and mud and water.

"Gr-r-r-r-ppp!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young scoundrels! Ow! Ow! I'm ch-ch-choked! Groo! Ugh! Oh!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Bob Cherry, rubbing his damaged arm. "You ought to be in prison! Don't try to get out, for if you do you'll get shoved in again, jolly quick!"

Mr. Banks snorted with fury, and tried to scramble out of the pond into the road, in spite of the warning. Bob Cherry's boot came into gentle contact with his chest, and sent him whirling back into the water, and there was another splash.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bookmaker came up again, choking and gasping.

He did not try to get into the road again. He scrambled out of the pond on the other side, rolling and trampling through the reeds, and paused there for a moment or two to recover his breath, and yell threats at the grinning juniors in the road. Then he set off across the fields towards the Cross Keys, squelching out mud at every step, and followed by a yell of laughter from the Famous Four.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

No Good.

DR. LOCKE, the reverend Head of Greyfriars, was still wearing a worried look as he sat in his study. The kind old doctor had a weight upon his mind, as Bob Cherry had so sapiently divined. It had troubled him very much to sentence a Greyfriars fellow to expulsion from the school, and he had often thought of Valence since the black sheep of the Sixth had gone. But he had done his duty, and he remained firm to it.

Valence had brought disgrace upon the old school, and he had had to go. The Head felt that there could be no appeal; and it troubled him very much to have to see the expelled fellow's sister. The girl could not understand, and he had to explain how impossible it was for him to allow her brother to return to Greyfriars. And making that explanation was a painful task, which the Head shrank from, but which he had to go through.

And so he was looking very worried, as he sat in his study at the time fixed for the appointment; and the worried look deepened upon his kind old face as he heard footsteps in the passage outside. There was a tap at the door, and the Head called out quietly:

"Come in!"

Wingate and Arthur Courtney entered the study. Dr. Locke gazed at them in some surprise. He had expected to see Violet Valence.

Wingate was looking awkward and uncomfortable. He coloured under the inquiring glance of the Head.

"Can you spare us a few minutes, sir?" the Greyfriars captain asked.

"Certainly," said the Head. "I am expecting a caller, but until then—"

"Miss Valence is here, sir; but she is waiting till we have seen you," said Wingate bluntly. "We've come about the same matter."

"Indeed!" said the Head.

"It's about Valence, sir. Is there any chance for him?" said Courtney.

"I don't understand you, Courtney."

Courtney flushed.

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"Some of us in the Sixth, sir, think that things were a bit hard on Valence. He was a very easy-going chap, and we think he was led into his trouble. It was a great blow to his people; his being expelled, and he's had a very rough time at home. He's learned his lesson, sir, and if you'd let him come back, he would try to do better. His father is down on him—"

"It must have been a great shock to Mr. Valence, and I was very sorry for it, Courtney," said the Head; "but I explained fully to Mr. Valence about the matter, and that I had no choice in it."

"I know, sir. But—doesn't it possible for the chap to have another chance?" said Courtney earnestly. "I'd be willing to answer for his going straight, if you'd let him come back to Greyfriars, sir."

"I'd keep an eye on him, sir," muttered Wingate.

Dr. Locke shook his head.

"Impossible," he said.

"But, sir—"

"Do you think I've not reflected upon this, Courtney?" said the Head gently. "You know I am not one to err upon the side of harshness. But in justice to the good name of the school, and to the other boys, I could not allow Valence to remain here. It was impossible, and it is equally impossible for him to be allowed to return. Please don't say any more on the subject, Courtney."

Wingate looked at his chum grimly. Dr. Locke had said exactly what the captain of Greyfriars expected him to say. Courtney opened his lips to speak again, but Dr. Locke made a gesture.

"It is useless to say any more, Courtney."

"Very well, sir," said Courtney, with an effort; "but—but you will see Miss Valence, sir?"

The Head sighed.

"Certainly; I cannot refuse to do so."

"Very well, sir."

The two seniors quitted the study. A minute or two later the girl came in, and Dr. Locke prepared himself for the painful ordeal. Violet Valence was looking very pale and very distressed. She had taken her courage in both hands, so to speak, for this interview with the grave and reverend Head of Greyfriars, and she was a little terrified at her own temerity in coming there at all.

Dr. Locke's manner was kindness itself, and it put the girl at ease. He rose as she came in, and gave her a chair, and the girl sank into it, her troubled eyes fixed upon the doctor's face.

"You know why I have come, sir," she said. "It was very, very kind of you to see me. My father does not know I have come here—I have come because my poor brother's future depends upon your decision."

"My decision was made long ago, my dear child," said the Head gently. "Your brother's future was in his own hands, and he marred it himself. After what he did, I was powerless to help him."

"But he was led into it, sir," said Violet eagerly. "That wicked man, Griggs, the poacher, had some influence over him, and he was always weak and easily led. But he has had such a lesson, sir, that he will be more careful in the future. He is sincerely sorry for what happened."

The Head was silent.

"If you would give him another chance, Dr. Locke—if you would let him return to Greyfriars, just to see—for one term—"

"Impossible, my dear child."

The young girl's eyes clouded over, and the doctor was terribly afraid that she was going to cry. But she did not.

"Oh, sir, you don't know how hard this is on my brother! After being expelled from Greyfriars, it is impossible for him to enter another school. They will not take him, with such a disgrace hanging over him."

"Yes, I suppose that is the case."

"It means that his whole future is wrecked, unless he has another chance, sir."

The Head looked deeply troubled.

"I am sorry, Miss Valence, more sorry for you than for your brother. But he knew what he was doing—he was not a junior of the Fourth or the Shell. He was in the Sixth Form, and quite aware of what he was doing. Since it all came out, I learned that he had had a narrow escape before, and that his friend Courtney saved him by taking your brother's punishment upon himself."

"If Valence had been able to profit by a lesson, surely that should have taught him to avoid evil ways. But it had no effect upon him; in a few weeks this happened, and it all came out, and I had no choice but to expel him from Greyfriars. Believe me, my dear child, it was very hard upon me. I am not a harsh man, but I had my duty to do."

"Oh, sir—"

"It was my duty to expel him from the school, and it is my duty not to permit him to return," said the Head.

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quietly. "I am more sorry than I can say. But I cannot alter my decision. It is impossible."

There was silence in the study. The girl's eyes were brimming now. Dr. Locke moved uneasily some papers on his desk.

"Then—then there is no hope, sir?" the girl muttered, at last.

"I am sorry to say so, Miss Valence; but there is none."

Two big tears rolled down Violet's cheeks. Dr. Locke coughed uncomfortably. Miss Valence rose to her feet.

"I am afraid you consider me a very hard man, my poor girl," said the Head sadly, "but a schoolmaster's duty is sometimes hard; and I have first of all to think of Greyfriars and the boys under my charge."

"No; I—I know that you have done what you think right, sir," said Violet miserably, "but I—I hoped—"

"I am so sorry."

Violet Valence walked blindly towards the door. Dr. Locke held it open for her to pass out, and closed it behind the graceful form with a deep and troubled frown upon his face. He was sorry for Violet, and deeply pained by the interview; but his feelings towards the expelled senior were angry enough. Why could not the fellow have behaved decently, and saved his master and his people all this trouble?

Courtney was waiting for Violet at the end of the passage. The look upon her face showed that she had failed.

"No good, Vi?" the prefect asked.

She shook her head.

"No. Dr. Locke was very kind, but he would not change his mind. I—I suppose I could not expect him to," said the girl wearily; "but—but it is very hard."

Courtney did not reply; he found nothing to say. In his heart he felt that the expelled senior had only had his deserts, but he could not say so to Violet; certainly that would not have comforted her.

They crossed the Close and walked out of the gates. Violet was silent, and her face was pale, but she held back her tears. She had bad news for her brother. They came in sight of the stile in the lane. Valence was sitting there, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, and his brow puckered in a frown. He looked up eagerly at the sight of them, and slid off the stile.

"Well, Vi?" he exclaimed quickly.

The girl shook her head.

"It was no use," she said.

"He won't let me come back?"

"No!"

Valence gritted his teeth.

"Hang him!" he muttered.

"Val!"

"Shut up!" said Courtney gruffly. "It's no good slanging Dr. Locke. You got it in the neck, but you know it wasn't the Head's fault. We've done all we can, and we got Wingate to speak a word for you, too. But it wasn't any use—the Head's as firm as a rock. The idea will have to be given up."

"You mean that I can't come back to Greyfriars?"

"Yes, of course I mean that. The Head's settled that."

Valence's eyes gleamed.

"What's going to become of me, then?" he demanded fiercely. "I can't get into another school—being expelled from here shuts up every decent school against me. I can't stay at home—my father's leading me a dog's life. I've got to go and stay with an uncle in Cornwall. I can't stand my pater, and he can't stand me. Do you think I'm going to stick in a country village and vegetate for months?"

Courtney did not reply. It was no business of his, and if Violet had not been present he would have pointed out that Valence should have thought of all that earlier, before he disgraced himself and was sacked from the school.

Valence watched him irritably.

"Well, I tell you I'm not going to stand it!" he broke out. "The Head has no right to come down on me like this. There are worse fellows at Greyfriars than I ever was—Loder, of the Sixth, for instance, and Carne, and Ionides, that Greek chap—do you mean to say that I was ever so bad as that gang?"

"I suppose not," said Courtney. "They are a bad lot. But they haven't been bowled out by the Head, and you have."

"Yes, it's getting found out that makes all the difference," said Valence bitterly.

"Well, you couldn't get found out if you didn't—"

"Oh, I didn't ask you for a sermon," said Valence, interrupting him. "I tell you this—I don't care twopenny for what the Head says on the subject; I'm coming back to Greyfriars."

Courtney stared at him.

"I don't see how you'll manage that without the Head's permission," he said.

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With a terrific yell Trevelyan jumped up and squeezed his scalded hand under his arm. "I'm sorry!" stammered Bob Cherry. "I thought the teapot was empty!" As he spoke the teapot slipped from his hand and fell with a crash to the floor. "My—my hat!" stammered Bob, standing dumbfounded. (See Chapter 9.)

"Well, I shall manage it," said Valence. "My uncle in Cornwall is a decent old chap, and he will help me, I know. He stands by me more than my pater ever did. And I tell you I'm coming back, whether the Head likes it or not. The Head can go and eat coke!"

And Valence tramped away angrily down the lane, without another word. Courtney looked at the troubled face of Violet. He had heard of Valence's uncle in Cornwall before—a gentleman who was supposed to have a reckless past behind him, and who was, therefore, probably more in sympathy with his reckless nephew than Valence's own father was likely to be. But how the gentleman in Cornwall could help Valence to come back to Greyfriars against the Head's wish was a mystery to Courtney, and he could see that Violet was equally mystified.

"What does he mean to do, Vi?" Courtney asked, after a pause.

The girl shook her head.

"I don't know. He has spoken like that before, several times, but I don't know what it means. It can't mean anything—it's impossible for him to go back to Greyfriars unless the Head permits him."

"Of course it is. I'm sorry I couldn't do more, Vi."

The girl held out her hand.

"You've done all you could," she said. "Thank you very much. I must join my brother now."

Courtney watched the graceful figure till it disappeared down the lane in the direction Valence had taken, and

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then, with slow steps, he returned to the school. He was disappointed, for Vi's sake, that he had been able to do nothing for Valence. But that was not all he was thinking of now. What did Valence's strange words mean? What wild scheme had the expelled fellow in his head now?

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Bolsover.

"WHEREFORE that worried look, my beloved son?" asked Bob Cherry, as he clapped Harry Wharton on the shoulder in the Close after school the next day.

Wharton started a little. He had been thinking very deeply, and Bob Cherry's sudden clap on the shoulder was startling.

"Ass!" he replied politely.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"But what's the deadly secret?" he asked.

"You seem to have a keen eye for worried looks," said Wharton, laughing. "Have you got the Head to make a clean breast of it yet?"

"Oh, that's all right," said Bob Cherry. "I fancy it was that interview with Miss Valence that was bothering the Head. Now, what's the matter with you? You're not wrinkling up your chivvy like a zinc roof over Valence, I suppose?"

"No," said Wharton, laughing. "I'm sorry for Valence,

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and especially for his sister, but I wasn't thinking about him. I was thinking of the cricket match on Saturday."

"Nothing to worry over in that, surely?" said Bob Cherry in surprise. "As we've beaten the Fifth at both footer and cricket, I think we can go into a match with the Upper Fourth without our knees knocking together."

"Oh, yes; we shall beat Temple, Dabney & Co. all along the line, I expect," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "I have been thinking that, as we're stronger than the Fourth, we might give some of the second-rate players a show in a Form match. We had to get up our strongest team against the Fifth, but we can walk over the Fourth, and I think we might give some of the rotters a show."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "I don't want to be selfish—I don't mind standing out to give somebody else a show."

"Oh, I don't want you to stand out—we shall want you to slog them!" said Harry, laughing. "Three, or four, or five of the Old Guard, you know, and some of the weaker players. It bucks a fellow up to play in a good match. We know the Fourth can't play Nugent's bowling, for example, so I was thinking of leaving Franky out, and giving them a chance."

"Very complimentary to the Fourth!" grinned Bob Cherry. "What does Franky say?"

"Oh, he doesn't mind. Suppose we leave out Franky, and Johnny Bull, and Inky, and Tommy Brown. Some of the fellows say that we keep the play too much in our own gang. That's the nice, friendly way Bolsover puts it, at least, and this will show the whole Form that we don't want to be greedy—we only want to win."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "And what rotters are you going to play?"

"Well, I was thinking of Hazeldene. Marjorie Hazeldene is very keen on seeing her brother in the Remove eleven. She knows that crick bucks him up, and keeps him straight—and goodness knows the silly ass wants some keeping! As we're only playing the Fourth on Saturday, it's a chance to play Hazel. If he rots, it won't hurt us much—there will be enough of the Old Guard to pull the match out of the fire."

And Bob Cherry cordially agreed.

Harry Wharton, as captain of the Remove, had a good many difficulties on his hands. As every fellow in the Remove—the Lower Fourth—believed himself to be a cricketer almost up to county form, the cricket captain's task was not easy. When a match was likely to be tough, Wharton had to select the best players for it—and the best cricketers in the Remove were found among his own personal friends. Which gave his enemies the pretext for saying that he kept the Form matches for his own friends, and never gave an outsider a look-in. Wharton was a very keen player, and all his chums were keen players, so it was only natural that the best batsmen and bowlers should be found in the "Co.," and Wharton couldn't be expected to pass them over, and lose matches, simply because they were his friends. But disappointed cricketers were not very reasonable in their criticisms.

Wharton had been thinking the matter over very carefully in his mind, and he was glad of the chance of playing Hazeldene. Wharton was very friendly with Marjorie, Hazeldene's sister at Cliff House School, and Bolsover & Co. openly declared that he played Hazel because Marjorie had asked him to. To which Wharton had made no reply, but when Hazel went off form he was promptly dropped from the Form eleven, which was an effectual reply enough. Even for Marjorie's sake Wharton would not put a bad player in the team when it was a question of risking a match. At the same time, he was sorry to see Hazel going off form and dropping cricket, and glad of a chance of bucking him up again.

Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, came upon the chums in the Close as they were looking for Hazeldene. There was a very disagreeable frown upon Bolsover's brow.

"I want to speak to you, Wharton," he said disagreeably.

"Go ahead!"

"We're playing the Upper Fourth on Saturday?"

"Exactly."

"Well, I think it's time some of the fellows had a look in in a Form-match, as well as your own gang," said Bolsover.

Wharton winked at Bob Cherry.

"So do I," he said calmly.

Bolsover seemed a little nonplussed. He had not expected that reply.

"There are a lot of subscribing members of the Form club who think they don't have a chance," he said. "I'm one of them."

"Well, if you'd stick to practice a bit more, instead of smoking cheap cigarettes in the wood-shed, you might get

into the Form eleven," said Wharton coolly. "You're big enough, and you could bat well if you chose to stick to it. But I'm not playing any duffers in a match that matters, so long as I'm cricket captain."

"So you think I'm a duffer?" demanded Bolsover fiercely.

"Yes; in fact, I know you are."

And Bob Cherry chuckled softly. Bolsover always seemed to fancy that his size and strength ought to make him cock of the walk, and that by raising his voice sufficiently he could have his own way. But he was not likely to influence the captain of the Remove by those methods.

Bolsover clenched his hands.

"Look here," he exclaimed, in his most bullying tones, "are you going to play me on Saturday?"

"Yes."

Bolsover almost staggered. The calm and matter-of-fact reply took his breath away. He had expected a contemptuous refusal, and he could only imagine that, for once, Harry Wharton had been scared by his bullying demeanour. And that thought made him assume a much more threatening attitude.

"Well, I'm glad you've thought better of it," he said truculently. "I was getting fed up with being passed over, I can tell you. So I'm playing on Saturday?"

"Yes, if you like."

"Good! And I shall expect to be put into the team for the match against the Shell next week," said Bolsover threateningly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You can expect it, but you jolly well won't get it!" he said.

"What!" roared Bolsover.

"Getting deaf?" asked Wharton pleasantly. "You've got no more chance of getting into the Form team next Wednesday than of getting into Greyfriars First. We're giving the duffers a chance on Saturday, and you're one of the duffers. That's where you come in. See?"

Bob Cherry burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Remove walked on, grinning. They left Bolsover standing there, scowling with rage, his hands clenched hard, and slowly realising that he had not, after all, succeeded in bullying the Form captain into giving him that chance on Saturday.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Road to Ruin!

"HAZEL, old man!"

Hazeldene, of the Remove, started, and looked up. He was leaning against one of the old elms in the Close, with his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets, and a wrinkle on his brow. He met the eyes of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry waveringly. Hazeldene had a way of not looking people straight in the eyes.

"Hallo, you fellows!" he said.

"We want you to play on Saturday," said Wharton directly. "You've been chucking the cricket a lot lately. Come down to the nets now for some practice."

"Anybody died?" asked Hazeldene sarcastically.

"No."

"Half a dozen fellows sick?"

"No, ass!"

"Then what do you want me on Saturday for?"

Wharton frowned. He knew that Hazeldene had been hurt by being left out of the team of late, but he did not mean to have any nonsense.

"We want you to play against the Fourth," he said. "Temple, Dabney & Co. are muffs, and there's no need for the Remove eleven to be at full strength. So I'm giving some of the second-rate players a chance."

Hazeldene sneered.

"And I'm one of them?" he asked.

"Yes, you're one of them," assented Wharton.

"Thank you! I used to play in the Form eleven, and my play was considered all right."

"Yes; that was when you had less to do with Bolsover and Snoop, and let cigarettes alone, and didn't sneak out of bounds of a night," said Wharton sharply. "You promised me to give up all that when I put you in the eleven, and you didn't keep your word."

"I suppose a fellow ain't expected to be an angel."

ANSWERS

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"He's expected to be decent," said Bob Cherry.
"Well, never mind that," said Wharton. "You can on Saturday if you like, cigarettes and all."

Hazeldene shrugged his shoulders.

"Thank you for nothing!"

"Do you mean to say that you don't want to play?" demanded Wharton.

"Exactly!"

"You know there are twenty chaps in the Remove to jump at the chance of playing in the Form match."

"Let them jump!" said Hazel, with a sneer. "I'm not doing any jumping at your orders, Harry Wharton."

Had Wharton been dealing with any other fellow in the Remove, he would have turned on his heel, and walked away at that. But he remembered Marjorie and his promise to her to look after Hazel as much as he could. He had pulled Hazel out of more than one scrape, and he was prepared to take a great deal of trouble about the wayward and reckless fellow.

"Now, look here, Hazel, this won't do," said Wharton. "Your play isn't up to form for the Form matches, but you ought to stick to cricket. If you shape well on Saturday, I'll do the best I can for you in matches afterwards."

"You needn't trouble. I'm fed up with cricket, and with you, too!" said Hazel, with a shrug of the shoulders.

Wharton looked at him hard.

"That means that you are at the old game again," he said.

"Have you been meeting Mr. Banks lately?"

Hazeldene flushed crimson.

"Mind your own business!" he exclaimed savagely. "Whom I meet or don't meet has nothing to do with you. You're not my father-confessor, I suppose?"

Wharton's jaw squared grimly.

"I'm captain of the Remove," he said. "We gave Mr. Banks a ducking in the pond at the cross-roads yesterday for badgering a Greyfriars chap. We're quite ready to do it again. And if we ever find a fellow in the Remove talking to that scoundrel, we'll give the fellow a dormitory ragging. That's straight from the shoulder. I should think what's happened to Valence of the Sixth would be a lesson to you."

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, come away!" said Bob Cherry, pulling Wharton by the arm. "The idiot's ratty about something, and it's no good talking to him."

"Hold on a minute, Bob! Look here!" said Wharton, in a gentler tone. "You know this won't do, Hazel. You know your connection with that rascal Banks nearly got you sacked once before. We're your friends, and we want to stand by you."

"Well, you can have a chance," said Hazel bitterly. "I'm hard up. Will you lend me some money?"

"I thought it was something of that sort," said Bob Cherry quietly.

"I'd lend you all the money I could raise willingly enough," said Wharton, "only I should have to know what it was for. If it's for something you can tell me about go ahead, and I'll do my best."

"I don't see why you should ask about my private affairs," said Hazel tartly. "If you like to lend me money, I'm in need of it. If you don't want to, don't gas any more about friendship!"

"How much do you want?"

"Six or seven pounds."

Wharton stared.

"Why don't you say six or seven hundred?" he demanded.

"Where on earth am I to get six or seven pounds from?"

"I dare say you could raise it, if you like. Mauleverer's a friend of yours, and he'd lend you some, and Bull would lend to you, though he won't to me. You could do it if you liked, and it would be a big favour to me."

"You want me to go begging up and down the Remove to raise money for you, without telling me what it's wanted for?"

"I don't want you to. But if you want to be my friend, that's the way to help me."

"I don't know that it would help you. The money would go to that bookmaker, I suppose? A junior in the Remove doesn't want six or seven pounds for himself. I certainly shouldn't dream of borrowing money right and left for you unless I knew what it was for."

"Then shut up about your rotten friendship. You make me sick!"

Harry Wharton clenched his hands hard. He had to make a great effort to restrain himself from knocking Hazeldene down where he stood. But he remembered Marjorie, and held his hand.

"You won't tell me what you want the money for?" he asked quietly.

"No, I won't!"

"Are you in debt?"

"Mind your own business!"

"You cheeky cad!" broke out Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind to give you a hiding. You've been asking for one for a long time."

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EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

Hazeldene's eyes glittered.

"You can begin, if you like," he said. "I'm fed up with you and your precious friendship. I knew all along how much it would be worth, if I really asked for help. I might as well have asked Billy Bunter. Go and eat coke! I'm not playing in the match on Saturday. I'm going to chuck cricket. Now, let me alone!"

"Do you mean that you've got another engagement for Saturday?"

"Yes, I do."

"With Mr. Banks, perhaps?"

"I don't choose to tell you," said Hazeldene. "Leave my affairs alone! You are a little too high and mighty in the Remove, Harry Wharton, and I'm fed up with it."

"You cheeky rotter!"

Smack!

Hazel's open hand came, with a sounding report upon Wharton's face. The captain of the Remove staggered back under the blow, which took him by surprise. He was not much hurt, but his face was flamed with anger.

"Take that!" muttered Hazeldene, between his teeth.

"Now—"

Wharton made a spring forward. Hazeldene struck out again, but in a moment he was in the grasp of the athletic Removite, and swung off his feet. In Wharton's grasp the junior was as an infant. For one minute he was in danger of getting the biggest thrashing he had ever had in his life. Wharton's face, aflame with anger, blazed into the countenance of Hazeldene, which had gone suddenly pale.

Then suddenly Harry Wharton released him.

"You're not worth licking!" he said scornfully. "Go your own way, and be hanged to you!"

And he strode away, leaving the black sheep of the Remove trembling with anger, and gasping for breath. The junior stood under the elm-tree, his face white with passion, and he shook a clenched fist after the captain of the Remove.

"Hang him!" he muttered. "Hang him! I'm done with him now, and all his set! I've got other friends!"

But Hazeldene's other friends were not likely to bring him much happiness or benefit, and in his heart he knew it, as he gazed with a scowling brow after the old chum he had insulted and defied.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The New Fellow in the Sixth.

HARRY WHARTON'S eleven played the Upper Fourth on Saturday afternoon, but Hazeldene did not play in the team. He was not seen about Greyfriars that afternoon at all, and Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, was also missing, and so was Snoop, the sneak of the Remove. It was easy enough for Harry Wharton to guess that they were gone together upon some expedition that would not bear the light; but he said nothing.

After what had passed between them, he could not give Hazeldene advice, and Hazeldene certainly would not have listened to it. The only thing to be done was to let the obstinate fellow go his own way, and take his punishment when it came.

Wharton's idea of playing outsiders for once in a Form match was very popular in the Remove, and it was quite successful; for, though the Remove did not make so good a show as usual, there were enough of the "old guard" in the team to make sure that they were not beaten.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were beaten by thirty runs, which was a margin quite large enough to justify Harry Wharton in his experiment. Bolsover carried out his bat for six in the first innings, and a duck's egg in the second, and he was observed to swagger a little less than usual for some time afterwards.

Besides the Form match between Lower and Upper Fourth, there was a match between Fifth and Sixth that afternoon, and the junior match ending unusually early, most of the Removites crowded round the senior ground, to watch the conclusion of the senior match.

Wingate was captaining the Sixth and Blundell the Fifth, and among the onlookers was Coker, of the Fifth, in a state of suppressed indignation. Coker, of the Fifth, was a mighty man of war, and equal to punching the head of any fellow in the Sixth, and he therefore did not see why he should not bat against the Sixth. Nothing would persuade Coker that he was a bad cricketer, and nothing would persuade Blundell that he was a good one, and so Coker was among the spectators this time. His chums—Potter and Greene—were in the Fifth Form eleven, and they had been very sympathetic. But Blundell was as hard as nails. He told Coker that he—Coker—had lost enough matches for the Form—a remark which was far from solacing Coker for being passed over.

OUT OF BOUNDS!

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with an air of great astonishment, as the Co. of the Remove came upon the senior ground. "Bowled out, Coker?"

"No!" growled Coker.

Wingate's team were in the field, and Blundell and Potter were finishing up the innings for the Fifth. The Removites assumed that Coker had been playing and was out, though, as he was not in flannels, they really had no excuse to assuming anything of the sort.

"Stumped?" asked Frank Nugent sympathetically.

He had been only a spectator himself that day, but he looked quite cheerful about it. But there is a difference between being left out to give a second-rate fellow a chance, and being left out because you are second-rate yourself.

"No!" snapped Coker.

"Caught out?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No!"

"Hit the wicket?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No!" snorted Coker.

"Leg before?"

"No!" Coker roared.

"Punched the umpire, and ordered off?" ventured Ogilvy, of the Remove.

"No, you young ass!"

"Then how did you get out?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I haven't been in!" growled Coker. "I wasn't played!"

"You don't say so, Coker!" exclaimed the whole band of the Removites in chorus, and with expressions of the greatest astonishment.

Coker was a little mollified. It was said of old that a prophet is not without honour excepting in his own country. The Fifth did not think much of Horace Coker's cricket, but the Removites evidently estimated it at its true value. And Coker thawed.

"Yes; they left me out," he said.

"Giving the poorer players a chance, I suppose?" said Nugent blandly.

"Yes; as a matter of fact, that's what they are doing," said Coker. "But Blundell didn't mean it that way. He said I wasn't up to a match with the Sixth! Rot, of course!"

"The Fifth will lose," said Bob Cherry solemnly.

The chums of the Remove suppressed a chuckle. There was not much doubt that the Fifth would lose, for they were close upon the end of their second innings, and they wanted sixty to win. And it was doubtful if they would get six. But Coker nodded.

"Oh, they'll lose!" he exclaimed, with conviction. "I told Blundell they would lose if they left me out! And they're doing it!"

"A Daniel come to judgment!" grinned Nugent. "A giddy Daniel come to judgment! And do you mean to say that Blundell disregarded a solemn warning like that, Coker?"

"Yes; the ass!"

"Then he deserves to lose by sixty runs!" said Bob Cherry.

"If he had played you, he might have had the distinction of losing by six hundred instead of sixty! Ta-ta!"

And the juniors scampered off before the enraged Coker could get at them.

Harry Wharton & Co. came round the other side of the field, and stopped near the pavilion to look on. Blundell's wicket had fallen now, and the Fifth were last man in. But Potter and Fitzgerald, who had the wickets now, were keeping them going, though they were not doing much in the run-getting line. The innings looked as though it would last into dusk, after all.

Wingate yawned, and looked round at the group of juniors. The Removites grinned at him cheerfully.

"Back up, Skipper!" said Bob Cherry. "We beat the Fifth last week, so there's no real reason why you shouldn't beat 'em this week."

Wingate laughed.

"You cheeky young rascal!" he said good-humouredly.

"What's the time now?"

"Nearly half-past six."

"That old innings will waggle on for an hour yet," said Nugent. "You can't come in and have any tea, Wingate. Those two chaps are going to stick to those two wickets like glue to a pair of bags."

"There goes the ball again!" said Bob Cherry. "You needn't move—it's not coming your way. There you are—short slip has to leave off yawning and pick it up. My hat! Next time I play cricket with the Fifth, I shall bring a hammock!"

"They'll keep me here after half-past," said Wingate.

"Will you kids do something for me?"

"Like a bird!"

The juniors of Greyfriars would have jumped at the chance of doing anything for Wingate, at any time. The captain of the school was the idol of the Lower Forms.

"What do you want us to do," asked Tom Brown—"apply

an electric wire to Potter over there, and make him hit out?"

"Ha, ha! No. There's a new fellow coming in the Sixth to-day. He's come a jolly long way, and I was going to look out for him," said Wingate. "I expected this match to be over sooner, but they haven't played Coker, so their innings have lasted longer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's coming by the six train, so he may come in at the gates any minute," said Wingate. "Will you kids go down to the gates and meet him, and take him into the House and show him the Sixth Form quarters? He's to have Valence's old study; it's empty now. If you like to do that for me—"

"Like a shot!" said Harry Wharton.

"Like a volley, you mean!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll all go together!"

"No larks, mind!" said Wingate sternly. "Larks aren't allowed on fellows in the Sixth."

"My dear old boy, I'd as soon think of larking with my own great-grandfather!" said Bob Cherry, in a shocked tone.

"Besides, with such grave and respectable young fellows as we are—"

"Oh, cut off!" said Wingate, laughing.

And the Removites strolled away from the cricket-field, down to the school gates. Bob Cherry yawned portentously.

"Not much there to watch, anyway," he said. "The Fifth can't play cricket for toffee. I wonder what the new chap is like? Jelly queer thing for a new chap to come into the Sixth. They generally start lower down in the coll than that."

"Yes; it's queer," said Nugent. "Perhaps some chap who's been at another school, and changed out; it sometimes happens."

"Sacked, you mean?"

"Well, the Head wouldn't take a chap who'd been sacked from another school," said Harry Wharton. "But the chap's parents may have moved in this direction, and they may want him to be near them. Wingate said he had come a long way. We'll ornament the gates until he turns up."

And the juniors lined up against the gate, and watched the road. Gosling, the porter, came out of his lodge, and regarded them with a frown. He never saw the Removites in his quarters without apprehension, which was generally justified. The chums of the Remove took off their caps with great solemnity, and bowed to Gosling with great embarrassment, but this act of politeness did not seem to placate the porter. On the contrary, it called up a darker frown to his rugged brow.

"Young himps!" murmured Gosling, loud enough for the juniors to hear. "Wot's the little game now—hey? Wot I says is this 'ere—wot's the little game?"

"We're waiting for a little boy," Wharton explained. "Would you mind going back into your lodge, Gosy, old man?"

"Wot lor?" demanded Gosling.

"There's a new chap coming. It might make him nervous if he saw you suddenly," Wharton explained. "I think that your chivvy ought to be shown to a new chap by degrees. It's inconsiderate to spring a thing like that on a new fellow all at once."

Gosling went back into his lodge and slammed the door, and the juniors chuckled. They generally had the best of it in any little argument with Gosling.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, looking out into the road. "I wonder if this is the chap?"

The Removites all followed his glance at once.

A lad of about seventeen was coming down the road from the village, with a bag in his hand. He was a fellow of slight build, with a face so dark as to suggest foreign blood in his veins. He wore a light coat and a silk hat. His features were somewhat small, but his eyebrows were bushy and very dark, and his hair somewhat long and quite black.

He halted outside the open gates, and looked at the juniors inquiringly.

"Is this Greyfriars?" he asked.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

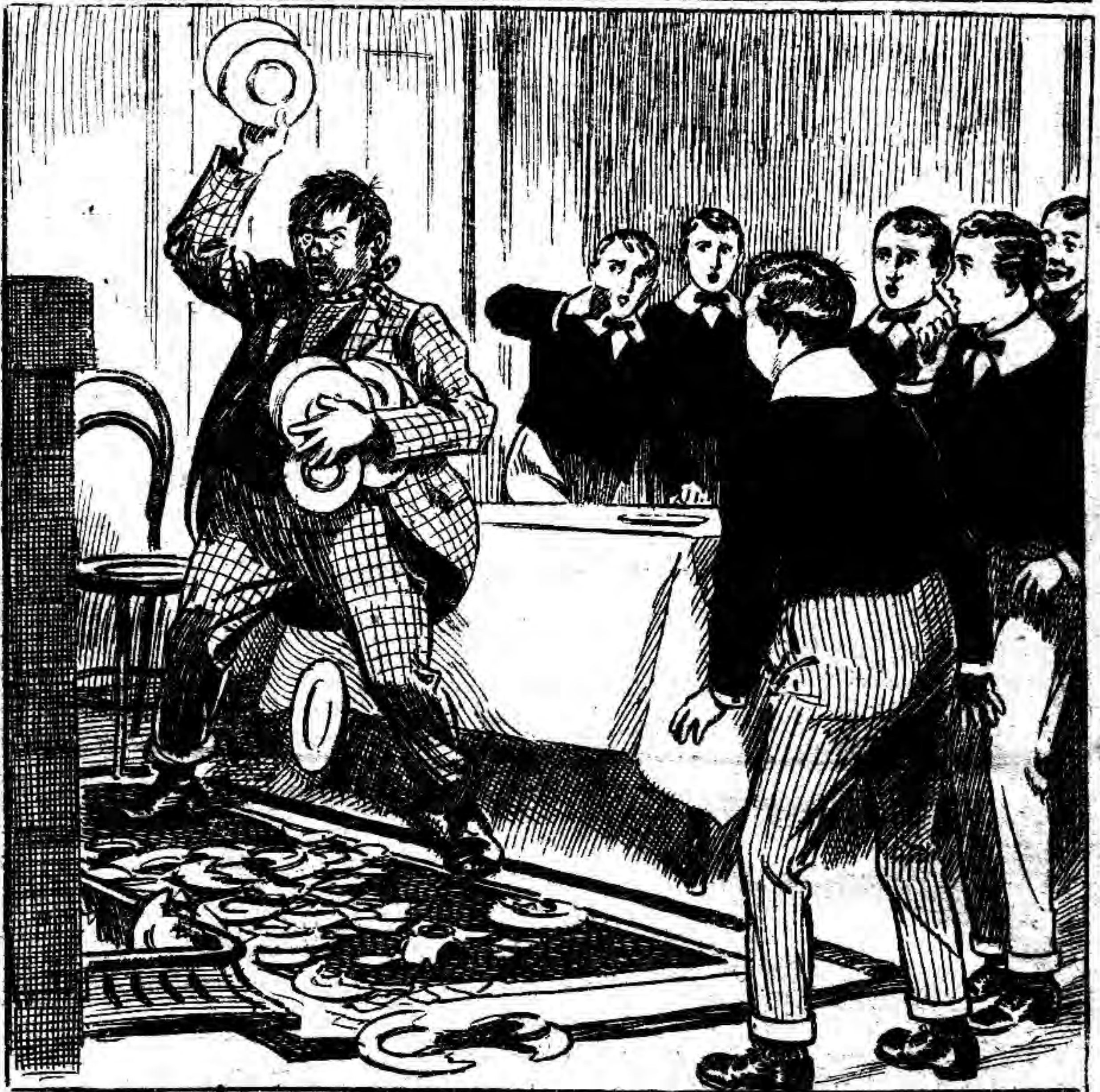
Trevelyan of the Sixth.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked at the new senior with great interest. A fellow who came into the Sixth, instead of passing up from the Lower Forms was an object of interest, and the new fellow's foreign look made them wonder where he came from. He looked foreign enough, but his voice was quite English.

"Yes, this is Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton. "Are you the new chap?"

"Yes—I'm a new boy for Greyfriars, if that is what you mean. I have just come up from Cornwall."

"Ah! Wingate said you were coming a long way," Nugent remarked.



The situation was growing very peculiar, not to say intolerable. To be almost on fighting terms with a guest was a new experience to the juniors of St. Jim's. But they had never had such a peculiar guest before. Cousin Aubrey was something quite out of the ordinary, for he seemed to find a great solace in the smashing of the crockery. Crash! crash! crash! Plates and glasses, and cups and saucers and dishes, went crashing into the grate, till the pile of broken china rose high before the fender. (An amazing incident from the long, complete school tale of Tom Marry & Co., entitled "GUSSY'S CANADIAN COUSIN!" by Martin Clifford, contained in this week's issue of our popular companion paper. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

"Who is Wingate?"

"Wingate of the Sixth—captain of the school," said Nugent. "He asked us to hang round the gate and meet you when you came, as he's busy with a funeral. We're to show you the Sixth Form quarters."

"Thank you," said the new boy. "You are juniors, I suppose?"

"Yes. We're in the Remove—most important Form at Greyfriars, but not the top Form," said Bob Cherry. "Ever heard of the Greyfriars Remove?"

"No!"

"Then you haven't lived. But we'll give you something to cure all that," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Wingate said we weren't to lark with you because you are going into the Sixth. Awfully high and sacred institution, the Sixth, you know—may be looked at, but mustn't be touched."

The new fellow did not smile.

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"Then you can show me the way in," he said. "One of you can carry my bag."

"We don't fag for the Sixth," said Bob. "We had a row over that some time ago, and our rights were acknowledged by all the giddy powers. But we'll carry your bag out of politeness because you're a new chap."

And he took the bag, which had the initials "G. T." stamped on it.

The new boy walked into the Close with the juniors. He was head and shoulders over all of them but Bob Cherry.

"Mind telling us your name?" asked Tom Brown.

"Trevelyan."

"Belong to Cornwall?"

"Yes."

"There's a Cornish chap here in the Remove—chap named Trelice," said Bob Cherry. "One of the best."

The new boy nodded.

OUT OF BOUNDS!

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"You are thinking that I look like a foreigner," he said abruptly.

"Well, perhaps we did think a little that way," Bob Cherry admitted.

"There are a good many people in Cornwall with Spanish blood in them," Trevelyan explained. "Lot of Spaniards were wrecked there at the time of the Spanish Armada. I'm partly a Spaniard by descent."

"Oh, I see!"

The juniors walked on to the School House with the new senior. There was something about him that puzzled them a little, though they could hardly have said what it was. They entered the School House, and piloted the new fellow towards the Sixth Form quarters.

Harry Wharton opened the door of the vacant study which had belonged to the expelled Sixth-Former.

"This is your room," he said.

Trevelyan entered the study and glanced round him. The room looked very uncomfortable, with the afternoon sun slanting in at the windows.

"The room is furnished," he remarked. "I understood that fellows at these schools had to provide their own furniture."

"So they do. The school starts you with a table and a chair," said Harry Wharton. "But this study belonged to a chap who left rather suddenly, and he didn't take his props. I don't know whether he's going to send for them; he hasn't done so, so far. So you have fallen into clover."

"Chap left suddenly," repeated Trevelyan. "What did he leave for?"

"Sacked!"

"What do you mean by 'sacked'?"

"Expelled," Bob Cherry translated. "He got mixed up with a gang of poachers, and there was a row, and a keeper on Sir Hilton Popper's estate was hurt. The chap had to go."

"What was his name?"

"Valence."

"And he isn't coming back?"

"No fear!"

"Sure of that?" asked Trevelyan.

"Yes, rather! His people tried to get the Head to take him back, but it was no go."

"Oh!" said Trevelyan, apparently interested in the history of his predecessor in the study. "What sort of a fellow was he?"

"Oh, he wasn't so bad!" said Bob Cherry, who had a natural repugnance to speaking badly of a fellow behind his back, though he liked Valence little enough. "He was rather soft, you know; and I dare say he was led into what he did. His sister is a splendid girl, and she came up to ask the Head to let him off, but it wasn't any use. I believe the Head would have done it if he could. He's an old sport, you know. But Valence was altogether too thick. It might have been a prison case, you know—with the name of Greyfriars in all the papers—and that would have been simply awful."

"Yes, I suppose it would," said Trevelyan thoughtfully.

"This chap—what did you say his name was—"

"Valence."

"Yes, Valence. This Valence seems to have been a reckless sort of an ass," said Trevelyan. "I suppose everybody here was glad when he went?"

"Oh, I don't know about that?" said Harry Wharton uneasily. "We were all sorry."

Trevelyan looked at him curiously.

"Why were you sorry, if he was such a bad lot?" he asked.

"Well, it's rotten to get it in the neck, as Valence did, even if he was a bad lot," said Harry. "Besides, he had his good points. There are worse fellows than Valence at Greyfriars, only they haven't been bowled out. And a chap can't be all bad, to have such a jolly good sister as Valence has. You see, he hadn't any backbone—he was his own enemy. When he was with Loder and Carne and that lot he was a bully, like them; and when he was with Griggs, the poacher, he was a poacher. But when he had sense enough to stick to old Courtney for a chum he was decent. And we were all sorry that he got it so hard at the finish."

"Well, I dare say he'd be glad to know you were sorry for him," said Trevelyan. "Thank you for showing me in here."

"Oh, that's nothing!"

And the Removites departed, leaving Trevelyan alone in his study. In the Sixth Form passage the juniors stopped and looked at one another.

"Well, what do you think of him?" asked Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry rubbed his nose in a very thoughtful way.

"Blessed if I know," he said. "What do you think?"

"I don't know."

And that was the only conclusion that the heroes of the Remove could come to. They did not know what to make

of Trevelyan. There was something about him that puzzled them, and they could not in the least tell what it was.

Perhaps it was his peculiar, foreign look, or the fact that he had told them that he had Spanish blood in his veins. There had been no Spanish boys at Greyfriars in their time. Certainly there was something about him that made them feel strangely curious, though they were not given to curiosity as a rule.

As they came out of the School House again they met Wingate and some of the Sixth coming in. Wingate called to Harry Wharton.

"Has that chap come?" he asked.

"Yes. We've shoved him into Valence's study."

"Thanks!"

"Did you beat the Fifth?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin. Wingate laughed.

"Yes, we beat them," he said.

"Lucky for you they weren't playing Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate and Courtney went into the Sixth Form passage and knocked at the door of the study that had been Valence's. It was opened by the dark-skinned, dark-haired new boy from Cornwall.

"Come in!" he said.

The two prefects entered the study. Wingate glanced over the stranger with a quick, comprehending glance that took him all in at once. Then he held out his hand.

"I'm Wingate," he said—"head prefect. You're Trevelyan, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Glad to meet you! This is Courtney, second prefect. You've come all the way from Cornwall to-day?"

"Yes. Won't you sit down?"

"No; I've got to go and change—we've just been playing the Fifth. Just looked in to make your acquaintance," said Wingate, with a smile. "You must be tired after such a jolly long journey. Will you come to tea in my study—a quarter of an hour?"

The new fellow hesitated a moment.

"Thank you, with pleasure," he said.

"I'll expect you, then. I hope you'll like Greyfriars."

"I'm sure I shall."

"Good!"

And Wingate quitted the study with Courtney.

"Looks a queer sort of a bird, Arthur," said Wingate, as he turned into his own study.

"Yes," said Courtney.

There was a queer intonation in Courtney's voice that made Wingate turn and look at him sharply.

"Hallo?" he exclaimed inquiringly.

Courtney turned his eyes away.

"What are you thinking about, Arthur?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Know the new chap?"

"Don't know anybody in Cornwall," said Courtney. "I'll go and get changed. You haven't asked me to tea."

"Ass! Of course you're coming to tea!" said Wingate, laughing. "I believe you've taken a prejudice against the new chap, and you haven't known him five minutes."

Courtney did not seem to hear, as he hurried out of the study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry is Very Clumsy.

"HAZELDENE! Where's Hazel?"

Bob Cherry was asking the question up and down the House. But nobody had seen Hazeldene of the Lower Fourth.

"He's gone out," said Russell of the Remove. "I think he went out with Vernon-Smith and Snoop. What do you want him for?"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"I don't want him!" he growled. "But Wingate's having a high old tea in his study, and it's Hazel's turn to tag."

"He's forgotten, then," said Bulstrode.

Another snort from Bob Cherry.

"If he were here, I'd give him a thick ear for forgetting!" he growled. "What right has the silly ass to forget? Groo!"

"You're next on the list!" grinned Bulstrode.

"I know that!" grunted Bob Cherry. "That's what I want to find Hazel for."

And he stamped away. Bob Cherry was due in Harry Wharton's study to tea, and the tea in No. 1 was to be something rather extra, and half a dozen fellows were coming to it. And Bob did not want to be away, even to tag for Wingate. But there was no choice in the matter.

Fagging the Remove had been abolished at Greyfriars. There had always been a struggle over it, and the Remove

had risen up against it at last, and would have no more of it, and, to smooth matters over, the Sixth had renounced their right—if they had ever had any—of fagging the Lower Fourth. But in favour of Wingate, the popular captain of Greyfriars, the juniors had made an exception. The rule having once been established, Wingate had never thought of breaking it, as some of the bullies of the Sixth did—fellows like Loder and Carne, who never would play the game. But the Removites had elected of their own accord to fag for Wingate. It was an honour; and they had declared that they would not leave him at the mercy of inky fags of the Third and Second Forms. For a fellow to show unwillingness to fag for old Wingate, was to bring down upon himself the wrath of the whole Remove, and even the truculent Bolsover had never "got his ears up" on that question. If a fellow had shown any unwillingness, the Greyfriars captain would probably have refused to be fagged for by a Removite again, and the whole Form would have felt hurt and insulted.

Regular turns were taken with the fagging for the school captain, and if a fellow happened to be absent when he was wanted, another fellow had to take his place without letting Wingate suspect that there was any want of harmony in the matter. By which means several slackers succeeded in leaving their fagging duties to other fellows. Hazeldene had evidently done so on this particular Saturday afternoon, and as Bob Cherry was next on the list for duty, he had either to fag in Hazel's place, or to let the captain of the school know that a Removite was shirking the self-imposed duty.

Which was not to be thought of. Bob Cherry looked into No. 1 Study, where Wharton, and Nugent, and Johnny Bull, and Bulstrode, and Lord Mauleverer, and Dick Penfold, and Mark Linley, and Micky Desmond, and a couple more fellows, were crowded, amid great preparations.

"You'll have to count me out," said Bob Cherry. "I'll look in later."

"Oh, rot!" said Harry Wharton. "You've got to come. What's the matter?"

"Hazel's out, and I'm going to fag for Georgie!" Georgie was an affectionate way of alluding to Wingate—not in his presence, by the way.

"Oh, the cad!" said John Bull.

Bob Cherry nodded, and made his way to Wingate's study. The captain of Greyfriars had changed after the match, and was standing by the window, talking with Walker of the Sixth.

Bob Cherry did not ask for permission to enter. He was there on duty. He came in, and set to work in a business-like way. He raked up the fire and mended it, and jammed the kettle on, and went to the cupboard. Wingate looked at him with an amused smile. If all the fellows in the Sixth had been like Wingate there would never have arisen any question in the Remove of abolishing fags for the top Form.

"How many to tea, Wingate?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully. He was inwardly exasperated against the missing fag, but he would not let Wingate see anything of that.

"Four!"

"Toast and eggs, I suppose?"

"Yes; and jam and cakes," said Wingate. "You can cut down to Mrs. Mumble's and get the stuff. Tell her to put it to my account."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry cut off cheerfully. Walker looked after him and grunted.

"Those young beasts won't fag for me," he said. "I have to have an inky monster from the Second. Nugent burnt my toast as black as a cinder yesterday, and when I licked him with a cricket-stump he kicked my shins. Fact!"

"Hard cheese!" said Wingate, laughing. "You'd better keep an eye on me, and follow in your father's footsteps, and perhaps the Remove will take you under their wing. They're a set of queer little beggars."

Bob Cherry was back in a wonderfully short space of time. The kettle was singing, and he warmed the teapot, and set it by the fire to dry, and then began to make toast. While he was making toast, he had a little saucepan containing a dozen eggs on the fire, and kept one eye on them. He sliced up whole loaves for the toast, and made it in nicely-browned rounds; Bob Cherry knew how Wingate liked it, and he knew that four seniors would be able to handle a great deal of toast after a cricket match.

Courtney came into the study, and Bob Cherry turned a ruddy face from the fire and gave him a grin. But there was no answering smile from Courtney. His usually sunny face was dark and thoughtful. He seemed to be in a brown study, and he replied absently to what Wingate and Walker said to him. A few minutes later the dark face of the new senior looked into the study.

"Is this Wingate's study?" he asked.

"Here you are!" said Wingate cheerfully. "Come in. How long are you going to be with that toast, Cherry?"

"Nuff to go on with!" said Bob Cherry, perspiring.

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EVERY
TUESDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

"This is warm weather to be sticking over a fire. I wouldn't do it for anybody but you, George."

Wingate laughed, and lifted the dish of toast that was already made to the table.

"The heggs is done, as Gosling would say," said Bob Cherry, turning them out. "And I'll make the rest of the toast in two twos. You can wire in, my sons!"

And Bob Cherry knelt to his task again, while the four seniors sat down round the table. Wingate was kindness itself, and he had already discerned that the new senior was not quite at his ease, which he attributed to his new surroundings. Wingate talked cheerfully, and the talk ran on Greyfriars, cricket, and other kindred subjects, but the new fellow said little. Courtney was quite silent. Sometimes he looked at the new boy, and mostly at the tablecloth, and munched toast mechanically. It was very clear that there was something on Courtney's mind.

The seniors expected Trevelyan to give them some information about himself, and he did so willingly enough. He had not been intended to go to a public school, it appeared, and his uncle had had a tutor for him, but his uncle was going abroad on business now, and so he was sent to Greyfriars. That was how it came about that he was going directly into the Sixth. His uncle was the owner of a tin-mine in Cornwall, and had been an old Greyfriars boy. That much imparted, Trevelyan dropped the subject, and showed a great interest in matters appertaining to the school.

Bob Cherry finished a mountain of toast and placed it upon the table. Then he took the teapot to make tea a second time. When that was done, his duties in Wingate's study would be finished, and he would be free to rejoin his chums in No. 1 in the Remove. Bob Cherry was looking decidedly red and warm after his toast-making exploits. Walker had refilled the teapot with hot water, and Bob Cherry, not being aware of that fact, lifted it carelessly, and a stream of weak tea ran out of the spout. There was a terrific yell from Trevelyan. A splash of the tea had gone right across his hand, which was stretched out to take a fresh piece of toast.

"Ow, ow!" he roared.

He jumped up, knocking the chair back, and squeezed the hand under his other arm.

"I—I'm sorry!" stammered Bob Cherry. "I thought the teapot was empty. I'm sorry, Trevelyan."

"Clumsy young ass!" said Walker.

Trevelyan made a grimace, but he kept his temper.

"Never mind; it's all right," he said, squeezing his scalded hand. Bob Cherry looked anxiously at that hand, hoping that the water had not been hot enough to scald. Then all of a sudden the teapot slipped from Bob's hand and fell with a crash to the floor, breaking into twenty pieces.

Bob Cherry remained standing dumbfounded, his jaw open, his eyes staring.

"M-m-my hat!" he stammered.

Trevelyan looked at him, startled, and then suddenly a wave of colour passed over his dusky face, and he thrust the scalded hand into his pocket.

"I—I think I'll go and bathe this," he stammered. "Excuse me, you fellows." And he ran out of the study without waiting for a reply.

Bob Cherry still stood where he was, dumbfounded.

Wingate looked at him sharply.

"Well, of all the young asses," he exclaimed. "What did you drop that teapot for?"

"The—the teapot!" stammered Bob Cherry.

"What's the matter with you? Are you off your rocker?"

"N-n-no!"

"Go and fetch Courtney's teapot, and buck-up."

"Ye-es. All right."

Bob Cherry still seemed in a dazed state. He went out of the study like a fellow in a dream, and came back with Courtney's teapot, and made the tea again without a word.

"You can cut now," said Wingate.

"All right!" gasped Bob Cherry.

He quitted the study. In the passage he paused to pass his hand across his brow, and to gasp.

"Am I dreaming, or going off my rocker?" he murmured. "My only summer hat! What does it mean?" And he ran off to the Remove passage at top speed.

"I hope the new chap isn't scalded badly," said Wingate uneasily. "Hallo, here he is! How's your hand Trevelyan?"

Trevelyan re-entered the study.

"All serene," he replied. "The water wasn't very hot. I'm all right."

"I'm glad of that."

And the seniors went on with their tea, little dreaming of the wonderful news that Bob Cherry was even then imparting to his chums in No. 1 Study in the Remove passage.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing Adventure!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were half-way through their tea when Bob Cherry burst into the junior study, gasping. He came in on the run, and just stopped himself in time to avoid dashing into the tea-table. The juniors stared at him in surprise, and Harry Wharton jumped up.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed. "Loder after you?"

"No!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Then what's happened?"

"I'm dreaming, that's all—dreaming in the daylight," said Bob Cherry. "Either that, or I'm going off my rocker."

"It's the rocker that's to blame," said Frank Nugent calmly. "You remember last Wednesday you told us there was something wrong with the Head—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bob Cherry. "This is serious. I suppose you can keep a secret, you fellows? Shut the door, Harry."

"What on earth's happened?"

"Shut the door, and I'll tell you. See that Bunter isn't nosing about the passage first!" gasped Bob.

Harry Wharton glanced into the passage to make sure that the Peeping Tom of the Remove was not there, and then closed the door. The feed was suspended by common consent. The Removites realised that something extraordinary must have happened to make Bob Cherry act in this extremely peculiar way.

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "What's the trouble, you know?"

"Go ahead, Bob!"

"Pile in!"

Bob Cherry looked round over the assembled juniors. They were all friends of the Famous Four, and could be relied upon.

"It will have to be a secret," he said.

"We're all old pals here," said Johnny Bull. "Pile in. This suspense is killing me, as the nigger said when they hung him."

"Get it off your chest, Bob."

"I've been fagging tea for Wingate."

"We know that."

"The new chap was there—Trevelyan, the new senior."

"Extraordinary!" said Frank Nugent gravely.

"Shut up, Franky. Don't be an ass!"

"But it was extraordinary!" said Bob Cherry, in a gasping voice. "I upset some hot tea over his paw, and he yelled."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, any common or garden junior would have done that," said Frank Nugent disparagingly. "I'm not going to be astonished unless you hand out something more startling than that."

"You know that he's a dark chap," said Bob Cherry. "His face and hands are dark as an Italian organ-grinder's. He told us a yarn about being partly a Spaniard. Well, when I saw where the hot tea had swopped over his paw, what do you think—"

"Give it up!"

"Ask us another!"

"It had come off!" said Bob Cherry, in a thrilling whisper. The juniors stared at him blankly.

"His hand had come off!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Impossible!"

Bob Cherry snorted.

"You ass, no! Of course, his hand hadn't come off!" he yelled. "The dark complexion on his hand had come off!"

"What!"

"Sure as Euclid is Euclid!" said Bob Cherry solemnly. "There was a white patch on his hand where the colour had been scalded off."

"Great Scott!"

"But—but it's too thick," said Harry Wharton, staring at Bob in bewilderment. "Do you mean to say that his complexion is false? What on earth should a chap want to stain his skin for?"

"I'm not telling you what he wanted to do it for, but that he's done it," said Bob Cherry. "He's done it. I tell you I saw the white skin where the brown stain was rubbed off in the hot water."

"It's amazing."

"Begad!"

"Is it a jape, then?" said Nugent doubtfully. "It's just the same game that we played on the Fifth last week—staining our skins, and passing ourselves off as French chaps. But we shouldn't have had the nerve to come to Greyfriars as new boys. That would have been a little bit too thick even for a Remove jape."

"If it's a jape, I can't catch on to it," said Bob Cherry.

"But one thing's jolly certain, that chap is no darker than I am, under that giddy complexion of his. And if you got his togs off, I don't believe the rest of him would be the same colour as his hands and face. It would be too much jolly trouble for a japer to go all over his giddy carcass with that stuff."

"It simply beats the deck!" said Johnny Bull. "I suppose you're quite sure. You said you were dreaming just now, you know."

"Well, it seemed like a dream at first," said Bob Cherry. "Who'd have thought it. And I come to think, now, that Courtney was looking awfully queer all the time I was there. I wonder if he's caught on, too."

"If it's a jape, we oughtn't to give the chap away," Harry Wharton said thoughtfully. "I can't make it out. Could it be a Highcliffe senior over here on a practical joke?"

"Blessed if I think it possible. This chap must have come up from Cornwall, as he says. Fellows don't drop into public schools by chance. There must have been letters to and from the Head. He must have a real uncle in Cornwall—he must be genuine. Yet—"

"Yet he's in disguise."

"Yes."

"It's a giddy mystery. In disguise! I—I suppose you're quite sure?"

"Of course I'm sure!" roared Bob Cherry, getting exasperated. "Do you think I'm off my giddy rocker?"

"Well, I shouldn't wonder—"

"Look here, Frank Nugent—"

"Peace, my sons!" said Harry Wharton. "We may take it that Bobby is sure. But I can't make it out, for one, and I don't know that it's any bizney of ours, for another thing. Ought we to keep this to ourselves?"

"If it's a jape—yes."

"But if it isn't."

"If it isn't a jape, what is it?"

"A swindle of some kind, though I can't understand it. But it would be jolly like sneaking to tell about the chap."

"Yes, we can't do that."

"At the same time, if it's some swindler who's planted himself on the Head by some trick, he ought to be shown up," said Mark Linley.

"Yes, rather."

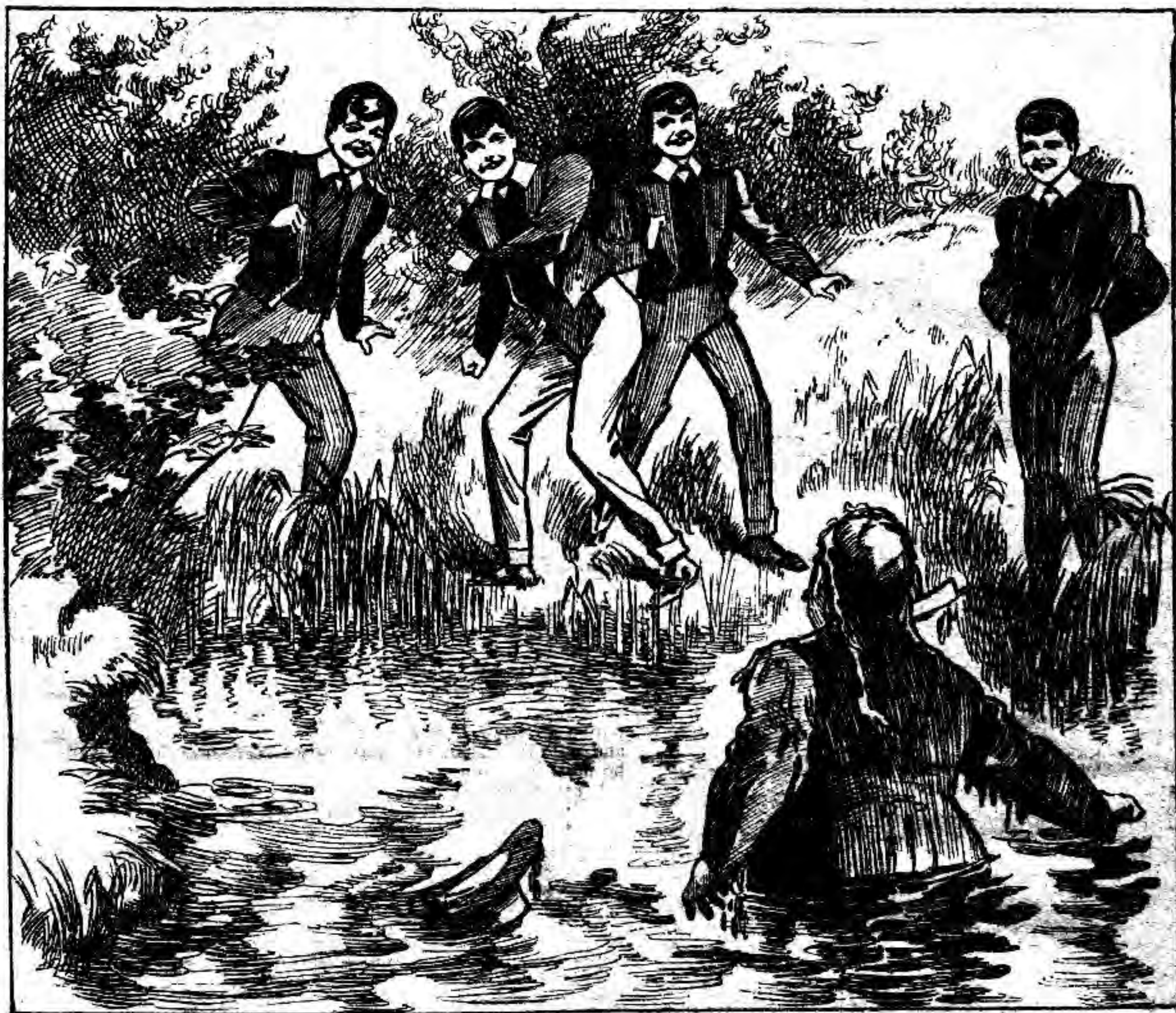
"Suppose we go and see him, and make him own up the facts, after tea," said Bob Cherry, after a pause. "We can

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"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Greyfriars Juniors, as the rascally bookmaker rose to the surface of the shallow pond again. Mud and green slime and ooze clung to him; he was festooned like a mermaid, and spluttering with wrath and mud and water. "You young scoundrels! Owp! I'm ch-ch-ch-oked!" he spluttered. (See Chapter 3.)

tackle him by himself, so that if there's no harm in him, we sha'n't be giving him away."

"Good egg!" said Wharton, in relief. "That's a jolly good idea. And now let's get on with the washing."

And the juniors resumed their interrupted tea. But their thoughts ran upon the mystery of the new fellow in the Sixth; and they talked of little else. Nugent suggested that it wouldn't do for a big crowd to visit the new fellow on inquiries; and it was agreed that Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton alone should go. Good as that feed was in No. 1 Study, the juniors were glad when it was over, and they were free to carry out that visit to Valence's old study where the new fellow had his quarters. The strange discovery made by Bob Cherry was weighing upon their minds.

But as Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry quitted the study after tea, there was an occurrence that drove out of their minds, for the time, the mystery of the new senior in the Sixth. A junior came along the Remove passage, with slow and halting steps, and a face so white that, as the Removites saw it, they uttered a simultaneous cry.

"Hazel, what's the matter?"

Hazeldene did not answer—he did not seem to hear. In fact, it was doubtful if he heard the chums of the Remove speak to him. He passed them, with that strange, unsteady step, that grim, hard, white face, and went into his study and locked the door.

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THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

What Courtney Knew.

WINGATE and his companions had finished their tea in the Greyfriars captain's study. Trevelyan did not seem to be thinking any further of the accident to his hand. Probably he did not know what Bob Cherry had observed with regard to that. The hand, whether it had been washed white by the hot water or not, was its dark colour again now, so perhaps Trevelyan's hurried visit to his own room had not been merely for the purpose of bathing it. Courtney was still maintaining his glum silence. The other seniors, Wingate and Walker, looked at him in amazement more than once, and Courtney noticed it once or twice, and coloured awkwardly. But he did not come out of the deep thought into which he was plunged.

Trevelyan rose to go to his study at last. He took a cheerful leave of the Sixth-Formers, and left before the others. Then Wingate turned an inquiring glance upon Arthur Courtney.

"Got 'em?" he asked.

Courtney started.

"Eh? Got what?"

"Em!" said Wingate. "The doleful dumps, or the tooth-ache, or the jim-jams, or what. You look as if you were going to a funeral. You must have cheered the new fellow

up wonderfully with your bright and cheery ways—I don't think!"

Courtney laughed, and coloured.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I—I've been thinking."

"What's the trouble?"

"Oh, nothing in particular. I—I think I'll get along," said Courtney. "You must excuse me for being such a killjoy—I can't help it. I've got 'em, as you say."

And he quitted the study.

"Well, my hat!" said Walker, with a whistle. "I must say I never saw Courtney like that before. He's usually quite cheery and chippy."

"Thinking about that beast Valence, I expect," said Wingate, with a frown. "We never seem to be able to get rid of that fellow. He seems to be sticking to us like Julius Cæsar to the giddy conspirators."

"Oh, Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!" grinned Walker. "Valence has left his ghost behind him to haunt Courtney, I suppose."

"That's about the size of it. And the fellow was such a rotter!" said Wingate. "He left a bad taste in my mouth when he went. Well, thank goodness, we sha'n't see him at Greyfriars any more!"

Courtney was looking blacker and gloomier than ever as he went out of the study. He moved along slowly to the study that had been Valence's, and found two juniors of the Remove knocking at the door.

"What do you kids want here?" asked the prefect.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry exchanged glances. They liked Courtney of the Sixth, but they had no intention of confiding to him the discovery Bob Cherry had made about the new senior.

"We want to see Trevelyan," said Wharton.

"Well, you can cut along now."

"It's rather important," said Bob Cherry.

Courtney made a gesture of dismissal, and then his expression changed. A voice had called out "Come in!" from within, but they did not open the door yet.

"You were fagging at tea for Wingate, Cherry," said Courtney slowly.

"Yes, Courtney," said Bob, on his guard at once. "We may as well get along, Harry, if Courtney's going in now."

"Hold on a minute," said Courtney. "What made you drop the teapot in Wingate's room?"

Walker said it was because I was a clumsy ass."

"Don't talk rot, Cherry! You were startled about something. What was it?"

"Always was clumsy, you know."

Courtney frowned.

"Was it anything in connection with the new fellow?" he asked quietly.

Bob Cherry coloured. He was a very bad hand at concealing anything, and his thoughts could generally be read in his face.

"Well, you—you see—" he stammered.

"Yes, I see," said Courtney. "The new fellow has struck you as being something a bit peculiar, and you were going to ask him questions."

Bob Cherry could only stare at Courtney. The prefect had read everything in his face, and Bob Cherry could not deny facts.

"I—I—" he stammered.

"I quite understand," said Courtney. "Now, look here, Cherry. I'm a prefect, and you can leave this matter in my hands. Do you understand?"

"But—but—"

"I won't ask you what you've seen, or what you think you've seen, or anything about it," said Courtney. "I'll ask you not to jaw about it in the school, that's all."

"Then—then you know—"

"Never mind what I know. No need to compare notes about that. Have you been jawing the new fellow over already?"

"I don't keep any secrets from my chums," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, that's all right, but don't let them jaw it over the school. A still tongue shows a wise head, kid."

"But—but if you know—"

"It's jolly queer," said Harry Wharton. "Perhaps we ought to tell you—"

"Don't tell me anything. Just keep your mouths shut, and leave it in my hands," said Courtney. "You know I'm a prefect, and I take all responsibility. I suppose that satisfies you?"

"Certainly!" said Harry at once. "But—"

"Never mind the buts. Cut off, and don't bother the new fellow in any way. Come, I'm speaking not only as a prefect, but—but it would be a favour to me," said Courtney. "You know I'm to be relied on to do what's right, I suppose?"

"Why, of course!"

"Then cut off."

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"Right-ho! I'm not sorry to leave the matter alone," said Bob Cherry. "I'd rather have nothing to do with it, if you think fit."

"Good, then!"

The two juniors walked away, looking very perplexed, but upon the whole, satisfied that a prefect of the Sixth had taken the matter in hand. They did not speak until they were out of the Sixth-Form passage.

"Courtney knows!" said Bob Cherry then, with a deep breath.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"We can leave it to him," he said. "We were wondering whether we ought to tell a prefect, and this saves us the trouble."

"Right you are!"

Courtney watched the juniors until they were out of sight. Then he tapped at the study door and entered. Trevelyan was on his knees before an open bag, which he was unpacking. He looked round as the prefect came in.

Perhaps there was something in Courtney's face that hinted of trouble. Trevelyan closed his lips a little, nodded abruptly, and then went on unpacking his bag.

Courtney watched him in silence for a few minutes. There was no sound in the study save that made by Trevelyan as he laid the articles out of the bag. A letter-case dropped from his hand and slid upon the floor, and several articles fell out of it. A grim smile came upon Courtney's face as Trevelyan gathered up the papers with trembling fingers. The new fellow could not disguise the fact that his hand was shaking.

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

"Go ahead!"

"When you have finished with that bag will do."

"Why can't you go on now?"

"I'll wait."

Trevelyan made an irritable gesture, and rose to his feet. There was a flush in his dark face as he stood confronting Courtney.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"Will you let me see your arm?" asked Courtney.

Trevelyan started.

"My arm? What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. Will you let me see your arm past the elbow?"

"Are you mad?"

"No."

"Then what do you want to see my arm for?"

"To see if it is the same colour as your hand."

Trevelyan staggered back. He cast a quick glance towards the door, which was ajar. He crossed over to it hastily and latched it.

"I suppose you are mad," he said, with an effort at calmness. "Anyway, I'm not going to gratify your idiotic curiosity. I don't know what you're driving at, and I don't care. Is this the way you usually treat a new fellow?"

"Not a new fellow," said Courtney.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that I don't think you are a new fellow."

Trevelyan stood with his back to the light.

"I suppose you are insane," he said. "Would you mind leaving my study?"

"If you are what you say," said Courtney, without heeding the words, "why won't you show me your arm?"

"Because I don't choose to do anything so idiotic."

"You have come here in disguise," said Courtney abruptly.

"Oh, you are raving!"

"I thought there was something familiar about you when I first saw you," said Courtney. "Something peculiar has struck the other fellows about you, too. They have remarked upon it. It's because you're made up. Your complexion doesn't suit the cut of your features. It's because your complexion wasn't born with you. You have come here disguised."

"What utter nonsense!"

"And I have seen you before," said Courtney; "I wasn't sure, till you refused to let me see your arm and satisfy myself. Now I know."

The new senior did not speak. He gazed steadily at Courtney, his breath coming thick and fast. Courtney met his eyes, and drew a deep breath.

"Now I know," he repeated. "How could you be so reckless as to play a mad trick like that? Valence, what have you come back to Greyfriars for?"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way.

COURTNEY'S eyes were fixed upon the new senior's face as he asked that startling question. Trevelyan did not turn pale—to the eye. But Courtney knew that he was white, under that cunning stain that hid his skin. Courtney had no further doubts upon the subject now. He knew that the fellow facing him was Valence, of the Sixth—

Valence, the fellow who had been expelled. He had kept his word—the declaration Courtney had regarded as a foolish boast, he had carried out. He had come back to Greyfriars, in spite of the Head and the sentence of expulsion.

For a full minute there was silence. It was broken only by Trevelyan's hard gasping for breath.

"Well," said Courtney, at last.

"Well," said Trevelyan, between his teeth.

"What are you doing here, Valence?"

"Don't call me by that name here, you fool!"

"You admit that you are Valence?"

The new senior shrugged his shoulders.

"Not much use denying it now, to you, I suppose," he said.

"I suppose you are not going to betray me."

Courtney started.

"Betray you!" he repeated.

"I'm back at Greyfriars," said Valence doggedly. "I'm going to stay here. You couldn't be such a sneak and a cur as to give me away. I've seen the Head—I passed under his eyes all right. Nobody else suspects me—only you."

"You are mistaken; some of the juniors suspect you already."

"Not who I am?"

"They suspect something. I don't suppose they've thought of such a hoax as this yet. They know you are disguised, I think. I have told them to say nothing, so far."

"Who are they?"

"The juniors of No. 1 Study in the Remove."

Valence drew a deep breath of relief.

"Those kids can be trusted to hold their tongues," he said.

"But this can't go on," Courtney exclaimed sharply.

"It shall go on."

"Do you mean to say that you are thinking of staying here at Greyfriars, under an assumed name, in disguise?" Courtney cried, in amazement. "It's impossible! It may come out at any minute."

"I have to chance that."

"When it comes out, you will be booted out of Greyfriars. It will be worse than ever for you."

"It's a risk to run, that's all."

Courtney gazed at him dumbfounded.

"You've changed a lot," he said at length. "You used not to have nerve like this. I should never have dreamed of this, in you."

"I've had time to change," said Valence, shrugging his shoulders. "I've had a dickens of a time at home. If I wanted a chance of reflecting on what a fool I've been, I've had it. My pater has been down on me all the time—even the mater hadn't much to say for me, though she generally takes my part. And the worst of it was, the pater was in the right. He said I'd ruined my career, and disgraced him, and that I should never have another chance, and it was quite true. You told me often enough in the old days that I was going on the road to ruin, and that when it was too late I'd be sorry I hadn't chucked playing the goat. Goodness knows I was sorry enough, when the chopper came down! But then it was too late."

"I was sorry, Val—"

"Look here, Courtney. I'm sorry for having played the fool; if the Head had taken me back, and given me a chance, I'd have proved by my conduct that I mean to run straight." There was a note of earnestness in Valence's voice that Courtney had never heard there before. "Do you think I haven't had time to realise what a fool I've been, to see what a rotter I was to worry Vi as I've done? All I wanted was a chance to show that I had reformed. The Head wouldn't give me a chance—I dare say he had reason enough not to trust me. But it was genuine. Don't you believe me?"

Courtney was silent.

"You don't believe me?" said Valence bitterly.

"I don't know whether to believe you or not," said Courtney, with an effort. "I'd be glad enough to believe you. But I've heard you talk like this before, and you know what came of it?"

"Yes, I know; but one swallow doesn't make a summer. I mean it this time. Give me a chance, and I'll prove it to all Greyfriars."

"But—but this trickery—"

"It was the only way. The Head wouldn't let me come back, and the pater wouldn't, and couldn't get me into another school like this. I had to chuck up the whole bizney, or else get here in this way. It wasn't my idea, either; you put it into my head."

"I!" exclaimed Courtney, in amazement.

Valence grinned a little.

"Yes, you! Don't you remember writing to me last week? You told me about a jape the Remove kids played on the Fifth, getting themselves up as French chaps to make the Fifth play them at cricket. I chewed over that, and I said to myself that if the fags could take in the whole Fifth Form that way, it was good enough for me. And it would make matters no worse, anyway. If I'm found out and sacked, I'm no worse off than I was before. But I sha'n't

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be found out—if you hold your tongue. You must hold your tongue, and back me up."

"You must be mad," said Courtney hoarsely. "I'm a prefect, and I can't be a party to trickery like this. Besides, how long do you think it can last? I tell you it may come out at any minute."

"It may last long enough for my purpose."

"And what is that?"

"To work up a good character, and show the Head, and everybody, that I am all right. When I've done that, I mean to confess to the Head, at the end of the term, and put it to him, whether I haven't proved that I've reformed. Don't you think he'd have to pardon me then?"

"Oh, but if you are found out first—"

"Then it's all up. But I sha'n't be any worse off than I was. And I won't be found out. I've thought the whole business out from start to finish. It's for Vi's sake as much as my own, Courtney. You don't know how much my sister thinks of me, and how cut-up she was over my getting sacked from Greyfriars."

"I think I do know," said Courtney quietly.

"Well, then. If I get on all right here, and make the Head respect me, and get him to forgive me at the end of the term, it will be all right. If you give me away, Vi will never speak to you again, I can promise you that."

"She does not know about this?" Courtney exclaimed, with a quick breath.

"Vi? Of course not. I shouldn't be likely to tell her. My people don't know, either. They won't know till I've got through."

"But how did you manage it? How—"

"My uncle in Cornwall. He's a jolly decent old chap, and he always stood by me, when my own pater was down on me," said Valence. "He's been jolly decent. I admit that this time he was a bit waxy. But I swore that I was going to do better, and he believed me, and he's stood by me like an old sport. He's helped me in this, like the good old boy he is—only on condition that I keep my word and keep straight in the future. I'm going to do it, too. He fixed up everything with the Head. Dr. Locke knew nothing about my having an uncle in Cornwall, and it was easy for him to arrange for his nephew to come to Greyfriars."

"It might all have come out."

"I know it might have, but it hasn't. And it won't, if we are careful."

"Well," said Courtney.

"Yes. As you've found out, you will have to help me now to keep the others from finding me out. And I swear that I am going to keep straight."

"Yet only the other day, when you came down with Vi, I found that you'd met that rascal Banks, the bookmaker?"

"He fastened on to me," said Valence. "He knew me. It's no good denying that I used to have dealings with him. But that's all over now. He's got no hold on me, and he wouldn't know me if he met me, any more than the others do. I shall be jolly careful to give him a wide berth, in case he spots me—he wouldn't be above blackmailing me, and making me pay to keep the secret—he's a thief, and he's hard-up now. You may be sure that I sha'n't go near the Cross Keys again."

"I wish I could believe you," said Courtney.

"I suppose I deserve that," said Valence bitterly. "It's no good telling you I've had my lesson, and learnt it. I've told lies enough, I know; but this is the truth."

"It was a lie coming here under an assumed name."

"It isn't an assumed name—one of my Christian names is Trevelyan, after my uncle. I don't say I like the scheme altogether; but it was the only way to get back to Greyfriars, and here I am."

"It's madness—sheer madness!" cried Courtney.

Valence clenched his hands.

"Does that mean that you're going to give me away?"

"Goodness knows what I ought to do! It's rotten to have to keep a secret like this—to help in imposing on the Head."

"It won't hurt the Head. I want to establish my character and get another chance. I'm not hurting anybody, am I?"

"I suppose not."

"Keep it dark, and back me up, and you'll see that I mean every word I say. I tell you I'm going to keep straight."

"I'd take some risks to make you do that, if only for Vi's sake," said Courtney. "But words are cheap. You've said all this before!"

"Give me a chance, that's all. Keep my secret, and help me."

Courtney was silent.

"You'll keep it dark, Arthur?"

"Yes," said Courtney at last. "I'll keep the secret, and help you, though goodness knows how it will end! But

"I'll do the best I can for you, and give you a chance. And if you take me in this time, I'll never speak to you again."

"It's a go!"

Valence held out his hand, and Courtney, after a moment's hesitation, took it. And from Arthur Courtney, at least, Greyfriars was not to learn that Trevelyan, the new fellow in the Sixth, was no other than Valence, the schoolboy-poacher—the fellow who had been expelled in disgrace from Greyfriars.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Friend in Need.

VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was seated in his study, in his comfortable armchair, with his feet on another chair. The Bounder of Greyfriars for once did not look comfortable, or easy in his mind. As a rule, he was perfectly cool and unconcerned under all happenings, but on this particular evening it would have been easy to see that the Bounder was disturbed. He snarled as a tap came at the door, and he scowled as Hazeldene of the Remove entered. Hazeldene closed the door behind him, and came over to the Bounder, his face pale and miserable. Vernon-Smith gave him a sneering nod, and his hard face cleared a little. Perhaps it cheered him to see a fellow more troubled in mind than he was himself.

"I don't know what I'm going to do," said Hazeldene wretchedly. "This has been an awful afternoon, Smithy."

"No better for me than for you," said Vernon-Smith. "I've dropped every blessed cent on those confounded races, and I owe fifteen pounds."

"You've got lots of money, and your pater——"

The Bounder interrupted him.

"I haven't got lots of money now," he said. "I'm stony. And the money I owe I can't settle up till next week. My pater's a millionaire, but I have to be careful how I pump quids out of him. Even he would kick at this."

"Then you can't help me?"

"Help you!" said Vernon-Smith, in contemptuous wonder. "I've got enough to do to help myself. In fact, I can't help myself."

Hazeldene sank into a chair, facing the Bounder. His face was as white as if death were in his breast.

"Then I'm ruined!" he muttered.

The Bounder sneered.

"You would plunge," he said. "Blessed if I'm not sorry I took you with me now."

"I'm sorry enough."

"You bothered me to take you. Snoop isn't kicking like this. He had sense enough to let betting alone when his money was gone. Not that anybody would have let Snoop bet on tick—they know him."

"They let me bet on tick," said Hazeldene, in a low voice. "I was a fool, I know. But I owed that shark Banks seven pounds nearly, and I hoped to make enough to square him and get my paper back."

"Your paper?"

"Yes—my I O U."

"You utter idiot!" said the Bounder witheringly. "Do you mean to say that you've been fool enough to give Banks your signature on paper?"

"I had to—I owed him the money."

The Bounder laughed scornfully.

"I should have to owe a lot before I put it in that rascal's power to blackmail me!" he said. "Why, he has only to show that paper to the Head to get you sacked from the school! You're under his thumb now, so long as he keeps the paper."

"That's what I want money for. I tried to make it to-day—I've lost all I had, and a sovereign I borrowed from Lord Mauleverer, and my watch, and my scarf-pin. I owe Snoop my pocket-money for the next three weeks," said Hazeldene wretchedly. "I'm at the end of my tether. I owe Cobb four pounds ten, but I haven't given him any paper. I owe Banks ten pounds now, instead of seven, and I have given him a fresh I O U for the other three."

"Well, it's no good to him—he can't recover money at law on betting transactions; and besides, you're under age."

"I know all that; I'm not thinking of his calling me into the County Court," said Hazeldene savagely. "I'm thinking of his showing the paper to the Head, and getting me kicked out of Greyfriars, as Valence was."

"He won't do that if you pay him. He's a square man, so far as that goes."

"But I can't pay him!"

"Then you shouldn't have betted with him," said Vernon-Smith, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You say that, when you led me into it! You made me——"

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"Oh, cheese it! I tried to hold you back to-day, but you had the fever," said the Bounder. "Weak duffers like you should let gambling alone. You can never stick it if you lose; and if you win, it makes you go on and on, till you lose in the long run."

"You betted more than I did."

"I can stand it. My word's good enough to my creditors, and I can pay in a week, and they know it. If you can't pay, you should keep off the grass."

"It's too late for that now. I owe Banks the money, and he's got my paper."

"Well, he may give you time."

"He says he can't. He's had losses, and he's hard up, and there's a row on between him and Cobb about money. He says he wants the money at once, or else——"

"Well, what else?"

"Or else he'll get me sacked."

Vernon-Smith gave a soft whistle.

"My aunt! You are in the wars, and no mistake!" he said. "Can't you raise the money?"

"I can't raise five shillings. I thought you could help me."

"I can't help myself, I tell you. I might let you have a little next week, as a loan——"

"Banks wants his money on Monday, at the latest."

"Then you can count me out. I'm no good to you."

"What am I to do?" groaned Hazeldene.

"Blessed if I know! I'm sorry." There was a kind of contemptuous pity in the Bounder's face as he looked at the wretched boy he had led into the primrose path of dalliance with sin. "I'm really sorry. If I could help you, I would. But as a matter of fact, I was just scheming when you came in how to borrow half-a-sov. to tide me over the week. I'm stony."

"Then I'm done!"

"Try Wharton, and that gang," said Vernon-Smith, with a sneer. "They were always trying to get you out of my hands, and pluck you like a giddy brand from the burning. Give them a chance to rescue you now."

"They couldn't raise so much money. And I've quarrelled with them. I—I punched Wharton's head the other day."

"Phew! He's not likely to help you after that!"

"Then it's the sack for me, if you can't help me," said Hazeldene with a groan. "I shall go the same way Valence went. I never felt sorry for him till now. How am I going to face the people at home?"

"Well, I'm sorry," said the Bounder, sincerely enough. "I didn't know you were hit so hard as this, and you must admit that to-day I tried to keep you from playing the giddy ox. You wouldn't listen to me. I'd help you if I could, but I can't."

Hazeldene rose, and quitted the study without another word. He looked as if he had received a knock-down blow, as, indeed, he had. He returned to his own study, and shut himself in. He paced to and fro, his face white and strained, his heart like lead. What a fool he had been! He knew that, but then, he had known that all the time. How was he to get out of this fearful scrape?—that was the question.

He could not hope to raise the money. He had told Mr. Banks so, and his reply had been a volley of savage abuse and threats. Wouldn't he have taken Mr. Banks's money if he had won? Hazeldene could not deny that he would have taken it. He would have been only too glad to take it. Now he said he couldn't pay when he lost. Did he call that honest? Mr. Banks was right enough there—it certainly was not honest. At the same time, if he couldn't find the money, he couldn't. Where was a junior in the Lower Fourth to get ten pounds from? Where did Banks think he could get it from? Borrow it in portions from other fellows up and down the school; write to his parents with some lie about wanting money for clothes, or a new cricket-bat; sell what property he had—there were various ways of raising money. The trouble was that Hazeldene had already exhausted them all, and was at the end of his tether. He could not expect Mr. Banks to believe that; the bookie shrewdly suspected that the junior would find the money rather than have his I O U's shown to the Head of Greyfriars. How did he expect Hazeldene to find it? The boy knew that Mr. Banks did not care if he stole it, so long as he handed the money over on Monday. If he did not hand it over then, it was all over with him, and he would follow Valence in exile and disgrace.

In his miserable agitation, Hazeldene did not hear a knock on the door. It opened, and Harry Wharton came in. The captain of the Remove looked steadily at Hazeldene, who stopped in his irregular pacing to face him. There was a bitter and savage expression on Hazeldene's face. He knew that Wharton could not help him, if he would, in this matter, and he had nothing to gain from the captain of the Form.

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"What do you want?" he asked savagely. Wharton took no notice of his offensive tone. "You are in trouble," he said. "You've been out for the afternoon with the Bounder, and you're in trouble. Is there anything I can do?"

"Yes," said Hazel bitterly. "Give me ten pounds."

"I can't do that, but—"

"Then leave me alone."

"Look here, Hazel—"

"Leave me alone, I tell you!" exclaimed Hazeldene almost hysterically. "I don't want you to preach at me now. I can't stand it. Let me alone!"

Wharton hesitated. Hazeldene clenched his hands menacingly.

"I punched your head the other day!" he said. "Do you want me to do it again?"

Wharton smiled scornfully.

"I'm not afraid of your punching!" he said. "You know I could wipe up the floor with you if I liked. Never mind that—"

"I'll give you a chance to try!" said Hazel, between his teeth.

"Stand where you are; I don't want to hurt you! Look here, Hazel, don't be a fool! Are you really, honestly in need of that money?"

"I shall be sacked from the school on Monday evening if I don't get it. That's all."

Wharton's lips set hard.

"I can guess where the money will go," he said. "It makes me sick to think of money going to the blackguards who've brought you to this. But—"

"They've got my signature for it, and they'll show it to the Head—"

"I understand. You can't get your paper back without paying?"

"No."

"If you get it back, Hazel, will you promise to keep out of this?"

"If I get my head out of a tiger's mouth, will I promise not to put it in again?" said Hazel bitterly. "Yes; I can promise that."

"Then I'll get you the money," said Wharton, with an effort. "I hate doing it, but I can't see Marjorie's brother sacked from Greyfriars. But look here, it's the first and the last time! I give you my word, here and now, that I'll never stand any money again if you get into the scrape again!"

"I won't ask you to. But—but do you mean to say that you've got ten quid?" exclaimed Hazeldene, in amazement.

"I haven't, but I can get it. My uncle's got some money of mine. I intended it for something else, but never mind about that now. I can get you ten pounds, though I'm not pretending that it isn't a wrench. Not a word to anybody—I don't want it gassed about. I can get the money by Monday, and I hope it will do you good!"

Hazeldene's overwrought feelings gave way, and he burst into tears. He tried to stammer out thanks, but Wharton cut that short. As a matter of fact, it was a hard wrench to the captain of the Remove to part with the money, and he did not like doing it, but he did not want any thanks for it, either.

"Don't blab!" he said. "You're all right now. And for goodness' sake, have sense enough to keep out of this fool-business after this!"

"I will—I will! Honour bright!" gasped Hazeldene.

And he meant it—when he said it, at all events.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hazeldene's Appointment.

TREVELYAN, of the Sixth, was in Courtney's study when Hazeldene came into that study on Monday after lessons. Hazel wanted a pass out, to meet Mr. Banks and settle with him, though, of course, he was not likely to explain his reason for wanting the pass. He had chosen Courtney as the most good-natured of the Greyfriars prefects, and the least likely to ask questions.

Courtney and Trevelyan were in conversation when Hazel came in, and Courtney was looking very cheerful. During the last couple of days he had had some opportunity of watching Trevelyan, or, rather, Valence, and it had been borne in upon his mind that the expelled senior was in good earnest. He had turned over a new leaf, and he showed it in many ways.

So far, no one seemed to have "tumbled" to what Courtney had guessed. If Harry Wharton & Co. had any suspicion, they did not say so—they were willing to leave the matter in Courtney's hands, as the prefect had taken charge of it.

And Courtney's heart was lighter now. He was now beginning to think that the idea was not such a bad one, after all, daring and reckless as it was. If Trevelyan could win general respect as Trevelyan, there was no reason why he should not keep it as Valence. If only no discovery was made, the plan of the expelled senior might be crowned with success, after all. And Courtney's hopes were rising.

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ONE
PENNY.

They were talking together with great cordiality concerning the next Sixth Form cricket match and Trevelyan's chances of getting into the eleven, when Hazeldene knocked and came in. Courtney looked round at him.

"Will you give me a pass out of gates, Courtney?" asked the Removeite.

"What for?" asked the prefect.

"I want to go down to Friardale and pay a bill." Courtney grinned.

"Well, that's a jolly good reason for wanting a pass out," he said. "Sure there is nothing else you want in Friardale?"

Hazeldene coloured awkwardly.

"Yes, Courtney."

"Why can't you leave it till to-morrow?" asked the prefect. "It's past locking-up now, and you'll have to walk in the dark."

"I—I promised the money for to-day, and I've only just got it," said Hazeldene.

He would not have cared to take the risk of meeting Mr. Banks in the daylight, anyway.

Courtney looked at him curiously. He was not of an inquisitive nature, and he never bothered his head about other fellows' affairs, but he had his duty to do as a prefect, and giving a junior a pass out of gates after dark was a serious matter. And Courtney knew very well that youngsters often came to him to ask for what they would not have ventured to ask of the other prefects.

"Didn't you say you were going down to Friardale, Trevelyan?" the prefect asked, turning to his companion.

The new senior nodded.

"Yes; I've got to see about my new bat—they promised to have it to-day," he said. "I'm going to the post-office, too. I could call in at the place and pay this bill for the kid, if you like—if that's what you mean?"

Courtney nodded assent.

In the old days Valence would not have made that good-natured offer, but lately he seemed to have learned that there were others in the universe to be considered besides himself.

"Good! Give Trevelyan the tin, and tell him where it is, Hazeldene," said Courtney.

Hazeldene stood rooted to the floor.

"I—I—I'd rather go myself!" he stammered. "Thanks awfully! But—but if you don't mind, will you give me the pass, Courtney? I don't want to bother Trevelyan."

"No trouble," said Trevelyan.

"Oh, you want to go yourself, do you?" said Courtney grimly. "You may as well say out that it's a yarn about having a bill to pay, and you want to go to Friardale for something else! Out with it!"

"It—it's true!"

"Whom do you owe the money to?"

Hazeldene was silent.

"Out with it!" exclaimed Courtney sharply.

"I—I—"

"You untruthful young rascal!" said Courtney. "You're lying! You won't get a pass from me, and I'll speak to the other prefects, too. Get out of my study! And, mind, it's jolly well known that there are Greyfriars fellows who go into the Cross Keys for cigarettes and other things, and I've had an idea for some time that you were one of them. I won't ask you any questions, but take care! Now, get out of my study!"

Hazeldene got out. He could not have the pass out of gates; but he was only too glad to escape from the prefect's presence without further questioning. Courtney turned to his companion with a frown.

"The young rotter!" he said. "He wouldn't have had the cheek to spin that yarn to Wingate or Loder."

Trevelyan was looking very thoughtful.

"The young ass!" he said. "As a matter of fact, Courtney, I've seen that kid under some circumstances—when I was here before, you know—and I know he had dealings with the betting set at the Cross Keys. He wants looking after. I know how jolly easy it is to slide into that kind of thing, and how frightfully hard it is to get out of it. I'm sorry for that kid. But, of course, the only thing you can do is to keep him in. Well, I will be getting along now."

And Trevelyan left the prefect's study, still looking very thoughtful. Valence had turned his back on his own past, and he felt a keen compassion for any fellow who was still struggling in the mire that he had escaped from. He wondered, as he left the school and walked down towards the village, whether there was anything he could do to help Hazeldene to get out of the crooked path. If he could, and did, that would be some atonement for what had happened in his own past.

Hazeldene had left the prefect's study with a heavy heart. After failing with Courtney, he knew that it was useless to

apply to any other of the prefects. As for asking a master, that was out of the question. Mr. Quelch would have asked him directly where he wanted to go, and he could hardly have explained. At the same time, he was bound to go that evening. Monday was the last chance—Mr. Banks had declared roundly that unless Hazeldene was at the appointed place, with the money in his pocket, he would come directly on to Greyfriars with the paper the foolish boy had signed. He would have the paper with him, to hand over to Hazeldene when the debt was paid, or to place before Dr. Locke. If he were not going to get his money, at all events he would make the defaulter smart for it.

There was only one course open to Hazeldene now—to break bounds. It was easy enough to do, but it was not so easy to conceal the fact. If he was not back by calling-over, all would be discovered, and he would not have much time. But he had to run the risk. He stopped only to get his cap, and hurried out into the Close. In his pocket he had the money Harry Wharton had given him. It had arrived at Greyfriars by the afternoon post in a registered letter from Colonel Wharton, and Harry had handed over ten golden sovereigns to Hazeldene. Those ten sovereigns were in Hazeldene's pocket now, and once they were transferred to Mr. Banks, he would have his paper back, and he would be free—and safe!

The junior scuttled across the darkened Close, and reached the school wall. He climbed the wall with beating heart, half afraid that Courtney might have decided to keep an eye upon his movements. But there was no one beside himself in the old Close. The junior clambered over the wall, and dropped into the road, and stood for a moment to get his breath.

There was a sound along the wall from the direction of the gates. Hazeldene remembered what Trevelyan had said about going to the village, and he guessed that the new senior was leaving the school. He crouched against the wall, with his heart thumping.

If the Sixth-Former saw him—

Footsteps came along the wall. Hazeldene crouched closer, in the shadow of the wall and an overhanging tree. Trevelyan passed within six feet of him, and Hazeldene held his breath. The senior did not observe the dark, crouching form in the shadows. He passed on, and his footsteps died away in the distance towards Friardale.

Hazeldene straightened up, his heart throbbing, his face white. He had escaped that danger, but it left him with quivering nerves. He moved away in the same direction that Trevelyan had taken, but more slowly. He did not want to run any risk of overtaking the Sixth-Former.

But Trevelyan had disappeared. Hazeldene reached the stile half-way to the village, and stopped, breathing hard. This was the place of his appointment with Mr. Banks, but he was the first upon the spot. In his anxiety not to be late, he had been too early, and it wanted still a quarter of an hour to the time appointed.

Hazeldene leaned upon the stile and waited. The quarter of an hour passed, and he looked up the road towards the village. There was no sign yet of Mr. Banks; the bookmaker was in no hurry to keep his appointment. Five minutes—ten minutes!

Hazeldene began to feel uneasy lest Trevelyan should finish his business in Friardale and return, and see him there in passing. A lamp in the highroad cast its light over the stile and the surrounding hedges and bushes, and if Trevelyan had passed, certainly he would have seen the junior. Yet Hazeldene dared not leave the spot; he dared not run any risk of missing Mr. Banks.

His heart thumped as there came a heavy footstep in the lane. He peered up the road, and was relieved to see the fat form of the bookmaker puffing along slowly. As he came nearer Mr. Banks, puffed an odour of mingled tobacco and rum before him, which was the reverse of pleasant. But Hazeldene did not mind it. He was only too glad to see the bookmaker, and get that wretched interview over.

Mr. Banks halted, puffing for breath, and still exhaling rum and tobacco fumes; and Hazeldene felt in his pockets with eager fingers for the money, and there was a jingle of golden coins.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Valence's Choice.

MR. BANKS extracted a fat cigar from his pocket and lighted it in a leisurely way. His flushed face told that he had been drinking, though he was not intoxicated. There was a menacing gleam in his eyes. His attire was a little shabbier than when he had met Valence at that spot the previous week, and the big gold chain was still missing, and the huge diamond Mr. Banks generally wore had apparently gone to keep it company. Things were evidently still going badly with the bookmaker. Mr. Banks was prolonging his painful experience of the downs of life.

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"So you're 'ere!" said Mr. Banks, in a threatening tone. "I've been waiting nearly half an hour," said Hazeldene. "Ho! I 'ope you've got the money?" said Mr. Banks. "If you ain't, you know wot it means—I'm coming back with you to the school!"

Hazeldene shuddered. He had not the slightest doubt that Mr. Banks would have kept his threat if the money had not been forthcoming. It made Hazeldene feel quite faint to think of going into the school in company with the fat bookmaker.

"I've got the money!" he said hastily.

Mr. Banks started a little. He had expected to be met by excuses, and perhaps a partial payment. What Hazeldene's resources might be he did not know, but he felt sure that the junior could raise some of the money if he were screwed down hard enough to it. But he had certainly never expected to get ten pounds out of Hazeldene at once.

A covetous gleam came into his little puffy eyes. If the boy could raise ten pounds in a lump under threats, he was evidently a richer pigeon than Mr. Banks had previously imagined—and Mr. Banks was extremely loth to let such a pigeon escape from his net. In his present state of "hard up" there was no reason why the foolish boy should not act as a horn of plenty for the needy bookmaker.

"You've got it?"

"Yes."

"Ten quid?"

"Yes. Have you brought the paper?"

"That's all right!" said Mr. Banks suspiciously. "Lemme see the colour of the money first. I ain't taking anything on trust. No fear!"

Hazeldene groped in his pocket, and the ten sovereigns came to light. They glittered and gleamed in the light of the street-lamp as he counted them into the fat, oily palm of the bookmaker.

Mr. Banks's eyes gleamed, too. In his present needy state ten pounds was something like a fortune to him. His fingers closed upon the coins as a claw might have closed.

"That's right?" said Hazeldene.

"That's right!" said Mr. Banks, transferring the sovereigns to a leather pouch, and the pouch to his pocket. "That's fair and square! But where did you get that money? I 'ope you kem honestly by that money, young feller!"

Hazeldene flushed.

"It's mine," he said. "Do you think I stole it?"

"Where did you get it, then?"

"A chap lent it to me to get out of this—gave it to me, rather. I don't see how I'm ever going to pay it back," said Hazeldene bitterly. "Blessed if I know what he did it for; he's not reckless with money, as a rule. But he had this, and he gave it to me."

"I reckon he'd help you agin, too, then?"

"He swore he wouldn't. And I sha'n't want him to, either. I'm done with gambling, and making a fool of myself," said Hazeldene, with a deep breath. "I've had a scare this time that will last me all my life, I think."

The bookmaker sneered.

"So you're goin' to turn your back on your old pals because you've had a little bit of bad luck?" he asked.

"Nice pal you've been to me!" said Hazeldene. "You've had a lot of money out of me; and you were going to ruin me because I couldn't pay this. If Wharton hadn't given me this money you'd be going up to the school now."

"The loser pays," said Mr. Banks sententiously. "That's the rule of the game. You can't bet, and take your winnings, and not pay the losings."

"Well, I've paid now. Give me my paper, and I'll be off."

A somewhat uneasy grin appeared upon Mr. Banks's purple face. What he was going to do did not commend itself even to his hardened conscience, but he was going to do it. A boy who could raise ten pounds in a couple of days was not to be allowed to escape so easily.

"I reckon I've left my pocket-book at the Cross Keys," he remarked. "I'll let you 'ave that paper later."

Hazeldene caught his breath.

"Give it to me now!" he cried.

"Quiet, I say—"

"You said you were bringing it with you, to take to the Head if I didn't pay you!" Hazeldene exclaimed fiercely. "You're lying! You've got it in your pocket at the present minute. You know it."

"Oh, that was only what I said!" replied Mr. Banks. "I wasn't reely going to be so 'ard on you, you know. You can't shake off an old pal like this—"

"Give me my paper!"

"I ain't got it."

"Liar!" yelled Hazeldene, beside himself with rage and terror, as he realized that he had paid over the money for nothing, and was not to have the paper, after all—that he

was to remain in the power of the bookmaker. "Thief! You've got the paper! Give it me!"

"Softly, my pippin," said Mr. Banks. "I don't allow nobody to call me them fancy names. You can 'ave the paper on Saturday—and it'll cost you another ten quid."

"I have no more money—I cannot—"

"You've done it once, and you can do it again," said Mr. Banks coolly. "Get it where you got this. If it was given to you, as you say, the feller'll give more; if you stole it, steal some more in the same place."

"Do you think I stole it, you hound?"

"I dunno, and I don't care! The paper will cost you ten quid—and that's the end of it! Good-evening to you!"

And Mr. Banks made a motion to depart.

Hazeldene stood rooted to the ground for a moment, rage and despair in his heart. Then, with a wild, hysterical cry, he flung himself upon the fat bookmaker.

"You thief! You awful thief! Give me the money or else the paper! Give me my paper! I'll smash you—"

Mr. Banks grasped the struggling junior in a powerful grip and thrust him off.

"Better keep quiet, you young fool!" he said harshly.

"Do you want anybody as is passing to 'ear you?"

"I don't care!" shrieked Hazeldene. "I'll tell the Head myself! I'll go to the police! Give me my paper—"

"Quiet, I say—"

"The paper!" Hazeldene's voice was a scream now; the maddened boy was beside himself, and he flung himself at the man, tearing and hammering like a madman. "Give me the paper, you thief! Give it me!"

"You will 'ave it, then!" muttered Mr. Banks savagely, and his fat and heavy fist rose and fell; and Hazeldene gave a sharp cry. But he did not release the bookmaker.

There was a footstep in the lane, and Hazeldene shrieked: "Help! Help! Help!"

The footsteps quickened, and a sturdy form loomed up. Hazeldene redoubled his cries, too maddened and hysterical now to know or care that he was betraying himself.

"What's the matter here?"

"Trevelyan!" yelled Hazeldene, recognising the Greyfriars senior. "Trevelyan! Help me! This villain has robbed me!"

Trevelyan halted.

"Banks!" he exclaimed.

In his startled surprise, Trevelyan did not speak in the low, even voice he had adopted in his new character at Greyfriars. His voice rang out clearly, and the bookmaker, who could not see the dark face, and the black hair, and the bushy eyebrows, which might have deceived him, recognised the voice.

"So it's you!" he cried. "You stand off from 'ere, Master Valence!"

The senior bit his lip hard. He felt that he had betrayed himself, and to the man who was likely to be most unscrupulous in making use of his secret. But he did not intend to admit that the bookmaker's assumption was correct.

"I don't understand you," he said. "My name is Trevelyan, and I belong to Greyfriars. What are you doing with this junior?"

"He's robbed me!" shrieked Hazeldene. "He's got my signature for ten pounds, and now I've paid him the money he won't give me the paper, the thief!"

Trevelyan's brow hardened. He knew Mr. Banks of old, and he could quite believe Hazeldene's statement.

"You should not have had any dealings with the man, Hazeldene," he said. "You would be expelled if the Head knew."

"I know that," said Hazeldene, with a half sob. "The hound threatened to take up the paper to the school unless I paid him ten pounds to-night. I've had to break bounds to do it, and I cadged the money from Wharton. Now I've paid him, the villain won't give me the paper. He says I've got to give him another ten pounds for it on Saturday. I can't! And I'll—I'll kill him first!"

"That's enough," said Trevelyan curtly. "Banks, give him the paper."

The bookmaker thrust his hands into his pockets, and stood looking at the Greyfriars senior with an insolent grin. Trevelyan had turned now, so that the light from the street lamp fell upon his face, and Mr. Banks was looking upon a countenance that he certainly would never have recognised as Valence's, well as he knew Valence. But the secret was already betrayed, and Mr. Banks was sure of his victim.

"Give him the paper, hey?" the bookmaker repeated, with a grin.

"Yes."

"Suppose I don't choose."

"Then I'll make you."

The bookmaker looked at the senior. Valence was slim, but sturdy enough. Certainly he could have got the better of the fat unwieldy bookmaker, though it might have meant a tussle if Mr. Banks put up a fight. He could make Mr. Banks give up the paper if he chose. But afterwards? That dread was in Valence's heart as he spoke, but his voice was firm. He had told Courtney that he was going to keep on the

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A grand, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday.

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straight path, whatever the cost, and whatever the risk, and he had meant it. He knew what his duty was now, and, by the irony of Fate, it looked as if it was by doing his duty that he was to be ruined at Greyfriars again. But to his honour be it said that he did not falter. His glance was firm, his voice cold and determined.

"You'll make me, Master Trevelyan of Greyfriars," said the bookmaker, with an evil chuckle. "You'll make me! Master Trevelyan of Greyfriars! Ha, ha, ha! I never 'eard of such a trick, and I'll wager that the Doctor of Greyfriars never 'eard of it, neither. But he'll 'ear of it, soon enough, if you meddle with me, Master Trevelyan of Greyfriars. I know who you are!"

"Look here—"

"Stand off! I'm keeping that paper. The brat can pay for it. I've had 'ard luck lately, and I want money. It ain't your bizney, anyway."

"I'm going to see fair play."

"You're going to keep your 'and out of this pie," said the bookmaker, in a low tone of deadly menace. "You'll leave me alone, right now, or—"

"Or what?" Trevelyan spoke calmly, but there was ice in his heart.

"Or I go right up to Greyfriars, and tell Dr. Locke that the feller he expelled has come back to school in disguise, under a false name, and you know what would 'appen then!" exclaimed the bookmaker, and his loud, coarse voice rang with triumph.

Hazeldene uttered an exclamation of amazement. Trevelyan did not speak. There was a long, deep silence, which lasted minutes.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Facing the Music.

VALENCE was struggling with himself.

He knew that the bookmaker would keep his threat; there was no doubt about that. He had to pass on, leaving the wretched junior at the mercy of that unscrupulous shark in human form, or else—

Or else all was over!

Dr. Locke would know the truth, and the next day he would be gone from Greyfriars, with his last chance gone—ruined for life!

The bookmaker watched him with glittering eyes. He had no doubt which way Valence would decide, and he was sure of him. He only wondered that the senior hesitated so long. The Valence he had known in the past would not have hesitated for a second. Mr. Banks dimly realised that there had been some subtle change in Valence since he had known him, though he could not understand what it was. But that the senior would face ruin rather than desert that wretched junior, who, after all, was nothing to him, did not seem possible to Mr. Banks.

And he was taken utterly by surprise when Trevelyan's answer came—cold, clear, in inflexible tones.

"Give the boy his paper."

The bookmaker stared blankly.

"You 'eard what I said?"

"Yes."

"You don't deny that you are Valence?"

"That is not your business."

"It's the 'ead's business, and I'm goin' to make 'im acquainted with it, if you meddle with me," said Mr. Banks savagely. "Clear off!"

"Give the boy his paper."

"I won't!"

"If you won't, I shall take it from you by force," said Valence coldly.

Mr. Banks gasped.

"Do you mean that?"

"Every word."

"Then look out for squalls," said the bookmaker, between his yellow teeth. "Mind, I ain't giving you the paper. You'll get 'urt if you lay 'ands on me."

"Will you give it up?"

"No!" yelled the bookmaker.

"Hold my cap, Hazeldene."

Trevelyan tossed the cap to Hazeldene, pushed back his cuffs, and advanced upon the bookmaker. Mr. Banks, beside himself with rage, and perhaps confident in his size and weight, met him with hands up, and eyes gleaming. Hazeldene stood by, and looked on as the fight began, trembling—for himself. If Trevelyan won the paper for him, well and good; if not—Hazeldene dared not think what would happen then. What would happen to Valence himself, now, in any case, Hazeldene had no time to think of. His concern just now was for himself.

Twice, thrice, the bookmaker's fat, heavy fists crashed upon

Valence, and the Greyfriars fellow reeled. But he was driving the bookmaker back all the time under a shower of blows, and a terrific right-hander, which crashed upon Mr. Banks' fat chin, sent him spinning against the stile, and he rolled on the ground.

Trevelyan advanced upon him with gleaming eyes and clenched hands, and waited for him to rise. But the bookmaker did not rise.

He lay in the dust groaning, with one eye half-closed, and a red stream oozing from his mouth.

"Ow!" he groaned. "I'll make yer pay for this! Oh, my eye!"

"Have you had enough?" said Trevelyan quietly.

"Ow! Yes! Burn yer, yes."

"Hand over the paper to the boy, then."

"Mind, I'll make you suffer for this," said Mr. Banks hoarsely. "I'm comin' up to the school to tell the 'Ead. You 'ear me?"

"Do as I tell you."

Mr. Banks snarled savagely, and groped in his pocket. He brought out a pocket-book, and selected a paper from it and tossed it into the road. Hazeldene ran to it and picked it up.

"Is that your paper?" asked Trevelyan, as the junior examined it in the light of the lamp.

"Yes."

"Has this man any other papers of yours?"

"No."

"Then you are clear of him now?"

"Yes, yes!" gasped Hazeldene, almost sobbing with relief.

"Thank you—thank you! I don't know how to thank you!"

"Cut off," said Trevelyan briefly, "and don't get into a scrape like this again."

And Hazeldene cut off, only too gladly. He ran all the way back to Greyfriars, and in ten minutes was in his study in the Remove passage, and was burning the paper over a candle, and his heart grew light as he watched it consumed by the flame. But Valence's heart was not light. He left the bookmaker groaning in the dust, and strode away to the school, with a heart as heavy as lead.

He had ruined himself now.

He knew it, and he knew that all was up. Mr. Banks, baffled in his scheme for blackmailing the junior, and aching all over from the thrashing he had received, would be burning for revenge upon his old acquaintance who had done with him. As soon as he was able to get to the school, he would get there. Valence arrived at Greyfriars, and went into his study—to wait!

He knew that he would not have long to wait. The bookmaker would not lose time. The miserable lad paced up and down the study. There was a tap at the door, and he stopped. Was it a summons to the presence of the Head?

He fully expected it. But in response to his faint "Come in!" it was Courtney of the Sixth who entered the study. The prefect looked quickly at his old chum, and he saw the signs of conflict in Trevelyan's face, and his own became very grave.

"Something's happened?" he exclaimed quickly.

Trevelyan nodded.

"Mr. Banks has just arrived," said Courtney. "I saw him come in. He's gone in to see the Head; I was afraid you might have met him. He looks as if he'd been under a lawnmower. Did you have a row with him?"

"Yes."

"You licked him?"

"Yes."

"Serve the old right!" said Courtney. "I suppose he knows you now—that's why he's here, to betray you to the Head?"

"Yes."

"Poor old chap! I'm sorry! It's all up, then!"

"Yes," said Valence, with a groan. "It's all up! I came back here determined to play the game, whatever happened. I've played it, and it's led me to this! If I'd let Banks alone, and let him have his rotten way, he'd have let me alone. I've got to pay for having acted decently—for the first time in my life! I suppose it's a kind of justice—but it comes hard!"

The door opened, and Wingate looked in. There was a peculiar and puzzled expression upon the rugged face of the captain of Greyfriars.

"The Head wants you in his study, Trevelyan!" he said.

"Very well," said Trevelyan quietly.

He quitted the room with a firm step and made his way to the Head's study. A good many fellows gathered round to look at him. Mr. Banks' arrival at Greyfriars had caused a great deal of surprise—he was not exactly the sort of visitor the Greyfriars fellows were accustomed to seeing. The state of his features showed that he had been thrashed, and the word ran round that Trevelyan of the Sixth had thrashed him. The idea was that the bookmaker had come to com-

plain to the Head of the fellow who had licked him, and the juniors chuckled at the idea. The fellow who had licked Banks was likely to be very popular in Greyfriars, and they did not think that the Head would be very much "down" on him.

"Buck up, Trevelyan!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "I saw his eye—you gave him a beauty. The Head is bound to give you a pat on the back for that, and if he doesn't the Remove will!"

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton. "It will be all right, Trevelyan!"

The distress in the new senior's face was evident to all, and the juniors wanted to "buck him up." They did not know what was upon the mind of the unfortunate senior.

Trevelyan knocked at the Head's door and entered.

Mr. Banks was seated in the study, and he looked a wretched object. One of his eyes was quite closed, and his nose seemed to be swollen to twice its normal size—which was not small. There were several bruises on his face, and his lip was cut. His clothes were dusty and dragged from rolling in the lane. His bruised face was black with rage and drink. He had bucked himself up for the visit to the Head with deep draughts of the vile liquor sold at the Cross Keys in Friardale.

Dr. Locke was looking very distressed, and at the same time very stern. Trevelyan saw that the bookmaker had already told his story. But his head was high as he came in. He was ruined, but he had kept his word and his resolve. It was very different from the last time that he had stood for judgment before Dr. Locke in that room. Then he had been guilty—now he was to suffer for having done right. And he felt the difference, and felt that he could face his fate with courage.

"This gentleman has told me a very strange thing, Trevelyan," said Dr. Locke, his eyes fastening upon the new senior. "He declares that your name is not Trevelyan at all, and that you are a boy who was expelled from Greyfriars—a senior named Valence. The story is incredible—I have only to ask you whether it is true. I cannot believe that such an imposture could be practised on me!"

"Let 'im wash 'is face," said Mr. Banks, with an evil chuckle. "You'll soon see all that blessed complexion come off. You mark my words!"

"Every investigation will be made, of course," said the Head coldly. "What have you to say, Trevelyan?"

"It is true, sir."

Dr. Locke started.

"You are Valence?"

"Yes, sir."

"It seems impossible!" gasped the Head. "Valence! You—you have dared to deceive me in this way—to impose yourself upon me as a new boy, under an assumed name!"

"Yes, sir," said Valence. "I do not deny it. That man has done me harm enough in the past, and he has now done me harm again. You will not imagine that he has betrayed me from a good motive," he added bitterly.

Dr. Locke glanced from one to the other. Certainly it would have been a little difficult to imagine that the battered blackguard before him had acted from good motives.

"I thank you for giving me this information, Mr. Banks!" said the Head coldly. "I wish you a very good evening!"

Mr. Banks rose to his feet, and grinned maliciously at Valence.

"I warned yer!" he said, in a low voice, as he passed the senior.

Valence made no reply.

The door of the Head's study closed behind Mr. Banks, and the discovered impostor was alone with the Head.

There was a short silence. Dr. Locke watched the face of the boy before him keenly. Even yet he could hardly believe that this was Valence.

"So you are Valence?" he said at last.

"Yes, sir."

"And what is the meaning of this extraordinary masquerade?"

Valence smiled bitterly.

"I wanted to have another chance, and you would not let me come back, sir," he said. "It was the only way. I meant to show you, and all the fellows, that I had reformed—and to confess to you at the end of the term. If I'd kept straight till then, I thought you would believe in me, and give me another chance. That scoundrel has mucked it up for me. I know I've got to go—and I'm ready!"

"Why has that man betrayed you, Valence? When you were expelled from Greyfriars, it came out that you had had dealings with him—that he was a friend of yours. Does all this mean that he found you out, and tried to get you into his clutches again, and that you refused?"

For a second Valence hesitated. It was a chance of a lie

that might save him—and Mr. Banks was not there to contradict it. But the boy was done with lies. He straightened up, and answered quietly:

"No, sir. I think he would have done that—but it didn't happen that way."

"But you quarrelled with him?"

"I took the part of a fellow he was down on, sir."

"Indeed! Tell me about it."

"I—I can't give you the fellow's name, sir. He was a kid, and that villain had a paper signed by him for a debt, and when the kid paid the money, he wouldn't give up the paper. He was going to keep it to blackmail the fag by threatening to bring the paper to you."

"Ah! And you—"

"I made him give it up."

"That was how you came to fight with him?"

"Yes, sir. And I'm jolly glad I gave him a licking," said Valence, between his teeth. "He had done harm enough—to me and others!"

"You knew he would betray you?"

"He warned me that he would."

"Yes. I heard him say so a few minutes ago as he left," said the Head quietly. "The man is an utter scoundrel. Valence, you did wrong in coming here like this. If I had believed in you, I would have given you another chance here. But how was I to believe? All that you said, you had said before, and your actions did not bear out your words."

"I know it, sir," said Valence wearily. "I couldn't expect you to believe me, and I don't expect it now. If I'd had a chance, I'd have proved it, but that hound has spoiled my chance. If—if you'll let me leave quietly, sir, without a disgrace before all the fellows, that's all I ask."

The Head's glance was very kind.

"My dear boy," he said. "You came here in this strange way to prove that you have reformed. You think that man has prevented you, and certainly he has done his worst, as he supposed. But cannot you see that—far from his intention—

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he has really enabled you to prove that you were in earnest?"

"I—I don't understand you, sir!" faltered Valence.

Dr. Locke smiled.

"If you had been your old self, unrepentant, you would have made any terms with him rather than be exposed. Valence, you have acted like a brave and honourable lad, and I believe now that your repentance is sincere. And, believing that, Heaven forbid that I should not give you another chance to redeem the past. You must leave Greyfriars—as Trevelyan—but you shall come back under your own name, and what has happened shall be forgotten!"

Valence tottered. He gazed at the Head as if not comprehending. Dr. Locke placed a hand upon his shoulder.

"Be firm, my boy, and keep to the right path—that is all I ask. You have done bravely and well, and in the future you will do better."

The tears ran from Valence's eyes.

"God bless you, sir!" he said, in a broken voice. "I'll prove to you that you were right to pardon me, sir!"

"I am sure you will, Valence!"

And Dr. Locke shook hands with the boy who, a few weeks before, had been expelled from Greyfriars.

Greyfriars did not know the whole story—the fellows only knew that Trevelyan, the new boy, had left suddenly, and that a few days later Valence returned, and took up his old place in the school. Only Courtney and Hazeldene—and perhaps Harry Wharton & Co.—knew the circumstances that had led to the return of the expelled!

(Next Tuesday's grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled "OUT OF BOUNDS!" By FRANK RICHARDS. Please order your copy of The "MAGNET" Library in advance. Price 1d.)

CHING-LUNG IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND.

A Wonderful Story
of Ferrers Lord,
Millionaire,
Rupert Thurston,
and Gan-Waga.

OUR GRAND SERIAL STORY I

THROUGH TRACKLESS TIBET!

BY
SIDNEY
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-Hai, the capital of Ching-Lung's province in China.

The party, conducted by an Afghan guide named Argal-Dinjat, 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 Sahib, and a band of his ruffianly followers. Things are looking serious for the party when they are rescued by Ferrers Lord's wonderful aeronef, 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 cavern. Hal Honour, the engineer, however, makes a strange promise, and says that within two months he will rescue the whole crew. Faithfully to the hour Honour fulfils his promise, and the miniature aeronef he has constructed 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 aeronef 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-Hai 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 for a short trip in the aeronef, and during their journey they defeat the combined armies of Storland Sahib and the natives, and capture the town of Lhaknav. This done, the victorious party return to the cavern,

The Building of the Fort—The "King of the Roads" is Completed—An Attack, and a Repulse—Nearing Lhasa.

Hal Honour's tireless energy soon began to bear fruit. He seemed to be able to live without sleep or rest. For a week the furnace never ceased to roar. Little of moment happened. Ching-Lung and his chosen followers made several journeys to the beautiful ravine. For them it was a fairly lazy time. They mined a certain quantity of coal each morning, and for the rest of the day they had only to amuse themselves. Ching-Lung and Rupert were discussing what to do, when Ferrers Lord strode out of the darkness.

"No play to-day, boys," he said, "but lots of work."

"If you want me to dig another ounce of coal, I go on strike, old chap!" laughed Ching-Lung.

"You needn't be afraid of that," answered the millionaire. "Honour has practically completed the motor-car. The segments only want putting together, but that cannot be done here. We can only take the segments out one or two at a time, and I am rather uneasy about Storland Sahib."

"You think he might make a raid?"

"He will if he can. It will take time to put the motor

together. I want you to choose some spot at the foot of the mountain, and to build a fort."

"Great Scotland, I'm not a bricklayer!"

"Get about your business," said Ferrers Lord, with a smile.

"All right, don't be nasty. Come along, Ru. We'll chuck being colliers, and go into the building line. Hi, yi! Prout, Maddock, Gan, Joe! Tumble up, my bricklayers—tumble up!"

It was another glorious day, but rather cold. The aeronef passed through the shaft and glided down. She turned eastwards, away from the village. To the left lay the river, and beyond that the marshes. Below was a plain, covered with boulders in frequent patches.

"The very spot!" said Ching-Lung. "There's no cover for an attacking party, and plenty of stone for building. What do you think about it, Ru?"

"I think it's just the ideal place."

"Let her down, Tom."

The aeronef sank. Two Maxims were planted in excellent positions, in case of an unexpected attack. The aeronef, in charge of Prout and Gan-Waga, sailed back to bring up more men. There was material in plenty. Ching-Lung marked

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out a forty-foot square. There was no necessity to be particular in the work. All they required was four bullet-proof walls.

They started at once to lever large boulders into position. It was hot and tiring work. The aeroplane returned with another batch of men. Then Joe headed a wood-cutting party. The trees were felled so as to fall into the river, and were hooked as they floated down. Joe quickly knocked together a strong and serviceable derrick for lifting the stones into position. When the sun began to sink, the walls of the fort were already nearly four feet high.

They slept well that night. In the morning Ferrers Lord joined them and worked with the rest. A few natives skulked about. The second day's labour raised the walls to five feet. There was no sign of Storland Sahib and his wolves. The building went on at a good pace. On the third day, at noon, the fort was completed.

"It's not exactly Windsor Castle, nor yet the House of Lords," said Ching-Lung, as he inspected the roofless structure, "and it won't even keep out the rain."

"If it will keep out bullets we want no more," answered Ferrers Lord.

"Wid a few aisy-chairs, a billiard-table, and some pictures on the wall," murmured Barry, "O'd take ut for me villa residence, at a bob ivery foive year for rent."

Little by little many things were brought into the fort from the wreck of the airship. Awnings were stretched to protect the men from the night dews.

And then the motor-car began to take shape. Even in the most difficult task of all—the tyres—the indomitable engineer had triumphed after many failures. They looked clumsy, but they were tough and strong. All through the day and through much of the night Hal Honour worked.

The car was very large, for it had to carry more than twenty men and a good deal of baggage. They had decided to abandon every article that they could do without. Kits were cut down to the smallest possible extent. Only one suit and one great-coat could be taken.

"Heard the news, Tom?" asked Barry.

"What's that, sonny?"

"Yez have got to shave off yer whiskers and get yer hair cut," said Barry sadly, "trim yer nails and clane yer teeth."

"What for?"

"To save weight, Tom. The order's just been given. Yez have got to pull the nails out of yez boots, too."

It was not quite so bad as that, but much had to be sacrificed. They were about to journey through a hostile country, full of the sparks of revolt. Everything had to make place for ammunition. They could not afford to abandon a single cartridge, for at any moment Storland Sahib might set Tibet ablaze.

The car aroused their admiration and wonder. It seemed to fascinate Gan-Waga and O'Rooney. They were always prowling round it. Gan-Waga had never seen a motor-car before, and he asked Barry what kind of a horse was going to pull it.

"A clothes-horse," said Barry.

"Not know him."

"Well, bedad, yez'll be sthaggered whin he comes along!" explained Barry. "He fades on towels, dusters, blankets, and such, and, troth, he's a foine kicker! And these wheels—luk at 'em!"

"Ain't dey fat?" said Gan, patting the pneumatic tyres.

"Wot inside?"

"Bottled wind."

"Well, I nebber was!" said Gan-Waga, his eyes round with wonder.

He could not tear himself away from the car.

Three days later Hal Honour calmly put on his coat, and lighted his pipe. He crossed over to where the millionaire was standing.

"I'm ready," he said.

"I congratulate you, old chap."

They shook hands. Maddock blew his bo'sun's whistle, and the packing commenced.

The wall was pushed down to make a passage for the motor, and the boulders cleared away. Hal Honour took his seat. The wheels revolved, and the monster vehicle moved triumphantly out.

The men rushed after it, cheering and waving their helmets—all but Gan-Waga, who stood staring with eyes like saucers. The speed increased.

Teuf, teuf! Teuf, teuf!

The King of the Roads swept in and out among the heaps of boulders. It left the runners far behind. Ching-Lung, who was beside the driver, stood on his head, with his helmet on his left foot. Round they came again, rushing along the bank of the river. They dashed down the narrow village street, scattering the horrified Mongols in every direction, terrifying fowls and sending pigs scuttling. And then the

King of the Roads came round with a splendid sweep and halted before the fort.

"All sound," said the engineer, springing down.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

They seized him and lifted him shoulder-high, carrying him three times round the car.

"It's more than splendid," said Ferrers Lord. "I'm glad you made the car independent of the aeroplane."

"It was the only sensible thing to do, Lord."

"I agree with you. The advantages are enormous."

Hal Honour warned the men aside, and, stepping back a few yards, drew his revolver. He fired six shots at the steel sides of the car.

"Bullet-proof," he said.

"What about the tyres, old chap?" asked Ching-Lung.

"I'm afraid they ain't very bullet-proof."

"We can't help that," said the millionaire. "Honour, you have excelled yourself."

"Yes," answered the engineer, smiling. "But, remember, all the credit is yours. You invented the motor, while I only built the car."

"Don't wrangle about it," grinned Ching-Lung. "The idea is, when do we start?"

"At once. We shall tow her, I think. There's no need to waste her power when we must use the aeroplane. We'll christen her. Now, Rupert, do the honours."

Thurston broke a bottle of champagne against a spoke and christened the car. He made a short speech that was loudly cheered. They had a case of champagne which they could not take with them, and it was foolish to leave the wine for the natives. The bottles were uncorked.

Then two stout wire hawsers, made fast to the aeroplane, were attached to the car. The men scrambled in, and the aeroplane slowly rose. The hawsers tightened.

"Are you ready?" shouted Ferrers Lord, from above.

"Ready and waiting, old chap!"

The screws spun swiftly. There was a sudden jerk, and then, towed by the aeroplane, the car began to move. They looked back at the village that had been the scene of so many adventures.

"Farewell, me own, me native land!" said Barry. "I loved yez well. Oh, tell me not that Oi shall never see yez no more! Oi hope not. Me heart is full, and so is me boots. Good-bye!"

"Dash it all," said Ching-Lung, "I'm almost sorry we're going!"

The golden sunlight touched the roofs of the miserable hovels. The pace began to quicken.

"Howld on!" roared O'Rooney suddenly. "Sthop the cab!"

"What's the row, you noisy lunatic?"

"Oi must get out! Ut's a case of loife and dith! Oi've lift the cat shut up in the drawin'-room wid the canary!"

Barry was hanging over the end of the car, with one foot on the step. The temptation was too great for Prout to resist. He gave Barry a push, and the Irishman rolled out and went sprawling into the sand. At that moment Ferrers Lord quickened the pace of the aeroplane. Before Barry could regain his feet the car was twenty yards away.

"Man overboard!" cried Maddock.

Barry began to run, but he could not run fast enough. He did not lose much ground, but he certainly gained none. The men screamed with laughter.

"Put on a spurt, Barry!" shouted Prout. "Keep it up and you'll win!"

"Don't miss the train!" screamed Maddock. "Hi, look at its legs! You'll break 'em, Barry!"

"Sthop! Sthop!"

Barry's legs absolutely twinkled as he ran, and the perspiration rolled from him. Still, he could not gain a solitary inch. Ferrers Lord had not noticed the plight, for the steering occupied all his attention; and the men on the aeroplane's deck, who were grinning like apes, took care not to inform him.

Prout was enjoying it more than anyone. He kept putting his fingers to his nose in a rude manner, and telling Barry not to break a blood-vessel. Ching-Lung crawled over the driver's seat, and made his way to the back of the car.

Then he gripped Prout, and, exerting all his wonderful strength, jerked the steersman over the door. He held him there for a second, while Prout yelled and kicked, and then let him fall.

By the time Prout got up all his joy had gone. Barry was ahead of him, and the car ahead of both. Prout started to run, too, and the men laughed wildly.

"Two to one on Prout!" cried Ching-Lung. "Three to one on Prout! Any price on Prout! Any—"

Ching-Lung found himself lying on the sand. The catch of the door had suddenly become unfastened, and he had been leaning against the door. He was the last man now.

He came on like a flash, and passed Prout. Just then

Ferrers Lord looked round. His grey eyes twinkled. Ching-Lung was almost level with Barry. The laughter turned to cheers. Ching-Lung was breaking records, and gaining at every stride. His pigtail stood out straight behind him.

"Well run, sir! Well run!"

He was barely three yards from the car. Ferrers Lord glanced ahead. There were no obstacles in the way. He pressed down the lever gently, putting at least another five miles an hour on the speed.

That settled it. Ching-Lung ran, and ran, but he came no closer. Barry and Prout began to grow small in the distance, and at last Ching-Lung gave it up.

"Brakes, Honour!" cried the millionaire.

Car and aeronef slowed down.

"Cast off!" came the order.

The hawsers were freed, and the car swung round and ran back to pick up the castaways. Ching-Lung felt rather small as he saw the grins on the men's faces. Barry and Prout were a mile away. When the King of the Roads came up with them they were lying on the ground fanning themselves.

"Tired?" inquired Rupert.

"Niver!" moaned Barry. "O'm quoitte fresh! Me doother ordhers me to take a little jintle exercise, loike that ivry mornin'! O'm sorry we quarrelled, Tom."

"We've not quarrelled," panted Prout. "Who said we'd quarrelled?"

"Oh," said Barry, "O'i felt sure we'd fallen out—of the car! Moi misthake—moi misthake."

The aeronef again picked up her consort and drove ahead. So far the travelling had been easy. The ground was almost level, but care had to be taken to steer clear of clumps of bushes and cactus. Though so weighty, the car ran very easily, and put little on the aeronef except on starting. They travelled for three hours, and then there was a halt for a meal. The millionaire called Barry.

"Have you any idea of the country immediately ahead, O'Rooney?" asked Ferrers Lord.

"Not much, sor. There's a river to cross, O'i know."

"And a bridge. Argal-Dinjat says there is one."

"Yis, sor, there's a bridge. Afther that there's a big wood to go through, and, throth, it isn't the noicest place in the worrld! O'i think it will puzzle us, for the road isn't too woide."

The millionaire shrugged his shoulders.

"That's awkward, Honour."

"We can make a road," said the engineer.

"I believe you'd make anything, Honour!" laughed Ching-Lung. "Pass me the sugar, Ru, while there's some left. Bother Maddock and his tea! When he brews it it's always too weak to crawl out of the pot!"

Ferrers Lord and the engineer looked over the motor-car. It had stood its first journey splendidly.

"My map of Tibet has no river marked on it, Honour," said the millionaire; "but all the charts differ. I suppose O'Rooney knows best. A river without a bridge would puzzle us."

"There are fords."

"Possibly; but the river might be in flood, or we might not be able to find a ford. What then?"

"Build a raft for the car."

"Imagine there's no wood to be found, old chap?" suggested Ching-Lung.

Honour pointed to the car, and then to the aeronef.

"Take the motor to pieces again," he said, "and let the aeronef carry the segments over."

Dishes, cups, and cooking-utensils were packed away.

After a few miles the character of the country changed. It became more hilly, and the road was little better than a track. The car jolted and bumped unpleasantly, and the pace was very slow.

"A village just ahead!" cried Ferrers Lord.

Ching-Lung stood up on the seat and looked through his field-glasses. He saw the rows of hovels. The car was crawling up a long slope. Shouts and the noise of drums and gongs reached them.

"They take us for evil spirits," grinned the prince, "and they're making that row to frighten us away. I guess I'll get out and stretch my legs. Come along, Gan."

The Eskimo sprang out after him. They walked beside the car, and reached the top of the hill. The villagers had assembled, and were beating drums and firing off crackers to scare the strange monster. Honour put on the brakes.

"There's room enough between the houses, Honour!" called Ferrers Lord.

"Right!"

Car and aeronef neared the village. The people dived into their houses in terror. In a few minutes they were through the dirty street. Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga boarded the car again.

"I'm going upstairs, Gan," said Ching-Lung.

"Mind not fall, Chingy!"

"Never in this world! You come as well, and I'll give you some candles."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 224.

A grand, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday.

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Gan-Waga looked doubtfully at the wire hawser. It was a stiff climb with the aeronef in motion.

"Not like him, Chingy," he said.

"Cowardy, cowardy custard!" chuckled O'Rooney. "Bedad, he's afraid! Cowardy, cowardy—"

"I'm not afraid," said Gan-Waga. "Not cowardy custard, neither. Me climb up if ugly Irish-face climb up!"

"Hear, hear! That's fair, Barry!"

Ching-Lung was already in mid air. Hanging by one hand from the wire, he produced a pea-shooter, and a pea hit O'Rooney behind the ear. Barry growled vengeance, but he did not look comfortable. He had not bargained for Gan-Waga's challenge.

"Me go if yo' go!" repeated the Eskimo. "If yo' not you cowardy custard!"

"Don't old Irish look pale?" said Prout.

"Look at his 'air!" added Joe. "It's all on end."

"Cowardy, cowardy!" laughed Gan-Waga. "He not go."

"Won't Oi?" growled Barry, setting his teeth. "Oi'll not be hate boia a lard-factory! Oi wouldn't disgrace me noble name! Howld me coat and yez'll see."

The car was hardly moving. Ching-Lung still hung from the hawser, and was lighting a cigarette. Barry gripped the wire, and began to slowly wriggle upwards.

"Look out!" yelled Ching-Lung wildly.

"What's the matter?"

"Look out! Oh, look out! I'm turning giddy! I—I can't hold on! Help, help! I know I shall fall! Oh! Oh!"

Barry uttered a yell of dread. Ching-Lung came shooting down the wire at tremendous speed. Barry gave himself up for lost. He shut his eyes and awaited the shock. The next instant he was lying in the bottom of the motor-car, while Ching-Lung, amid loud laughter, darted up the hawser again and gained the aeronef's deck.

Barry was not hurt. Ching-Lung had only struck him hard enough to send him into the car. But Barry was sulky about it, for he objected to being laughed at. Prout was going to attempt to climb when the millionaire's stern voice ordered him to desist. It was very well for Ching-Lung to perform foolhardy tricks, but the others were forbidden to risk their necks.

"There's the river at last, Ching!"

Ferrers Lord pointed to a distant streak of silver. It was a good many miles away. Beyond it was a dark patch of country, which the glasses showed to be a forest. As they drew closer, Ching-Lung made out a long bridge, with more than thirty arches.

"I wonder if that thing will hold us?" he said. "I've had some experience of Chinese bridges, and I don't think Tibetan bridges are any better. They are only built for light traffic, and if the thing let the car through somebody would get wet."

"It looks substantial enough."

"We can chance it, Lord; but make the men get out."

It was a sensible plan. The bridge was built of stone, and, to the eye, it seemed sound and strong. Ferrers Lord gave the order. The men sprang out as the car rumbled on to the first span.

"A hatchet, Ching," said the millionaire.

Ching-Lung understood. He seized a hatchet, and stood ready to sever the hawsers in the event of a collapse, and to free the aeronef from her consort. The men followed.

"It's quite safe, after all," said the millionaire.

"All aboard, lads!" shouted Ching-Lung. "There's no danger."

The speed increased. Then came a deafening roar. A shower of stones sprang into the air, mingled with smoke and flame. The startled men sprang up. Ferrers Lord rushed to the levers. A great gap appeared in the centre of the bridge, and the arches quivered under the motor-car.

The next moment they were on firm ground. Their faces were white when they looked back.

"A mine!" said Ching-Lung hoarsely.

"Storland Salib," answered the millionaire. "He knew we must cross the bridge, and he mined it in readiness. That was dynamite. By Jove, we only got over in time!"

It had been a close thing. Ferrers Lord brought the aeronef to a standstill. The air was full of smoke and dust. Four arches had gone, and the stream was rushing through the gap.

"There the brutes are!" said Ching-Lung.

A boat appeared in the distance.

"I'm almost inclined to follow and teach them a lesson," said Ferrers Lord. "If I thought the scoundrel was in that boat I'd pay him the debt in full! What's the matter down there?"

"The carpenter, sir!" cried Prout. "He's got hit by a stone, sir!"

"Badly?"

OUT OF BOUNDS!

Please order your copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance.

"Stunned, sir."

Poor Joe lay unconscious in Maddock's arms, blood streaming from his head. A stone had struck him. They bound up the wound, but it bled a great deal. Honour was compelled to stitch it. All the time Ferrers Lord was examining the country. Argal-Dinjat squatted beside him.

"You say there is a road," said the millionaire.

"A path, sahib," answered the Afghan. "It is wide enough for the strange chariot (the motor) for a time, but beyond is a pass, and that is too narrow."

"Is there no other way?"

Argal-Dinjat shook his turbanned head.

"For the vessel that flies, yes; but for the chariot, no, sahib. I came this way only once, but I never forget."

Hal Honour had joined them.

"Where the aeroplane can go, the motor can go," he put in. The millionaire nodded. It would mean taking the car to pieces when they arrived at an impossible place, and much delay. But it was the only thing they could do.

"Well, Argal-Dinjat, show us the path," said Ferrers Lord. "Tell me how to steer."

"At once, sahib; but it is a dangerous path. Many men might lurk in the ravine. They blew up the bridge, and they may await us there. I warn the sahib to load his guns."

He stood by the wheel, giving a few guttural directions. Ferrers Lord knew that his warning was not to be despised. An ambush was what he feared most. Who could tell what terrible slaughter an unexpected volley might cause? The baggage was piled as much as possible round the sides of the car, and the men were told to lie down. At last a break was seen in the wall of trees.

"The path, sahib!" said the Afghan.

Ferrers Lord stopped the vessel, and shrugged his shoulders.

"It will be dark in a couple of hours," he said, "and the place does not look inviting. For all we know, Storland may have an army hidden there. What is your opinion, Honour?"

"Wait until to-morrow."

"That's my idea, too," said Ching-Lung. "Let us camp out here, and have the day before us. I don't like ambushes at any time, but I object to them strongly in the dark. And I'm as hungry as a shark, and sleepier than a dormouse. Camp out by all means, old chap, and let us see a square meal."

The aeroplane drew the car farther into the open. They cut wood, and built two fires. When the darkness came, the great electric lamps of the motor-car and aeroplane blazed out. Prout and Barry were appointed sentries, and, wrapping themselves snugly in their blankets, the men lay down to sleep.

Barry's station was nearest the forest. It was a warm night, and the sky was studded with brilliant stars. The sight of the starry heavens made Barry feel poetical. Leaning on his rifle, and gazing upward, he began to compose a poem.

Acting as a sentry was a new experience to Barry. He got on fairly well with the poem, and, getting tired of walking up and down, he sank gracefully to the ground, and leaned his back against a boulder. First one eye closed, and then the other. He tried vainly to keep them open. His head sank, and a soft musical snoring told the mosquitoes that he was asleep.

Dark figures began to creep out of the forest, and human eyes flashed in the gloom. Barry awoke with a start. Voices were muttering close to him. His heart gave a leap that almost choked him.

"Wait," said a voice in the vernacular. "We must get all round them before we attack. We can't fail this time."

"And the signal?"

"The call of a wolf. Wait ten minutes more. Get to your post."

Barry could see nothing, but he caught the sound of stealthy footsteps. He cursed himself for having neglected his duty. Well enough, he knew the man who had spoken—Storland Sahib.

There were ten precious minutes yet. He waited, trembling. All was still. Barry went down on all-fours, and crawled towards the camp. There, in the red glare of the dying fires, lay his sleeping comrades. He glided forward. He could trust Ching-Lung.

"Yes; what is it?"

Ching-Lung was awake and alert in an instant.

"Sh-h! sh-h!" whispered Barry hoarsely. "Oi—Oi wint to slape, sor, and, bedad, they're all around us!"

"Who? What?"

"Storland Sahibs rascals!" panted Barry.

"Good heavens! Do you mean that? And where's Prout?"

Barry turned white. Perhaps his neglect had caused the steersman's death. He uttered a groan of despair. Ching-Lung awakened the millionaire. Ferrers Lord did not move a muscle.

"Rouse the men," he said; "but do not startle them. Tell them to get up."

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them to crawl to the car one by one. Three of them must go with the aeroplane."

"I'll wake Honour first, then," answered the prince.

Where was Prout? All the men were roused, but without any noise or confusion. Ching-Lung crept towards where Prout had been seen last. To his intense delight he saw a misty figure in front of him.

"Tom!"

The figure turned.

"Who's that?" asked Prout's gruff voice.

"Don't make a row," muttered Ching-Lung. "Get down on your marrow-bones, and crawl to the aeroplane."

All was ready. At last, through the silence, sounded the long-drawn howl of a wolf.

"They're coming!" said Ferrers Lord, raising his revolver.

Crack! At once the electric lamps of the car sent two dazzling shafts of light through the gloom.

The aeroplane rose, Prout working her searchlight, and the gunners kneeling with levelled guns. Honour started the car.

Wild yells of rage, disappointment, fear, and baffled fury rose from Storland Sahib's wolves. The lights revealed them. Shot answered shot, scream answered scream. The car spat flame as it moved upon the attackers. There were more than a hundred of them. Before the car could gather speed they were swarming round it.

Then it was clubbed rifles and revolvers. The men on the aeroplane were afraid to fire, for the risk of injuring their own comrades was too great. A dozen hands were clutching the wheels to hold the motor back, knives hacked at the tyres, savage faces shone in the light.

Cool and collected, Hal Honour put on full speed. The car leapt forward, lurching sickeningly as it passed over human bodies. Twenty of the wolves hung to its sides. Clubbed rifles, revolver bullets, and even fist blows hurled them off.

"Reload!" rang the engineer's voice.

The car spun round, and swept down on the enemy. The rifles spat out their deadly contents; but the Mongols had had their fill. They scattered at the approach of the car, and fled for the forest.

"Bravo, Honour! Well done all!" cried Ferrers Lord. "Anyone hurt?"

There was silence for a moment. Ching-Lung called out the names of the men. Three did not answer.

The search commenced. Two bodies were found. Both the men were dead. They had fallen from the car, or been dragged out in the struggle. Argal-Dinjat was the third, but they looked for him in vain.

"This is a bad business," said the millionaire moodily. "Poor fellows! How many have we accounted for, Ching?"

"Seven dead and four wounded."

"You'd better get Honour to attend to their wounds."

One Mongol died before they could carry him into the light, but the wounds of the rest were not serious. Honour did his best, but the only thanks he received consisted of ugly looks and muttered curses. Ching-Lung, Prout, and Maddock continued the search for the Afghan.

"It seems to me, sir," said Prout, "that he'll turn up when he wants. If he was dead or hurt, we'd have found him. We haven't even found his outlandish gun. He's gone after Storland Sahib, that's what it is."

"I should not be surprised, Tom."

"I'm certain of it, sir."

"Then we may as well chuck it up," said Ching-Lung.

They had conquered, but the victory was a sad one. They gathered silently round two shallow graves, and Rupert solemnly read the Burial Service over two loyal and gallant comrades. Three volleys were fired over the mound. The Mongols were buried apart.

Ching-Lung was the last to leave the grave. As he turned sadly away, he saw Barry standing near him in a forlorn attitude.

"Cheer up!" said Ching-Lung.

Barry groaned.

"Bedad, sor, Oi faal loike a murderer!" he said. "Av Oi hadn't gone to slape—"

"Don't think about that, my lad. I can't excuse you, but it might have been worse for us if you hadn't. Prout was awake, but he saw nothing suspicious. Except for your forty winks they might have cut the throats of all of us."

Barry took comfort at last, but his eyes never closed all night. When the sun rose, Argal-Dinjat strode into the camp, with his rifle on his shoulder.

"Where have you been?" Thurston asked.

The Afghan looked at him sullenly.

"I was hunting, sahib," he answered; "but the game escaped."

"The game was Storland Sahib—eh?"

"Yes, sahib; but his hour has not yet come. But I can wait."

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He looked ugly as he squatted there, with a tigerish gleam in his eyes.

"I'd sooner have that chap for a friend than a foe, Ru," muttered Ching-Lung. "We're going to take a bird's-eye view of the place. Will you come?"

"If you like."

Ferrers Lord was already aboard the aeronef. It mounted higher and higher. The millionaire glanced eastwards, and the sun, rising like a ball of fire, shone on roofs and walls far away in the distance.

"Lhasa," said Ferrers Lord—"the capital of Tibet!"

Uncomfortable Travelling—Gan-Waga's Adventure with an Eagle.

The path through the forest was not too wide. In America it would have been a "corduroy" road, for it was paved with tree-trunks, over which the motor-car lurched and bumped very nastily. Besides, brambles and ferns had sprung up between the logs, and great creepers hung from tree to tree. These had to be cut through to make way for the aeronef and consort. Altogether, progress was slow, painful, and difficult, and the adventurers groaned as some specially vigorous jolt flung them up against each other.

"U-u-ut's l-l-loike r-r-roidin' in an—an armchair, isn't u-ut?" stammered Barry. "The aise and e-comfort of u-ut makes me p-p-poine to go on f-for iver f-floatin' g-gintly through s-space loike this. In fact, ut's a d-dhrame of j-j-joy!"

Barry got out and walked, and all the others except Hal followed his wise example. Even a well-balanced and pneumatic-tyred motor-car was pain and grief on such a road.

"Wouldn't it make a noise crequet lawn, Ben?" said Barry.

"Lovely!" answered Maddock. "I wish I was on the aeronef. They've got the best of it."

"Look out!" yelled the voice of Thomas Prout. "Mind your eyebrows!"

His gleaming axe hacked through a liane, and the severed creeper fell on either side in two gigantic ropes. They plodded on behind the car through the interminable forest, without meeting a single human being. It grew insufferably hot as the day advanced, and the flies were merciless. They were all well pleased when the aeronef slowed down.

After the midday meal the journey was continued along the hateful road. It was terribly monotonous, and hotter than ever. Gan-Waga emptied several cans of water over himself. He loathed the heat, and grew quite sulky. At last the road curved sharply, and as they rounded the bend the ravine spoken of by Argal-Dinjat appeared ahead.

It was as if a great, narrow slice had been cut out of the hill. Further progress was impossible for the car, for the road was much too narrow.

"This is where we stop, old chap," said Ching-Lung. "You can't put a full-sized brick into a pint bottle, and you can't put the King of the Roads in there. We'll have to take him to bits."

Ferrers Lord smiled. Hal Honour was already at work. "Our emperor of engineers wastes no time," answered the millionaire.

"But how long will it take?"

A good many hours. I don't know how long the ravine is. It all depends on that."

"All right," grinned Ching-Lung; "if there's any work to be done, you must excuse me. My doctor tells me that work in any shape might bring on a fainting-fit. Toodle-oo!"

Ching-Lung slid down the hawser. Gan-Waga sat on a log, perspiring and sighing.

"Buck up, you box of melted butter," said the prince.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Me expiring all ober," panted Gan.

"Perspiring, silly! You speak the English language like an old crow!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Gan rudely. "Go and pawn yo' pig-tail!"

Ching-Lung looked mildly surprised as Gan stood up with a dark frown, and strode away.

"Here, come back, three-feet-nothing!" called the prince.

"Where are you off to?"

"Goin' find brick and piece string tie round yo' neck and drowned yo'!"

With this parting shot, Gan vanished into the ravine. As a rule, he was very good-tempered; but he was not born to endure a hot sun. How he longed for a lump of ice! Fanning himself with a palm-leaf, he squatted down in the shade of a rock. Then he heard a soft and soothing sound—the musical tinkle of falling water. Gan licked his parched lips joyfully.

It was a little waterfall. Gan sat down under it, and let its cooling stream pour over him and drench him to the skin. He put his back against the rock, and closed his eyes.

"Butterful!" he murmured dreamily. "Lubblly! Grand-ful! Pelicious! I nebber go 'way—nebber no morer! I die under dis squirt!"

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Softly he sank to slumber, happy at last, with the water splashing over him. Half an hour later Prout, Barry, and Maddock walked down the ravine. They paused and stared. "Bedad," said Barry, "did yez iver see the loikes o' that at all, at all?"

Barry scratched his head, and Gan snored on sweetly. The aeronef, bearing a segment of the dismantled motor, buzzed over them, with the millionaire at the wheel. Barry could hardly tear himself away from the novel sight. He twisted a wreath of leaves, and hung it over Gan's left eye.

"Butterful! Butterful!" lisped the dreamer. "Oh, let us be joyfulness! Ta-ra-boomdeyay!"

"Harrk how he babbleth wid his infant lips!" said Barry. "Oh, come home!" said Prout. "You talk a lot too much, by hekey you do!"

"Troth, Oi'm comin'!" said Barry, shouldering his gun.

O'Rooney cast many a glance behind at the dreamer.

"Hallo," said Maddock: "that's no sparrow!"

They looked up. An eagle was gliding through the air, its mighty wings fully extended. Prout raised his rifle.

"Howld on!" said Barry. "Howld—!"

Crack! A shot rang through the ravine, and the great bird turned over, and came whirling down. None of the men had fired. The bird struck the earth with a thud and a scream, rose, and fell again. It fell on Gan's chest, and its talons fastened themselves in Gan's clothing.

The Eskimo awoke, and what his first thoughts were will always remain a mystery. He uttered a howl, and grappled with the feathered monster. The eagle had one wing broken, and it was unable to free its talons. In a paroxysm of amaze and fright, Gan-Waga gripped it round the body, and man and bird rolled over together.

The unexpected shot had startled Prout, Maddock, and Barry almost out of their senses. Gan yelled "Murder!"

They rushed to the rescue. Gan was uppermost, but the bird had got its beak on the fleshy part of the Eskimo's leg. Luckily Gan-Waga wore tough leather trousers; and luckily, too, the fall had knocked the strength out of the eagle. Just as the men hurried up, Gan managed to unsheath his knife, and the struggle was over.

"Coo-ee!"

The mystery was explained. Ching-Lung came down the cliff, swinging himself from ledge to ledge. He reached the ground, and burst into a roar of laughter. Gan sat under the waterfall, holding the eagle by the neck, in a kind of stupefied trance. He looked at them blankly.

"Rouse up, Gan!" grinned Ching-Lung.

"Hunk?" inquired Gan-Waga dazedly.

"Get up, the house is afoire!" said Barry.

"Wake up," roared Prout; "it's time to feed the fowls!"

Gan-Waga rubbed his head, and examined the eagle.

"Bedad, aren't yez ashamed of yerself," said O'Rooney, "to stale a pore little birrd loike that out of its warrm, cosy nest? Oh, cruel, cruel man! Ut won't sing, av yez put it in a cage. Ut's a cock robin, isn't ut?"

"A lark, I think," said Prout. "Poor little thing! Barry's right, Gan; you're a cruel monster!"

Gan gave up rubbing his head, and began to rub his leg. The beak of "the poor little thing" had bruised like a rat-trap. Still he did not speak. He was trying to think it over.

"Chingy!" he murmured feebly.

"My son!"

"Where he come from, hunk? What he want go for me for?"

"Took you for something to eat, I expect, sonny," chuckled the prince. "He's got a nest up here, and I'm after it. Thurston will be glad to have an egg for his collection. He'd like to have his head stuffed as well, I expect, so don't maul his feathers about. Cut it off neatly, Tom, and keep your eye open for his mate."

Ching-Lung began to climb again. He had seen the nest just after shooting the bird. He found foothold in places that might have made even a mountain goat shiver to look at.

"Here it is!" he shouted at last.

"Any eggs?" roared Barry.

"Two, and as big as footballs."

The ragged nest of sticks was on a ledge below him, but it was difficult to reach it. Even Ching-Lung hesitated. A stout shrub grew on a cleft above the ledge, and beyond the ledge was an ugly drop of forty feet. Ching-Lung's pockets were mysterious places. Prout declared that those pockets contained everything—from a grand piano to a frying-pan. What Ching-Lung produced was a long piece of string. He tied a stone in the middle of the string, and a circular piece of leather to the end of it; then, opening a little tin box, he smeared the leather with some sticky substance.

(Another long instalment of this thrilling serial story next week.)

My Readers' Page.



GRAND,
NEW,
WEEKLY
FEATURE.

NEXT WEEK'S STORY.

In next Tuesday's grand, long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled

"OUT OF BOUNDS,"

by Frank Richards, an altogether new phase is introduced into the peaceful existence of the old school. An enterprising business man erects a busy factory in the neighbourhood—a hive of modern industry whose bustle disturbs a quiet countryside. Greyfriars views with resentment the activities of the enterprising gentleman aforementioned, whose interference in the matter of a certain cherished right of way brings affairs to a crisis between the factory and the school. The Famous Fighting Form at Greyfriars takes active steps to protect its rights, and the excitement naturally reaches the highest pitch. Whatever you do, therefore, don't miss

"OUT OF BOUNDS."

A STORM IN A TEACUP.

The letter published on this page some weeks ago, and signed "The President of the Anti-MAGNET League," has aroused a storm of indignant protest amongst my readers all over the country. I have received hundreds of letters all couched in similar vein, and expressing the disgust, scorn, and derision with which the precious scheme of Master Maurice Hubert—the precious "President" above mentioned—is regarded by all loyal Magnetites. Many of my chums express themselves in vigorous and even warlike terms, and inquiries for the "President's" address are numerous and urgent. I am afraid Master Maurice would be in for a warm time had he not prudently omitted to give any address save the somewhat vague one of "Liverpool." Some of his fellow-townsmen are particularly anxious to meet him, regarding his little scheme as a blot upon the good name of their great town. Here are a few extracts taken at random from the hundreds of letters I have received on this subject:

"Arthur E.," of Swansea, writes:

"I am sorry to learn that there are boys who are so foolish as to establish such an absolutely ridiculous farce as an 'Anti-MAGNET League.' I entirely fail to see what harm there can be in either THE MAGNET or 'The Gem.' You have the consolation of knowing that for every one reader who takes Maurice Hubert's views there are fifty thousand or so who don't. I have been taking both papers now for well over three years, and have not only found them interesting, but most useful. Perhaps there is a possibility of Maurice Hubert's having exaggerated the number of misguided youths whom he has 'reformed.' After reading THE MAGNET and 'The Gem,' my parents were quite willing for me to read them."

A short note from "H. S.," of Lee, S.E., reads as follows:

"Dear Editor,—Having read the paragraph re 'The Anti-MAGNET League,' I was very surprised to find that anyone should be so unfair to THE MAGNET Library. I think it would be a good idea for your readers to form Pro-MAGNET Leagues, every reader to try to get as many as possible to read THE MAGNET, so as to make sure the Anti-MAGNET League will not do THE MAGNET any harm."

The following letter, from a married lady living in Manchester, is sure to interest all readers, so I give it in full.

"Dear Editor,—It is not often that I get my back up about anything, but it did make me vexed to think that there was such a mean-spirited fellow as the one signing himself 'President of the Anti-MAGNET League.' If he doesn't like THE MAGNET let him leave it alone—we are told to do good, not evil. I am a married woman, and I read a great deal, but there are no books that give me greater pleasure in reading than THE MAGNET and 'The Gem.' For clean reading for clean minds there is nothing to beat them. I should like to read some of the books that the 'President' is in the habit of reading, and perhaps I would find some a lot worse than THE MAGNET. I think he is like the Suffragettes—it is the only way he can make a name. I have a little boy and girl of my own, and I hope when they grow older that there is nothing worse than THE MAGNET and 'The Gem' that they

read. I have been laughed at for reading THE MAGNET and 'The Gem,' but I have persuaded my husband to read them, and I have caught him having a good laugh on the quiet. I have been a reader for about three years, and am likely to remain a reader for a good many more years. Hoping my letter will do something to make up for the nasty, ill-natured letter of the 'President of the Anti-MAGNET League,' I remain, yours sincerely,
A MANCHESTER READER."

To the writers of the above, and all the great company of loyal readers who wrote to the same effect, I express my hearty thanks. I cannot refrain from thinking, however, that the matter which has excited this great indignation is hardly worthy of more than passing attention. Even supposing that the redoubtable Master Maurice Hubert's statements are founded on fact—which many readers appear to doubt—I feel very sure that they are grossly exaggerated for the purpose of effect, since I can hardly believe that our youthful 'President' could find, say, more than one or two Magnetites so childishly simple as to fall in with his biased views of a story paper which holds a position second to none in the affections of the youth of Great Britain. But be that as it may, I would like to assure my youthful adversary that I feel no resentment whatever towards him. I am only sorry for him—sorry, and at the same time grateful to him for having unwittingly called forth from hundreds of readers proof of a grand loyalty, of which I am justly proud.

HOW TO MAKE AN ELECTRIC BATTERY.

The simplest form of an electric battery that can be made at home is the bichromate cell. From this can be obtained a fairly strong current, the only fault of which is that it is not constant. The best use it can be put to is the driving of small motors, or for medical shocking coils. If it is wanted for lighting purposes, one single cell will not be of sufficient power except for a very small lamp. A number of these batteries are, however, easily connected.

To make the battery, proceed in the following manner: First obtain these articles—a jam-jar with a fairly wide neck, two plates of carbon of sufficient length to reach within half an inch of the bottom of the jar, one plate of zinc of about half that length, two brass terminals, and a brass rod about a quarter of an inch thick, a little bit longer than the zinc plate, and with a screw at the bottom of it. Also get a semi-circular piece of thin copper-sheet. Construct a wooden cover for the top of the jar, boring three holes across the diameter, each one just a little larger than the diameter of the brass rod.

Through the two outer ones connect up the two carbon plates by means of the copper-sheet to one terminal, which should be placed over one of the holes if possible. Next take the brass rod and push it—it should fit rather tightly—through the central hole down between the two carbons. Then screw the end of it on to the top of the zinc plate, and the battery is ready to receive the solution. The second terminal should be fixed to the top of the brass rod. A tip with regard to the zinc plate. When the battery is not in use it can be pulled out of the liquid, but when in use the zinc is exposed entirely to the acid, which will soon destroy it. To stop this without lessening the power of the current, the plate should be coated with mercury, soaked in sulphuric acid.

With regard to the solution, this can either be made at home or can be bought already mixed at the chemists. If it is made at home the following chemicals will have to be bought: One pound of bichromate of potash or of soda and some sulphuric acid. It is easier to take a bottle to the chemist's, and ask him to fill it with a saturated solution of bichromate, as it saves trouble, is no more expensive, and is sure to be mixed correctly. When both solution and sulphuric acid are obtained, take ten parts of the bichromate and mix it with one part of the sulphuric acid. Make sufficient to reach to within half an inch of the bottom of the zinc plate when it is pulled up as high as possible.

The greatest care should be observed in handling the acid, the smallest drop of which is capable of inflicting a terrible burn. The eyes, in particular, should be carefully guarded, as the least splash of the powerful acid in one of them might cause total blindness.

THE EDITOR.

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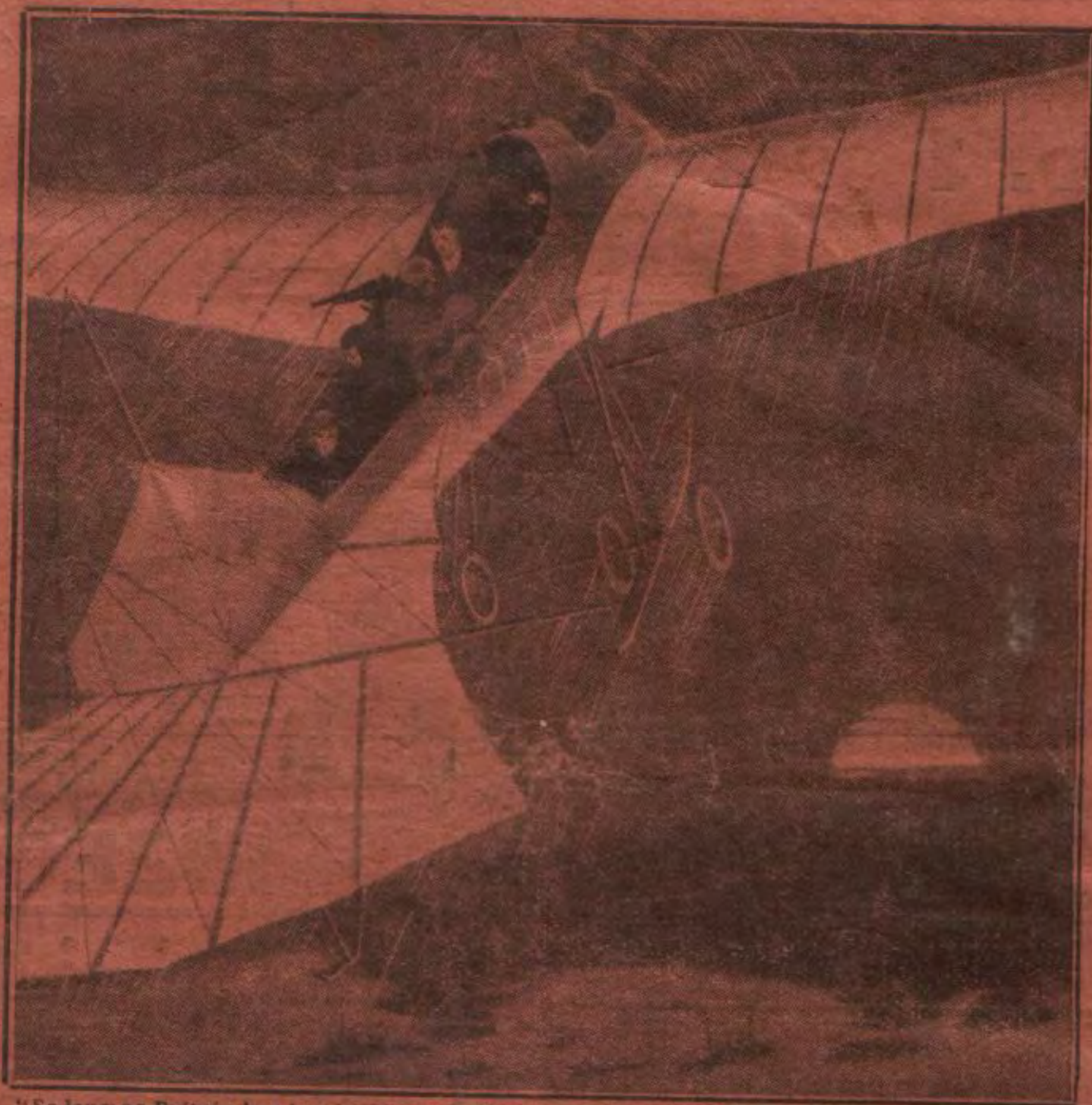
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