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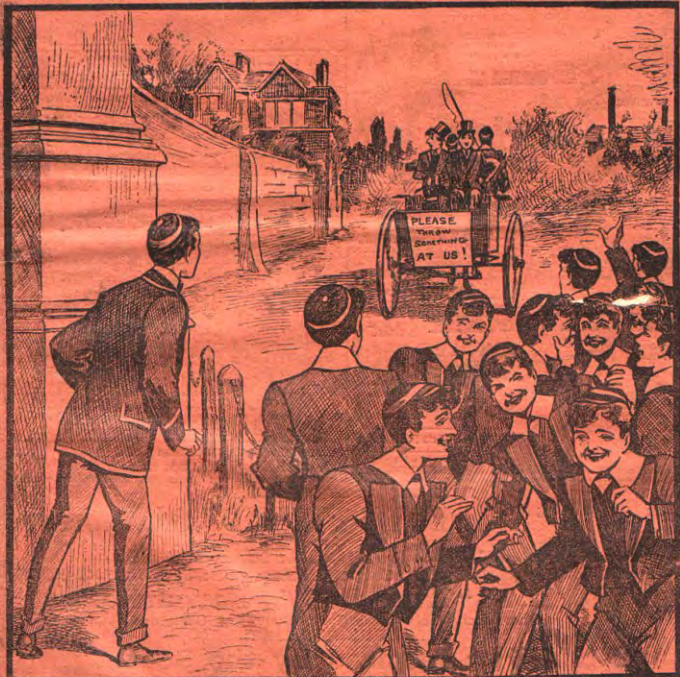
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GLOBE!"

—By—
SIDNEY DREW.

No. 229.

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Vol. 6.



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The Remove Form's Feud!

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School Tale of Harry Wharton &
Co. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fags Wanted.

HARRY WHARTON came into Study No. 1 with a telegram in his hand, and a serious expression on his face. There were two fellows in the study—Bob Cherry, who was sitting on the table and swinging his long legs, to an accompaniment of warning creaks from the table, and Frank Nugent, who was standing by the window and going through his pockets with a careful and methodical air, evidently in search of some odd coin that might have escaped previous searching.

Bob Cherry was watching him with a grin. Bob's pockets were turned inside-out, plain proof that he had been engaged in a similar quest, with similar results.

"Any luck?" asked Bob, as Nugent turned out his last pocket and grunted.

"A threepenny-bit," said Frank, holding it up.

"Oh, good!"

"But it's a bad one."

"Oh, rats!"

"I changed it for Bunter, I remember," growled Nugent. "I remember wondering why he couldn't change it at the tuckshop if he wanted it changed. I know now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It jolly well isn't a 'laughing matter'!" growled Nugent.

"I'm stony! And you—"

"One penny, but it's a good one," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, Wharton! What have you got?"

"A telegram."

"I don't mean that, ass! How's the money market?"

"Tight!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "That's what I want to see you fellows about. I'm down to my last tanner, and I want some tin."

"Seems to be an epidemic," grinned Bob Cherry. "I've got a good penny and Frank's got a bad threepenny-bit. Johnny Bull's story—I've asked him. It's a half-holiday to-morrow, and there are no more remittances till Saturday. We shall have to have tea in hall to-day. Ugh!"

"I've got a telegram—"

"My dear chap, we can't eat telegrams. Even Billy Bunter couldn't. If you can't suggest anything better than that—"

"Ass! I tell you—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry as a junior passed the open door. "Here's Micky! Come in, Micky! We want to see you specially."

Micky Desmond of the Remore looked in with a grin.

"Faith, and here I am!" he remarked. "What do you want?"

"Money!" said Bob Cherry laconically.

Micky Desmond's grin widened.

"Sure, and it's in the same boat I am," he said. "I was lookin' for somebody to lend me a bob—"

"Well, you ass!" said Bob Cherry in disgust. "You're a

pretty fellow to depend on in an emergency, I must say! You can buzz!"

And Micky Desmond chuckled, and "buzzed."

"Look here," said Harry Wharton. "I've got a telegram—"

"B-r-r-r! We're going to be fed up on that telegram, I see," said Bob Cherry. "The question is, how are we to raise the wind? I am stony, thou art stony, he is stony—nouns sommes stony, vous etes stony, ils sont stony!"

"What about Maslevener?" said Frank Nugent thoughtfully.

"Oh, we can't keep on borrowing of Maslevener," said Bob Cherry. "Besides, I've tackled him, and he's run out of cash, too. It's an epidemic, as I said. There's Coker of the Fifth—he's always rolling in money, but the trouble about Coker is that he wouldn't lend any of it to us. So he might as well be stony, too. There's nothing for it but tea in hall, Groo!"

"Look here, are you going to hear this giddy telegram?" roared Harry Wharton. "It's jolly important. There's a visitor coming—"

"Here!" asked Nugent.

"Yes—to this study."

"Just our luck!" groaned Nugent. "He was bound to come when we were stony broke. Just like Bob to be stony at the same time, too. I never saw such an ass! Who's coming?"

"Todd."

"Oh, old Todd!"

"Good old Todd!" said Bob Cherry. "I shall be glad to see him, especially if he's got any money!"

"He's coming to pay us a visit to-morrow afternoon," said Harry Wharton anxiously. "He's wired me to expect him. He's bringing his brother. Now, we've got to give them something of a feed—we can't ask visitors to have weak tea and crusts in hall, under the eye of a Form-master."

"No fear!"

"We shall need some cash," said Harry Wharton decidedly. "There are three ways of getting cash—begging, borrowing, and stealing. Stealing being out of the question, and begging being barred, we shall have to borrow it, so come on!"

"Where?"

"We shall have to make a round of the House, and ask every chap we meet," said Harry Wharton, "and the sooner the quicker. We're all in this—we've got to entertain the two Tods when they come, and we've simply got to raise the wind, so come on!"

"He Cherry did off the table."

"Right you are!" he said. "I don't believe it will be any good—there's simply a famine in cash in the Remove. Even Inky hasn't any. But we'll try. Never shall it be said that the Famous Four omitted to borrow money if they could when they were stony! I'm ready!"

And the chums of the Remove, looking very determined, left the study and started upon the borrowing expedition. But Bob Cherry's prediction turned out to be quite correct. Never had there been such a period of hard-upness in the Grexians' Remove. Even Lord Maslevener and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were in the same deplorable state as the chums of Study No. 1. Billy Bunter, it is true, was expecting a postal-order, but that would have been an extremely shaky reed to lean upon. Johnny Bull was generally well supplied with the sinews of war, but he was simply destitute just now, and he joined his three chums in their expedition, and added his eloquence to theirs. But the only net result was the offer of a bad expense from Osgily, who had no use for it himself. The Famous Four halted at last in the lower hall, and snorted.

"Nice state of things!" growled Bob Cherry. "It means tea in hall for all of us!"

"Oh, blow tea in hall! I'm thinking of the guests to-morrow—"

"And I'm thinking of tea to-day—"

"Look here! What's going to be done?"

"We are!" grinned Nugent.

"Oh, don't be funny! We—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Coker of the Fifth came down the passage. "Here's the great and only Coker, bulging with quids, as usual, I expect! I suppose we couldn't work a little robbery with violence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth saw the Removees, but he did not look at them. Coker of the Fifth was far too great a person to notice mere juniors; and, besides, there was generally war between the Remove and the Fifth, and even Coker could not deny that the Fifth generally had the worst of it.

Coker strode up to the notice-board in the hall, and with something of a flourish he pinned a paper on the board. He stepped back and regarded it with some satisfaction, and then—keeping his nose very high in the air as he passed the Removees—he walked away to his study.

Two or three fellows who were near to the notice-board—

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looked at the paper Coker had pinned up, and there were loud exclamations.

"The cheek!"

"Just like Coker!"

"Awful cad!"

"Yank it down!"

"The cheeky beast!"

The juniors were evidently indignant. Harry Wharton & Co., wondering what the notice was about, came over to the board and read it. The notice was written in Horace Coker's big, sprawling handwriting, and it read as follows:

"FAGS WANTED! GOOD PAY FOR LIGHT WORK!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Coker's Hands.

"FAGS wanted!" said Harry Wharton. "My hat! Good pay for light work! The cheeky cad!"

The Removees stared at the notice.

Fellows gathered round from all sides to read it. Strictly speaking, the Removees were not fags, as they were exempt from the duties of fagging for the seniors. But they were just as indignant as the Third-Formers and Second-Formers who came round to read the notice.

"Awful rotter!" said Tubb of the Third. "As if we want his rotten money!"

"Just like Coker!" said Nugent minor of the Second Form. "Fancy his having the cheek to offer to pay us for work! The cheeky outsider!"

The Famous Four drew back from the crowd. They shared the indignation of the rest; it was just like Coker's arrogance. Coker had heaps of money, and he was generally supposed to imagine that he could do anything he liked in consequence. But a glimmer of fun was in Bob Cherry's eyes now. He had a new idea.

"I wonder what it is Coker wants done!" he said thoughtfully.

"Oh, fagging in his study, perhaps," said Nugent, with a sniff.

"Suppose we do it!"

"Eh?"

"We're looking for cash," said Bob Cherry. "He that will not work neither shall he eat, you know. If it's good pay for light work that will just about suit us. The better the pay and the lighter the work the better we shall like it."

"Work for Coker?"

"Well, we've got to raise the wind somehow," said Bob Cherry, "and we're unemployed at present, you know. Let's get along to Coker's study and see what it is. If it suits us we can take it on; if it doesn't, we can bump him for his cheek."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry led the way, and his chums followed him. They arrived at Coker's study, and Bob Cherry knocked at the door, and opened it by the simple process of jamming his foot against it. The door flew open, and the Famous Four walked in.

Coker was there. His chums, Potter and Greene of the Fifth, were there, too. The table was laid for tea, and the juniors cast a glance upon the piles of good things. Coker always "did himself" well, and, considering the funds at his disposal, there was nothing surprising in the carefulness of Potter and Greene to preserve their friendship with Coker unbroken.

The three Fifth-Formers glared at the juniors. They did not forget their little rubs with the Remove.

"What do you fags want?" asked Coker loftily.

"Please, we've come!" said Bob Cherry blandly.

"Eh?"

"We've come!"

"I can see you've come," said Coker; "and you'll go on your necks—if you don't buzz out of this study. What do you want?"

"Good pay."

"Eh?"

"For light work," explained Bob Cherry.

Coker stared.

"Oh!" he said. "You've seen the notice on the board?"

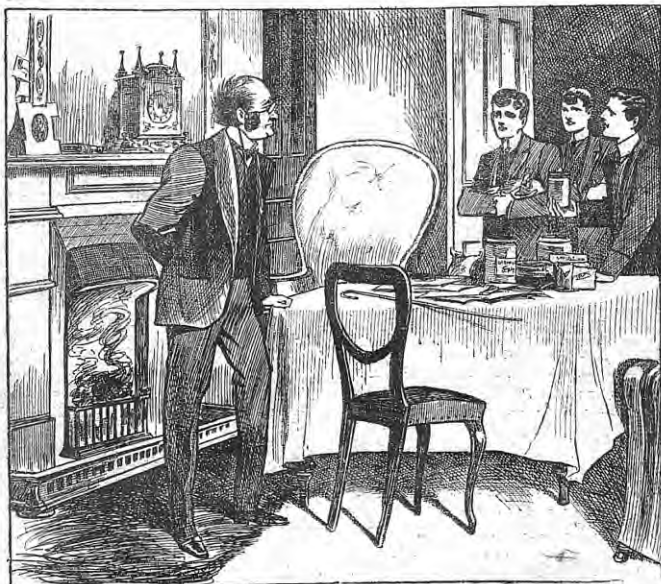
"Exactly."

"And you've come for a job?"

"Just so."

Coker and his comrades exchanged glances. They grinned. "Well, I didn't expect to get any applications from the Remove," said Coker, "but I don't see why you shouldn't have the job. If you're retting—"

"We're not retting," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We're hard up—stony, in fact. There appears to be no way of raising money excepting by working for it. Of course, that's an awful resource, but we're prepared to face even that."



"We shall have a ripping tea, sir," said Coker pleasantly, not realising that he was a victim of Harry Wharton & Co.'s great jape. "May I remove those papers, sir? and we'll lay the table." "Lay the table!" breathed the astounded Mr. Prout. (See Chapter 15.)

"We are?" said Johnny Bull.
"It means work, you know," said Coker.
"That's all right."
"The pay will be a fanner an hour—"
"Ahem! I suppose you couldn't make it half-a-sovereign an hour?" suggested Bob Cherry. "That would suit us better in every way."
"Sixpence an hour," said Coker: "and you'll have to work. I shall keep a eye on you; and keep you to it."
"Good! What's the work?"
"Digging."
"Digging!" exclaimed the Famous Four with one voice.
"Yes. You see," explained Coker. "I've taken up gardening, but on reflection I don't care to do the digging myself. I think it's better for me to direct operations, and do the brain work, you see."
"What with?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.
Coker frowned.

"None of your cheek!" he exclaimed. "I shall expect my hands to be civil. I don't believe in these modern ideas of petting and coaxing employees. Now, if you want the job, there you are. Is it a go?"
"Sixpence an hour," said Harry Wharton. "Good! It's a go!"
Then go and get your spades and things, and I'll come down and tell you what you are to do," said Coker loftily.

"Yes, sir!" said the four Remorites solemnly.
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"That's right," said Coker. "Of course, you will have to call me 'sir' while you are in my employ. You will have to work hard and obey orders."

"Yes, sir."
"Then buzz off and get ready. Work begins at half-past five exactly."

"Very good, sir."
And the Famous Four touched their forelocks to Coker, and backed respectfully out of the study. In the passage they grinned at one another.

"Of all the asses," murmured Bob Cherry. "I think Coker takes the cake! But we've got to raise the wind, and if there's nothing for it but working, we must work. What?"

"Right-ho!"
"Then let's go and get the giddy spades—we can borrow them of Gosing."

And the grinning juniors hurried away.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Labour Dispute.

COKER of the Fifth came down at exactly half-past five with a devious swagger in his walk. Coker was popularly supposed to be the biggest ass in Greyfriars—in fact, everyone thought so with the single exception of Coker himself. But they did not tell Coker so. Coker was a big, broad-shouldered fellow, very big and very strong, and

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"THE SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE!"

ready to hit out at a moment's notice. Even prefects in the Sixth thought it worth while to be civil to Coker. It was a constant exasperation to Coker that the Remove—the Lower Fourth—did not treat him with the great respect which was his due. One of Coker's chief occupations was keeping Harry Wharton & Co. in their place. But the Famous Four required a great deal of keeping there.

But just now the Famous Four were on their best behaviour. Inwardly they were taking Coker and his offer of employment, with good pay for light work, as a great joke. Outwardly, they were as solemn as ovals.

They touched their caps very respectfully to the great Coker as he came up.

Gardening as a hobby had lately been taken up by Coker. Harry Wharton & Co. had taken it up first, and Coker, in his usual way, had taken it up too, just to show the juniors what gardening was really like. The Head had willingly allowed the amateur gardeners a piece of ground to cultivate. When the first enthusiasm had worn off work had slackened down, and the youthful horticulturalists turned up to work in a very desultory fashion. Coker, after due consideration, had decided that he wouldn't do the digging himself. Then the brilliant idea had come into his mind of employing fags to dig in his garden at the moderate price of sixpence an hour. Money was no object to Coker, but it was generally a very considerable object to impecunious fags. Coker had not expected his old rivals of the Remove to apply for the job. But they had, and Coker meant to make it understood that he was top dog.

"Oh, you're here?" said Coker.

"Yes, sir," said the Famous Four gravely.

"I'm going to put in some rose cuttings here," said Coker. "I'm expecting them down by the next post, and I want to have the ground ready. I've bought some of Fipkin's Phenomenal Forcer, which brings roses up very quickly. You've got to dig the ground up here ready."

"Yes, sir."

"Wire in, then," said Coker, with a wave of the hand.

"Yes, sir."

"No slacking, you know."

"No, sir."

And the four juniors wired in.

They had had a great deal of practice in digging in their own garden. It was not hard work to them, and they certainly handled their spades in a workmanlike manner. But Coker found fault. It was "up to" him to find fault, of course, in order to show his superior knowledge of gardening.

"Do you call that digging?" he demanded, after a time.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, put more beef into it," said Coker: "we've got to get this job through. I can't pay hands sixpence an hour for slacking."

"Certainly, sir."

"Throw that earth out a bit quicker, Cherry."

"Oh, certainly, sir."

Bob Cherry hurled out a spadeful of earth, and Coker gave a roar. The mould had alighted upon his waistcoat, and a considerable amount of it stuck there.

"Ow! You young ass!"

Bob Cherry shovelled out the earth faster than ever. It fell in showers over Coker, and he retreated with a roar of rage.

"You fathead! Stop it!" he yelled.

Bob Cherry looked up in surprise.

"Anything the matter, sir?" he asked.

"Ow! You ass! You've smothered me with mud!" roared Coker.

"Dear me! I was only obeying orders, sir! You told me to shovel it out faster, sir."

"You—you—you ass! You're sacked!" roared Coker.

"Sacked?"

"Yes! Get out of my garden!"

Bob Cherry gave a whistle.

"Lot of good it is for a chap to try to turn an honest penny by honest work!" he grunted. "I hope you'll let me off, sir. Think of my wife and family at home, sir, if I'm cast back upon the ranks of the unemployed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out!" yelled Coker, brushing his waistcoat and trousers. "You clumsy ass! Get out!"

"Oh, all right," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "If I'm to be sacked, you may as well have some more."

"Yaroor!" roared Coker, as a fresh shower of earth fell upon him. "Yow! Stop it! Oh!"

Whiz, whiz! came a fresh spadeful.

Coker fairly ran.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Of course, it's awfully cheeky of a workman to treat his governor like this!" he remarked. "But perhaps it will do him good. Wire in, you fellows, and mind you don't get the sack! I'll go and look for the postman. If there should happen to be a remittance, you can sack Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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And Bob Cherry put his jacket on and walked away—sacked.

Coker did not return to the scene of operations for some time. He had a considerable amount of dusting down to do. When he came back he was not in a good temper. The three "hands" were digging away industriously. But Coker, like many employers of labour, felt that he had a right to wreak his bad temper upon his employees. What were employees for? And the fact that the employees were also Removeites and his old rivals gave an added zest to the raving.

"You've been slacking!" growled Coker crossly.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"I say you have! Don't contradict me!"

Wharton winked at Nugent and Johnny Bull.

"Certainly not, sir. I hope I know my place. I'd sooner contradict my own grandmother, sir," he said meekly.

"Well, keep your place, and don't argue with me!" said Coker. "Don't dig a great hole all in one place. Do you think I want to bury my rose-cuttings?"

"Very sorry, sir!"

"Oh, shut up! Dig along the wall, there, and not too deep!"

"Very good, sir!"

"And don't jaw!"

"Yes, sir."

"Get a move on, Bull! You're a lazy rotter!"

"Yes, sir," said Johnny Bull.

"I suppose that spade weighs a ton, by the way you handle it, Nugent!"

"Not quite, sir," said Frank. "I don't know the exact weight, but if you like I will go and inquire of Gessing."

"Don't be an ass! Get on with your work!"

"Yes, sir."

Coker grunted. He could not think of anything more to say, and the three juniors were working away industriously. Coker was really not quite certain how he wanted the ground dug, for, as a matter of fact, what he did not know about gardening would have filled whole volumes on the subject of horticulture. But he had bought rose-cuttings, and he meant to put them in, in season or out of season, and hoped for the best. And he placed great faith in Fipkin's Phenomenal Forcer. A commercial traveller had sold Coker large packets of the Forcer, and had told him entrancing stories of the way the Forcer had forced up rose-trees almost in a night. Coker had felt that he could not do better than use plenty of the Phenomenal Forcer, which could be had for a shilling a packet—and was worth a guinea, so the commercial traveller declared; and as he dealt in the article, surely he should have known if anybody did!

Coker had several packets of the Phenomenal Forcer, and he sprinkled the stuff into the trenches the juniors had dug, and ordered them to mix it well in the mould. Such were the instructions he had received, though the commercial traveller had said that really it did not matter much how the Forcer was used, so long as it was used.

"Mind how you mix that!" said Coker. "Don't scatter it too much, and don't bury it in in chunks! Be sensible!"

"Yes, sir."

"And shut up!"

"Yes, sir."

"It's about time we put in the cuttings," Coker remarked. "It's time they were here. I suppose you young chumps don't know anything about planting rose-cuttings!"

"No, sir."

"Blessed if I feel like paying wages to a set of incompetent asses!" said Coker. "Oh, you fathead, Nugent, you're scattering dirt over my boot!"

"Yes, sir."

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The calm reply seemed to have an exasperating effect upon Coker. He reached out and gave Nugent a shove, which sent him upon his knees in the excavation he had been making.

Nugent yelled.
"Oh, you fathead!"
"Sacked!" screamed Coker. "I don't allow my hands to call me names! You're sacked!"

Nugent scrambled out of the hole, breathing fury. There was a shout from the distance, and Bob Cherry came dashing round the chapel, waving a letter in the air.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo! It's all right!"
He dashed up breathlessly.

"What have you got there?" demanded Harry Wharton.
"Letter from my pater."

"Anything in it?" asked Johnny Bull eagerly.
"Postal-order for a quid!"

"Hurrah!"
Wharton and Johnny Bull threw down their spades. They were in funds again. When one of the Famous Four was in funds, all were in funds. Coker glared at them.

"Look here—"

"We're going on strike!" said Wharton. "Fellow-workmen, I hereby call upon you to declare a general strike, and down with grasping employers."

"Hear, hear!"
"Down with Coker!"

"Hurrah!"
"Collar him!"

"Look here!" shouted Coker. "I— Oh! You— Ow! Yah!"

Coker was "down" with a vengeance. The four juniors collared him, and he was whisked into the hole Nugent had scrambled out of. The earth round him came nearly up to his armpits, and his boots sank deeply into the soft mud at the bottom.

"Varooh!" roared Coker. "Let me gerrup!"

"Rats! You'll stay where you are!" grinned Bob Cherry. "You're sacked!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You're sacked, Coker!"
"Yah! I won't pay you if you don't help me out!"

"Ha, ha, ha! We don't want your rotten tanners!" grinned Nugent. "You're sacked! Fill in that hole, you chaps! Coker can stay there for a bit. It will cool his temper, and he may learn better manners."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
And the juniors howled with laughter as they shovelled in the loose earth round the unfortunate Fifth-Former.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Buried Treasure.

COKER roared.

But his roaring had no effect upon his rebellious hands. As an employer of labour, Coker had been unreasonable and tyrannical. His employees were on strike, and with a vengeance. Unheeding of Coker's loud objections, turning deaf ears to his wild threats, the juniors shovelled in the earth industriously.

They shovelled it in, and jammed it in, and trod it down round him, and the Fifth-Former was tightly embedded in earth.

Coker was a prisoner.

Only his chest and his shoulders and head showed above the ground, and his arms, which were waving wildly.

The Removites stood round him in a circle, and roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Lemme gerrout!" yelled Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I'll smash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I—I—I'll pay you a bob an hour, instead of a tanner!"

"You can't corrupt a trade union in that way," said Frank Nugent loftily. "We are on strike for the dignity of labour."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I—I—I'll lend you ten bob!"

"Scat!"
"I'll smash you!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Come on, you fellows," said Bob Cherry. "We've got to cash this postal-order. We can get some tea for ourselves, and lay in a supply for to-morrow, ready for Todd, you know. Upon the whole, remittances are better than working. I shall think twice before I take on another job."

And the Removites walked away, laughing. Coker glared after them.

The patch of ground that had been assigned to the amateur gardeners was behind the old chapel, near the east wall of the school, and at a considerable distance from all the school buildings.

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Coker had a very powerful voice, but it was doubtful if his roaring could be heard from the School House or the cricket-field.

The cold contact of the earth was already making his legs feel chilly, and there was no doubt that if he remained there very long he would catch cold, to say nothing of the discomfort of the position. And if he were found there by the other fellows, he knew he would never hear the end of it. All Greyfriars would yell over the story.

"Come back, you rotters!" yelled Coker.

"Good-bye!"
"Come and lemme out!"

"Ta-ta!"
"Hi! I say, come back! Oh! Yow!"

The Removites disappeared round the chapel. Coker shouted again, and then gasped for breath.

Harry Wharton & Co. evidently did not intend to come back. Coker was a prisoner in the earth. He attempted to drag up the clods about him with his hands, but they were too tightly jammed in.

He knew that he would not be left there very long. The Removites would tell the story, and he would have half Greyfriars round him soon. That was just what Coker was anxious to avoid. But there was no escape for him.

But as he scratched savagely at the thick clods jammed round him a fat form came rolling from behind the trees, and a fat face, adorned with a pair of big spectacles, dawned upon Coker's vision. It was Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, and he was grinning.

Coker scowled at him.

"You fat idiot," he shouted, "what are you sniggering at?"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"Give me that spade!"

"Billy Bunter did not move. He blinked at Coker through his big spectacles, taking care to keep at a safe distance from the Fifth-Former's grasp.

"Will you give me that spade, you silly porpoise?" yelled Coker.

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"Look here, I—I'll give you a bob to dig me out!" gasped Coker.

Bunter sniffed.

"Two bob!" said Coker.

Another sniff.

"Five bob!" shouted Coker.

"Oh, really, Coker! I trust you do not think that I would take money for doing a fellow a small favour!" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I hope I am not that kind of chap!"

"Well, dig me out, anyway!"

"Ahem!"

"Buck up, you fat idiot! The whole blessed school will be round here soon!"

"Ahem!"

"What are you waiting for, you ass?"

"Ahem! The fact is, Coker, you have hurt my feelings by suggesting that I should take money for helping you!" said Bunter, with an air of offended dignity.

"I take it back," said Coker. "Help me out!"

"Only, you see—"

"Wipe it!"

"I shall be very pleased to help you out," said Billy Bunter. "The fact is, I was looking for you, Coker. I'm expecting a postal-order this evening—"

"Will you get that spade and dig me out?" demanded Coker sulphurously.

"And one good turn deserves another," pursued Bunter.

"Now, if you cared to cash my postal-order for me—"

"All right! Begin with that spade!"

"It will be for ten shillings, Coker!"

"I'll cash it! Dig me out, you ass!"

"Only I happen to be rather hard up just at present," Bunter explained. "It is barely possible, too, that the postal-order may not come till to-morrow morning. There has been a great deal of delay in the post lately about my postal-orders. Could you cash my postal-order in advance, Coker, old man?"

"No! Yes! Dig me out!"

"Ten bob!" said Bunter.

Coker gave him a glare.

"Yes, yes; Now begin, before all the fellows come round."

"Certainly, Coker!" said Bunter.

And he picked up one of the spades and began.

There was a sound of running footsteps, and Micky Desmond and Ogilvy of the Remove came dashing through the trees.

"Fads, and what is it?" exclaimed Micky. "Wharton said there was a buried treasure here in Coker's garden."

Ogilvy roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! Coker's the buried treasure! Ha, ha, ha!" "Clear off, you cheeky fags!" growled Coker. "Back up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Coker, I'm working very hard!" said Bunter. "Back up, or you jolly well won't get the ten bob!" Bunter paused in his labour. He was not used to work, and he did not like it. The weather was hot, and the perspiration was rolling down Bunter's fat face.

"Look here, Coker, if you're not going to cash my postal-order, I'm not going to take all this trouble. I say—"

"Back up!" growled the unhappy Coker, as three or four more fellows came tearing round the chapel. "I'll give you anything you like! Only get a move on!"

"Where's the buried treasure?" exclaimed Hobson of the Shell, coming up, breathless. "Bob Cherry says there's a buried treasure here."

"Here it is!" grinned Ogilvy.

"My hat! Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Back up, Bunter, you fat duffer!"

Bunter had shovelled away a quantity of loose earth. Coker was revealed down to the waist now. He made a big effort to draw himself out, but his legs were too tightly embedded. He gasped for breath, and urged Billy Bunter to greater efforts. But the Owl of the Remove was taking a little rest. "Say, Coker, if you don't mind, I'll have the money now," he said. "You might forget afterwards, you know."

"Dig me out first, you fool!" "Ahem! I'd rather have it now. You shall have my postal-order, of course, immediately it comes," said Bunter, with dignity.

"My money's in my trousers-pocket," growled Coker.

"Oh!" said Bunter.

And he recommenced shovelling.

But by this time fellows were arriving upon the scene in crowds.

There was an old legend at Greyfriars that a buried treasure existed in the precincts of the school, and fellows had sometimes hunted for it—without success. The story that a buried treasure was to be seen in Coker's garden brought fellows of all Forms racing to the spot.

The discovery that Coker was the buried treasure made some of the fellows snort, and some of them laugh. Nobody seemed to think it was necessary to help Coker. They stood round and laughed, while Billy Bunter shovelled away at the earth at a rate which would have made his fortune if he had been working by the hour.

"How on earth did you get there, Coker?" asked Tubb of the Third.

Coker snorted.

"Help me out, you ass; and don't jaw!"

Tubb chuckled.

"I'm not digging for buried treasure," he replied.

"No fear!" grinned Bobsolver minor. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Potter of the Fifth, as he came up with Greene. "Is that you, Coker? Are you the buried treasure the fellows are talking about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help me out!" growled Coker. "Kick that fat brute away, and help me out!"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

Potter and Greene were chuckling. They could not help it. But they responded to the appeal.

Potter jerked Bunter's spade away, and pushed the fat junior over a heap of earth. The two Fifth-Formers shovelled out the earth rapidly, and Coker dragged himself out of the excavation at last. His trousers were heavy with mud, and his boots were unrecognisable. He was in a towering rage.

Billy Bunter gathered himself up from the heap of earth he had sprawled over, and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked at Coker.

"I say, Coker, I'll trouble you for that ten bob—"

"Be-r-r-r!"

"Look here, Coker, I want what you owe me—"

"You're jolly well going to have it, too!" said Coker. And he smote Billy Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove staggered over the edge of the hole, and fell in.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Micky Desmond. "Faith, and here's another buried treasure entirely!"

Coker strode away, squelching out mud at every step. The Greyfriars fellows followed him, roaring with laughter; and Billy Bunter was left to scramble out of the hole unaided—which he did with some difficulty.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Owl! Beast!"

And on reflection the Owl of the Remove decided not to approach Coker again on the subject of cashing that postal-order.

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Helping Hand.

STUDY NO. 13 in the Remove passage presented a festive appearance.

Study No. 13 belonged to Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Jagset Rann Singh, and little Won Lung, the Chinese. All four of the juniors were there, and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull in addition. And the study table looked very inviting.

It was long past the usual tea-time for the juniors, and they were fully prepared to do full justice to the meal—and there was a good meal ready for them to do justice to.

Bob Cherry's postal-order from his father had come in the nick of time. The effort the juniors had made to raise money by working had not been a success. Coker was not an ideal master, and they were never likely to draw that stipend an hour. But it was a great satisfaction to them to have left Horace Coker of the Fifth to be discovered by the other fellows as a buried treasure.

They chuckled over it as they sat round the hospitable quarter in Study No. 13. Bob Cherry had nobly expended a quarter of his remittance in standing tea, and the remainder was being kept in hand for the entertainment of the two Todds on the morrow. All the Co. were anxious that the Todds should be looked after when they came. Alonso Todd had once been in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, and although he was called the "Duffer," he was generally liked, and the juniors were glad to have a visit from him. And his cousin Peter, who was his double—very like him in fact—had once been in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, and although he was called the "Duffer," he was generally liked, and the juniors were glad to have a visit from him. And his cousin Peter, who was his double—very like him in fact—had once been in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, and although he was called the "Duffer," he was generally liked, and the juniors were glad to have a visit from him. And the juniors were glad to see him again. But the chums of the Remove were not thinking of the two Todds at this precise moment. They were thinking of Coker.

"It was like Coker's cheek to take up gardening at all," Frank Nugent said indignantly. "It was our idea first, and he never thought of a garden till we had one. And now he's got one, he's too jolly lazy to dig in it himself."

"I don't think he'll employ labour there again," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he's too big an ass to be able to garden, anyway," said Nugent, with a sniff. "He's bought a lot of rubbish called Fipkins' Phenomenal Fencer, and he thinks it will force up his rose trees. Of course it won't do anything of the sort. But I've got an idea."

"Go it!"

"Coker is planting his rose cuttings this evening, and he thinks the Phenomenal Fencer is going to force them up. Now, I think it will be a shame if he's disappointed, and I really think that we might help him."

The juniors stared.

"How can we help him?" demanded Johnny Bull. "We can't force up rose-trees, can we?"

Nugent nodded.

"That's just what we can do. If we can't make the same ones grow, we can put others in their places."

"Eh?"

"It will be funny to see Coker's face to-morrow, if he finds a well-grown rose-bush on the spot where he leaves his giddy cuttings to-night!"

The juniors roared.

"Going will sell us some rose-bushes cheap," said Nugent. "The Head allows him to sell things out of the garden, you know, and he makes some money that way. We can get some young bushes from him, and stick 'em in Coker's ground, and to-morrow night we can replace them with some full-grown—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker will be crowing over his success, and he will be so pleased when we explain to him how it was brought about," grinned Nugent.

"Well, it's a chap's duty to help on an enthusiastic horticulturist like Coker," said Bob Cherry, with a nod. "It's a rippling idea. Coker will be pleased."

And when tea was over in Study No. 13, the young rascals of the Remove strolled down to Coker's garden to see how he was getting on. Coker was there, and Greene and Potter of the Fifth were with him. Coker had changed his clothes since his burial. He favoured the Removes with an angry frown.

"Pax, old man!" said Bob Cherry pacifically. "We've only come to see how you are getting on. We're not looking for work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're awfully interested in your rose-trees," Harry Wharton explained. "Would you mind letting us see them?"

Coker thawed a little.

"You can look at 'em," he said. "I've got the cuttings



"Oh, really, Coker," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity, "I trust you do not think I would take money for doing a fellow a small favour. I hope I am not that kind of chap." "Well, dig me out, anyway, and buck up, you fat idiot! The whole blessed school will be round here soon," yelled Coker. (See Chapter 4.)

in. Don't touch them, you know. I've got plenty of the Force in the ground, and I expect the cuttings will be blooming in less than a week."

"That will be blooming nice, won't it," said Nugent.

And the juniors chuckled.

Coker had his cuttings in, as he said, though whether they would do anything but wither away there was a great question which remained to be answered. The juniors looked at them with very great interest, and congratulated Coker so nicely on his success that the hero of the Fifth almost forgot his unpleasant experiences as an employer of labour, and was quite condescending to them.

Harry Wharton & Co. strolled away, leaving Coker and Potter and Greene still busy, and visited Gosling in his lodge. Gosling, the porter, eyed them with disfavour when they came in. He was not on the best of terms with Harry Wharton & Co. But as soon as he learned their errand, he was all smiles.

"Which I've got jest the thing that will suit you," he said. "I was goin' to sell my young rose-trees to Sir Hilton Popper's gardener, but I'll let you 'ave some of them as a special favour, Master Wharton."

"You are too kind, Gosling—you are really!" said Wharton. "Not at all, Master Wharton. Wot I says is this 'ere—I believe in encouraging young fellers to take up gardenin', and I'll let you 'ave them young bushes for a pound, Master Wharton, as a special favour."

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"Never mind the special favour, then," said Harry laughing. "We've only got half-a-crown to spare, so we must try our luck at the nursery in Friar-dale. We only want six of them, and they needn't be first-class."

"Make it five bob, Master Wharton, and I'll suit you down to the ground," said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere They'll be remarkable cheap, too."

So Harry Wharton made it five bob. As the rose-trees cost Gosling nothing, he did not lose on the transaction. The new purchases were concealed in the wood-shed, and the chums of the Remove returned to the School House, well satisfied with themselves. Coker came in at dusk, looking very important. He was anticipating the greatest results from his liberal use of the Phenomenal Force, and, indeed, the results were destined to be very surprising.

A quarter of an hour before bed-time that night, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent stepped quietly out into the Close, and made their way to the wood-shed. As it was not unusual for juniors to take a sprint round the Close before bed-time, no particular attention was paid to their movements. As for Coker of the Fifth, he was far too leffy a person to trouble his head about what the fings of the Remove might be doing. If he had known how they were engaged, however, he would have been interested.

Wingate of the Sixth was herding the Removites off to bed when Wharton and Nugent came in, a little muddy about the hands and feet. The captain of Greyfriars looked at

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them, but made no remark, and he turned out the lights in the Remove dormitory and retired. Then the sound of a joyous chuckle was heard.

"All serene?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes—all serene! Coker will be pleased!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Simply Marvellous!

HORACE COKER of the Fifth was one of the first fellows to wake on the following morning. The first clang of the rising-bell had hardly sounded on the sunny air when Coker sat up in bed, and called to Potter and Greene.

"You fellows getting up?"

Potter snored, and Greene grunted.

Coker turned out of bed, and began to dress himself. Like most enthusiastic amateur gardeners, he was very anxious at all times to know how his garden was getting on. And he wanted to know, too, whether the free use of the Phenomenal Forcer had had any perceptible effect. The commercial traveller who had sold him some dozens of packets of the Forcer had solemnly assured him that the effect could almost be watched with the naked eye. Coker, who knew about as much of horticulture as he did of Sanskrit, would not have been at all surprised to see his rose cuttings bursting into bud already. He gave Potter a shake.

"Ain't you getting up, Potty?"

"Groo! Lemme alone!"

"It's rising-bell."

"Oh, rats!"

"I say, Greene—"

"Oh, shut up, Coker!"

Coker grunted, and finished dressing himself, and left the dormitory. Potter and Greene were not nearly so enthusiastic about the garden as he was. The rising-bell clang on, and the Fifth-Formers sat up and yawned.

Coker had only been gone a few minutes, and the Fifth were not yet out of bed, when there was a sound of rapid-running footsteps in the passage. Coker burst into the dormitory, his face red with running, and his eyes ablaze with excitement.

"Great Scott! What's the matter?" exclaimed Greene, in amazement.

"The roses!"

"What, anything happened to them?"

"They're coming out!"

"Coming out of the ground?" ejaculated Potter.

"No, farthead. Coming out in bud. It's the Forcer," said Coker excitedly. "Every word that chap told me was true. It's marvellous!"

"Oh, bosh," said Potter. "It can't be! They couldn't have grown during one night."

"But they have."

"But it's impossible, old chap. Roses don't grow like giddy mushrooms," argued Greene.

"I suppose I can believe my own eyes!" howled Coker. "Come and see for yourselves, you silly asses. It's the Forcer that's done it, of course."

"Look here, Coker—"

"Come and see!" roared Coker.

"Oh, all right," said Potter resignedly.

Potter and Greene dressed themselves quickly, under Coker's winging, and accompanied their excited chum from the dormitory. Some of the Remove were down as the Fifth-Formers went downstairs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry affably.

"Going gardening?"

"My roses are coming up!" said Coker hotly.

Bob Cherry looked incredulous.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he said. "You only put in the cuttings last evening."

"I know I did."

"Then how could they be coming up?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"It's the stuff I use," Coker explained. "Stuff called Fipkins' Phenomenal Forcer. It's simply marvellous, and it isn't generally known, either. Some of the fellows said I had been done when I bought it. We'll jolly soon see who was right now. Come and have a look at the roses. They're in bud already."

"In bud?"

"Yes, rather."

"Impossible, old man! You're dreaming," said Frank Nugent, with a shake of the head.

"Come and see, then!" said Coker, sniffing. "You Remove kids don't know anything about gardening. I'm a dab at this sort of thing. I've grown tomatoes at home, and they were jolly nice, weren't they, Potty?"

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"Oh, ripping!" said Potter.

"But these roses are a regular triumph," said Coker. "I put in three good cuttings, and they've sprung up in the night like mushrooms. Just you see!"

And Coker hurried away towards his garden, with the juniors on his track. The chums of the Remove grinned at one another as they followed Coker and Potter and Greene. Three or four other fellows who had heard Coker's excited remarks followed them, to see the marvellous sight—something entirely new in amateur horticulture.

"Look!" exclaimed Coker, with pride, as they arrived in the garden. "What price that?"

Potter and Greene simply stared.

In the place of the three cuttings which Coker had jammed in the evening before were three young rose bushes, with the red buds already opening to the sun.

"My-my only hat!" gasped Potter. "They've grown a foot in the night."

"And got buds on!" said Greene, in astonishment.

"It's the Forcer," said Coker. "Fipkins' Phenomenal Forcer, you know. Of course, I never expected it to turn out like this. It's amazing, I know (hat, but every word that commercial traveller said was true. It's a record."

"It's simply amazing."

"What do you Remove chaps think of that?" demanded Coker, with a chuckle. "I don't think you'll be so successful as that with your garden—eh?"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I don't suppose that would happen twice," he said gravely.

"Not likely," agreed Nugent. "This is the kind of thing that would only happen where Coker was doing the gardening."

Coker sniffed.

"You can cackle if you like," he said; "but there it is. There are the roses, and it's through the Phenomenal Forcer. I shall buy some more of that stuff. It's wonderful!"

"Wonderful ain't the word," said Johnny Bull. "I call it marvellous!"

"Delicious!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder if they will grow any bigger to-day."

"Sure to," said Coker confidently. "I shouldn't wonder if they're a foot higher and in bloom by dinner-time."

"Oh, draw it mild, Coker!"

"Well, I shouldn't wonder. This Phenomenal Forcer is wonderful stuff."

"Ha, ha, ha! It is!"

And the Removites strolled away, chuckling. The news of Coker's wonderful success as a gardener spread through the school. Fellows who were not, as a rule, much interested in gardening went to look at Coker's rose-tree. Some of them chuckled; they could not quite believe in the magic power of the Phenomenal Forcer, and some of them had a suspicion that Coker was being japed in some way. But it was no use suggesting that to Horace Coker. Coker knew what he knew; and he knew that he was having a wonderful and unprecedented success as a gardener.

Coker looked very cheerful that morning in the Fifth Form room. He was thinking more about gardening than about his lessons, and the vials of his Form-master's wrath were poured upon him more than once. Mr. Prout had a prejudice in favour of thinking of lessons in lesson-time, and he showered lines upon Coker.

But Coker did not mind.

What were two hundred lines, or even three hundred, to a fellow who had succeeded in growing roses at a rate never known before, and who was thinking that, even then, his wonderful roses were still growing at the rate of an inch or two every half-hour!

Coker could afford to despise lines. In his mind's eye he already saw himself competing and carrying off first prizes at horticultural shows. Probably there would soon be a new variety of rose to be known as the "Coker," or the "Gleire de Greyfriars." Coker felt elated at the idea.

Some of the fellows in the Remove Farm-room, too, were thinking about Coker's garden and Coker's roses. In the room there were three rose-trees waiting to take the place of those already a-growing and a-blowing in Coker's garden, and the Removites wanted to have them in place before morning lessons were over.

Frank Nugent gently requested permission of Mr. Quelch to get out of the Form-room ten minutes before lessons were over; and as Frank had been particularly dourful and attentive that morning, the request was granted.

Nugent thanked the Form-master and disappeared, and Harry Wharton and his chums grinned joyously at one another.

When the Form was dismissed, the chums of the Remove hurried out, and found Frank waiting for them in the School House doorway.

"Nugent met them with a cheerful nod.

"It's all right," he said.

"Good! Here comes Coker!"

Coker, of the Fifth, came out of his Form-room with Potter and Greene, and he hurried past the Removites, and dashed away in the direction of his garden. Quite a crowd of fellows followed him to see if there had been any difference in the roses. Coker gave a yell of surprise and delight at the sight of his garden.

For the rose-trees were now nearly a foot higher, and they were blooming with roses, fully out.

Coker could scarcely believe his eyes.

"My hat!" he gasped. "My only hat! It's marvellous!"

"Extraordinary!"

"Amazing!"

"The amazefulness is terrific," murmured Harroce Jamset Ram Singh, of the Remove, "and the laughfulness is also great."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glared at the grinning Removites.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," he said. "I suppose that is jealousy on your part. You don't know how to garden. Look at those roses."

"It's wonderful, and that's a fact," said Wharton. "If there's a Force that will force roses up like that, it's worth a guinea a box."

"Yes, rather."

"That's what the chap told me," said Coker. "But it's sold at a shilling a packet. It's simply miraculous."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, unable to contain his mirth. "Ha, ha, ha! This beats the giddy beanstalk in the fairy tale. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Coker and the Beanstalk!" grinned Johnny Bull.

And the juniors yelled.

"You can cackle as much as you like," said Coker: "but there are the roses. I shall get some more cuttings, and get them in as soon as I can. Might make a lot of money out of roses at this rate."

"Gosling might, anyway," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But where have the labels gone off the things?" asked Potter, scanning the rose-trees. "You left the labels on, Coker."

"Oh, blown off, perhaps," said Coker carelessly. "I wonder what size these will be by tonight! I hope I haven't missed too much of the Force. It's possible that if we overdo it the things may grow too quickly, and perhaps fade away quickly, you know."

Coker went in to dinner in great spirits. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were ten minutes later for dinner when they came in to the Remove table, and Mr. Quelch frowned at them.

"You are late, Wharton and Nugent!" the Remove-master exclaimed. "Where have you been?"

"Gardening, sir," said Wharton meekly.

"You must not let gardening interfere with your punctuality in other matters, Wharton. You will take twenty lines each."

"Yes, sir."

Wharton and Nugent did not seem to mind the lines. They were all smiles during dinner. When that meal was over, Coker & Co. strolled out of the dining-room, with the evident intention of visiting the rose-garden.

The chums of the Remove followed them this time. They wanted to see the results. Quite a crowd of fellows went down to Coker's garden with Coker. His horticulture was beginning to interest the whole Fifth. Certainly Coker could show results that had never been attained by the amateur horticulturists of the Remove.

Coker came round the old chapel cheerfully, and then, as he came in sight of the garden, his expression changed.

He halted, and for a moment he stood rooted to the spot.

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

Then he tore madly forward.

The blooming rose-trees had disappeared. In their place were three meagre cuttings, already half-dead. An amazed crowd gathered round, staring at them.

"Who's taken my trees?" roared Coker.

"M-my hat!" gasped Potter. "Look here, these are the original cuttings—"

"Rot?"

"They are! Look at the labels—they're numbered in your own fist—and, besides, I know the cuttings again," said Potter, in blank astonishment. "They're the same."

Coker gazed at the meagre growths which had replaced the blooming roses. He could not understand.

"It—it must be the Force!" he gasped at last. "They grew too quick, and they've faded just as fast as they grew. It's extraordinary!"

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

Coker glared at him.

The chums of the Remove seemed to be almost in hysterics. They clung to one another, and almost wept with laughter. As Coker gazed at them, the truth slowly dawned upon him. He remembered that Wharton and Nugent had been late for dinner, and that they had made the excuse that they had

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PENNY.

been gardening. He knew now what gardening they had been doing.

"You—you young rotters!" he stammered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Marvellous thing that Phenomenal Force!" grinned Nugent.

"They grew up in a night, and down in a day," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites staggered away, gasping with merriment. Coker's face was a study. He understood now.

"Collar the young rotters!" he yelled. "It's a rotten Remove joke! Collar them!"

But Potter and Greene did not move. They were laughing too much. The whole crowd was in a roar, with the solitary exception of Coker. Coker did not see anything to laugh at. But the other fellows did. They saw Coker.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Two Todds.

"My dear Peter—"

"Shurrup!"

"But, my dear Peter, Friardale is the next station."

"Br-r-r!"

Two youths sat in opposite corners in a carriage, as the local train ran in towards Friardale. They were remarkably alike. Both of them had slim forms, and large heads, and prominent noses, and silk hats pushed back from bulging foreheads. Almost every line in either face was reproduced in the other. But although their looks were alike, their manners and customs were evidently different.

Alonso Todd—once known as the Duffer of Greyfriars—sat bolt upright in his seat, and he scanned every station carefully as the train rolled on. He seemed to be afflicted with a fear that the train might shoot through his station without stopping, or that it might not give him time to get out when it did stop. Five minutes before the train was due in Friardale he had taken down his umbrella from the rack, and shifted himself forward on the seat.

Peter Todd, his cousin, was sprawling back in his seat, with one foot on the opposite seat beside Alonso, and the other on the window-frame. He had a paper in his hands, and was reading it, and he only glanced in reply to Alonso's nervous remarks.

"I—I say, Peter, hadn't you better get ready?" suggested Alonso.

"Shurrup!"

"Put your book away, my dear Peter!"

"But—"

"My dear— Ah, we are stopping! Pray hurry, Peter; we may be carried past our destination, and that would inflict a grievous disappointment upon our friends at Greyfriars, who are doubtless attending our arrival at this very moment," said Alonso Todd, who had a wonderful language that was all his own.

"Oh, hosh!"

"My dear Peter—"

The train stopped. Peter Todd turned the handle of the door and jumped out, and Alonso followed much more carefully.

"You should not jump out in that reckless way, Cousin Peter," he said warningly; "you might chance to dislocate a limb. You remember, Uncle Benjamin told us always to be careful. Just before we started he took me by the hand, and said—"

"—and—"

That last ejaculation broke from Alonso as his foot slipped on a piece of orange-peel, and he rolled on the platform.

Cousin Peter burst into a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Alonso. "Yow!"

"I didn't hear Uncle Benjamin say anything of the sort," said Peter Todd. "Get up, kid, and come along. Don't forget your umbrella. You're bound to want an umbrella on a blazing June afternoon. Buck up!"

"It might rain, my dear Peter."

"Yes, and it might not. Buck up!"

Alonso rose slowly and painfully to his feet. He picked up the piece of orange-peel very carefully, and put it into his pocket. Cousin Peter watched that proceeding in utter amazement.

"What on earth are you stealing that orange-peel for?" he demanded.

"My dear Peter, I am but removing it in case it may cause anger to another pedestrian."

"Why can't you chuck it on the line, then?"

"It might conceivably be the cause of an accident—"

"Br-r-r! Let's get out!"

They walked towards the station exit, Alonso with his umbrella under his arm, Peter Todd felt in his pockets.

"You've got the tickets!" he said. "You remember?"

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said I was to let you mind them because Uncle Benjamin had impressed upon you to be careful."

"Yes, indeed, my dear Peter."

"Well, hand them out, then. This man at the gate isn't a permanent institution; he's only here to collect tickets."

"Oh, certainly, Peter!"

Alonzo Todd hooked his umbrella upon a railing, to free his hands, and dived into his pockets in turn in search of the tickets. The Friardale porter watched him with interest. He remembered Todd from the time he had been a pupil at Greyfriars.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Todd, at last. "I—I seem to have mislaid the tickets, Peter. I really fail to discover them in any of my pockets. It is very odd."

"Better look in your hat," said Peter. "People sometimes put tickets in the lining of their hats."

"But I am sure I did not."

"Better look."

"Very well, my dear Peter."

Todd searched in the lining of his hat. But no tickets were to be found. The Friardale porter looked a little festive.

"It ain't my dooty to wait 'ere all day, gentlemen," he remarked.

"I am truly sorry," said Alonzo Todd, in great distress. "I have apparently mislaid the tickets. I trust you do not suspect me of the dishonesty of travelling on the railway without a ticket. That would be utterly opposed to all the teachings of my uncle Benjamin."

"Look in your boots," suggested Peter.

"M-m-my boots, Peter?"

"Certainly! Tickets have slipped down into fellows' boots before now."

"But—but—"

"Tuck up, Alonzo!"

"Oh, certainly, Peter!"

Alonzo sat down on the platform and removed his boots. Several idlers had gathered round by this time, and they observed Alonzo's proceedings with cheerful interest. Todd took off both boots, and gazed at his red striped socks in dismay.

"They are not here," he said.

"Perhaps you took them out of your pocket when you got out the sandwiches in the train," Cousin Peter suggested.

"Dear me! They may have fallen out in the carriage," exclaimed Todd. "That is quite probable; but the train is now gone."

"Then it's jolly lucky I picked them up, ain't it?" said Peter Todd, taking the tickets out of his waistcoat pocket.

"Here you are, my man! Come on, Alonzo!"

"You—you—you have the tickets, Cousin Peter?" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, in amazement and relief.

"Yes. I've given them up. Come on!"

"You—you—you picked them up in the carriage?"

"Yes; when you dropped them. Come on!"

"But, my—my dear Peter, if the tickets were in your possession, why have you given me the trouble of undertaking this prolonged and futile search?"

"Just to give you a lesson in carefulness," said Peter cheerfully. "Come on!"

And he led the way out of the station.

Alonzo Todd followed him with his boots unlaced. He had no time to lace them: Cousin Peter seemed to be in a hurry. He stopped in the station vestibule, however, to lace them up, while Peter Todd walked out on the pavement and looked up and down the High Street.

There was a shout from a couple of youths in silk hats and Ettons who were standing outside Uncle Cherry's tuckshop.

"Todd, by Jove!"

The two fellows were Bolsover-major and Vernon-Smith, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

Peter Todd looked at them and grinned. On his previous visit to Greyfriars, his likeness to Alonzo had caused him to be mistaken for the Duffer. And it was evident that Bolsover and the Bounder had taken him for Alonzo again.

They came over towards him quickly. Alonzo was still in the station, lacing up his boots in the careful and methodical way he had learned from Uncle Benjamin. He was not likely to appear for some minutes.

"Hello, Todd!" said Bolsover.

"Glad to see you, Duffer," said Vernon-Smith.

And they rushed upon Todd with outstretched hands, as if to shake hands with him in the most enthusiastic manner; and suddenly raised their hands as they came near, and knocked his hat off.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the two juniors did not laugh long. Peter Todd made one stride towards them, and his right and left flashed out, and Vernon-Smith sat on the pavement, and Bolsover sat, in the mud.

Cousin Peter picked up his topper and dusted it with his sleeve and put it on his head.

The two Greyfriars fellows sat dazed and gasping.

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"Like some more?" said Peter Todd genially.

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

"My dear Peter, what has happened?" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, coming out of the station. "I trust you have not been led into any exhibition of violence? You remember the advice Uncle Benjamin gave us—"

"Not at all," said Cousin Peter. "These two chaps are tired, and they are sitting down to rest. Come on!"

"Dear me! How very odd that they should sit down in a muddy place—"

"Yes, isn't it? Come on!"

And Peter Todd took his cousin's arm and marched him away.

Bolsover and Vernon-Smith looked at one another, with sickly expressions.

"It—it wasn't the Duffer!" muttered Bolsover. "It was that beastly cousin of his! I'd forgotten about him! Ow!"

"Yow!" mumbled Vernon-Smith. "Oh! I'd forgotten him, too! I—I shall remember him now, confound him!"

And the two Removes picked themselves up disconsolately, while the two Todds walked away towards Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Frangible—With Care!

BOB CHERRY was the first to spot the Todds on their arrival. He sighted the cousins coming in at the school gates, and gave a shout:

"Here they are!"

"Here's the Duffer!" sang out Johnny Bull.

And the chums of the Remove rushed to meet their guests and to shake hands with them.

"Jolly glad to see you!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, shaking hands with one of the cousins. "You are Alonzo, ain't you?"

"Rats! I'm Peter!"

"Oh! Blessed if I can tell 'oother from which!" said Wharton, with a puzzled look. "You ought to be labelled, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear friends," said Alonzo Todd, beaming with smiles, "I am so glad to see you all again. I am so sorry that I can only stay a few hours. I am so glad that you have not forgotten me. I am so sorry that I have not been able to see you all before. I am so glad to meet such a hearty welcome. I am so sorry—"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, in amazement. "I never saw a chap glad and sorry so quickly! Go it, Todd!"

"My dear Cherry—"

"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly glad to see you!" said Billy Bunter, rolling up. "I—I say, which of you is Alonzo?"

"I am Alonzo, my dear Bunter."

"Good! I say, Alonzo, we've got a ripping feed ready for you in No. 1 Study—my old study, you know. Haven't we, fellows?"

The chums of the Remove glared at Bunter. That was Billy Bunter's cool way of inviting himself to the feed.

Alonzo shook hands warmly with Bunter.

"I am so glad, Bunter!" he said. "You are very hospitable indeed, and, in fact, I must remark that you have got over the wretched meanness which was so prominent a characteristic of yours when I knew you before."

"Oh, really, Todd!"

"Oh, so pleased, Bunter, and I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would be pleased, too," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile. "It shows that, as my Uncle Benjamin has always said, there is some good even in the rottenest kind of fellows."

"Why, you ass—"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Alonzo is quite right—excepting about there being a change—there isn't any change! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

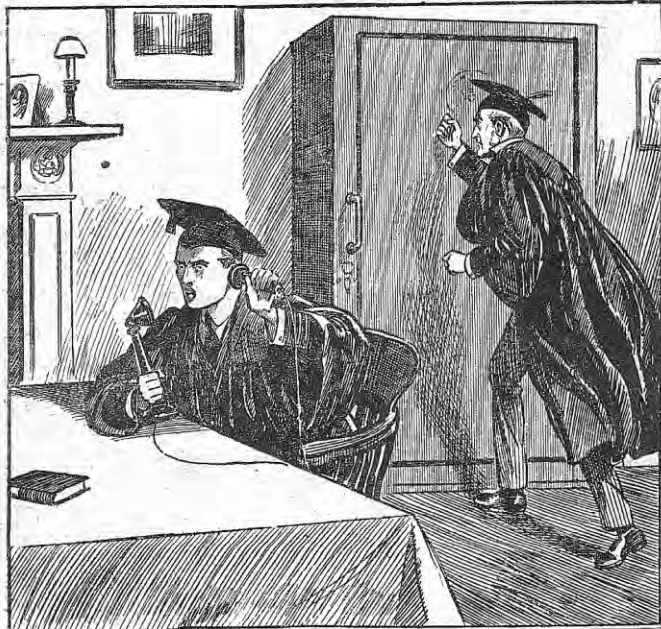
"Come and have a stroll round while the feed's being got ready," said Harry Wharton. "Nugent and Johnny are going to look after the feed."

"I say, Wharton, I should be very pleased to do the cooking," said Bunter. "You know I'm a dab at cooking, and—"

"And eating!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Keep an eye on that fat boulder when you unlock the cupboard, Franky!"

"What-ho!" said Frank Nugent, emphatically.

The two Todds walked away with a crowd of Removes, to get the feed ready in No. 1 Study. Little Winn Lung, the Chinese, lent his expert assistance in the cooking—though it was necessary to keep an eye on him, as he had certain



Mr. Ralston spoke into the telephone. From the iron safe came intermittent knocking, fainter than before. Dr. Holmes knocked upon the door of the safe. It was to let the wretched prisoner within know that his appeal was heard—that they were trying to save him. (For the above incident see the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "FACING THE MUSIC!" by Martin Clifford, which is contained in our popular companion paper, "The Gem" Library. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

Chinese notions in cookery which did not exactly agree with English palates.

There was a crowd of juniors on the cricket-field, and Cousin Peter seemed to snuff the game like a war-horse snuffing the battle from afar.

"You play cricket?" Wharton asked him.

"What ho!" replied Cousin Peter.

"Let's play, then, while the feed's coming on," said Bob Cherry. "We'll get up two sides in no time. I remember how Alonzo used to play, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo shook his head.

"With your kind permission, my dear friends, I will seat myself in a secluded spot and peruse this volume which my Uncle Benjamin has presented to me," he said. "I shall be very pleased to watch the game, but not to participate in it."

"Good!" said Cousin Peter. "Keep out of mischief."

"My dear Peter—"

"Let's get on the ground," said Peter.

Alonzo Todd sat under a tree near the junior ground and opened his book—a most interesting volume dealing with the

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history of that valuable vegetable, the potato. Todd was soon deeply buried in the volume, while Cousin Peter borrowed a bat, and went to the wicket.

Cousin Peter soon showed that he could bat. Mark Linley sent down a ball, and it glanced off the gleaming willow, and there was a crash.

"Oh!" ejaculated Alonzo Todd.

His silk hat flew off, and a cricket-ball rolled at his feet in the grass. He jumped up in amazement.

"Dear me! What—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Field the ball!" shouted Linley.

"Dear me, the ball has struck my hat!" said Todd, picking up his hat and trying to smooth out a deep dent in it. "How very odd!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Penfold fielded the ball and tossed it back to Mark Linley. The Lancashire lad grinned, and bowled again. He did not think it was quite by chance that that ball had knocked off Alonzo's hat. He suspected Cousin Peter of having a queer vein of humour.

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Whiz!

Alonso had settled down to read again when the ball came along.

Biff!

"Oh, dear!"

Alonso's valuable volume was knocked clean out of his hands, and it plumped against his face, and he rolled back.

There was a yell of laughter from the juniors on the cricket-field.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well stopped, Todd!"

Alonso rose to his feet.

"Under the circumstances, my dear fellows, I think I will get a little further away," he said gently. "I fear that I am in the way."

"Not at all, Toddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Alonso put his umbrella under one arm, and the big volume under the other, and ambled away. He left the cricketers grinning behind him.

Gosling, the porter, was conveying a large package across from his lodge to the School House, and grunting and gasping over it, as Todd came towards the House. It was a large package, of an oblong shape, and was labelled "Fragile—with great care!" Perhaps for that reason Gosling was bumping it down every few yards.

"Dear me!" said Todd. "That seems very heavy for you, Gosling. Can I assist you?"

Gosling bumped the package down once more, and rubbed his hands and growled.

"Wot I says is this 'ere, Master Todd, it's 'eavy; and a man gits thirsty on a 'ot afternoon like this."

"I've no doubt that is the case," assented Todd sympathetically. "Shall I fetch you some water from the fountain, Gosling?"

Gosling snorted.

"No, thank you, Master Todd. I wouldn't trouble you. This 'ere thing is 'eavy. It's jest come for Mr. Quelch, and I dunno wot it is. Br-r-r-r!"

"Pray allow me to assist you, Gosling. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to make myself useful; and I should be very pleased."

"Wot I says is this 'ere—you can take one hend if you like," said Gosling.

"Very well, my dear Gosling."

The big package was certainly heavy. It was wrapped and tied up in thick paper, but there was evidently a wooden packing-case within.

Todd took one end, and Gosling the other, and they bore it to the School House and up the steps. It was heavy, and an awkward shape for carrying, which was doubtless the reason why Todd let his end slip from his hands half-way up the School House steps.

"Oh!" gasped Todd. "Look out, my dear Gosling!"

"Yaroch!" roared his dear Gosling.

The case bumped from step to step, and rolled on the ground, and rested there, and Gosling sat on the steps and gasped. Mr. Quelch looked out of the doorway with a red and annoyed countenance.

"Is that my package, Gosling?"

"Yes sir!" gasped Gosling.

"You may have damaged it with your clumsiness," said the Remove master, frowning. "Cannot you see that it is marked 'Fragile'! It is dangerous to handle such a package carelessly. Take it up and convey it into the library at once. Todd need not assist you!"

"My dear sir, I shall be very pleased to assist Gosling!"

"You will do nothing of the sort, Todd! The package is too valuable for you to be allowed to assist in carrying it!"

And Mr. Quelch frowned and went in. Todd sighed, and walked away, leaving Gosling to carry the package into the house alone.

The Duffer looked round for a quiet spot where he could peruse his valuable volume undisturbed while his cousin was on the cricket-field. He selected the wooden seat under the library window, a very quiet spot, shaded by trees. Todd sat down on the seat, and opened his volume. But he was not destined to peruse the instructive history of the potato-plant in peace. Two juniors, Ogilvy and Vernon-Smith of the Remove, came sauntering towards him, and they sat down on the seat, one on either side of the Duffer.

"I suppose we'd better tell Todd," said Ogilvy, with a dubious glance at the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"Todd's the chap to tell us what ought to be done," he remarked. "It's jolly lucky that Todd happens to be here to-day, I think. Otherwise, the whole school might be blown up, and no end of lives lost."

Alonso looked alarmed.

"My dear fellows," he exclaimed, "what's the matter?"

Vernon-Smith and Ogilvy hesitated.

"I don't know whether we're really justified in troubling you with it, Todd, as you're not a Greyfriars chap now," said the Bounder.

"My dear Smith, pray do not think of that! I shall be very pleased to help you in any way. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to make myself useful," said Todd eagerly. "Pray acquaint me with the cause of your alarm."

"Shall we tell him, Ogilvy?"

Ogilvy nodded.

"Perhaps we'd better!" he said. "Todd's the chap to deal with the situation."

"Yes; that's right enough!"

"Pray go on, my dear Smith!"

"I suppose you've heard of the Anarchist outrages lately?" said the Bounder solemnly.

"Yes, indeed; they are very interesting," said Todd.

"Well, we've received information," said Vernon-Smith impressively, "from a source we can't divulge, as it was in confidence—that the Anarchists have plotted to blow up all the public schools in England!"

"Dear me!"

"And they're beginning with Greyfriars!"

"Good gracious!"

"The plot is to send an infernal machine to one of the masters here, labelled 'Fragile—with great care!'" went on Vernon-Smith, with owl-like gravity. "You see, that will keep it from going off in transit. When it is opened it will explode, and blow up the whole school. Opening it, you see, will set the machinery in motion, and then—"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Todd, in great alarm. "It has already arrived!"

"What?"

"A large and heavy package has arrived, addressed to Mr. Quelch," said Todd, in great excitement. "I have just helped Gosling to take it in."

"By Jove!"

"Mr. Quelch ordered him to take it into the library," said Todd. "Is it possible that that is the infernal machine?"

"Pretty certain, I think," said Vernon-Smith. "But you'd better not go near it. Mr. Quelch is certain to be blown to bits, now, but you mustn't run the risk!" said Todd warmly. "My Uncle Benjamin would urge me to defeat such a wicked plot at any risk to myself. I shall certainly acquaint Mr. Quelch with the nature of that dreadful infernal machine."

"Well, if you think it your duty, Todd!"

"But—but are you quite sure?" said Todd, looking at the serious faces of the two juniors, with a remembrance of the number of times his leg had been pulled when he was a Remove fellow at Greyfriars. "Are you sure?"

Vernon-Smith looked offended.

"You'd better wait till you hear the infernal machine ticking, if you want proof!" he said. "Of course, it may be too late then! Come on, Ogilvy! If the thing's in the library now, we don't want to keep near this window. Todd doesn't mind the risk, but I do!"

"My dear Smith—"

But the two juniors were walking away. Alonso Todd was left sitting under the library window, in a most uneasy and troubled frame of mind.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Not an Infernal Machine.

CLICK! Click!

The sound came faintly from the open window above

Todd's head.

The library windows were high up, too high to be reached by fellows outside; but as the sashes were open, sounds could be heard from within. And from the silence of the library that sound came softly:

Click! Click! Click!

Todd started.

Vague doubts of the accuracy of the information given him had been lurking in his mind, in spite of the trustfulness of his disposition. He remembered that Vernon-Smith was not exactly a truthful youth, and Ogilvy had frequently helped to mystify the Duffer of Greyfriars in his old days as a Remove fellow. And the story of an Anarchist plot to blow up Greyfriars was really extraordinary.

ANSWERS

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But the clicking sound from within the library banished all doubts.

Todd knew that Mr. Quelch had ordered the mysterious package to be taken into the library, evidently with the intention of unpacking it there.

Now it was unpacked, and the clicking had started.

Vernon-Smith's statement was borne out in every particular. Certainly, unless his story was true, he could not have known that the clicking would begin—at all events, so it seemed to Alonzo Todd.

Todd rose to his feet, and laid down his book and his umbrella, in a state of the greatest agitation.

What should he do?

His Uncle Benjamin would certainly have counselled him to run any risk to save Mr. Quelch's life, but the prospect of getting within close range of an infernal machine was not pleasant.

To Todd's credit be it said, he did not hesitate more than a moment.

Then he rushed away towards the School House door.

At any cost, he must get to the Remove-master and warn him. Even now he might be too late! The terrible contrivance was ticking away—and it might explode at any moment.

As he rushed away, he could still hear it.

Click! Click! Clickety-click! Ping-ping!

"Good heavens!" muttered Todd. "Oh dear!"

He dashed into the School House, and into two juniors who were just coming out. They were Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent. They caught the agitated Todd as he rushed in, linking their arms across his chest and stopping him.

"Tee's ready!" said Johnny Bull.

"Just in time!" said Nugent cheerfully.

"My dear Nugent—my dear Bull—

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Frank, noticing Todd's wild and excited look. "What's happened?"

"Quick! Come on!"

"Eh?"

"Mr. Quelch is in danger!"

"Quickly—in danger! What on earth are you driving at?" exclaimed Bull.

Todd grasped his arm.

"Quick! Come on! He may be killed any moment!"

"Great Scott! What—

Todd dashed on, and turned into the passage leading to the library. Nugent and Bull, exchanging glances of alarm, rushed after him, and several other juniors who had heard the alarmed exclamations rushed after him, too. Johnny Bull overtook him in the passage and caught him by the shoulder.

"Where are you going!" he demanded.

Todd panted.

"To the library!"

"What for?"

"Mr. Quelch is there!" gasped Alonzo. "He is in fearful danger! He may be blown to pieces at any moment!"

"What!"

"Faith, and that sounds a bit thick!" grinned Micky Desmond. "Sure, some spalpeen has been pulling your leg, Todd darling!"

"Not at all, my dear Desmond. An infernal machine has been sent here to blow up the school—"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"It is in the library, and Mr. Quelch is unpacking it! I heard it ticking from the Close!" panted Todd. "Come on—let me go! Quick!"

He tore himself away from the amazed juniors, and dashed on. He reached the library door, and wrenched at the handle. The door was locked.

Click-click-click!

Clickety-click! Ping-ping!

The weird sound came clearly through the door of the library. The other juniors heard it as they came up. They had never heard such a sound from the library before, certainly. Todd hammered upon the door with both fists.

"Mr. Quelch—Mr. Quelch!"

There was the sound of a movement within, and the clicking ceased.

"Who is there?" called out the voice of the Remove-master.

"It is I—Todd."

"Go away at once! I am busy!"

"But, sir—"

"Go away!"

"My dear sir—"

"Do you hear me?" roared Mr. Quelch. "How dare you interrupt my work!"

Todd gasped.

Click-click-click!

The weird sound recommenced from inside the library.

Todd was desperate.

He flung himself against the door, and it creaked and

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bumped in the lock. Johnny Bull caught him by the shoulder.

"Stop it, you ass!"

"He will be blown up!"

"I tell you—"

"We must save him!"

"Click-click-click! Ping!"

Todd cast a wild glance up and down the passage. He caught up a heavy stool, and dashed at the door.

Crash!

The lock flew into pieces under the terrific blow.

The library door flew open.

Todd rushed in.

"Oh, sir—"

Click-click-click!

Ping!

"Oh!"

Todd glared round in search of the infernal machine.

All he saw was a typewriter on a table, and Mr. Quelch, jumping up from the table, with fury in his face. On the floor lay the packing that had been round the typewriter, and the empty case and the cut cord. The truth dawned upon Alonzo Todd. It was a new typewriter that had arrived for Mr. Quelch, and he was testing it, and the clicking was simply the working of the keys.

"Oh—oh!" gasped Todd.

Mr. Quelch rushed towards him. He could scarcely believe his eyes. The lock of the library door had been broken in, and a crowd of juniors were staring in from the passage. Mr. Quelch grasped Todd by the shoulder and shook him.

Todd gasped for breath.

"What does this mean?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"M-m-mean, sir?" stammered Alonzo.

"Why have you burst into the room like this?"

"Like—like this, sir!" stammered Todd, dropping into his unfortunate way of repeating what was said to him, as he always did when he was scared or agitated.

Mr. Quelch shook him furiously. He had reason to be annoyed. He had ordered that new typewriter, and had been anxiously waiting for its arrival for some time. Mr. Quelch was an author in his spare moments, and he was engaged upon a very valuable history of Greyfriars. Some of his manuscript had recently been pilfered, and buried by a mischievous junior. It had been recovered, and Mr. Quelch had brought him of the excellent idea of getting a typewriter for the purpose. But he had not expected to be interrupted like this when the writing-machine arrived. He shook Alonzo Todd as a terrier might shake a rat, and the unfortunate Duffer gasped and wriggled in the Remove-master's powerful grasp.

"How dare you!" shouted Mr. Quelch. "Do you realize the damage you have done, you ridiculous boy? If you still belonged to Greyfriars, I would have you flogged for this, Todd. Do you hear?"

"Hear, sir?" stammered Alonzo.

"How dare you burst in that door?"

"Door, sir?"

"How dare you, Todd!"

"Dare, sir?"

Mr. Quelch shook him till his arm ached. Then he released him, and the Duffer staggered against the door, gasping for breath, and blinking at Mr. Quelch.

"Now," said the Remove-master savagely, "kindly explain why you have acted in this extraordinary way, Todd!"

"I—I'm so sorry, sir!"

"Why have you done this?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I did it to save your life, sir."

"What?"

"I—I thought that was an infernal-machine, sir, and was just going off to blow you up, sir," gasped Todd.

Mr. Quelch seemed petrified for a moment.

"You thought my typewriter an infernal-machine!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir—"

"You—you—you—"

"I—I heard it, sir, and—and I thought it was ticking, sir," said Todd. "And as Vernon-Smith had warned me that there was an Anarchist plot to blow up Greyfriars, I—"

"A what!" roared the Form-master.

"An Anarchist plot, sir, to blow up the school. Under the circumstances, when I heard the clicking, I—I—I thought—"

Mr. Quelch stared at the junior.

It was some moments before he spoke again, and by that time he had calmed down. Even a slight smile lurked upon his face.

"You are an extraordinary boy, Todd!" he said at last. Alonzo nodded.

"Yes, sir. My uncle Benjamin thinks so, too," he said, simply.

"Ha, ha—ahem!—I—I mean, I am very glad you are no longer at Greyfriars. I think a Form-master's duties would be entirely too heavy if you were in his Form, Todd. I shall pardon you for this ridiculous action, as you have been deceived by another boy. The damage you have done will be charged in Vernon-Smith's bill; and I shall also have something to say to Vernon-Smith. You may go."

"Thank you, sir," said Alonzo meekly. And he went.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Mistaken Identity.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came in from the cricket, and swarmed into Study No. 1. They found tea ready, but Johnny Bull and Nugent were not there. Bull and Nugent came along a few minutes later, however, with Alonzo, and explained. The chums looked at Todd in great admiration. Cousin Peter sat down in the armchair, and kicked up his feet and yelled. Alonzo Todd looked at him with grave reproach.

"My dear Peter," he said, "it is really no laughing matter! If that had been an infernal-machine instead of a typewriter, Mr. Quelch would certainly have been blown to pieces."

"And if you had been a sensible chap instead of a blithering ass, you would certainly have known that those boundaries were pulling your leg!" shrieked Peter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Peter, they deceived me. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted, at the conduct of Vernon-Smith."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, ten's ready, if you're got over the Anarchist scare. Toddy," grinned Johnny Bull. "Sit down, old man."

"Thank you very much, my dear Bull!"

And Todd sat down to tea. Bob Cherry lifted a large teapot, full to the brim, out of the fender, and set it on the table. Todd jumped up at once.

"Pray allow me to pour out the tea," he said.

"Oh, don't bother."

"No bother at all!" Todd assured him.

"Well, be careful, then."

"Oh, certainly," said Alonzo, taking up the teapot. "My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be very careful, even in the smallest matters, and I—"

"Look out!" roared Nugent. "You're pouring it over the cake."

"Dear me! I did not notice!"

Todd swung the teapot round from the cake, and there was a roar from Johnny Bull as a stream of hot tea shot over his knees.

"Ow—ow!"

"My dear Bull—"

"Yaroo!"

"I'm so sorry—"

"Stop it, you ass!"

Bob Cherry reached out and grasped the Duffer's arm. Unfortunately, Todd imagined that he was taking the teapot, and he obligingly let go. To tell with a crash, and there was a volcanic roar from Peter Todd. Splashes of hot tea came over his legs, and he jumped clear of the floor.

"Oh, you fabulous ass!"

"My dear Peter—"

"Yow! Yaroo! Groo! You dangerous lunatic! Yow!"

"My dear—"

There goes the tea—and the teapot!" grinned Nugent.

"Never mind, we're more of both. Sit down, Todd, old man. You're dangerous!"

Alonzo looked deeply distressed.

"I'm so sorry, my dear fellows—"

"Sit down!"

"Very well."

And the Duffer sat down. Bob Cherry jammed the kettle on the fire again, and Nugent sniffed another teapot out of the

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cupboard. The juniors began on the more solid part of the feed, and waited for their tea. When the kettle boiled, Alonzo obligingly offered to make the tea, but Johnny Bull grasped him, and held him down in his chair.

"That you jolly well won't!" he said grimly.

"My dear Bull—"

"You sit where you are."

"Oh, certainly; but—"

"Pass the eggs," said Peter Todd.

"With pleasure, my dear Peter."

There were a dozen or more boiled eggs on a plate, and Todd reached the plate, and held it out to Peter. He was just a little hasty in his efforts to be quick, and a couple of the eggs rolled off, and crashed upon Cousin Peter's waistcoat. Eggs were not intended to stand that usage, and they burst.

Cousin Peter gave a muffled roar.

The eggs were by no means hard-boiled. Two streams of yolk flowed down Cousin Peter's waistcoat, and he looked at Alonzo with a look that was more eloquent than words.

"Oh!" he said.

"I'm so sorry—"

"You fabulous burler," said Peter, rising from the table.

"Excuse me, you fellows, I'll go and wash this off."

"Shall I come with you, my dear Peter?"

"No!" roared Peter.

Cousin Peter left the study, and hurried to the bath-room at the end of the passage. He turned on the hot-water tap, and washed the yolk off his waistcoat, and rubbed it as dry as he could with a towel. While he was so engaged, a fat face adorned with a pair of spectacles looked in.

"I say, Todd, old man—"

Peter grunted.

"I'm so jolly glad to see you again, Toddy," said Billy Bunter, evidently taking Peter for his cousin. "Would you like me to come to tea with you?"

Cousin Peter grunted. On the occasion of his last visit to Greyfriars he had been taken for Alonzo, and his likeness to the Duffer was still deceptive.

"My dear Bunter," he said, in Alonzo's voice. "You gratify me very much. Are you really glad to see me, my dear Bunter?"

"Yes, rather," said Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "You see—"

"Shake hands, then."

"Certainly, Todd. I shall be very pleased."

Todd grasped Bunter's fat hand.

He grasped it hard.

Bunter wriggled.

He had never dreamed that Alonzo Todd possessed such strength of muscle. Todd seemed unconscious that he was exerting any unusual pressure. Bunter seemed to curl up under his grip, and finally he howled.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"What is the matter, my dear Bunter?"

"Ow! You're squashing my jaw! Yow! Leggo!"

"I'm so sorry, my dear Bunter."

"Groo!"

Bunter jerked his fat hand away, and glared at Todd.

"You—you beast!" he gasped. "You're not Alonzo at all! Ow! Buns!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away, sucking his fat hand.

Cousin Peter grinned serenely, and left the bath-room, and came down the Remove passage.

"Hallo!" exclaimed a cheery voice. "Todd, by Jove!"

It was Coker of the Fifth. He was coming along the passage with Potter and Greene.

The three Fifth-Formers halted at the sight of Todd. They had not the slightest doubt that this was Alonzo. In fact, it never occurred to them that he might be anybody else.

Todd grinned and nodded. He saw the Fifth-Formers' mistake, but did not correct it.

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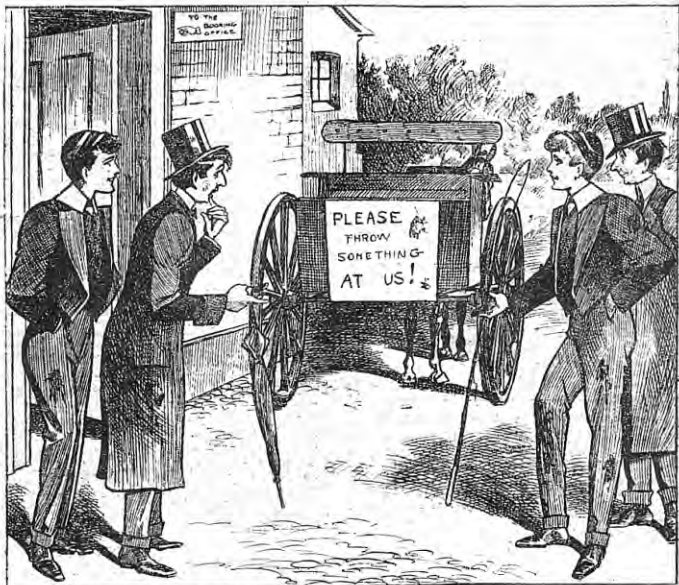
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The juniors descended from the trap. Then Bob Cherry gave a roar, and pointed to the inscription on the back of the vehicle, which he had seen for the first time, "Look!" he bellowed. "No wonder every idiot we've passed on the road has shied something at us!" (See Chapter 11.)

"So you've come back," said Coker genially.

"Yes, my dear Coker."

"Visiting Wharton, eh?"

"Yes, I have the honour to be Wharton's guest. My Uncle Benjamin says that Wharton is a very nice boy," said Cousin Peter solemnly. "He shows a great interest in my valuable book, 'The History of the Potato, from the Seed to the Saucepan.'"

Coker chuckled.

As a matter of fact, he had been looking for Todd. He had heard that the Duffer of Greyfriars was visiting the Famous Four that afternoon, and he regarded it as an excellent opportunity of repaying the little joke of the Removites in planting the rose-trees in his garden.

His meeting Todd in the passage like this, away from the other juniors, was really a stroke of luck, though if Coker had known that it was Peter, and not Alonso, he might not have considered it so lucky.

"I want you to do me a little favour, Toddy," said Coker.

"My dear Coker, I shall be delighted," said Peter sweetly.

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to do anybody any favours I possibly could, even unpleasant and disagreeable people."

Potter chuckled softly, and Coker glared at him.

"What are you chuckling at?" he demanded.

"Oh, nothing," said Potter. "Get on with the washing."

"Well, look here, Toddy, I'm not on the best of terms with THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 229.

the chaps in No. 1 Study," Coker explained. "We've had some little rubs—"

"Yes, they have told me about the gardening," said Todd. "It must really have been quite a disappointment to you, my dear Coker. I laughed very much."

"Oh, did you?" said Coker, with a glare. "You silly ass—ahem!—I mean, just so! Exactly. Well, you see, Toddy, I've been reading a book about a good little boy named George, and I want to do Wharton a favour, you know. As he's got guests in his study, I want to make a little contribution to the feed."

"That is very noble of you, my dear Coker."

"The fact is, I mean to be noble, and—and forgiving," said Coker. "Wharton wouldn't accept the things if he knew they came from me, so suppose you take them in, and—and he won't know I sent them. I will tell him afterwards, you know."

"What a very excellent idea, my dear Coker! I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would be delighted to hear you talk like that."

"Got the bag, Potty?"

"Have you are," said Potter.

"Jam-tarts," said Coker, handing the bag to Todd. "Six of them, and twopenny ones, with plenty of jam. Just take 'em in, and don't say they came from me."

"How noble of you, my dear fellow!" said Todd, taking the bag, and looking into it. "If I were a suspicious chap, I should think that you had put something nasty in the jam, and

that you were just using me to plant the things on Wharton and the rest. But, of course, I know that you wouldn't do anything mean like that."

Coker turned red.

"Of—of course not!" he stammered.

Potter and Greene chuckled again. Then, as Coker glared at them they became very serious.

"Don't mind these silly aszes, Toddy," said Coker. "They're always chucking over something. Mind you don't mention the tarts are from me. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, my dear Coker!"

And Todd walked on with the bag of tarts in his hand. Coker & Co. looked at one another, and chuckled softly. They studied the supposed Duffer walk down to the door of No. 1 Study.

"My aunt!" said Coker, with a deep breath. "It's working all right! Those young bounders eat those tarts!"

"And they will!" grinned Potter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They will have some little pains in their little insides!" chuckled Coker. "It may help to teach them not to chuck the Fifth. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Todd's worth his weight in gold!" grinned Coker. "I—oh—yareeh!"

Squeli!

A jam-tart whizzed through the air, and smashed upon Coker's rather prominent nose. Some of the jam went into his nose, and some into his mouth, and some into his eyes. That which went into his mouth tasted decidedly unpleasant. Coker gurgled.

"Oh, owl owl!"

Whiz! whiz! Smash, splash!

Potter and Greene roared, too. Todd was standing in the doorway of No. 1 Study, grinning. The tarts whizzed along the passage with unerring aim. Greene received one in his left ear, and Potter one in his neck.

"You—your young villains! Ow!" gasped Coker, as another tart caught him under the chin. "Groo-hoo! Oh!"

Whiz!

Potter dodged, but too late. A tart smashed in his eye, and he yelled as he dabbed madly at the jam.

The three Fifth-Formers made a wild rush at Todd. The last tart came whizzing along the passage, and it flattened on Coker's forehead. Then Todd whipped into the study, yelling with laughter. Coker & Co., jammy and furious, arrived at the study door, and glared in. The juniors were all upon their feet now, and they roared at the sight of him. "Oh!" gasped Coker. "It wasn't Alonzo all the time; it was the other beast. Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker & Co. made a rush into the study at Peter Todd. But the Removites lined up, and the odds were too great for Coker & Co. Coker and Potter and Greene were grasped by many hands, and hurled forth. They rolled in the passage, jammy and yelling, and the study door was slammed after them.

Cousin Peter within the study came roars of laughter, as Coker & Co. picked themselves up and departed. And the things they said to one another as they went were very emphatic.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Seeing Alonzo Off.

TEA in Harry Wharton's study was a very merry meal. True, Alonzo was very keen to read old chapters from the "History of the Potato," and the juniors, if they had so chosen, could have learned the history of that valuable vegetable, from the seed to the succupan. But Peter always interrupted his cousin when he began, and Alonzo never got further than, "In the first place, the seed is sown."

Cousin Peter was very entertaining when he was not busy shutting up Alonzo. The time passed merrily enough. Quite a number of fellows dropped into the study during tea. They stated that they came to see old Todd, and old Todd thanked them in touching terms for remembering him in this affectionate way; but as they all stayed to tea, perhaps there was another attraction in the study beside Alonzo. Bob Cherry had nobly expended all his fifteen shillings upon that tea, and a committee of experts had chosen the good things, so there was really a first-class spread. And before tea was over every available inch of space in the study was occupied. The chums could have put a notice outside the door, "Standing Room Only," but it would not have been quite correct, for after a while there was not even standing room.

Alonzo gazed round upon the crowded Removites with affectionate eyes.

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"It is so very pleasant to see so many kind old friends again," he said. "I am so glad to see you, Bulstrode. You were captain of the Remove when I was here, you know, and you were a bullying beast, you will remember. I am so glad that you appear to have become quite decent now. It must be a great pleasure to your friends."

Bulstrode scowled. He did not like being reminded of past matters that were better forgotten; but Alonzo, among his many great gifts, did not number that of tact.

"Pass Bulstrode the jelly, Alonzo," interrupted Harry Wharton, to cut short the Duffer's unfortunate reminiscences.

"Oh, certainly, Wharton!"

And Alonzo shot a plateful of quivering jelly upon Bulstrode's waistcoat. Bulstrode roared.

"Oh, you silly ass!"

"My dear Bulstrode, I'm so sorry——"

"Accidents will happen, especially when Alonzo's around," grinned Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I guess I'll help myself."

"Can I pass you something, my dear Fish?"

"I guess not. Hands off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is a great pleasure to see you again, my dear Fish. I have very often thought of you while I have been away, and wondered whether you swank the same as usual."

"Hey!"

"And you, too, Snoop. I am glad to see you do not bear malice for any differences we had in the past," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile.

"Oh, not at all!" said Snoop, who was devouring jam-tarts at express speed. "When I heard you were here, Toddy, I simply had to come in and see you."

"I am so gratified," said Todd. "Perhaps I was rather hard on you in the old days. If so, I am sincerely sorry. But it was really owing to the teaching of my Uncle Benjamin, who always impressed upon me never to be friendly with a fellow who sneaked and told lies. That was really the cause of it."

"What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Go on with the reminiscences, Alonzo. Did Uncle Benjamin ever teach you to be tactful like this!"

"My dear Cherry——"

"I say, you fellows, you might make room for a chap," said a peevish voice at the door. "I don't see why I should be left out, when I was always Todd's special friend."

"Surely that is a misapprehension on your part, Bunter," said Alonzo, in surprise. "I remember trying to be friendly towards you, but it was quite impossible, on account of the meanness of your character, my dear Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I trust you do not mind my being candid, my dear Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be quite candid."

"You silly fathead——"

"Ahem! And here is Vernon-Smith, too," said Alonzo. "I am so glad to see you, Vernon-Smith, and I am sure you do not bear any malice for the plain opinions I used to express about your wicked and rascally conduct in breaking bounds at night."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fathead!" said Vernon-Smith angrily.

"My dear Smith," said Alonzo, "I—oh! Oh! Ah!"

Vernon-Smith jammed a couple of tarts upon Alonzo's earnest and benevolent face, and strode out of the study. The Duffer gasped in astonishment.

"Dear me!"

He dabbed at his face with his handkerchief. "I—I trust I have not said anything to offend Vernon-Smith, my dear fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is most extraordinary," said Alonzo. "He looked quite annoyed about something. I wonder what it was."

"I wonder!" agreed Bob Cherry, grinning.

And the juniors roared.

Peter Todd looked at the clock, and rose to his feet. The table was by this time pretty well cleared, and the crowded juniors were beginning to depart, all of them assuring Alonzo that they had been simply delighted to see him.

"Time to go, Alonzo," said Peter. "We've got to catch our train, and it's a good walk to the station."

"We're not going to walk," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "We've hired a trap to drive you, and two of us are coming with you."

"Oh, good!"

"That is really very thoughtful of you, Wharton. Although not appreciably fatigued, I shall be glad to see the country-side from the vantage offered by a vehicle," said Alonzo. "I am sure you shall enjoy the drive exceedingly."

"It will save you taking the local at Friarsdale," Bob Cherry explained. "We can drive directly over to Courtfield, where

you can catch your train, and you won't have to change again."

"Tipping!" said Cousin Peter.

"I ordered the trap for half-past five," said Wharton. "I'll go and see if it's ready."

And Wharton left the study.

The available funds of the Famous Four had been expended upon the feed; but the trap had been hired upon the understanding that it was to be paid for on Saturday, when the pocket-money of the Remove chums would arrive. It had been sent over in good time by the livery stables in Courtfield, and it was already waiting outside the School House, with a man in charge. The man was to wait at the school while the trap drove to Courtfield and back with the juniors. It was really a nice trap, with plenty of room to seat four, one of them the driver.

"Ere you are, sir!" said the groom, recognising Wharton.

"Good!" said Wharton, looking over the horse with satisfaction. He liked, like most schoolboys, to have a good horse to drive.

"Going on a little excursion—eh?" said Coker, of the Fifth, who was among the crowd of fellows standing on the steps looking at the trap.

"Yes," said Harry.

"Like me to drive?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No fear?"

"Blessed if I think the masters ought to trust you kids out with a horse," said Coker, with a shake of the head. "It ain't safe."

"Safer than if you drove, Coker, old man," said Wharton, and he returned into the house to announce that the trap was ready.

Coker grunted. Coker was feeling very sore over his successive defeats at the hands of the Removes, and he had been turning schemes over in his mind as he stood there with Greene. Potter had gone into the house.

"Young sweeps!" growled Coker. "It would serve 'em right if we collared the trap ourselves!"

"Man in charge," said Greene.

"Well, we three could bump him over easily enough. I say, Potter—where's Potter?"

"He went in ten minutes ago."

"Silly ass!" growled Coker. "—Oh, here he is!" Potter came out of the School House, grinning. He had something concealed under his jacket, of which his chums obtained a glimpse.

"What have you got there?" demanded Coker.

"Shush!" said Potter mysteriously.

"But what is it?"

"Look!"

Potter opened his jacket a little, allowing his mystified chums a glance at a big sheet of cardboard lettered over in black. Coker and Greene stared blankly.

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush!" said Potter. "Here they come!"

"Mum's the word!" murmured Greene.

Harry Wharton & Co. came out. Coker, Potter, and Greene walked away towards the school gates, and waited there till the old stone arch. Outside the School House the two Todds mounted into the trap, with Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry. Wharton took the reins, and the other three disposed themselves comfortably in the trap.

The Co. shook hands with Alonzo and Peter all round. Quite a big crowd gathered to say good-bye to the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Good-bye, Alonzo!"

"See you again some day?"

"Hurrah!"

Alonzo stood up in the trap as it started, and raised his hat. "Good-bye, my dear fellows! I— Oooooooh!"

The jerk of the starting trap made Todd tumble, and he sat down, his hat flying out of his hand as he flung out his arms to save himself. Bob Cherry roared as he caught the back of Alonzo's hand across the nose.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Alonzo.

"Oh! Fathead!"

"M-m-my hat—"

"Chuck in that topper, somebody," called out Peter Todd. Johnny Bull picked up Todd's topper and tossed it into the trap. Then the juniors shouted and waved their hands, and the vehicle rattled down the drive to the gates.

Harry Wharton "tooted" the trap through the gates, and outside in the road Coker & Co. were seen, standing directly in the way.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Coker.

Wharton pulled in the horse.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"Only to say good-bye to our dear Alonzo," grinned Potter.

"Oh, rats!"

"My dear Wharton," remonstrated Todd, "I regard this

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as a very kindly attention on the part of Coker. I shall be very pleased to shake hands with you, Coker."

"Buck up, then!" said Harry.

Coker & Co. came round to the back of the trap. Coker and Greene climbed half in, to shake hands with Alonzo, which they did with much ceremony. No one was regarding Potter, who stood in the road behind the high back of the trap, and naturally no one noticed that he whipped the cardboard out from under his jacket and stuck it on the back of the trap. It was already smeared thickly with secotino for the purpose. It was but the work of a moment, and then Potter reached up to shake hands with Alonzo, too.

"Good-bye!" said Coker affectionately. "I hope we shall see you again, Todd. I'm anxious to hear more about your Uncle Benjamin, and I want you to read me a chapter out of that book of yours, 'The Story of a Tomato'—"

"The Story of a Potato," my dear Coker. "I—"

"Yes, I meant potato," said Coker blandly. "I—"

"If my cousin would be willing to catch a later train I could read you a chapter now, my dear Coker."

"Rats!" said Cousin Peter.

"My dear Peter—"

"Drive on!"

Harry Wharton drove on. The trap rattled away down the road, and Coker & Co. stood looking after it and grinning. They had reason to grin, for in the bright sunshine the large white card fastened on the back of the trap showed up to great advantage, and the black letters on it stood out in bold relief. And the legend it bore ran:

"PLEASE THROW SOMETHING AT US!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Throwing Things.

HARRY WHARTON drove on merrily down the sunny lane. The juniors had started in good time, intending to have a pleasant drive round the country and arrive at Courtfield Station when the train was due. The route lay through the village of Friardale, and then round by the slopes of the Black Pike, and then on to Courtfield. The trap bounced along merrily, and the juniors chatted as they whizzed along under big, leafy trees. One or two pedestrians glanced at the trap, and the juniors saw them grinning. But they were accustomed to seeing people grin when Alonzo was about, so they did not take any particular notice of the fact.

What first startled them was the action of a small rein when the trap ran into the quiet old High Street of Friardale. He glanced at them, and stooped and picked up a clod of earth and hurled it into the trap.

It caught Bob Cherry under the chin.

The surprised junior gave a roar.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo, in surprise. "What an exceedingly rudely and unprovoked action! I consider—"

"Stop the trap!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'll squash him!"

"He's buzzed!" grinned Peter Todd.

Bob Cherry rubbed his chin with his pocket-handkerchief. The trap slackened a little in passing through the narrow village street. A couple of juniors belonging to Highlife School were outside the local tuckshop, and they stared at the trap and chuckled.

"Throw something, eh?" murmured Ponsonby. "You bet! Rather!"

"What ho!" murmured Vavasour.

An egg-box was close at hand outside the shop. Vavasour and Ponsonby stooped and grasped an egg each.

Bob Cherry saw the action, and shouted.

"Don't you throw those eggs at us, you villains—"

"Well, you're asking for it," grinned Ponsonby.

"Asking for it! What do you mean? I— Oh! Br-r-r-r!"

Squash!

Squish!

Two eggs smashed among the juniors in the trap.

Bob Cherry received one, and one was divided between Alonzo and Peter. The juniors roared. Ponsonby and Vavasour, yelling with laughter, disappeared down a turning and fled.

"Ow!" muttered Bob Cherry. "Groo!"

"Yah!"

"Oh!"

"Drive on, for goodness' sake!" said Peter Todd. "They all seem to be mad here. What did that clasp mean by saying we were asking for it?"

"Blessed if I know! Groo!"

"Oh dear!" said Alonzo. "The scent of these eggs is most unpleasant. I think they must have been somewhat stale. Oh!"

Br-r-r-r!

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The juniors dabbed themselves as clean as they could with their handkerchiefs. The trap ran on.

Curiously enough, throwing seemed to have set in as a sort of mania along the road. In the village, and past the village, fellows picked up clods and turfs and tossed them at the trap as it passed.

All sorts and conditions of people did the same thing—Highcliffe fellows, and boys belonging to the Council school at Pegg, and village boys, and errand-boys, and country yokels.

It was amazing.

The juniors began to wonder whether the whole countryside had suddenly taken leave of its senses.

"What on earth does it mean?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, exasperated. "I suppose everybody hasn't gone dotty all of a sudden."

"It is very odd, my dear Cherry."

"Two or three of the howling idiots have yelled out that we're asking for it," said Peter Todd. "I don't catch on at all."

"They must be potty," said Wharton.

"Buck up, and let's get to Courtfield."

In the quiet country lanes the juniors had a respite, but as they came towards Courtfield the remarkable persecution began again. A number of hands belonging to the jam factory at Courtfield End were coming down the road, and when the trap passed they burst into a roar of laughter, and began scrambling in the road and ditch for missiles. Bob Cherry gave the alarm.

"Buck up, Wharton!" he shouted. "They're going to throw."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton cracked the whip, and the horse burst into a gallop. The trap dashed on at a spanking speed, but the factory hands rushed after it, hurling clods and turves amid yells of laughter.

"Stop it, you idiots!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You're asking for it!" yelled back Jack Blunt.

"What! Stop it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Make him go, Harry!"

Wharton cracked and cracked and cracked with the whip. The horse's hoofs were beating a rapid tattoo in the road, and the factory hands were left behind at last, breathless with laughter and running.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "They've all got it—all mad as hatters!"

"It is extraordinary!" said Alonzo.

Peter Todd sniffed.

"It's a jape of some kind," he said. "Blessed if I understand it, though! Hallo! Look out! Here's a fresh lot!"

A number of fellows belonging to Courtfield School were in the street as the trap entered Courtfield. Harry Wharton recognised Trumper, and Grahame, and Solly Lazarus, and several more of them, and waved his hand. The Courtfield fellows nodded cheerfully, but as they caught a glimpse of the back of the trap they burst into a yell of laughter.

"Throw something!" said Trumper. "What! Anything to oblige!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the Courtfield fellows threw—anything that came to hand. Missiles of all kinds whizzed into the trap. Bob Cherry gave a roar as an old cabbage-stump in the final stages of decay caught him under the chin. Harry Wharton yelled as a potato knocked his hat off. Alonzo Todd gasped with horror as an egg broke on the back of his neck. Yells of laughter from everyone on the street greeted the juniors of Greyfriars as they fled from the fusillade.

It was with great relief that Harry Wharton & Co. saw Courtfield Station at last. The drive had not been what could be called a success. Wharton brought the trap to a halt outside the station, and there was a howl of laughter from the loungers there.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth is the matter with 'em?" said Wharton, in amazement. "The whole blessed county has gone off its rocker, I think."

"Looks like it," growled Bob Cherry.

The juniors descended from the trap. Then Bob Cherry gave a roar, and pointed to the inscription on the back of the vehicle, which he had seen for the first time.

"Look!" he bellowed.

"Oh!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"Please throw something at us!" Wharton read out. "Oh, the bouncers! Oh, the rotters! That was what Coker stopped us for outside the gates."

"The awful schemer!"

"Dear me!" said Todd. "I regard this as an example of duplicity on the part of Coker! My uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted."

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"The—the bouncer!" said Peter Todd, in great admiration. "I shouldn't have thought that ass Coker had brains enough for a jape like this."

"My dear Peter—"

Bob Cherry jerked the card off the trap, and cracked it up. A grinning crowd had gathered round, and the Greyfriars fellows were glad to get into the station. They had arrived very early, owing to the extra speed they had put on, and they had a quarter of an hour to wait for the train. Alonzo offered to while away the time pleasantly by reading out a chapter of the "Story of a Potato," an offer which was declined without thanks.

The train came in at last, and the two Todds stepped into a carriage. Alonzo shook hands most affectionately with Wharton and Bob Cherry, and promised them that he would pay them another visit as soon as he could.

Then the train rolled out of the station. Alonzo opened his book, and Peter Todd leaned back in the opposite corner of the carriage and closed his eyes.

"I will read you a chapter as we go, Peter," said Alonzo mildly. "It will be improving the shining hour, which our uncle Benjamin has always insisted upon us to do."

And he started.

Peter Todd took it very patiently. Alonzo's voice droned on uninterruptedly for a quarter of an hour. Then he came to the end of the chapter, and glanced across at his cousin.

"Is it not quite interesting, Peter?"

"Sure!"

"My dear Peter—"

"Sure!"

"Peter—"

"Snore—re!"

Cousin Peter was fast asleep.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. Well Bowled!

COKER & CO. greeted Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry when they returned to Greyfriars with genial grins; but the two Removites walked in with an air of elaborate unconsciousness. Coker hailed them in a very friendly way.

"Had a good drive, you chaps?"

"Oh, ripping!" said Bob Cherry.

"Any adventures en route?" grinned Potter.

"My dear chap, what adventures could we have in a little drive in the country?" said Harry Wharton, with an air of astonishment.

"Did anybody throw things at you?" asked Greene.

And the Fifth-Formers roared.

Wharton and Cherry went in without replying, leaving Coker & Co. in a state of very considerable satisfaction with themselves. The affair of those unfortunate rose-trees in Coker's garden was to some extent avenged.

Wharton and Bob were not so reticent in their own study. Nagent and Johnny Bull and the rest roared over the story, just as much as Coker & Co. had done.

"Blessed if I can see so much to cackle at," said Bob Cherry, rather crossly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Johnny Bull. "Fancy you chaps running the gauntlet like that! And you never thought of guessing that it was a jape."

"How were we to guess, fathead?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop cackling, for goodness' sake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull did not stop cackling, and Bob Cherry, in a state of exasperation, rushed at him and hurled him forth into the passage. Even then Bull did not stop cackling. His cackle could still be heard as he retreated to his own study.

And when other fellows heard the story they cackled too. In fact, it was astonishing how funny the Removites seemed to consider it. The idea of Wharton driving along a trap bearing a placard inviting people to throw things at him, and never suspecting why the public took advantage of the invitation, seemed irresistibly comic to the juniors.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry began to get into a state of exasperation on the subject. It was all very well to be laughed at by the Fifth, and even by the Shell and the Upper Fourth, but to be laughed at by their own Form in addition was, as Bob Cherry said, a little too thick.

"Coker is still cackling over that giddy rot," Bob Cherry growled, after morning lessons the next day. "I don't believe he thought of it himself, either. But he's taking all the credit for doing as brown. The whole Fifth is cackling on the subject. Even the great Blundell has condescended to cackle. Blessed if I can see that it was such an A1, top-notch jape as all that."

"Faith, and you can't be expected to see it!" grinned Micky

Desmond. "But sure, it was funny intirely! You see, you looked such a pair of silly asses."

"Regular dummies," remarked Bolsover. "It's specially gratifying to the Remove to have our Form captain made to look a silly chump like this."

"Any more things you want throwing?" asked Snoop, with a giggle.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Yes, it's about time I started throwing things myself," he said. "There's a jolly unpleasant thing here, and I'll start on that."

And he started on Snoop, and threw him out into the Close, which completely damped Snoop's sense of humour for some time.

Coker & Co. came out of their Form-room, and grinned at the removal of Coker was decidedly pleased with himself. He had scored last and best in the endless tussle between the Fifth and the Remove, and he was triumphant. Potter and Greens were grinning, too, and so were Bland and Blundell and Fitzgerald. In fact, the whole Fifth grinned at the exasperated chums of the Remove.

And the juniors glared. They did not feel like grinning. They were getting fed up with the subject. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry tramped up the stairs, and Coker yelled after them.

"Hallo! Like some more things thrown?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Coker caught up a cushion from the seat in the hall, and buzzed it up the stairs after the juniors. It caught Bob Cherry on the back of the head, and he fell forward with a yell, and the Fifth-Formers below yelled too—with laughter.

Bob Cherry jumped up in a rage and grabbed the cushion. Coker & Co. retreated towards the Fifth Form-room, laughing, and Bob Cherry descended a few steps, leaned over the banisters, and hurled the cushion at them.

The Fifth-Formers dodged, and the cushion flew into the open doorway of the Form-room; and as ill-luck would have it, Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, stepped out at that moment.

The cushion caught him fairly on the chest, and he spun back into the room and sat down with a loud bump.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"My only Aunt Georgina! You're done it now!" yelled Coker. And he fled.

Mr. Prout jumped up like a jack-in-a-box, and bounced out into the passage, with flaming face and rustling gown. He glared round, and caught sight of Bob Cherry's horrified face over the banisters.

"Cherry!" he roared.

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered Bob.

"Did you throw that cushion?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"You—you had the astounding impertinence to hurl a missile at a Form-master—at me!" thundered Mr. Prout.

"Oh, sir! No, sir! Oh, sir!"

"No! You said yes!"

"I—I didn't chuck it at you, sir," stammered Bob. "That—that was an accident, sir. I—I chucked it at another silly ass, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean I chucked it at a silly ass, sir, and—and—"

"Come here, Cherry!"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Bob Cherry reluctantly descended the stairs. He knew that he was in for it. A junior could not bowl a Form-master over like a nippet without paying the penalty. Mr. Prout grasped him by the collar and marched him into the Remove-master's study. Mr. Quelch looked at them in surprise.

"What ever is the matter?" he exclaimed.

"I have been knocked down, sir—knocked over with violence, sir—hurled to the floor by the impact of a cushion projected through the air by this reckless and idiotic boy, sir!" snorted Mr. Prout.

"Dear me!"

"As he is in your Form, sir, I leave you to deal with him, sir," said Mr. Prout.

And he stalked out of the study. Mr. Quelch picked up a cane.

"I—I didn't buzz the cushion at Mr. Prout, sir," murmured Bob. "I—I buzzed it at another chap, sir. I—I—"

"I don't suppose you knocked down a Form-master purposely, Cherry. I am quite willing to believe that that was an accident," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "But it is necessary to take proper precautions against such accidents; so please hold out your hand."

And Bob Cherry received three cuts, and he went out of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 229.

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the study looking as if he were trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife.

His chums met him with great sympathy.

"Hard lines, old chap!" said Harry Wharton. "And it was all Coker's fault, too!"

"Does it hurt?" asked Micky Desmond sympathetically.

"No!" groaned Bob Cherry, with anguished sarcasm.

"It's nice, and I'm doing this for fun! Owl! Yow!"

And for a considerable time Bob Cherry was like unto Rachel; he mourned, and would not be comforted.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Many Invitations.

C LICK! Click!

Harry Wharton smiled as he heard the sound. Lessons were over that Saturday, and as the weather was suddenly rainy cricket was impossible, and Harry Wharton was going to the library to borrow a book. The clicking of the typewriter caught his ears as he came down the passage, and he remembered Alonzo Todd's scare. He tapped at the library door, and entered.

It was not Mr. Quelch who was seated at the typewriter, however. It was Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth. Mr. Prout found the Remove-master's machine very useful, and he had already fallen into the habit of using it to dash off little notes, and to write out exercises, and so forth. Undoubtedly it was very useful, as Mr. Prout's handwriting was almost indecipherable, and exercises set in that "fist" were a great deal like Chinese puzzles to his unfortunate victims.

Mr. Prout glanced round as Wharton entered, and gave him a frown.

"Pray be quiet, Wharton!" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"You are interrupting me."

"I am sorry, sir."

"Well, well, go away, then."

Wharton's brow knitted a little.

The school library was supposed to be free to everybody in the school; and although Mr. Prout was a Form-master, it was decidedly cool of him to appropriate the place because he wanted to typewrite. But it was scarcely possible for Wharton to argue the matter with the master of the Fifth, so he quitted the library without having found the book he wanted.

Nugent and Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry were waiting for him in his study when he returned. Rain was driving against the window, and the juniors had made up a big fire in the study, and they intended to pass the

next hour or two pleasantly sitting round the fire, while one of them read aloud from "Treasure Island."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Wharton came in. "Somebody else got the book this time?"

"I haven't looked."

"Why not, ass?"

"Prout was in the library, using Quelch's typewriter, and he shoed me out."

"Cheek!" said Johnny Bull. "As a matter of fact, I believe Quelch doesn't half like old Prout appropriating his typewriter in that way. I suppose he doesn't like to say anything, but I noticed his chum yesterday when he went to the library to write, and found that Prout was writing a letter on the machine."

"Prout uses it for everything now," said Nugent. "I heard Blundell say that Prout sent him a typewritten invitation to tea."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I was thinking of that," he said. "Prout's altogether too cool; but I got a wheeze into my head when I saw him clicking away on the typewriter. I think this is where we shall make Coker & Co. sit up."

"How!" asked Bob Cherry eagerly. "If it will stop their cackling over that stale wheeze of theirs I'm on, whatever it is."

Wharton closed the door, and began to explain in a low voice. The juniors listened eagerly, and there was a sudden yell of laughter in the study.

Bob Cherry jumped up, and caught Wharton round the neck, and waltzed him round the study in an ecstasy.

"Hurrah!" he chorused. "Come to my arms, my beaming boy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Owl! Leggo, you ass!"

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"Harrab! It will take Coker & Co. all their time to get on to a wheeze like that!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo, you fatted!"

Wharton jerked himself away, and Bob Cherry plumped down into the armchair, breathless. He chuckled with delight.

"That is better than 'Treasure Island,'" he remarked. "As soon as old Prout's done with the clicker, we'll get on to it."

"That's the idea."

And the chums of the Remove discussed their plan, and chuckled over it with great glee.

About an hour later Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent scouted cautiously along the passage leading to the library.

There was no sound from that apartment. The click of the typewriter was still. Wharton opened the door, and the two juniors slipped into the room, and closed the door behind them. The rain whisked softly on the library window.

"It's all serene," grinned Nugent. "We've got the place to ourselves. Bob will keep watch at the other end of the passage, and whistle if there's danger."

"Good egg!"

Wharton sat down at the typewriter. He removed the cover. The machine was quite ready for use. Wharton had handled a typewriter before, though experience was hardly necessary for using so simple a machine. A block of paper, which Mr. Prout had been using for his correspondence, lay upon the writing-table beside the machine. Wharton slipped one of them upon the roller, and adjusted it, and began to click.

Click! Click! Clickity-click!

He lifted the carriage, and showed Nugent when he had written. Frank read it with a chuckle of delight.

"Greafairs, Saturday."

"The pleasure of Master Coker's company is requested to tea in Mr. Prout's study at five o'clock precisely. Any little contribution to the tea will be welcome."

"My hat!" murmured Nugent.

Wharton grinned.

He whisked out the sheet, and put in another, and clicked away on the keyboard.

Click! Click! Click! Click! He clicked along, and raised the carriage.

"The pleasure of Master Blundell's company is requested to tea in Mr. Prout's study at four o'clock precisely. Any little contribution to the tea will be welcome."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton put sheet after sheet in the typewriter, and clicked them off neatly enough. He had eight done by the time he had finished, and he put them together carefully, folding up each and slipping it into one of Mr. Prout's envelopes. Three of the invitations were for Coker, Potter, and Greene, and they were all timed for five o'clock. Two of them were for Blundell and Bland, and they were timed for four o'clock. One was for Fitzgerald, of the Fifth, and that was timed for a quarter-past four. Two were for Temple and Dabney, of the Upper Fourth, and the time fixed in them was half-past four.

"What do you think of them?" grinned Wharton.

Nugent chuckled.

"Simply ripping."

"You see, the typewriter saves a lot of trouble," said Wharton reflectively. "We couldn't possibly write a note in Prout's hand—that would be wrong—and, besides, we couldn't copy his list, and if we could, nobody could read it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But a typewritten statement that the pleasure of Master Somebody's company is requested to tea—that's all right. His company is requested—we request it, don't we?"

"We do." "Ha, ha! We do!"

"We don't say that Mr. Prout requests it, do we?"

"Certainly not!"

"Of course, they may draw such a conclusion from the letter."

"Very possibly—the jape won't be much good if they don't!"

"But that's their look-out, isn't it?"

"Heard, heard!"

"So long as we tell the exact truth, I don't see that we can do any more."

"Quite so. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, then."

Wharton slipped the invitations into his pocket. The chums stepped quietly out of the library, leaving the typewriter as they had found it. Bob Cherry was keeping cave at the end of the passage, and he was getting a little tired. But he nodded cheerfully.

"All right!" he asked.

"Right as rain."

"Good! We shall have to get a fax to take the notes from."

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"Yes—some fax who does things for Prout, too," said Wharton thoughtfully. "Young Nugent, of the Second—your minor, Frank—he'll do."

"Good!" said Nugent. "Dickie will do it like a shot."

And Dickie Nugent was called upon for his services. The scamp of the Second was taken into No. 1 Study, and he ate jam-tarts while the chums of the Remove explained matters to him. Nugent minor grinned, and willingly assented to being a messenger. And when he had finished the jam-tarts, he took Study No. 1 with the invitations in his possession, and proceeded to deliver them at the studies of the Fifth-Formers, and Temple and Dabney.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled in chorus.

"I hope it will work," murmured Bob Cherry.

"We shall jolly soon see if it doesn't," said Wharton. "If it works, they'll be going to the tuckshop to get the stuff, and we shall see them from this window."

"Good egg! Let's watch!"

And the Famous Four took up their stand at the study window and watched.

Ten minutes later they had the pleasure of seeing Fitzgerald of the Fifth cut across to the tuckshop, with an umbrella up, and he came back in a few minutes with a parcel under his arm.

Five minutes later Blundell and Bland scooted across the Close, in mackintoshes, in the rain.

The Chums of the Remove grinned at one another.

It was very clear that the bait had taken, and that Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, would have guests in his study that afternoon!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Tea-Fight!

"Y aunt!" said Coker. "What's this?"

He was the last to receive the typewritten invitation handed in by Dickie Nugent. Dickie tossed the sealed envelope upon the table.

"For you, Coker," he said. "And there's one for Potter, and one for Greene."

And leaving the three envelopes on the table, Dickie Nugent hurried away.

The three Fifth-Formers picked up the letters and opened them.

"Hello! Typewritten!" said Coker. "This is something from old Prout, I suppose."

"An invite!" said Potter, unfolding his letter.

"By Jove, yes!"

Coker read his invitation aloud:

"The pleasure of Master Coker's company is requested to tea in Mr. Prout's study at five o'clock precisely. Any little contribution to the tea will be welcome."

"Jolly what he says to me," said Potter.

"And to me," remarked Greene.

Coker snorted.

"First time I've ever heard of a Form-master inviting a chap to tea, and asking him to bring his own grub!" he said.

"Pretty mean, I call it!" said Potter.

"Still, it's all the better, in one way," Coker remarked sagely.

"Form-master's teas ain't much catch as a rule. Blessed if I like gong and drinking weak tea and thick bread-and-butter—I mean, eating thick bread-and-butter—with a taste of cheap jam. Blessed if I'd ever go, only it ain't good form to refuse. If they let us take our own stuff we could make a decent spread of it."

Potter nodded.

"I suppose we'd better take something decent," he remarked.

"Oh, yes! Let's get down to the tuckshop."

"It's raining."

"Borrow a gamp, then."

And the chums of the Fifth, crowding together under an umbrella, made their way to the school shop, where Coker's purchases were so lavish as to delight the heart of Mrs. Mimbles.

The three Fifth-Formers returned to Coker's study laden up with good things, which were intended to be a pleasant surprise to Mr. Prout. Little did they dream that four pairs of eyes were watching them from the window of No. 1 Study in the Remove, and that four juniors were chuckling over the success of their plot.

Harry Wharton & Co. strolled out of their study a little later, and met Temple and Dabney of the Fourth in the Lower Hall.

"Looking for a tea, Temple?" asked Bob Cherry affably.

Temple shook his head in a very lofty way.

"As a matter of fact, we're having tea with a Form-master this afternoon," he said.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"You don't say so?" exclaimed Wharton. "Not Queelch?"

"No, Mr. Prout has asked us to have tea with him at half-past four."

"I hope you'll have a good time," said Nugent.

"Thank you very much," said Temple coisideschingly.

And the Famous Four strolled away chuckling.

The rain kept the juniors indoors, but the Famous Four had certainly thought of a means of passing away a rainy afternoon in an entertaining manner.

As a rule, Mr. Prout was out of doors on half-holidays, but the rain kept him also a prisoner in his study. The rain, which brought on little sharp pains of rheumatism in some of Mr. Prout's bones, did not improve his temper, and he was very snappish in his study that afternoon. He was cross to the maid for not lighting his fire as soon as he was ready for it, and cross to her again for making too big a one; and cross to Trotter, the page, for bringing in coals ten minutes after he rang for them.

Trotter and the maid compared notes on the subject below stairs, and Mr. Prout would have been shocked if he could have heard their joint opinion of him.

It was in this pleasant mood when four o'clock sounded from the clock-tower of Greyfriars, and there came a rap at his door.

"Come in!" rapped out Mr. Prout snappishly.

Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, entered, followed by Bland. They smiled politely at the Form-master, and laid little parcels on the table.

Mr. Prout stared at them blankly.

"What have you got there?" he asked.

"Jam-tarts, sir, and a pot of marmalade and some seed cake, sir," said Blundell.

Mr. Prout could scarcely believe his ears.

"Jam-tarts and a pot of marmalade and seed-cake?" he gasped. "And what have you brought such stuff to my study for, Blundell?"

It was Blundell and Bland's turn to stare.

"Why, for tea, sir!" said Blundell.

"For tea?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Do you mean to say that you are bringing your tea to my study?" roared Mr. Prout. "If this is a joke, Blundell, I fail to understand it. Leave my study instantly, and take that indigestible rubbish with you!"

"But, sir—," stammered Blundell, in dismay, not realising he was one of Harry Wharton & Co.'s victims.

"I—I say, sir—," stuttered Bland.

Mr. Prout pointed to the door.

"Leave my study at once!" he repeated. "Upon my soul, I never heard of such a thing! Go at once, or I shall cane you!"

"Oh, very well, sir!" said Blundell, very much huffed.

"If you don't want us here to tea—"

"Leave my study!"

Blundell and Bland left the study. They tramped away down the passage in a state of great indignation, and they left Mr. Prout frowning with annoyance. He was amazed and exasperated, and if Blundell and Bland had not been the two top boys in his Form, he would certainly have caned them for their amazing conduct.

But by the time the quarter after four sounded from the clock-tower Mr. Prout had dismissed the matter from his mind. He was very much annoyed at having to spend the afternoon indoors, and he was debating in his mind whether he should put on a macintosh and risk the rain, when there came a tap at his door, and he called out to the tapper to come in.

Fitzgerald of the Fifth entered cheerfully, with a smile on his face, and a basket in his hand.

"Well!" snapped out Mr. Prout.

"Just in time, I think, sir!" said Fitzgerald cheerfully.

"What? In time? What do you mean?"

"Just a quarter past, sir."

"I do not understand you, Fitzgerald. What is that basket for? What is in it?"

"Eggs, sir."

"Eggs?"

"Yes, sir."

In the name of all that is ridiculous, Fitzgerald, what have you brought a basket of eggs to my study for?" shouted Mr. Prout.

Fitzgerald stared.

"I'm going to poach them, sir."

"Poach them?"

"Yes, sir, if you'll lend me a frying-pan. Or I'll fetch one if you like, sir," said the Fifth-Former obligingly. "I thought I'd bring eggs, sir."

"Boy, are you mad?"

"Perhaps you'd rather have had something else, sir," said Fitzgerald. "But I knew you usually had cake; so I thought eggs."

"Take a hundred lines, Fitzgerald!"

"Faith, sir."

"And leave my study immediately."

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eggs away. Silence, sir! Another word and I will cane you!"

Fitzgerald simply gaped at his Form-master. But Mr. Prout's warning was explicit enough, and Fitzgerald did not want to be caned. He picked up the basket of eggs, and left the study in a state of utter bewilderment.

He confided to a chum he met in the passage that old Prout had always been rocky, but that he was fairly off his rocker at last.

Mr. Prout fumed, and sat down by his fire in a very bad temper. The wet weather was getting on his nerves, and he began to suspect that it was doing the same with his Form, and that they were planning to relieve the monotony by ragging their Form-master. And Mr. Prout snorted at the thought. He wondered whether any more fellows would be coming in, and his lips set tightly as he wondered.

Punctually at half-past four Temple and Dabney presented themselves. They knocked at the study door, and came in, in response to Mr. Prout's invitation, carrying a bundle each.

Mr. Prout's eyes gleamed. He was beginning to get used to having bundles brought into his study. He rose to his feet.

"Temple! Dabney!" He fixed a freezing glare on the two Fourth-Formers. "What have you got in those bundles?"

Temple and Dabney exchanged glances. They had been surprised that a Form-master sending out an invitation should hint for comestibles to be brought by his guests. But even after that they had never expected that Mr. Prout would make this immediate and greedy inquiry as to what they had brought.

But Temple replied very politely:

"It's a conspiracy, sir, about a conspiring for tea, sir!"

"Oh, rather, sir!" said Dabney. "We've got pineapple pie, sir."

"And ham and eggs—"

"And a cake, sir—"

"And a tin of pineapple!"

"You—you impudent young rascals!" gasped Mr. Prout. Temple and Dabney stared at him.

"How dare you!" shouted the Fifth Form-master.

"I—I don't—quite—understand, sir!" gasped Temple.

"Oh, rather, sir! I—"

"This is a conspiracy!" exclaimed Mr. Prout furiously.

"I see it all! You young rascals! If you belonged to my Form, I would cane you! You have the astounding impudence to tell me that you have come to tea in my study!"

"Why, yes, sir!" stammered Temple. "You—"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Prout.

"But—but—but—"

"Go—immediately!"

Mr. Prout made a spring towards the two juniors, and they whipped out of the study in alarm. Mr. Prout caught up the two bundles from the table, and hurled them one after the other into the passage.

Crash! Crash!

There was a sound of breaking jars and bursting eggs.

Then the door slammed.

Temple and Dabney stared at one another dazedly, and then at the smashed bundles of food things.

"M-m-m my only Aunt Matilda!" gasped Temple. "He's mad!"

"Oh, rather!"

"Let's buzz; he may come out with a poker!"

"M-my hat!"

And, grabbing up the wrecked bundles, which were streaming with pineapple and eggs, the two juniors fled.

Mr. Prout settled himself down by his fire again, breathing fury. He was sorry that he had not caned Temple and Dabney more. But he selected a stout cane, and placed it upon the table ready to his hand. If any more jaspers came to his study with eatables he was quite ready for them. He meant to make an example of the next that came, in a way that would be a warning to any more that were in the conspiracy.

But for some time he was undisturbed, and he was beginning to think that the matter was at an end, when five rang out from the clock-tower, and, almost on the stroke of time, there came a tap at his door.

Mr. Prout breathed hard through his nose, and sat bolt upright, his hand resting upon the cane on the table. But he calmed himself with an effort; of course, it might be quite an innocent visitor to his study. Mr. Prout did not want to be hasty. But if it was a jasper—

"Come in!" he called out, with great calmness.

The door opened, and Coker, Potter, and Greene, of the Fifth, appeared. Coker was carrying a bag, which was bulging out with the good things it contained. Coker had plenty of money, and he had spent it like a prince in providing comestibles for that feed in Mr. Prout's study. He

had been asked to bring contributions to the board, and he was bringing them most lavishly.

Mr. Prout bestowed a frozen glare upon the three Fifth Form fellows. They came in with great good-humour, and Coker set down his bag.

"We've come, sir," he said.

Mr. Prout's eyes glittered.

"Yes; I see you have come!" he said. "And now, will you kindly explain why you have come, and what is in that bag?"

"Lots of things, sir!" said Coker. "Ham, and eggs, and jam, and marmalade, and cake—"

"What?"

"And preserved peaches, sir, and tongue, and jelly, and dough-nuts—"

"Coker! I—I—"

"We shall have a ripping tea, sir!" said Coker pleasantly, not realising he was one of Harry Wharton & Co.'s victims.

"May I remove these papers, sir, and we'll lay the table!"

"Lay the table!" breathed Mr. Prout.

"Certainly, sir! Put the kettle on, Potter!"

"Right-ho!" said Potter.

Mr. Prout stood petrified. It was only natural that he should be astonished, under the peculiar circumstances. He wondered for a moment whether a sudden attack of insanity had seized upon his Form. But Coker & Co. looked sane enough, and they were all smiles.

Potter made a movement towards the fire, and Coker and Greene began to clear the table. Mr. Prout came to himself. His hand closed upon the cane in a tight grasp, and he whirled round upon the astounded Fifth-Formers.

"You young rascals!" he shouted. "It is a conspiracy; but I will show you that it is not safe to lay such tricks upon your Form-master!"

"Eh?"

"Take that—and that—and that!" roared Mr. Prout.

Lash! Slash! Crash!

"Ow!"

"Oh-b-h-h-h!"

"Yah!"

The cane descended across Coker's shoulders with a swipe that made him jump, and then it came lashing down upon Potter and Greene. The three Fifth-Formers dodged wildly to escape, and bolted round the table, and Mr. Prout-bolted after them, his gown rustling behind him, and his face flaming with rage.

"Take that," he roared—"and that—and that—and that!"

"Oh! Ow! Yaro-o-o-oh!"

Lash! Slash!

"He's mad!" gasped Coker. "Run for it!"

"Ow!" yelled Potter. "Run for your lives!"

They made a dash for the door.

Mr. Prout was behind them, his cane lashing away. Coker & Co. examined together in the doorway, all three trying to get out at once, and for a moment they were quite at Mr. Prout's mercy, and the cane rose and fell with wonderful celerity. The yells of the hapless trio rang the length of the passage. They burst out of the doorway and fled, and Mr. Prout, standing at his door, shook his cane after them furiously.

"There!" gasped Mr. Prout, as he turned back into his study, and tossed the cane upon the table. "I think I have made an example of the impertinent young rascals! I do not think there will be any more of this!"

And Mr. Prout was right; there was no more of it.

Coker & Co. dashed down the passage at full speed, and did not stop till they were in the hall, where they paused to gasp for breath. A yell of laughter from a crowd of Removites greeted them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's the row?"

"Prout's mad!" gasped Coker. "He sent us an invitation to tea, and asked us to take some things, and when we got there he started on us with his cane—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" groaned Potter. "He's mad—stark, staring, raving mad!"

"Mad as a hatter! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton. "I suppose you're quite sure that the invitation was in order—eh?"

"What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker gasped.

"You—you villain! Do you mean—?"

"Lots of people can use a typewriter, you know!" said Nugent cheerfully.

And the Removites burst into a yell of laughter.

Coker & Co. glared at them, understanding at last. But they did not feel equal to anything more than glaring just then. They shambled weakly away, leaving the Removites shrieking with laughter, and dangerously near hysterics. And for some time after that Coker & Co. were observed to sing small—very small indeed!

THE END.

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THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREWFerrers Lord, millionaire, and owner
of the Lord of the Deep.Prince Ching-Lung, Adventurer, Conjuror and
Ventriloquist.Nathan Gore, Jewel collector,
and multi-millionaire,
Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN."

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started especially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction, and now it seemed that this thick fog which had suddenly fallen over the Channel was to spoil everything. For the great sale was to take place at midday, and already the captain had told Nathan Gore that it would be impossible to reach Southampton before that time. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and, as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and fair words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?"

The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hunt him down and win back my diamond." He sends Frost, Maddock, and Joe down to the cave where the Lord of the Deep is hidden. Just as they arrive there a terrific explosion occurs, leaving the two men fighting for life in the water.

Quite unaware of what has happened, Ferrers Lord, with Hal Honour aiding him, continues to work on his latest invention, while Ching-Lung gives Gan-Waga a lesson in still-walking, taking him to the very stables, where Grunter, the second groom, is wreaking his violent temper on one of the under-grooms.

(Now go on with this instalment.)

How Gan-Waga Sang a War Song and Received a Bucket
of Water.

"The pig!" said the stable-boy to Ching-Lung. "If Mr. Lord only knewed what he was, he wouldn't be 'ere. Much obliged, your 'igness. Thank you kindly."

A half-sovereign changed hands. The youth who had sat in the bucket was wiping himself down with straw. Clearly Mr. Grunter was a tyrant and a terror. Ching-Lung spoke to another of the boys, and gained further information about the under-groom.

Gan had been leaning against the wall. "Gan," said Ching-Lung, "could you eat a pound of nice tallow candles?"

The Eskimo rolled his eyes and smacked his lips. "Eat tangles when dead, Chingy."

"Then stump over to that window and yell: 'Come out of it, funny face!'"

"Den I gettes cangles?"

"As certain as my portait is black, blubber-biter."

Gan clattered off, and Ching-Lung took up a position just within sight of the window. Gan's head almost came up to the sill. He opened his big mouth and howled:

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"What did he call you, Gan?" called Ching-Lung.
 "Yaller bomblexioned beetle," said the indignant Eskimo.
 "What dat mean, Ching?"
 "Something horrible, dreadful, awful!" said Ching-Lung, shuddering. "I couldn't tell you!"
 "Rude, Ching?"
 "Rude? Great pip! If a man had called me that, I'd— I'd—hang it, I'd sing to him!"
 "Den I sing to bottle-nose," said Gan fiercely. "I not be insulted. Do dey alwayes sing to peoples who insult in England?"
 "They often make them sing another tune," said Ching-Lung truthfully.
 "I make him sing old bottle-nose head off!" said Gan. "I sing war-song."
 And then Gan commenced. His voice was like the noise produced by innumerable plates being broken with a coken-hammer, and the fragments hurled down a flight of stairs. The stable cat fled to look for a pond or rain-barrel in which to commit suicide. No doubt the song meant something, and it sounded like this:

"Tchok tchark jaggar k-r-ktch blouh.
 Kik klak grow grow voosch gumbi goo
 Glog-glog-glug slipap-p-p-pung tchok tchark
 go-oo-oo."

Kunk!
 Kunk!

The way Gan brought out the "kunk" resembled nothing on earth. The nearest approach to it would be a bottle-factory struck by lightning. Grunter dived into bed and wrapped his head in the bedclothes. He could not deaden the sound.

"Kunk, kunk, kunk!" howled the Eskimo.
 "Murder!" moaned Grunter.
 "Kunk!" came the thunderclap.
 That cured Mr. Grunter's gout. He had only been able to limp, but he sprang out of bed and fell downstairs. He did not mind the fall. To the water-tap he rushed and filled a bucket. His eyes were wild and glassy, and perspiration streamed from him.

"Kunk!" rang the blood-curdling yell.
 "If I don't stop it, 'eart disease'll hend!" moaned the groom. "I can feel it comin' hon."
 He managed to get back to the bed-room. A final yell exploded like a cannon-shot, and almost knocked the groom backwards.

"Victory!" sobbed Mr. Grunter. "Victory or death!"
 He staggered to the window and rested the bucket on the ledge. Gan's mouth was open, ready to discharge another volley.

And so was the window.
 Mr. Grunter gripped the bottom of the bucket with both hands.

"Death or victory!" he yelled. "D-die!"
 He thrust the bucket over Gan-Waga's head, hammered it down with his fist, and then, reeling back, he collapsed on the bed, and groaned like an earthquake in pain.
 Ching-Lung had already started for home.

Deals Principally with Gan-Waga, and Proves that all is not Butter that Looks Golden.

Ching-Lung was compelled to return. Gan was far from being the meek and mild Eskimo of old. He had learned many things since leaving his native land, and although his honest, generous character was the same, Gan was afraid of nobody.

He wanted to get hold of Mr. Grunter, and tried to hammer down the door with his stilt. He swore that he would not be unkind to the man. He simply desired to knock Mr. Grunter's face into the shape a tomato-canon assumes after a steam-roller has passed over it. Mr. Grunter, who was as pale as a snowball, kept yelling that he had a loaded gun in the house, and that he would use it in self-defence. Ching-Lung had to drag the enraged Eskimo away by the ear, and place him in Barry O'Rourke's keeping.

"What is at he's been doin' at all, at all?" asked the Irishman.

"Fighting," said Ching-Lung.
 "Badaud, ut ought to be muzzled, sor. Ut luk terrible savage. D'yez still want to fight, Gan-Waga?"

"I want de man dat bucket me."
 "D'yez still want to fight? Oi axed."

"Yes, I do!"
 "Thin Oi'll fight yez for a month o' Sundays," said Barry, taking off his coat.

Gan knew the feel of O'Rourke's coconut fists. He said hastily that he didn't want to fight any more.

"Oi thought yez wouldn't, me son!" grinned Barry. "So

Oi've got to luk ather yez—ph! Gan, yez are nothin' more nor less than a woid, savage."

"I not a savage."

"Yez aye, Oi tell yez. Can yez read and wroite?"

Gan shook his head.

"Oi'll tache yez," said Barry. "What wourd should Oi wroite?"

"Butter," cried Gan, without hesitation. "Butter, or else cangles."

"Was at a toime—wan at a toime. Here's the oild table, and here's the chalk. Oi start loike this. That's the first letter—B; then comes U, T, E and R. That's how to wroite butter."

The Eskimo examined the word closely.

"What dey wroite for at all, Barry?"

"Wroite for? Harrik at the juggins! Wroite for? Ivry bald-headed lunatic wid pink whiskers knows that!"

"I tinked yod' knowed," said Gan-Waga gently—"was sure ob him."

Barry did not like Gan's tone. It suggested that Barry was a bald-headed lunatic with pink whiskers. Gan was a lot sharper than he looked, and a lot deeper than he pretended to be.

"Faith," went on Barry hastily, "yer ignorance would bring tears to the oies in a paycock's tail. Now, just consider, me bhoey. Suppose was had a box of soap, a box of nails, a box of onions, and a box of flour. Suppose they was all soaked up and looked the same. There yez are. Yez wanted the soap. 'Soap' is wrote on ut, and yez foind ut at wance. Av ut wasn't yez might open the nails and onions and flour boy misthake afor yez got to the proper wan. That's what writing's for, North Pole!"

"Bad 'nough," said Gan. "What want him for? I not twig, Barry."

"Gan, yez are barmy! Thy and think, av yez have as many brains as a blound bluebottle. Ut says on the separate boxes, soap, nails, onions, flour. Yez want the soap, and yez luke at the label, and there yez are. Loike the post says:

'None are so blind as they who will not hear;
 None are so dumb—'

Oi've got a bit mixed, but ye knows what Oi mane."

"Not see," said Gan, shaking his head. "Not want writin'."

"But how cud yez foind the soap, chumpy-head?" roared Barry.

"Smell it!" said Gan-Waga.

Gan's remark was unanswerable. Barry, at least, found it so.

"Smell onions, too," added the Eskimo meekly.

"That's another stagger."

"'Tis the nails!" said the Irishman. "Oi've got yez there—eh, me bonnie son? Yez couldn't tell them."

"Bot poung cangles I do, Barry."

"Oi take yez. How cud yez do it?"

"Easy 'nough," grinned Gan. "Me know soap and onions by smell; den if want nails, I feel weight ob box. Nails lot much heavy dan flour. De oder one left de flour. What good writing?"

"Gosh!" said Barry, scratching his head. "Ut's smartt, that is. Oi didn't think yez had got ut in yez. Badaud, ut's smartt—ut's smartt! Faith, yez have earned yer candles!"

Gan had a remarkable memory and a quick eye—in fact, two of them. He kept both fixed on the word chalked on the table. He did not know the letter B from a French puddle, or T from a railway-sleeper, but he tried to remember the look of the word, which Barry had printed in big capitals.

"I read 'butter good 'nough any time," he said. "Where dey keep him, Barry?"

"The little thief is after some!" thought the Irishman.

He added aloud: "Generally in the cellar, me bhoey, during the warm weather."

"In boxes?"

"In boxes, barrels, or kegs. Ut's all the same thing. Av yez sees that wurd yez can swear there's lovely golden butter inside."

"Do they lub a much lot?" asked the Eskimo, his mouth watering.

"Shiploads on ut, me spalpeen! That cellar is packed wid ut."

Gan passed his hand to and fro across his waistcoat and turned up his eyes.

"I going to sleeps now," he said, making for the ice-chest. "Wake up dinner-time."

Barry picked up the chalk thoughtfully. He was still distrustful of Gan. He knew the Eskimo's love of butter, and felt sure that Gan would raid the cellar. Barry began to grin. The wine-cellar was kept locked, but no one troubled about the beer-cellar. Barry looked out of the window, and saw a brewer's cart outside.

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Two men clinging to a rope were lowering a fifty-six gallon barrel of stout into that identical cellar. It was a blazing day, and Barry's grin began to widen. He waited until the grating closed and the cart drove away. Then Barry crept down the steps.

The cellar was cool, lofty, and well-lighted. There were rows of barrels standing on trestles, and countless cases containing bottled beers and mineral waters.

"Now, which is the new - comer?" thought Barry. "There's so many twins."

Barry saw several casks of stout. He tried each one with his hand. The iron hoops of one felt quite warm, while the others were ice-cold.

"Strong stout looks this don't get rattled about in a hot sun without getting his temper up," he grumbled. "O'll bet he's almost strong enough to blow the ind's o' the caak out!"

Barry baited the trap by chalking "Best Fresh Porter" on the wall, and then, hearing a footstep, he darted out of sight.

"It's the blug, sure enough!" grinned Barry. Gan-Waga it was. The little fat figure waddled across the cellar. He had not come unarmed. Barry saw that Gan had brought a hammer and a screw-driver.

"The fat little thafe!" grinned the Irishman. "Should Oi? Bedad, I must!"

On hands and knees, Barry crept up the steps. Then he sprang to his feet and ran.

"Plaze, sor," he panted, bursting into the billiard-room, "for the luv of mercy, come quick!"

"What is it?" cried Ching-Lung, startled.

"Anything serious?"

"It's that Gan, sir. He'll come to a bad and bitter ind! He's takin' to the drink!"

"Never! Not Gan?"

"Come and see, sor!" said Barry darkly. "What else does a chap steal into a beer-cellar for, I axes?"

Why does he arim himself wid gimlets, and chisels, and saws? Is ut burglary? Av ut is, what does he want to burgle exceipt Thread light, and catch him in the act!"

Ching-Lung, scenting a joke, followed Barry up the steps.

"Whisht! Not a wurd or a wink! We'll catch the roystein rogue in the very act. Lade on-lade on!"

They made no more noise than a pair of cats.

"Vender is the foul catiff, sor!" whispered Barry.

"By Jove, he is!" muttered Ching-Lung. "And what is his game?"

Gan was acting in a most mysterious fashion. He was crawling over the barrels, round barrels, and under barrels, with his snub nose almost glued to them.

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Mr. Grunter gripped the bottom of the bucket, and tipped it over Gan-Waga's head. "Death or victory!" he yelled. "Die!"

"What can the chap be up to, Barry?" "Lookin' for mushrooms, most loike!" muttered the Irishman.

"He's going off it!" said Ching-Lung. Gan began to wave his arms, and to dance like a Polar bear suffering from chilblains. He had found what he wanted; or, to be more accurate, what Barry had wanted him to find. Gan had recognised the magic word "butter."

Could that monstrous cask be full of it, or was it only a dream? The cask would hold hundredweights of it. Gan wiped his mouth and danced. Barry crawled after Ching-Lung. Peering through the half-gloom, Ching-Lung made out the words chalked on the cask, and also the legend:

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"XXXXX Stout." A glimmering of the plot dawned on him.

"Barry," he muttered, "is that stuff up?"
"Fiziz and froth'n' loike hold'n' lar!" grinned Barry.
"It's stronger nor dynamite!"

"And he thinks there's butter inside?"
"Aces ov ut, sor?" said Barry, as his hammer. He had never expected such a glorious find. To attack that cask, he ought to have brought a hatchet or a drill, and a few pounds of blasting-powder. Gan, the teetotaler, knew nothing about beer, and less about stout. He uttered a squeak of delight when he found the cork. It was protected by a piece of iron, which Gan quickly wrenched off.

"He's ather startin'," muttered Barry.

"Hush!"

"O! shall bust up!"

"Hush, you idiot!"

Gan was picking at the cork with the screw-driver, and the seething stout was as eager to get out of the cask as every convict was to escape from Dartmoor. Gan commenced to hammer softly.

"Uy's comin'! Ut's comin'!" said Barry, in muffled tones.
"Yow-ow!"

It had come! The Eskimo's yell of horror rang like a thunderclap through the cellar, as the remains of the cork shot out and struck him on his snub nose. Out streamed the black-and-yellow fluid as if from a steam fire-engine. Gan "got it in the neck," as the Yankees say.

The sticky torrent swept him backwards. He staggered up, only to slip and fall. The stream made a bullseye by catching him neatly in the ear, and Gan was wallowing in two feet or more of the richest and most beautiful froth imaginable.

Shrieking wildly, he rolled out of the froth into the cask-dust that littered the floor.

"Syphons, Barry!" said Ching-Lung quickly. "Into ambush, and stop him!"

"O! on it!" answered Barry.
There was a case of soda-water syphons close at hand. Barry seized four of them, and hurried to the door. He hid behind a barrel, to guard the steps. Gan—a mass of cork-dust and sickness—got on all-fours, and gazed round him in horror. Both cork-dust and froth were golden of hue, but they were not better. The place smelt like the concentrated essence of forty breweries. There was an ever-growing black pool on the floor, where several pounds' worth of stout had gone to waste.

Gan groaned, and limped towards the door. Whizz! A stream of liquid hissed into his face, and, utterly astounded and terrified, Gan sprang back. He tripped over a treacle, and splashed into the black pool. Scrambling up, he made another rush for the door. Just as Barry took aim, Ching-Lung drew the cork of a lemonade-bottle.

In the confined air of the cellar the pop sounded as loud as a pistol-shot. The stream from the syphon washed some of the cork-dust out of Gan's hair. He felt sure he had been shot, and raced down the line of barrels.

Then Ching-Lung took aim, a syphon in each hand. Both streams took effect. Gan yelled again, and fled across the cellar. Bottles containing aerated waters often burst in very hot weather, and one exploded in front of Gan with such a roar that his blood froze.

The cellar seemed full of armed assassins, all hungering for his life. Gan saw a barrel standing on end under the grating, and sprang upon it. It was old, empty, and weak. The end gave way, and, letting go another shriek, Gan dropped through. The force of his leap upset the cask, which rolled over.

"Gan!" came a whisper, that filled the frightened Eskimo with joy.

"Chingy! Chingy!"

"Hush! Don't make a sound for your life! I'm coming to you!"

Gan was shivering in the cask. There was room for two. Ching-Lung, armed with a syphon, crept in.

"Fah, you sickly, perfumed object, get out!"

"Not dare! Dey want kill me!" moaned Gan. "Dey shoot with pistols. I shotted all over. It dem yaller leges servants. Dey goin' murder Gan!"

"Shut up! The plot is black and deep!" hissed Ching-Lung. "For your gore the bloodstained reveals thirst!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" shuddered Gan.

"They will riddle you with bullets, hack you with knives, saw you with saws, hook you with fish-hooks, jab you with pinforks, pound you with flatirons, and mangle you with augurs!"

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"Hush, for your life—hush!" hissed Ching-Lung. "I am here to save you. I overheard the plot. Lying in wait, I

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seized one of the conspirators. Seizing him by the throat, I placed my trusty dagger to his heart, and wrung the truth from his pallid lips! Armed to the teeth, I crept down here. Trust to me, and I will save you yet. But, for the sake of Kruger, get out of here, for you smell like violets. Do not breathe! Do not wink an eyelid! Hist is the watchword! And thou wouldst see the light of day, varlet, silence! Stand ready! I go. Whatever happens, don't move or stir!"

"Vee-es, Chingy!" moaned Gan.

There was a lungehole in the cask. Ching-Lung crawled in and slowly righted the barrel. The cask began to move towards the door. Barry rubbed his eyes. He had not noticed that barrel before he saw it advance.

"Hi, hi, Barry!" rang out Ching-Lung's voice from the far end of the cellar. "He's in that tub!"

"Bodad, so he is, sor!" roared Barry. "What shall O! do, sor?"

"Knock him over! He's a burglar! I'll tackle the other villain!"

Barry, expecting that Ching-Lung had some other idea of increasing the fun, bounded from his ambush. A regular deluge of soda-water flew out of the lungehole and reduced his collar and shirt-front to the limpest possible state.

The cask began to mount the steps. Barry heard voices in the kitchen. There were three footmen there.

"Whisht," said Barry, waving them back, "ut's the foe!"

"What foe?"

"The Eskimo savage. He's comin'! Av yez wants to get a bit of yer own back, now's yer chance!"

The three footmen began to grin and turn up their cuffs. They wanted Gan badly.

"Git ridy, or not," said Barry. "Bow! him over the moment he comes! Whisht!"

Clump, bump, bump! The cask was steadily approaching. The footmen owed Gan a heavy debt, and they were determined to pay it off. Being four to one, they were very plucky.

"All together!" said Barry.

"All together!" repeated the footmen.

"Not a ha'porth!"

"Lay him low, and play shittles wid him," said Barry, wiping the soda-water out of his neck.

"We will!"

But they didn't. Instead of rushing forward and striking down the hated foe, the footmen shrank back astounded, as the big cask tripped into the kitchen. The tub halted, turned round, and leapt upon the table. And from its depths a muffled and jecting voice remarked:

"Charlie can't catch me!"

"Knock him off his perch, the cheeky blayguard," said Barry, keeping out of range of the blayguard.

"Yaller leges all too funky!" growled the voice. "Hallo, yo' wid de dyed 'air and soaped whiskers! De great Eskimo, me! sandwiches ob yo' when he come out of dis."

The lean footman hopped about in a frenzy of rage.

"Don't a-beat it, John," said the other two. "Don't be insulted by a savage. Knock him over, John."

"I will!" spluttered the footman. "I will!"

Feeling that he must do something for his reputation, for the eyes of his comrades were upon him, the lean one brandished his fists. No was very pale. He paused about a yard from the tub.

"Mr. Gan-Wagger," he said, with forced and terrible calmness.

"At yo' services, freak of nature," said the voice.

"You—you—"

"V, W, X, Y, Z," said Gan-Wagger.

The footman galped down a lump in his throat.

"Sir," he went on, with the same terrible calmness, "you are welgar. I ham the injured party. In the presence of my friends, who have 'eard the gross and cruel insults, I axes you to come hout and to give me satisfaction for them gross insults."

"If me do come out, tape," said the voice, "me gib you fites by de gross."

"Cowardly cur! Come hout afore I drags you hout!"

"Cowardly custard," said the voice, "yo' go and buy some calves to put in yo' stockings."

Fliggs folded his lean arms, and took a step forward.

"Sir," he hissed, "I can never parding them last words. The die is cast!"

"Why yo' cast de dye, tape, 'stead of put him on yo' 'air!"

"Will yo' apologise!" thundered Fliggs.

"A drink do yo' voice good," said the voice. "Hab a little drop, tape!"

That was the worst insult of all. Mr. Fliggs turned purple and foamed. A voice whispered in Barry's ear:

"Scot into the cellar when you hear me call, Barry, and

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My Readers' Page.



GRAND,
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NEXT WEEK'S CONTENTS:

Next Tuesday's grand, complete school story is entitled

"THE SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE."

by Frank Richards, and tells of the coming to Greyfriars of a junior endowed with the gifts of a youthful Sexton Blake. As it happens, occasion arises in the usually quiet old school for his peculiar talent to be brought into play, and, with the assistance of Harry Wharton & Co.,

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In our great new serial, too—

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—sensational developments may be expected, which may be relied on to keep this magnificent story to the forefront of all adventure tales. Altogether, next Tuesday's "Magnet" Library will be a superb pennyworth of exciting and entertaining reading-matter, which is at the same time perfectly harmless and wholesome. It will be advisable to order next week's number in advance, since it is only by adopting this course that all difficulty in obtaining it may be effectually avoided.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

L. K. W. W. and W. Q. (Dublin).—I don't quite know what sort of answer you expect me to give you to your statement. Every man to his taste, of course, but perhaps you will be surprised to learn that the conclusion you come to is exactly the opposite to that formed by the great body of "Magnet" readers.
John C. (Dorset).—Thank you for your letter. "The Gent" is the only companion paper to "The Magnet"—at present.

F. Robinson (Yorkshire).—Thanks for your letter and suggestion. I am afraid I cannot supply you with the address of the reader you mention, as it is against my rule to divulge any of my readers' addresses without their express permission.

W. M. Morris (Kimberley, South Africa).—Thank you for your letter. The matter you mention is already under consideration.

W. Russell (Old Southgate).—In reply to your query, I have to tell you that you can obtain a book dealing with how to make small and inexpensive articles from L. Upcott Gill, Bazaar Buildings, Drury Lane, W.C., entitled "Workshop Make-shifts," price 2s. 9d., post free. You might possibly be able to obtain a book on steam-engines and model aeroplanes from H. Gaisler & Co., 32, Charing Cross, W.C.

H. W. Bateman (Hull).—Thank you for your postcard. The story you mention has not appeared in threepenny book form, but may possibly be issued at some future date.

S. Duddles (Lincoln).—Thank you for your postcard. I have to tell you that you can obtain a book entitled "Practical Ventriolism" from L. Upcott Gill, of Drury Lane, London, W.C., for 1s. 2d., post free.

F. A. Salisbury (Hounslow).—Many thanks for your nice letter. I was interested to hear how your first came to read "The Magnet" Library, and also how you now enjoy reading them. May I suggest that you pass your copy on to a new reader when you have finished with it?

W. Lacey (Newport).—Thank you for your postcard. You can obtain sports' requisites from A. G. Spalding & Bros., of 317, High Holborn, London, W.C., whose speciality is in this line.

E. Preskett (Goodwood, South Australia).—Many thanks for your long letter. The stamp you enclosed is one of the present day issues of Greece, and is of little value. You can buy foreign stamps from Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., of 391, Strand, London, W.C., England.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED.

S. Woolson, of 235, Burdett Road, Limbhouse, wishes to obtain Nos. 19 and 20 of Vol. I. of "The Magnet" Library. R. Walker, c/o Simes, High Street, Worcester, wishes to obtain the first number of "The Magnet" and "The Gent" Libraries.

A FEW HINTS ON ROWING.

The would-be oarsman, before attempting to attain proficiency in rowing, should first of all know how to swim, and swim well. It is always advisable to make the first attempt during the summer months, as boats, when in the hands of the beginner, have rather a habit of turning over at times.

The main thing for the novice to bear in mind is that his object is to force his boat through the water as fast as possible, but to do so without waste of strength.

Let it be supposed that the pupil has no previous knowledge whatever of the art of rowing. He must then, first of all, sit down exactly in the middle of the seat, and must take care to see that he is seated opposite his feet, having the stretcher—the board on which the feet are placed—at such a length that when his body is just a little beyond the perpendicular his legs are almost straight. This is important, as otherwise, if the legs are perfectly straight, the force of the stroke is greatly minimised.

When seated thus, he must take hold of the oars, grasping them rather loosely, and in such a manner as when the wrists are turned downwards the flat of the blade will be turned upwards. They should be held near the end, so that the thumbs, in both cases, can overlap the end. The fingers should be placed round the handle as far as they will go. With regard to the position of the feet, they should be placed so that they press lightly but evenly upon the stretcher. The knees may be either apart or together.

Now for the movements. When the beginner has mastered the manner of grasping the oars, he should swing forward, with his arms extended, swinging the body from the hips as far as possible. This action sends the blades of the oars behind the rower. When they are as far back as he can send them, he should let the blades fall into the water, edge downwards, without any splash. Then the motion is reversed, and, keeping the arms stretched out straight for two-thirds of the stroke, he should swing the body back, thus throwing his whole weight upon the oars. This forces the blades of the oars forward, and sends the boat along.

At the end of the stroke the arms, from the elbows to shoulders, should be resting against the sides. At this point he must drop his hands sharply, thus lifting the blades clear of the water, and, turning the flat side of the blades upward by dropping the wrists, swing the oars back ready for the next stroke. A good swing forward is essential, as a longer stroke is obtained. The above directions should be followed carefully, and the movements practised as much as possible.

To get the right depth at which the oars should be pulled through the water, allow them to rest on the water, edge downwards, while in the correct position in the rowlocks. The amount they sink is the depth they have to be pulled.

One necessary thing to be learnt is how to "hold water"—i.e., stopping the boat. The method is to reverse the blades, and drop them deeply into the water. The depth is calculated according to the speed at which the boat is travelling. The arms in this movement have to be kept perfectly still. It is a very difficult manœuvre, and should be practised frequently, as it is important to know it in case of need.

The following few concise hints may be added:

- (1.) Straighten the arms before bending the body at the beginning of the stroke.
- (2.) Drop the oar or scull cleanly into the water.
- (3.) Draw the oar through the water at the same depth throughout the stroke.
- (4.) Make full use of back and shoulders.
- (5.) If rowing with others, keep the eyes fixed on the oarsman in front.

THE EDITOR.

Look out for this week's "GEM" Library, containing "FACING THE MUSIC," a splendid, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., and "THE SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS," a grand new school serial. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.

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It was true after all. Arthur Fitzgerald, the college man and county cricketer, was Dandy Jim, the crackman for whom the police of a dozen cities had been hunting for years! And yet he had worked now to save the life of one who was nothing to him—and in that act had betrayed himself to justice—he was facing the music at last. The party of St. Jim's masters had watched him as if fascinated, and suddenly a cry had broken from the headmaster as the heavy iron door swung open at last—open—the crackman had succeeded! As Mr. Hailton raised the rescued junior in his arms and carried him from the study, Arthur Fitzgerald staggered against the door of the great safe. "Now send for the police!" he gasped. "Everything is finished for me. My first and last attempt to lead an honest life—it is over and done with. I have given myself away to save that poor boy!"

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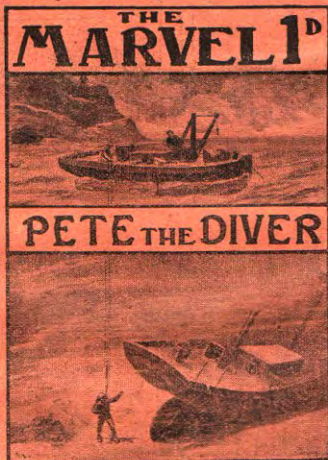
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