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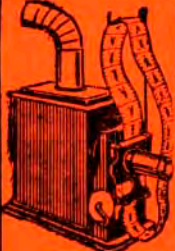
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POOR BOB CHERRY!

There was a shout of amazement from the juniors, and they gathered round the guy. The flare of the fire fell full upon the face of it, and the eyes could be seen working and rolling and glaring. Harry Wharton sprang towards it and tore the mask off the lower part of the face. The gagged mouth of Bob Cherry was revealed. The juniors gazed at the unfortunate Removite for a moment, and then there was a tremendous yell. "My hat! It's Bob Cherry! Ha, ha, ha!"



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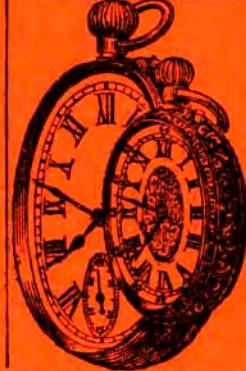
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The Bounder's Triumph!

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

- - BY - -

FRANK RICHARDS.

"Now let's see you throw your voice, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm not sure you're such a jolly good ventriloquist as you make yourself out to be." "Smith!" It was Mr. Quelch's voice, and the Bounder looked round at the door in alarm. "Yes, sir?" he stammered. Billy Bunter chuckled—he was only giving the Bounder a sample of his ventriloquism!

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Wrong Man!

"**S**HUSH!"
"But I say—"
"Shush! He's coming!"
"Oh!"

There was a sound of footsteps in the dim, misty Close of Greyfriars. Four juniors were in cover behind the trunk of the big elm that stood near the porter's lodge. A thick November mist had rolled up from the sea, and Greyfriars was wrapped in it as in a blanket.

In the Close, it was impossible to see a yard before one's face. Harry Wharton & Co., as they peered out from behind the elm, could see nothing but mist. They were within a few yards of the gates of Greyfriars, but the gates were swallowed up from view. Faintly, in the dimness, came a sound of footsteps.

Then the sound suddenly ceased. The four juniors peered eagerly out of their ambush, but they could see nothing, and hear nothing.

Harry Wharton growled under his breath.

"He's heard something!" he murmured.

"Heard you saying shush, perhaps?" said Frank Nugent blandly. And Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull chuckled softly.

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton. "Got the crackers ready?"

"Yes."

"Shush!"

"Look here—"

"Shush, you ass—he's coming!"

"Well, I'm shushing!"

"Shush!"

The juniors held their breath. The footsteps were coming on again from the direction of the gates. Bob Cherry drew a fusee from a matchbox. Nugent caught him by the sleeve.

"Hold on!" he murmured. "Those steps aren't heavy enough for Gosling."

"Yes, hold on!" said Wharton, in a tone of disappointment. "It's not Gosling!"

A figure loomed up in the fog—the figure of a junior in cap and overcoat. It was a fellow of Wharton's own form; and as he came closer, they recognised the outlines of the figure. Bob Cherry grunted discontentedly.

"It's the Bouncer!"

"Oh, blow!"

Vernon-Smith of the Remove paused, and peered at the juniors under the leafless elm.

"What on earth are you kids doing there?" he asked, in surprise. "Enjoying the fog?"

"Waiting for Gosling," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh! What's that you've got in your paws?"

"Crackers."

"Crackers! What on earth for?"

"Gosling."

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"He's going to report us," explained Harry Wharton.

"We've been down to Friardale to buy fireworks for the Fifth, and we got in exactly one minute late. And as we've blued all our tin on fireworks, we hadn't a tip left for the giddy porter, and he's going to report us to the Head—from a sense of duty, of course."

"So that we shan't forget the tip next time!" growled Bob Cherry.

"So we're waiting for him," grinned Nugent. "He will have to pass by here, and we're going to let him have some of the fireworks."

The Bouncer chuckled.

"Good egg!" he said. "As a matter of fact, he's just coming. He's let me in."

"Is he going to report you?" asked Wharton.

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"No. I happened to be with—h'm!" He paused.

"Somebody with you?" asked Nugent.

"Yes," said the Bouncer, with a peculiar look which the juniors did not observe in the fog. "I met the vicar of Friardale on the road, and he walked as far as the gates with me. Mr. Lambe stopped to speak to Gosling, and I slipped in. I say, you'll startle Gosling if you chuck those crackers at him."

"We're not going to chuck them at him," said Nugent; "we're just going to let them off. If they happen to explode round his feet, that's a sheer accident. There's no law against letting off crackers in the Close, only a few days before the Fifth, that I know of."

The Bouncer grinned, and walked on. His footsteps died away down the gravel path in the direction of the School House. The Famous Four resumed their watch in the direction of the gates. They had expected Gosling, the porter, to go up to the house at once; but, doubtless, he had been delayed by Mr. Lambe stopping to speak to him at the gate. The juniors shivered as a sharp gust of wind swept across the Close.

"Grrrrooo!" said Bob Cherry. "Nice weather for the Lambe to stop and chat with Gosling! I wish he'd buck up!"

"Well, he can't stop long," said Nugent. "The vicar's interested in Gosling, you know. He wants him to sign the pledge, and Gosling claims to be a teetotaler. I know he's very fond of teetotal drinks, such as gin-and-water. I—"

"Shush!"

"Oh, blow!"

"Shush!" whispered Wharton. "The bouncer's really coming at last."

"Good! I've got the fusee ready. Light up all at once."

"Good!"

"Hush! Shush!"

Footsteps were grinding on the gravel. They were heavy footsteps this time—the footsteps of a heavy man. This time it was not some belated junior, evidently. The chums of the Remove held the crackers in readiness. Bob Cherry had the fusee all ready to draw on the box. As Nugent had said,

there was no law against letting off crackers in the Close; though, undoubtedly, Gosling would be very much startled when they began to explode round his feet. But that was Gosling's look-out.

"Ready!" whispered Wharton.

"Yes—shush!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Here he is!"

A stout form loomed up in the fog. Bob Cherry scratched the match, and in a second four fusees were lighted, and there was a sputter of tiny sparks. The advancing figure paused, catching the sputter, and as he paused the crackers were tossed round his feet.

Bang, bang!

"Oh!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Oh, oh, oh!"

The crackers were of the kind known as "jumping" crackers; they repeated explosions six times before they were exhausted. And as there were four of them lighted at once, all jumping and skipping about on the gravel path, the effect was deafening.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

"G-g-g-good heavens!"

Bang, bang!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul! Oh, dear, whatever is that? Goodness gracious!"

"Ha, ha—oh!"

The laughter of the juniors died away into a frozen silence as they recognised the startled voice. It was not the voice of Gosling, the porter. It was the voice of Mr. Lambe, the vicar of Friardale!

Wharton gasped.

"Oh! That beast Smith—he knew the vicar was coming in! Oh, my hat, and he never told us—oh!"

Bang, bang, bang!

The portly vicar was leaping in the air, his arms waving wildly as the jumping crackers jumped and banged wildly round him.

"Oh, good heavens! Goodness gracious! Help! Fire!"

"Come on!" whispered Wharton. "We shall have to prove a jolly strong alibi for this! This way—quick!"

And the Famous Four fled in the fog.

Behind them, in the thick mist, they heard the final bangs of the crackers, and the terrified voice of the vicar died away in the distance.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Help Wanted!

QUITE a crowd of fellows were looking out of the doorway of the School House, as Harry Wharton & Co. arrived there breathless. The banging of the crackers had been heard in the house. Vernon-Smith and his followers, Bolsover major and Snoop and Stott, were grinning, and they burst into a roar of laughter as the Famous Four came dashing in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove glared at them.

"You rotter, Smith!" exclaimed Wharton. "You knew it was the vicar and not Gosling who was coming by—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ought to have warned us, you rotter!" roared Bob Cherry.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I didn't want to spoil the joke," he drawled. "I knew Gosling had gone into his lodge, so I thought you might as well have the vicar."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you've been fireworking the vicar!" exclaimed Temple, of the Fourth, in horror.

"By mistake," said Wharton. "We meant the crackers for Gosling."

"Oh, you awful asses!"

"There'll be a frightful row over this!" said Ogilvy.

"Faith, and there will, intirely!" said Micky Desmond.

"You spalpeens had better get out of sight before the vicar comes in."

"Buzz off—quick!" exclaimed Mark Linley.

"Right!"

The Famous Four ran upstairs. They reached Study No. 1 in the Remove passage, and hastily thrust the packets of fireworks into the cupboard, and threw off their coats and caps. They brushed the mud off their boots, and turned down the ends of their trousers. There was nothing to show now that they had recently been out of doors.

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton. "Let's go down and see the vicar come in, and look as innocent as—"

"Lambs!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha! Yes."

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Bang! Bang! Bang! The portly vicar was leaping in the air, his arms waving wildly, as the jumping crackers jumped and banged around him. "Oh! good gracious! Help! Fire!" "Come on," whispered Wharton. (See chapter 1.)

And the Co. sauntered downstairs. The lower hall was misty, from the open doorway. Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, came along with a frowning brow.

"Keep that door shut, you young duffers!" he exclaimed. "Do you want to fill the house with fog? Oh, I beg your pardon, sir! I didn't see you!"

Mr. Lambe had just arrived. He came in, looking very flustered.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. Wingate looked at him curiously. "Has anything happened, sir?" he asked.

"Goodness gracious! Yes! Goodness gracious! Oh!" gasped Mr. Lambe. "There have been a series of extraordinary explosions—a series of frightful explosions—in the fog! I cannot account for them. Someone must have left a large quantity of gunpowder in the Close, Wingate, and somehow it became ignited. The explosions were deafening—deafening! I am really surprised that I have escaped without serious injury. Goodness gracious!" "I heard something explode," said Wingate with a suspicious glance at the juniors. "It sounded to me like fireworks."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lambe. "Yes, Wingate, undoubtedly it was fireworks. I was very, very much startled. Goodness gracious!"

And the vicar, still looking very flustered, passed on, and was shown into the Head's study.

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"Jolly lucky he didn't recognise us!" murmured Nugent, when Wingate was gone.

Wharton shook his head.

"I don't know that he didn't!" he said. "Didn't you notice that he looked at me in a very fixed way?"

"Yes; I thought he took special notice of you," said Johnny Bull. "But he didn't know us, anyway. You can take the lickings for the lot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors remained in some suspense. If Mr. Lambe had seen them in the foggy Close, and had recognised any of them, a summons to the Head's study would probably follow. They waited for it. Loder, the prefect, came down the passage, and looked round the hall, and singled out the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton!" he called out.

"Yes, Loder?"

"Head wants you."

"Oh, blow!"

Loder looked at him.

"I don't think it's anything serious," he said, laughing. "The vicar is with him, so it can't be a licking, though I dare say you deserve one."

"That's all you know!" groaned Wharton.

"We'd better all come with you," said Nugent.

"No; that wouldn't do any good. What's the good of

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four getting it instead of one? If you get it, it won't make mine any less."

"Well, that's so; but—"

"Stay where you are."

"But, I say—"

"Who's chief of this Co.?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, you are; but—"

"Well, obey orders, then!"

And Harry Wharton went alone to the Head's study. He tapped on the door, and was admitted. Somewhat to his surprise, he found that Wingate, of the Sixth, and Blundell and Coker of the Fifth, and Hobson of the Shell, were in the study, and Temple of the Upper Fourth. Mr. Lambe, who seemed to have completely recovered from his shock by this time, was seated in an easy-chair, talking to the Head and tapping a fat forefinger on a plump knee to emphasise his remarks.

Harry Wharton looked surprised.

Why the fellows of the Sixth, the Fifth, the Shell, and the Fourth should have been called in to witness his punishment was a puzzle to him. Dr. Locke glanced at Wharton as he came in. The other fellows had only just entered, and had evidently been sent for at the same time as Wharton.

"Ah, Wharton! I am glad to see you!" said Mr. Lambe, in his fat voice. "I—ah—perhaps you know why you are called in?"

Wharton coloured.

"Yes, sir. I'm very sorry!"

"Goodness gracious! Eh?"

"I'm very sorry indeed, sir!"

"Eh? I do not understand!"

"I thought it was Gosling, sir," explained Wharton.

"What?"

The reverend gentleman looked so astonished that Harry saw that he was on the wrong tack. It was not the firework affair that he had been sent for to account for. But he had said too much to retreat now. Dr. Locke was looking at him with a frowning brow.

"Mr. Lambe has told me about the explosions which startled him in the Close, Wharton!" the Head exclaimed. "Is it possible that it was a trick played by you?"

"Oh, you cheeky young beggar, japing a reverend gent!" murmured Coker.

Wharton flushed.

"I—I did not know it was Mr. Lambe, sir," he stammered. "I—we—it was a lark. But if I had known it was Mr. Lambe, I should never—you see, it was a thick fog, sir, and—"

Mr. Lambe burst into a fat, good-natured laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha! That is enough, Wharton. Please overlook the matter, Dr. Locke. I am afraid Wharton has been led to confess under a misapprehension."

Dr. Locke's face relaxed.

"Yes; I think it is a case of a guilty conscience needing no excuser, Mr. Lambe," he said. "It was not in reference to that matter that you were sent for, Wharton."

"No, sir? What is it, then, sir?" asked Harry, turning over in his mind all the delinquencies which might possibly have come to the doctor's ears.

Mr. Lambe smiled indulgently.

"You had better say no more Wharton," he remarked. "You may be making some further inculcating confessions. As a matter of fact, Dr. Locke has sent for you, as well as these other boys, because I wish to speak to you."

"Oh!" said Wharton, in great relief. "I see, sir!"

"The fact is," said Mr. Lambe, in his deep, fat voice—"the fact is, my dear young friends, I wish to speak to you, as representing the various Forms of Greyfriars. You will speak to your Form-fellows in turn. We are about to hold a—ah—bazaar in Friardale."

"A bazaar, sir?" said Wingate.

"Yes, my young friend; quite the most extensive bazaar we shall have had this yah!" said Mr. Lambe. "I have suggested to Dr. Locke, and Dr. Locke has had the great kindness to approve—ah—of my suggestion that some of the boys of this—ah—school might like to take stalls in our bazaar."

"Oh!" said Coker.

"The proceeds of the bazaah will go to a worthy local fund," said Mr. Lambe. "In fact we are—ah—holding the bazaah in aid of the organ fund. Every little helps, as you are aware, and if you lads would like to help by taking stalls, and providing articles to sell in the bazaah, I should take it as a very, very great favah!"

"Oh, good!" said Hobson of the Shell. "I should be very pleased for one, sir."

"I'll speak to the chaps, sir," said Wingate doubtfully. Church bazaars were not much in Wingate's line, but he did not like to say so.

"You can depend on the Remove, sir," said Harry Wharton warmly. He was feeling very grateful to Mr. Lambe for requesting that the affair of the fireworks should go no further. "We'll take a stall with pleasure, sir, and provide the things."

"Thank you—ah—very much, Wharton!" said Mr. Lambe.

"And the Fourth, too, sir," said Temple. "We'll play up, sir."

"Very, very good!" said Mr. Lambe. "I am—ah—distinctly pleased with the—ah—enthusiasm my—ah—suggestion has evoked. We are ambitious of making this little bazaah the great success of the yah. Last year we produced forty-five pounds seven shillings and threepence three-farthings towards the—ah—blanket fund, which was a very great benefit to the pooh. We hope to eclipse all records this yah, and Mrs. Lambe suggested—ah—that the boys of this school might like to—ah—participate. Mrs. Lambe will be—ah—delighted! I thank you very much!"

And Mr. Lambe rose.

"I shall be very, very pleased to see any of you to tea at the—ah—Vicarage, when further details can be discussed with Mrs. Lambe," said the vicar, beaming. "But I am sure you will all be very, very enthusiastic. We are going to make this bazaah the success of the yah."

And Mr. Lambe, having enlisted his recruits, took his leave. Dr. Locke spoke a few words to the Greyfriars fellows before they left the study.

"I hope you and your Form-fellows will do everything you can to aid in the success of this very worthy enterprise," he said. "Each Form may take a stall at the bazaar, and provide the articles to be sold. The pupils of Cliff House will have a stall, and they are making things—fancy work and things—to sell at the bazaah. I am going to offer a prize for the largest amount raised at any of the Greyfriars stalls. I hope you will all do your best."

And the fellows said dutifully that they would.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Rivals of the Remove.

HARRY WHARTON came into No. 1 Study, and was immediately greeted by a question from half a dozen voices at once.

"How many?"

"How many what?" asked Harry, puzzled.

"Whacks!" said Bob Cherry. "How many on each paw?"

"Was the Lambe very waxy?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Did he watch you wriggle?" asked Micky Desmond sympathetically.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I haven't been licked," he said. "I wasn't wanted for that. Mr. Lambe didn't know I had anything to do with the fireworks till I let it out, and then he begged me off."

"Sure, that was dacent of him, intirely."

"He's a sport," said Nugent.

"But what was wanted, then?" asked Bob Cherry. "Anything on?"

"Yes, a bazaah."

"A what?" asked all the juniors together.

"A bazaah—or, rather, a bazaah, as Mr. Lambe calls it," said Harry, laughing. "It's going to be the great success of the yah."

The juniors laughed. Mr. Lambe's rich, rolling accent was the subject of many humorous remarks among the Greyfriars fellows. Billy Bunter, the Remove ventriloquist, who was great at imitating voices, could render it marvellously.

"Good old Lambe!" said Bob Cherry. "But what has his bazaah to do with the Remove?"

"It's a new wheeze. The Lambe thinks of letting each of the Forms here take a stall at the bazaah, and sell things," said Wharton. "It's for the organ fund—that blessed organ fund. They've been raising money for that fund ever since I've been at Greyfriars, and I suppose it will never be finished. I think it's a good idea to lend a helping hand—the Lambe is a good old boy, and he's got me off a licking. And the Head's going to offer a prize for the stall that does most business."

"Oh, good! What are we going to sell?"

"Oh, things, you know," said Harry Wharton, rather vaguely. "We can make them ourselves, you know; that will save a lot of money. And we can put fancy prices on them, and people will buy them for the good of the cause. You know the prices at bazaars haven't much to do with the value of the articles sold. The Head is keen on the fellows

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going in for it, and I think we ought to. Besides, it will be fun; they will have to give us an extra half-holiday to be at the bazaar."

Perhaps that last consideration had something to do with the approval the juniors all expressed of the scheme. At all events, they all approved.

"I think we ought to make the Remove stall go strong, for the honour of the Form, to say nothing of roping in the prize," said Wharton. "The Fourth and the Fifth, and perhaps the Sixth, are going to have stalls, and it's up to us to make the Remove stall knock them into a cocked hat. The Cliff House girls are going to have stalls, too. It will be fun. Now, we'd better put our heads together—"

"And our pocket-money," said Nugent.

"Yes," said Harry, laughing, "and our pocket-money, too, and make the thing go with a swing. The Fourth will cut us out if they can. Every chap who has anything he doesn't want can pile it up here, and we'll put it in a condition to sell. Old cricket-bats, and lamps, and bags, and pocket-knives, and bikes if you like—"

"Yes, there will be a lot of bikes contributed—I don't think."

"The Remove ought to stand together in the matter, and do their best," said Wharton thoughtfully. "On an occasion of this sort, even the Bounder might line up with the rest. I think I'll put it to the fellows. They're mostly in the common-room now. I think I'll go along and put it to them. You fellows come and back me up!"

"Right you are!"

And the Co. proceeded to the junior common-room. Most of the Greyfriars juniors were there, and the room was in a buzz. Temple, of the Fourth, was standing by the fire, with a crowd round him, talking. The story of the bazaar was out already. Temple & Co. had received the idea with enthusiasm, probably more for the sake of going one better than the Remove than for any other reason. The seniors, probably, would not be quite so keen about it; but the juniors were keen enough. Harry Wharton jumped upon a chair.

"Gentlemen of the Remove!" he called out.

"Hallo!"

All eyes were turned upon Wharton. Vernon-Smith & Co. were present, and they knew about the bazaar already; they had been talking about it when Wharton came in. Bazaars, certainly, were not much in the Bounder's line, but there never was any telling what the Bounder would do. If he did not help, he was very likely to hinder. The rivalry between Study No. 1 and the Bounder was very keen.

"Gentlemen!" said Wharton.

"Go it!" said Tom Brown. "Hear, hear!"

"Mr. Lambe, the vicar of Friardale, is holding a bazaar next week—"

"Yes, we know that," said Vernon-Smith. "We've just had it from Temple."

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"Order!"

"Go it, Wharton!"

"The go-fulness is terrific, my worthy chum," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Pile infully."

"Very well," said Wharton. "You know about the bazaar, then. The Remove are going to take a stall. I was sent for as captain of the Form to talk about it. Now, I want to appeal to all the fellows to help. It's an occasion when everybody ought to back up; and we want the Remove stall to be a success."

"Hear, hear!"

"There will be a subscription," said Wharton. "There will have to be some money raised. Every chap can contribute according to his means. We want articles to sell, too; every chap can bring to my study all the things he doesn't want, and we'll pack them up for the bazaar."

"Good egg!"

"I guess you can leave the management of the stall in my hands, sonny," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I guess I'm ready to place my financial experience at the service of the Form. Some!"

"Never mind your financial experience," said Wharton. "Your finances will be sufficient."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I can manage it," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll undertake to show a profit on the transaction. I'll show you how we manage things over there."

"That isn't exactly what we want," said Wharton. "We can manage it all right, and we want all the fellows to help. We have formed a committee to collect things to sell and to raise money."

"Who's on the committee?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"I am chairman—"

"Might have guessed that!" said the Bounder unpleasantly.

"And Nugent, Cherry, and Bull are members—"

"All in the family, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll put you on the committee, if you like, Smith," said Harry Wharton. "That is, of course, if you agree to help, and not to make trouble."

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The Bounder shook his head.

"No, thanks. I'm going to run a stall on my own!"

"Look here, that won't do!"

"Why not?" said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Two Remove stalls will be all right, and it will raise all the more money for the giddy organ fund. And we will undertake to give your stall the kybosh. Go ahead, and see if you can beat us!"

Wharton frowned.

"Well, if you look at it in that way, I suppose you can go ahead," he said.

"I suppose I can," agreed the Bounder. "I'm going to, anyway."

And the Bounder sauntered away with his companions. The greater part of the Remove, however, had gathered round Wharton. In spite of the Bounder's incessant efforts to make division in the Form, most of the fellows remained faithful to their old leader. And the Remove were ready to back up Harry Wharton in the matter of the bazaar.

"Now," continued Wharton, "we want to beat the other Forms, and get the Head's prize, if we can. Will all you fellows back me up?"

"Yes, rather."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm your man!"

"Faith, and we'll back you up all along the line, Wharton darling," said Micky Desmond. "But what are we to do, intirely?"

"Find things to sell. All the things you don't want—or all the things you do want, for that matter! Pile 'em into my study, and anything that wants mending can be mended, and we'll pack them up ready to go. And all you chaps who can make things, start making 'em. Fretwork things will sell, you know, and photo-frames, and things—anything you like that we can stick on the stall to sell."

"I guess there's a question I'd like to ask," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Ask away!"

"Who gets the prize?"

"The best stall, that raises the biggest sum?"

"I guess I mean which individual," said the Yankee school-boy.

"Fish is after the shekels," said Bulstrode, and there was a laugh.

"Well, if it's a money prize, it will be spent in standing a feed to all who help," said Harry Wharton—"at least, that's what I suggest."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good egg!"

"Bravo!"

Harry Wharton's suggestion was evidently popular.

"I guess that's all O.K.!" said Fisher T. Fish, with a nod.

"Nothing like having these points clear, you know. As a business man—"

"Well, I hope that's clear enough."

"Yes! But—"

"My hat! Haven't you finished asking questions yet?"

"Nope! Suppose you leave the whole business in my hands to manage?" the American junior suggested. "As a business man, I could run it cheaper than you fellows, and make a handsomer profit. Then I take the prize as the fee for my services. How does that proposition strike you?"

"Rotten!" said the juniors, all together.

And Fisher T. Fish gave a snort of disgust and walked away.

"Now, you fellows, put your heads together, and do the best you can," said Harry Wharton. "It's up to the Remove to make a good show!"

"Hear, hear!"

And Wharton stepped off the chair. A fat junior, whose plump face was adorned by a pair of large spectacles, poked the Remove captain in the ribs.

"I say, Wharton—"

"Ow! What do you want, you ass?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"I think it's a ripping idea to have a stall," said Bunter. "I'm going to back you up like anything. I suppose there's no limit to the amount of the contribution a fellow can make to the stall fund?"

"No; anything you like," said Wharton, with a stare of surprise. "What do you want to know for? I know how much you will contribute, you fat bounder."

"Oh, really, Wharton! How much do you expect from the fellows?"

"Anything they like to give—a half-crown, or five bob each, if they can raise it."

"Well, I'm going to contribute ten!" said Bunter pompously.

"You!"

"Oh, really, Wharton," said Bunter peevishly. "I really

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think you might take a fellow's word. If you've got the subscription list handy, I'll put my name down at once."

"Yes, I dare say you'll put your name down," remarked Bob Cherry, with a grin. "But will you put the money down? That's the question."

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, will you take the ten bob, Wharton, or will you not?" the Owl of the Remove demanded.

"Yes; hand it over, and I'll give you a receipt."

"Ahem! I'm going to contribute it in the form of a postal-order," Bunter explained. "I suppose that's just as good as cash."

"Every bit; hand it over."

"The postal-order is for a pound. I suppose you can give me change."

"Yes," said Harry; "we can raise it, anyway."

"Good! That's settled, then. Ten bob, please," said Billy Bunter, holding out a fat hand.

"But where's the postal-order?" demanded Wharton.

"Ahem! It will be in by to-night's post—"

"Why, you—"

"I was expecting it this afternoon," explained Bunter. "But there has been some delay in the post. It will be here to-night, or to-morrow morning at the latest. I suppose it is all the same to you, as the bazaar isn't held till next week."

"Oh, quite the same!"

"Good! You may as well hand me the ten bob change now—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," said Bunter crossly. "It's simple enough. You hand me the ten bob now, and I hand you the postal-order for a quid when it comes to-night, or to-morrow morning—"

"I'll hand you a thick ear, you blessed young spogfer!" said Wharton.

"Look here—"

"Oh, rats!"

"If you don't want my support, I shall withdraw it, and support the other party," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha! Good! Go and offer your support to Smithy for half-a-quid, and see what he says," said Bob Cherry.

And the juniors chuckled. Billy Bunter scowled, and rolled away to the Remove passage in search of Vernon-Smith.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Bouncer Means Business.

VERNON-SMITH had gone to his study. Bolsover major, and Snoop and Stott, his faithful followers, were there with him. Vernon-Smith had long tried to make a party in the Remove opposed to Harry Wharton; and of late he seemed to have had a considerable amount of success. Snoop and Stott, indeed, followed the Bouncer chiefly for the sake of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and Bolsover major backed him up from a spirit of opposition towards No. 1 Study. But there were other fellows in the Form who were not sorry to see the Bouncer "give Wharton a fall," as they expressed it; and Vernon-Smith considered that it was quite on the cards that he might succeed in putting No. 1 Study quite into the background. And when that was done he intended to make another attempt upon the captaincy of the Form. Once before he had very nearly succeeded in wresting the Form captaincy from Wharton; and he had not given up hope. But whether that came about or not the Bouncer was determined to make himself "top dog" in the Remove and to force his rivals to hide their diminished heads.

Bolsover major was looking puzzled. He had not intended to have anything to do with the bazaar, which he elegantly characterised as "rot"; and he was surprised by the Bouncer's declaration in the common-room.

"What do you mean, Smithy?" he asked. "You're not really thinking of taking a stall at the rotten bazaar, are you?"

"Yes," said the Bouncer. "That's exactly what I'm thinking of."

"What's the good?"

"To give No. 1 Study the kybosh," said the Bouncer. "They've taken up the affair, and they're keeping it entirely in their hands, as usual; as if they were all the Remove, and the rest of the Form only here to dance at their heels. I'm going to take it out of their hands, and run it over their heads."

"Well, there's something in that," agreed Bolsover.

"But even if you set up a rival stall they'll make a pretty good show," Stott remarked. "You can't prevent that, Smithy."

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The Bouncer smiled unpleasantly.

"Can't I!" he replied. "That's just what I'm going to do. There are ways of doing these things, you know; and I'm not going only to have a good stall myself, but I'm going to muck up Wharton's show."

Bolsover looked uneasy.

"Don't speak too loud," he said. "If the fellows heard that, that's enough to make the whole Form pile on you and rag you bald-headed, Smithy. Hang it all; it's rather thick, you know! The thing's for a charity, and if we don't help, we ought to let it alone—don't you think so?"

"No, I don't!"

"Well," said Bolsover hesitatingly, "I don't know that I care to have a hand in preventing a chap making money for a charity—"

"Oh, blow the charity!" said Vernon-Smith. "It's only a giddy organ fund. I know those organ funds and soup funds and winter-blanket funds. Old Lambe has a fresh one whenever one of his kids is old enough to be sent away to school, and has to have an outfit."

Snoop sniggered; but Bolsover frowned.

"Dash it all, Smithy; that's not right about old Lambe, anyway; and you'd better not jaw that kind of thing in public—"

"Well, I'm not jawing it in public," said the Bouncer. "I'm jawing it here, among friends, ain't I? Look here, we've agreed that No. 1 Study have got to be stopped swanking, and going round as if they own the earth. We're up against them all the time; and we've agreed that we're going to give them the kybosh all the time."

"Yes, that's so!"

"This is a jolly good chance. The Cliff House girls are going to be in the thing, and Wharton will want to have Marjorie and Clara at his stall. Well, I'm going to capture Marjorie Hazeldene for my stall."

"You can't do it!"

"I think I can—and that will be one in the eye for Wharton & Co. Marjorie Hazeldene will be valuable; all the fellows will come and buy something if she is selling at the stall. I've got her brother under my thumb, and I shall work it through Hazel. We're going to have a first-class stall, and be thanked in public by the vicar for our good works."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Wharton & Co. are going to get the kybosh," said the Bouncer. "I believe half the Remove are fed up with them, and will be glad to see them downed. I—Hullo!"

Billy Bunter opened the study door and blinked in. He gave the Bouncer a confidential nod, and walked in.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Well, what do you want?" growled Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover! I've come to the meeting; I knew you fellows were holding a meeting here," said Bunter. "I want to make my subscription to the fund."

"What fund?"

"I suppose Smithy is going to raise a fund, if he's going to have a stall at the bazaar," said Bunter peevishly.

"Nothing of the kind," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm going to stand the whole of the exes. out of my own pocket. I want the fellows to help me, that's all; but I shall find all the tin."

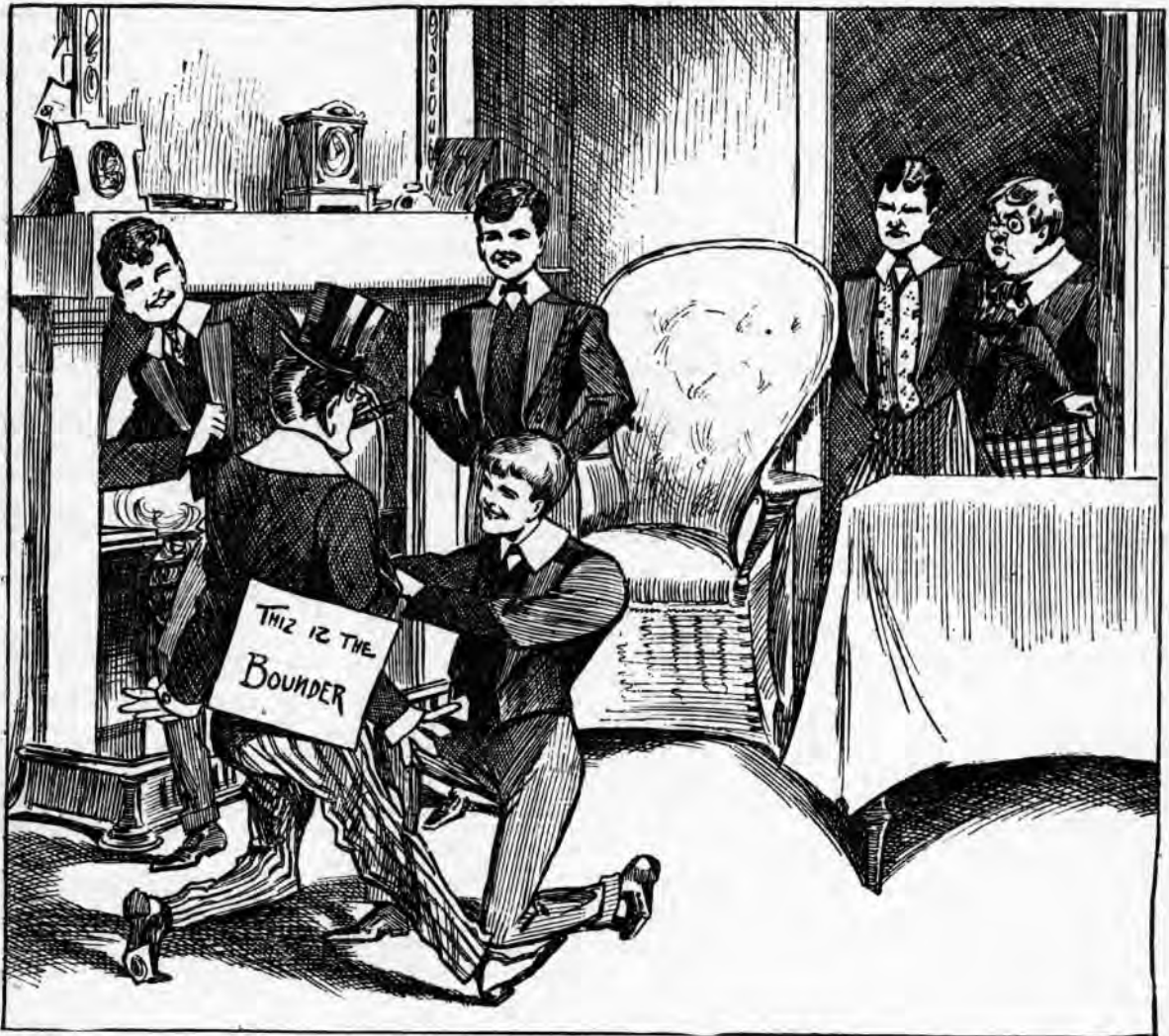
"I say, that's jolly generous of you, Smithy," said Bunter. Bunter knew perfectly well that Vernon-Smith was making a virtue of necessity. His friends were willing enough to rag Wharton & Co., but they were not likely to subscribe a single sixpence towards the stall. "I say, Smithy, you must really let me make a contribution, though. I've got a postal-order for ten bob, and I want to subscribe five out of it."

"Where's the postal-order?" asked Bolsover, with a grin.

"Ahem! It hasn't arrived yet; it will be here by to-night's post," explained Bunter. "That needn't make any difference, of course. Smithy can hand me the five bob change now—"

"Certainly," said Vernon-Smith blandly. "Here you are!"

Bolsover and Snoop and Stott gazed speechlessly at Vernon-Smith as he counted out five shillings into the fat palm of Billy Bunter. Vernon-Smith was the son of a millionaire, who made him an ample allowance, and his funds were the envy of many fellows at Greyfriars, seniors as well as juniors. But Vernon-Smith was never careless with his money; he was not even generous, and he was never known to part with any excepting for value received. The juniors could scarcely believe their eyes—indeed, William George Bunter could scarcely believe his. He blinked at the five shillings as they reposed in his palm, as if they were a beatific vision that might vanish at any moment. Then, realising that they were real enough, he slipped them into his pocket, and rolled out of the study before the Bouncer could have time to change his mind. Then Bolsover major found his voice.



Bob Cherry wrote in large letters upon a sheet of cardboard: "THIS IS THE BOUNDER," and pinned it on the figure. He had just finished when the Bounder looked in at the door. Bob glanced round. "Hallo! hallo! hallo!" he said. "Do you see any likeness?" (See chapter 14.)

"What on earth did you shell out for, Smithy?" he exclaimed. "You know jolly well that Bunter isn't going to get any postal-order. He's been gassing about that postal-order for whole terms, and it never comes!"

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"I know that, Bolsover."

"Then why did you—"

"Because I want Bunter to help me," said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders. "He's for sale, and I'm buying him, that's all."

"Oh, I—I see!" said Bolsover. "Blessed if I can see what use Bunter will be, though!"

"Well, I can, and that's all right," said Vernon-Smith.

There was a tap at the door, and Hazeldene came in. He nodded to the Bounder, and glanced rather hesitatingly at the other fellows.

"It's all right; the chaps are just going, Hazel," said Vernon-Smith.

Bolsover and Snoop and Stott took the hint, and left the study. The Bounder and Hazeldene were left alone, and they were soon talking in low voices, with an earnestness which showed that they were discussing some matter of deep importance—to themselves, at least.

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Every Little Helps.

BUMP!

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were at their prep. in No. 1 Study, when there was a sudden sound of bumping in the passage.

Wharton raised his head.

"What on earth's that?" he exclaimed.

"Sounds like a moving job," said Nugent, with a grin.

Bump! thump! bump!

The sounds stopped outside the closed door of No. 1.

"They're coming here, whatever it is," said Harry.

"Sounds like it."

Knock!

"Come in!" sang out Wharton.

The door opened. Three fellows of the Remove appeared in sight—Hazeldene, Bolsover, and Trevor. They were dragging an old packing-case into the doorway. Straw and packing-paper overflowed from it on the floor. Wharton and Nugent jumped up in astonishment.

"What on earth's that?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Packing-case," said Bolsover major.

"Yes; but what's it for?"

"It's for you."

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"Us?"

"Yes."

With a final heave, the three juniors hurled the big packing-case into the study, drew the door shut, and departed. Wharton and Nugent stared at the packing-case, and then at one another, and then Harry sprang to the door and pulled it open, and shouted after the juniors.

"Hold on! Come back! What's this for? We don't want it!"

There was a chuckle from the distance, and Bolsover, Hazeldene, and Trevor disappeared round the corner of the passage. Wharton turned back into the study with a look of exasperation.

"What on earth does it mean?" he exclaimed. "The silly asses must have dragged that old packing-case all the way from the box-room. What is it for?"

Nugent shook his head.

"Jape of some kind, I suppose," he said.

"I suppose so; but I'm blessed if I see where the joke comes in!" growled Wharton. "I'll jolly well make them take it away again."

And Wharton sat down at the table to go on with his work. Five minutes later footsteps stopped outside No. 1 Study, and the door was tapped upon and thrown open.

Russell and Ogilvy of the Remove looked in, grinning. They had several old sacks on their arms, and they hurried them into No. 1 Study without a word, and ran down the passage.

Wharton and Nugent leaped to their feet as the sacks came sprawling in, but the two juniors were gone.

The chums of No. 1 Study gazed at the sacks in amazement.

"What can they mean?" exclaimed Wharton. "Have all the fellows suddenly gone potty?"

"Looks like it."

"It's a jape of some kind, I suppose. But what can it be for? Blessed if I can see where the fun comes in!"

"They'll jolly well have to take the rubbish away again, that's all!" said Nugent.

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors, very much puzzled, resumed their work. But they stopped instinctively as they heard footsteps approaching the study door again. The door was opened, and Nugent and Wharton looked up, to see Potter and Greene and Coker of the Fifth standing there, looking at them with grinning countenances.

Coker nodded genially.

"I see you're at home," he remarked.

"Yes, we're at home," said Wharton. "Not expecting visitors, either, as a matter of fact."

Horace Coker laughed.

"My dear chap, you've forgotten!" he exclaimed. "You must be expecting visitors with their contributions. We've brought eatables."

"Eh?"

"Hand them over, Potty!"

"Right-oh!"

Potter walked into the study and deposited a large folded newspaper on the table. The scent that came from the newspaper was very fishy, and decidedly wanting in freshness.

"Kippers!" explained Potter, as the juniors sniffed with disgust.

"Kippers?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, kippers."

"What on earth have you brought kippers here for?"

"Because we don't want 'em," said Coker.

"We don't want 'em, either!" roared Wharton. "Take 'em away!"

Coker shook his head.

"Blessed if you don't blow hot and cold with the same breath!" he exclaimed in a tone of indignation. "First you say you want things, and then you say you don't want 'em. We've brought you the kippers. They've seen their best days, and are no good to eat, but they may do for the bazaar."

"The—the what?"

"The bazaar!" said Coker innocently.

"The bazaar?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes. You said that all the fellows were to bring things they didn't want to your study, and you'd pack 'em up for the bazaar."

"You—you frightful chump! We don't want this mess!"

"You said things we didn't want!" said Coker obstinately.

"And we don't want those kippers—no much!"

"No fear!" said Potter and Greene.

"I see you've had some other contributions already," said Coker, with a glance at the old packing-case and the sacks. "I hear there's more coming. Ta-ta!"

"You ass!" yelled Wharton, understanding the "rag" now. "Take these kippers away! They're simply shouting!"

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"No; you're welcome to them."

"You ass—you ass! You jesser!"

Coker & Co. chuckled and beat a retreat. Harry Wharton and his chums exchanged glances of dismay.

"It's a rag!" groaned Nugent. "I'll bet the idea came from the Boulder, too. They're going to dump all sorts of rubbish into this study."

"My hat! I'll—"

More footsteps. Wharton and Nugent fixed furious eyes upon the doorway. This time it was Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth who appeared in view, with smiling faces. They were carrying various articles. Temple had a chair minus one leg, Dabney an old tea-canister, Fry a strip of very much worn carpet, and Scott a broken teapot. They brought those valuable articles into No. 1 Study, and deposited them under the eyes of the owners of the study.

"There you are!" said Temple.

"What's that for, you fathead?"

"Our contribution to the bazaar."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"We've got another teapot you can have, if you like," said Fry confidentially. "The spout's gone, and it's got no handle, but otherwise it's all right."

"Take those things away!" roared Wharton.

"Eh? They're our contribution. You asked for contributions, you know—all the things we don't want."

Wharton made a dash for a cricket-bat, and the Fourth-formers fled, laughing. They left their contributions in the study, however.

"My hat!" said Wharton, breathing hard. "We'll get hold of the next idiot who comes here with a contribution! This is a rag!"

Nugent chuckled.

"It's rather funny, too, if it were somebody else's study," he remarked.

"Here comes a silly ass!" muttered Wharton.

Footsteps came down the passage. Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, looked into the study with his kind smile. He had a parcel under his arm.

"I've brought my little contribution, my dear fellows," he remarked genially.

The two juniors glared.

"Oh, you've brought it, have you?" said Wharton.

"Yaas."

"Then you'll get it in the neck, you silly ass!"

Wharton and Nugent sprang upon his lordship together. In a second Lord Mauleverer was rolling on the floor, and they were bumping him. The dandy of the Remove roared with surprise and anguish.

"Ow! Oh! Begad! Yow! My dear fellows—ow! Ow!"

"Brought your contribution, have you?" panted Wharton.

"I'll teach you to bring giddy contributions to this study!"

"Ow! But you—you asked—for—them."

"Yes; and you asked for this, and now you're getting it!" grinned Nugent. "Give him another bump, and one more for his uncle!"

Bump, bump!

"Yarcooh! Oh! Begad! Oh!"

"There!" gasped Wharton, as the unfortunate Mauleverer escaped from his grasp. "There! Now you won't be so funny again!"

Lord Mauleverer sat gasping on the carpet.

"Goo! You asses! Have you gone potty? Ow! You asked for contributions, and I've brought you—ow!—my silver watch, and—ow!—a tie-pin—yow!—and a silver matchbox. Yow! If you don't—yow!—want them—goo!—you might say so—yow!"

Wharton jumped.

It dawned upon him all of a sudden that Mauleverer had come to the study with serious intentions and real contributions. The chums of No. 1 Study had been a little too hasty.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Contributions.

LORD MAULEVERER sat and gasped as if he would never finish gasping. His collar was torn out, and hanging by one stud, and his jacket had worked up over his ears. His elegant clothes were rumpled and dusty. He looked a wreck, and he felt one.

Frank Nugent picked up the parcel the schoolboy earl had brought into the study. He opened it. The contents were as Lord Mauleverer had described them—a silver watch, a silver matchbox, and a tie-pin with a ruby in it, an extremely valuable contribution for the sale at the bazaar.

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton.

"M-m-my hat!" murmured Nugent.

They rushed to raise the schoolboy earl up. Lord Mauleverer took it for a new attack, and he hit out with both fists.

"Yaroooh!" roared Nugent, as he caught Mauleverer's left with his nose. "Ow! Stoppit!"

"Begad! I—"

"Pax!" gasped Wharton.

"What did you go for me for, then?" demanded Mauleverer, staggering to his feet. "Have you gone potty in this study, or what?"

"Sorry," said Wharton. "Really sorry; the fellows have been japing us, bringing a lot of rubbish here. Look at it!"

"And we thought you were up to the same game," Nugent explained. "Look at that rubbish!" He waved his hand towards the contributions.

Lord Mauleverer grinned as he glanced at the packing-case, the sacks, the broken teapot, and the other things, and sniffed at the eloquent kippers.

"Oh!" he said. "Yaas, I understand! It's all right. But you had better stop and inquire next time, my dear fellows. Ow!"

And Lord Mauleverer retired from the study, still gasping. "Perhaps we had better inquire next time, Franky!" grinned Wharton. "Poor old Mauly! Hallo, here comes another of 'em!"

"Don't be quite so previous this time," warned Nugent. "Give him a chance."

There was a rush of feet in the passage, and three or four fags of the Third Form came crowding into the doorway. Bolsover minor and Paget and Tubb, of the Third, jammed themselves in the doorway together, all very eager. They had their right hands behind them, a circumstance which aroused the suspicions of the Remove chums at once.

"Well, what do you kids want?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"We don't want anything," said Bolsover minor cheerfully.

"We've come to make our contributions for the bazaar."

Wharton made a movement towards his bat.

"What have you got?" asked Nugent.

"You really want contributions, don't you?" demanded Paget.

"Yes; but—"

"Well, here you are. Pile in!"

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

Their right hands came into view at once. Each hand held an egg in it. The eggs whizzed into the study with deadly aim.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Smash!

Nugent jumped back, and the egg intended for his face missed him narrowly, and smashed upon the clock. Wharton caught one in his ear as he turned; and then another, better aimed, took Nugent under the chin.

"Ow! Groo!"

"Yowp!"

The eggs were as ancient as the kippers. The fags, like the Fifth-Formers, were strictly adhering to the principle of giving away things they didn't want.

Wharton and Nugent, with a roar of wrath, leaped at the fags; and Bolsover minor & Co. fled at top speed down the passage.

The two Removites stopped in the passage, gasping and sniffing.

"Oh," groaned Nugent, "I'm being poisoned!"

"Oh, I'm suffocating!"

"Groo-hooh!"

Vengeance upon the fags was not the pressing need of the moment. What the chums of the Remove wanted was a wash to remove the clinging eggs and their fearful odours. They made a rush for the nearest bath-room.

With flowing water, in the midst of steam and soapsuds, they washed off the clinging eggs, gasping and snorting the while.

It was some time before they were quite clean, however, and the lingering scent of the eggs had departed.

"The young rotters!" growled Wharton, as they left the bath-room. "We—we'll simply squash them for this!"

"Yes—it's rather too thick!" gasped Nugent. "A rag's all very well, but this is carrying it too far. Hallo!"

"What's the matter?"

"Look!"

As they came in sight of their study doorway again, they saw Nugent minor and Myers and Gatty, of the Second Form, coming out. They hurried down the passage.

"What are you doing there, you young rascals?" shouted Nugent.

His minor looked along the passage and grinned.

"Bunk!" he rapped out to his companions.

And the heroes of the Second Form fled.

Wharton and Nugent approached their study with apprehension. Their apprehension was well founded. During their absence in the bath-room many visitors had arrived at No. 1 Study, and they had all left contributions.

The study was crammed with them.

Old broken chairs and articles of furniture, with the dust of ages collected in the lumber-room, were piled in the study.

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There were old boxes, and old bags, and broken crockery, broken foils and worn-out boxing-gloves. The japers had evidently rummaged the box-rooms and the lumber-rooms in search of contributions to the bazaar.

Wharton and Nugent stood in the passage, and gazed into the crammed study in dismay.

There was hardly room for them to enter.

The table was loaded, the chairs were covered with queer articles, and the shattered furniture was piled almost to the ceiling.

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

"Oh, great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowd of juniors had come along to look at the collection. They gazed into the study and roared.

"Faith, and it's a ripping sale ye'll have, with that little lot!" shrieked Micky Desmond. "Sure ye'll rake in the prize, darlings! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The prizefulness will be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lot No. 1," said Bolsover major. "What offers?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Going, going!" said Bolsover, in the manner of an auctioneer. "A fine collection of old furniture—very old, in fact—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not Chippendale, but chippy—very chippy and chipped—same thing; also some crockery that has seen better days," said Bolsover. "Likewise some kippers, very talkative—save you the expense of a gramophone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly asses!" roared Wharton wrathfully. "Who's done this?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton and Nugent glared at the yelling juniors. Everybody but themselves seemed to regard the contributions in No. 1 Study as a first-class joke; but Wharton and Nugent could hardly be blamed for failing to see where the fun came in. But their exasperation only added to the merriment of the Removites. The juniors simply shrieked.

Wharton made a rush into the study, sending the piles of old furniture crashing right and left. He grasped the newspaperful of ancient kippers from the table and turned to the door. There was a shout of alarm from the Removites as they saw his intention, and they tried to flee. But the passage was too crowded; and as they rushed into one another, and staggered to and fro, Wharton hurled the kippers. Those ancient denizens of the deep descended in a shower upon the struggling crowd, and there were wild yells again, but not yells of laughter this time.

"Ow! Oh! Groooooh!"

"Yaroooh! Ugh! Grugggg!"

"Yah! Ah! Yow!"

"Stoppit!" shrieked Bolsover, as a kipper caught him in the back of the neck, and slid inside his collar. "Ow! Ah! Ow! Groo! Ugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

"Ow, ow, ow! Groo! Oh!"

And the crowd fled from the kippers, most of them carrying away fragments of those ancient fish upon their persons.

It was Wharton and Nugent's turn to laugh—and they did!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Captured by the Enemy!

"HAZEL, old man!"

Hazeldene started a little. It was after morning lessons the day following the visit of the vicar to Greyfriars. Wharton had followed Hazeldene as he went out into the Close, after leaving the Form-room, and tapped him on the shoulder. Hazeldene looked very much inclined to hurry away; but he could not very well do so, and he hesitated, and stayed.

"What is it?" he asked. "Not cutting up rusty about that jape yesterday, are you?"

Wharton smiled.

"Oh, no! I hope I can take a joke with anybody—though it was rather thick, piling up our study with all that blessed rubbish. But never mind that; it's another matter I want to speak to you about. Come under the trees."

Hazeldene hesitated.

"Look here, I don't want a solemn jaw," he said bluntly. "If it's that, Wharton, I'd rather you cut it short."

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The Remove captain coloured.

"I won't jaw to you if you'd rather not," he said. "But I certainly wanted to speak to you seriously, Hazel."

Hazeldene shifted uneasily. He stood first upon one foot, and then upon the other. His look and attitude showed that he dreaded what was coming.

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

"It's about the Bouncer."

Hazeldene made a gesture.

"I guessed that was coming," he said.

"Yes, you might have guessed it," said Wharton quietly. "The fact is, Hazel, I don't think you have been playing the game."

"Thank you!" said Hazel, with a sneer.

"You can't have forgotten the scrapes you got into through Vernon-Smith," said Harry. "You can't have forgotten whom you came to to get you out of them when he left you in the lurch."

"That's an old story."

"History will repeat itself, I think," said Wharton. "The Bouncer has taken you up again; he has been trying for a long time to make up a rival party in the Remove, and now he's roped you in. If you prefer his friendship to mine, I've got no objection to make; but I think you ought to think it over a bit first. You know jolly well that Marjorie can't stand the Bouncer—"

"The Bouncer's all right," said Hazeldene. "He's a bit different now from what he used to be. If you think he's trying to get me to visit pubs along with him you're quite mistaken. There's nothing of that sort now. And Marjorie gets on with him better than she used to. I took him over to Cliff House to tea the other day, and they got on all right. If you fellows don't interfere, it will be all serene. I know you've got your back up about it, Wharton; but I don't see why I shouldn't be friendly with Vernon-Smith if I choose."

Wharton bit his lip.

"You can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, that's all," he said tartly. "The next time Vernon-Smith leaves you to crawl out of a scrape you can't come to us to pull you out of it."

"I suppose you'll never let me hear the end of that," said Hazeldene irritably. "That's an old story. I know you helped me; and I'm grateful. I can't say more than that. I don't see that it means that I'm to follow at your heels like a tame dog. I don't see that at all; and I'm jolly well not going to do it!"

"I don't ask you to. But I think you ought to remember that the Bouncer nearly got you expelled from Greyfriars; and that Study No. 1 saved you. And he'll do it again if it suits him to do it."

"I shall be too jolly careful for that," said Hazeldene. "I know what you mean—that Smithy is making use of me. Well, Smithy says you fellows make use of me to get a footing in Cliff House."

The Remove captain turned crimson.

"That's enough!" he said. "I thought I ought to speak to you about it, to know whether you are backing up Smithy, or backing us up. If you don't know what's good for you, you can go your own way—and be hanged!"

And Harry Wharton turned away angrily.

Hazel made a movement as if to follow him, and then paused. He turned and walked away in another direction.

Wharton's face was still clouded when Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull joined him in the Close.

"Wherefore that worried brow, my infant?" asked Bob Cherry, clapping his chum on the shoulder with a mighty clap.

"Ow! I've just been talking to Hazel. He's going to stick to Smithy," growled Wharton. "The Bouncer will make use of him, as he did before, and get him into hot water; and then we shall have to pull him out of it, for Marjorie's sake. Blessed if I don't feel inclined to let the silly ass go to the deuce his own way! It it wasn't for Marjorie—"

"But it is for Marjorie," said Bob Cherry seriously. "Patience, my son—patience. Hazel can't help being a silly chump; he's built that way. And the Bouncer is deep enough to take anybody in. The giddy Lambe is very much taken with the Bouncer."

"The vicar?"

"Yes. I hear that Smithy has telephoned to him, and asked permission to have a separate stall at the bazaar; and he's awfully pleased about it. He knows that Smithy's pater is a giddy millionaire, and he expects big things from Smithy's stall, I think. I hear that Marjorie Hazeldene is going to serve at Smithy's stall, too."

Wharton frowned angrily.

"That's what the cad is making up to Hazeldene for!" he said. "Hazeldene will do anything for a chap who butters him up and lends him money."

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Bob Cherry nodded.

"Can't be helped," he said. "I suppose Marjorie will naturally serve at the stall where her brother is; and if Smithy captures Hazel, he captures Marjorie along with him. It will make a lot of the trade go to his stall, too. The fellows are saying that his pater is going to send him twenty quid to spend on it."

Johnny Bull whistled.

"My hat!" he said. "We can't raise suns like that."

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Wharton, with an angry shrug of the shoulders. "Smithy's money seems to be all over the place. And a chap can't say a word without being set down as jealous of his wealth."

"Grin and bear it, my son," said Bob Cherry philosophically. "Smithy is going up like the giddy rocket now; he'll come down like the stick some day."

Wharton nodded without replying.

There was no doubt that Vernon-Smith was going up like a rocket. And it was hard for the Famous Four to keep their end up. In their contests with Temple & Co. of the Fourth, and Coker of the Fifth, they had a good chance, because Temple and Coker played the game, and never hit below the belt; but the Bouncer was utterly unscrupulous; and, as Harry Wharton & Co. would not descend to retaliate his underhand methods on him, the Bouncer was often victorious.

For the bazaar and the organ fund the Bouncer did not care two straws; but it looked as if he would completely outshine the fellows who were trying to do their best, and who really took an interest in the enterprise.

The Bouncer's dodge for getting Marjorie to his stall was the hardest blow at No. 1 Study. Marjorie was their chum, and they had taken it for granted that if she were not at the Cliff House stall she would be with them. But on that point the Bouncer had beaten them.

Harry Wharton thought it over, with wrinkled brows; and finally wheeled out his bicycle, and cycled over to Cliff House to have a little talk with Marjorie.

He reached the Cliff House Girls' School, on the border of the village of Pegg, facing the bay and the wide waters of the North-Sea. As he jumped off his bicycle at the gate he caught sight of Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevelyn in the garden. They came down to the gate to speak to him.

"About the bazaar, of course," said Miss Clara.

Wharton laughed.

"Yes, that's what I've come over about," he said.

"It's ripping!" said Miss Clara cheerfully. "It will be an extra holiday, you know. It's ripping—gorgeous!"

"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie.

"Well, spiffing, then, if you like that better!" said Miss Clara cheerfully. "Miss Penelope Primrose is taking a stall, and all the girls are making things to sell. Most of us will be there—selling things, or buying things."

"The Remove are going to have two stalls," said Wharton. "I've come over to ask you to be at our stall. We want you, you know."

"I suppose we shall be," said Marjorie. "I have promised Hazel to be at his stall—and I suppose he will be with you."

Wharton's brow clouded.

"You've promised Hazel?" he asked.

"Yes. He wrote to me last night, and I got the letter this morning," said Marjorie, wondering at Wharton's frown. "He asked me to reply at once, and I did."

Wharton muttered something under his breath.

"What's the matter?" asked Marjorie anxiously.

"Nothing," said Wharton. "Only Hazel isn't at our stall."

"Oh, I didn't understand that."

"Vernon-Smith is taking a stall on his own, and Hazel's going to be with him," Wharton explained.

Marjorie's brow puckered up a little.

"I didn't understand that," she said. "I took it for granted that Hazel would be with you, Harry. I'm sorry; I've promised now—and Clara, too!"

"It's rotten!" said Miss Clara. "It looks to me as if Hazel has been spoofing us, Marjorie."

"Oh, Clara!"

"Well, that's what it looks like," said Miss Clara persistently. "He knew jolly well that we should want to be with our friends, and not with Vernon-Smith."

Marjorie looked troubled.

"I'm afraid it can't be helped now," she said.

"No, I suppose not," said Wharton, with an effort. "If you've promised, you've promised, and there's an end of it. It's beastly, though."

And Wharton rode back to Greyfriars with a glum face. It seemed as if the Bouncer was destined to beat him on every point.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Dab!

VERNON-SMITH linked arms with Billy Bunter when the Remove came out after lessons that day. The fat junior blinked at him in surprise. He was not accustomed to such chumminess on the part of the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Come on, Bunt, old man!" said Vernon-Smith affectionately.

"Oh, certainly!" said Bunter. "Are you going to the tuckshop?"

"No; I want you to come to tea in my study."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "I'm on! I was thinking of going to tea in No. 1, but—"

"They've asked you to tea in No. 1?" said Vernon-Smith.

"Ahem! Not exactly. It's a sort of standing invitation—I can go when I like," Bunter explained.

"At the risk of being booted out," remarked Bolsover.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

Vernon-Smith gave the bully of the Remove a glance. It was Vernon-Smith's little game to be very polite to Bunter now—doubtless for good reasons of his own.

"Well, Bunter's always welcome in my study, anyway," he said. "I know a jolly good fellow when I see one. I'm proud of Bunter's friendship."

Bolsover coughed.

"Right-ho, Smithy!" said the gratified Bunter. "I like you ever so much better than Wharton and his lot. I never got enough to eat when I was in that study, and I can tell you I was jolly glad to change out of No. 1. I'll tell you what, Smithy—I'll ask Mr. Quelch to put me in your study, if you like."

"We're going to have a ripping feed!" said Vernon-Smith, apparently not hearing Billy Bunter's remark. "And after tea we should like you to give us a little ventriloquial display, Bunter."

"Oh, certainly, Smithy; I shall be very pleased," Billy Bunter was more and more surprised. He was a clever ventriloquist, and had a marvellous aptitude for imitating voices, but as a rule the Removites did not show much appreciation of his powers. Indeed, most of the fellows declared that they were fed up with Bunter's ventriloquism, and with Billy Bunter, too.

Vernon-Smith walked Bunter into his study, and Bolsover and Snoop helped to get the tea. Vernon-Smith would not hear of Bunter helping. He said that Bunter was a distinguished guest, and must take his ease in the armchair while the other fellows were getting the tea. Billy Bunter was quite willing to take the Bounder at his word. Taking his ease in an armchair was exactly suited to his tastes.

It was a really good feed. Vernon-Smith spent money lavishly when he had an object to serve, as he had now. When Billy Bunter took his seat at the table, his fat face was simply beaming.

"This is something like!" he remarked.

"I hope you've brought a good appetite with you," said the Bounder hospitably.

"Yes, rather; nothing wrong with my appetite," said Bunter. "I generally lose it after a meal, that's all," he added facetiously.

"Will you try the ham, and the eggs?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And the tongue?"

"What-ho!"

"And the cold beef?"

"You bet!"

"Pickles, Bunter?"

"Yes, please."

Billy Bunter contented himself with nodding after that when anything was offered. He was too busy to talk.

But the time came when even Billy Bunter was satisfied. He was finished before the table was quite cleared of eatables—an unusual circumstance when the Owl of the Remove was present at a festive board.

"Now for the ventriloquial display," Vernon-Smith remarked.

"Oh, certainly, Smithy."

Snoop looked at his watch.

"I've promised to help Myers of the Second with his work," he remarked. "Excuse me, you fellows, if I buzz off."

"Myers can wait," said Vernon-Smith calmly. "Stay where you are."

"But I—I say—"

"Oh, sit down!"

Snoop sat down. Vernon-Smith's word was law with the sneak of the Remove; he would never have dreamed of disputing the lordly will and pleasure of a fellow who could stand such ripping feeds.

Billy Bunter coughed, and cleared his throat. Bolsover yawned.

"Blessed if I can see the point!" he remarked. "I'm fed up with Bunter's ventriloquism. I thought everybody was."

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"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Well, I'm not," said the Bounder. "Give us an imitation of the Baa Lambe's voice, Bunt. I know you can do it."

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Yes, rather!" he said.

"Well, go it!"

"This bazaah is to be the great success of the yah," said Bunter, in the rolling tones of Mr. Lambe, the vicar of Friardale. "My dear young friends, I shall expect you to make every—ah—possible effort, and—ah—make this bazaah the—ah—success of the yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping!" said Vernon-Smith, grinning. "When you do that at the bazaah, Bunter, everybody will think it's the vicar himself."

Bunter sat suddenly upright.

"When I do what?" he said, gasping.

"You're going to ventriloquise at the bazaah," said the Bounder agreeably. "You're going to help me with my stall, you know. And—"

"But—but there would be a fearful row if I made fun of the vicar!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in dismay. "I can't do it, Smithy! I shouldn't have the nerve. Besides, some of the fellows might spot me, and I should get a licking. The Head would be frightfully waxy if he heard of it."

"My hat!" said Bolsover. "I should think he would!"

"We're going to take a good supply of tuck with us," the Bounder remarked. "Every fellow who helps me with my stall will live on the fat of the land."

"Good!" said Bunter. "But—"

"There won't be any risk," said the Bounder. "I only want to make a bit of a mix-up between the vicar and Study No. 1."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"Now, let's see you throw your voice," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't know whether you're in practice. In fact, I'm not sure that you're such a jolly good ventriloquist as you make yourself out to be. Fisher T. Fish says he can ventriloquise, and if you're not up to the mark, I think I shall leave you out, and take Fishy instead."

"Fishy can't do it," said Bunter, with a growl. "It's only his swank. Now, I'm a dab at it. I can tell you. But—"

"Oh, rot!" said the Bounder. "I dare say you—"

"Smithy!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice, and the Bounder jumped up in surprise, and looked round to the door in alarm.

"Yes, sir?" he stammered.

Bolsover and Snoop roared with laughter. There was no one in the study beside the four juniors. Vernon-Smith looked surprised for a moment, and then he glared at Bunter.

"Why, you fat fraud, was that you?" he exclaimed.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

There was a tap at the door, and Hazeldene came in. Hazeldene had been over to Cliff House on his bicycle, and he had just returned. He was looking rather clouded. The Bounder gave him a quick glance.

"It's all right?" he asked.

"Yes," said Hazeldene. "Marjorie thought I was to be at Wharton's stall, but she won't go back on her word. It's all serene. Clara has been giving me some plain English. She says I'm a—"

"Rotter!" came the voice of Miss Clara from the passage.

Hazeldene swung round towards the open door.

"M-m-my hat! I—I didn't know she had come over here!" he exclaimed. "I say, Clara—"

"Don't talk to me! You are a rank outsider!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Hazel uncomfortably. "Why don't you come into the study?"

"Oh, rats!"

Hazel stepped to the door and looked out. He almost staggered, and turned back into the study with a startled face.

"Didn't you hear Clara speak, you fellows?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith and Snoop and Bolsover together.

"Well, she isn't there; there's nobody in the passage," said Hazeldene, mystified.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bunter.

Hazeldene glared at the Owl of the Remove. He understood now.

"You—you fat rotter!" he exclaimed. "Was that some more of your rotten ventriloquism, then? I'll jolly well—"

Billy Bunter promptly dodged behind the Bounder. Vernon-Smith held up his hand for peace.

"It's all right," he said. "Bunter was giving us some

specimens when you came in. He's going to ventriloquise at the bazaar."

"He'd jolly well better not ventriloquise on me!" growled Hazeldene.

And he went out of the study and slammed the door. But Vernon-Smith was looking very well satisfied.

"You'll do, Bunter," he remarked. "Study No. 1 will have a glorious time at the bazaar if you shove your oar in properly."

Bunter did not look happy.

"But I—I say, Smithy!" he said feebly.

"Oh, rats!" said Smithy.

And Billy Bunter said no more.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Appreciating Bunter.

By the time the day of the Friardale Bazaar arrived, the Greyfriars fellows had grown quite enthusiastic about it. The Fifth had a stall, and the Fourth; and the Sixth Form, though they did not participate, all agreed to go and buy things. Even the fags were very keen, and Nugent minor, in the Second Form, had made an attempt to get the Second to subscribe for a stall. But at the end of a day's canvassing, Nugent minor found his subscription list totalling twopence, and all the articles contributed for sale were a penknife with two broken blades, and a corkscrew without a handle. Nugent minor returned them to their owners with sarcastic thanks, and decided that he would be only a visitor at the bazaar, and not a stall-holder. The two Remove stalls seemed likely to flourish. Vernon-Smith was spending money lavishly, and Harry Wharton & Co. were putting a great deal of work into their department. They had not so much money as the Bounder, but they had more industry, and they took a more genuine interest in the success of the affair. Their excitement grew as the day of the bazaar came nearer, but by the auspicious day they had everything ready.

They had quite a large collection of things to sell. That humorous contribution which had been piled into No. 1 Study the first day had been returned to the lumber-rooms; but since then the chums of the Remove had collected industriously. They had match-boxes and tie-pins, and pocket-knives and penknives, and fretwork tools, and photo frames and boxes, and all sorts and conditions of things. Fellows gave cricket bats and balls, intending to replace them somehow before next summer. On the eve of the great day, the Famous Four surveyed the piles of valuable articles in No. 1 Study with great pride.

"We shall have a ripping sale," said Harry Wharton. "There are lots of things here that any fellow would like. And if we let them go pretty cheap, the village kids will be able to buy them."

"The buyfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I think we shall cut out the esteemed Bounder, after all."

"The Head's making the prize a new footer—a guinea match ball!" said Bob Cherry. "It will be worth having, though he hasn't explained how it's to be divided among the winners."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll keep it for Form matches, if we win it," said Harry Wharton. "Mind, you've all got to wire in to-morrow, and simply make people buy. We've got to turn in more money than the Bounder, somehow, if we have to sell the socks off our feet."

"The sockfulness will be terrific," said the nabob. "If they do not buy we will give them socks, my worthy chum."

Vernon-Smith looked into the study.

"Hallo! Gloating over your treasures?" he asked.

"Yes," said Wharton. "I think we shall make a pretty good show!"

"I hope so," said the Bounder, with a grin. "But I'm going to capture that match ball. So they're the things you're going to plant on an innocent public?" He cocked his eye at the pile of various goods.

"Yes, they are," said Bob Cherry belligerently. "Don't you think they're good enough, confound your cheek!"

The Bounder laughed.

"You'll be taking them out on the wrong date," he said. "It's the day after the bazaar that you ought to parade that little lot in public."

"Why?" asked Nugent, puzzled.

"The Fifth, you know," said Vernon-Smith blandly.

And he walked away, chuckling.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another uncomfortably. In spite of themselves and their knowledge of Vernon-Smith's ways, the Bounder's disparagement of their collection made them feel uncomfortable.

"The rotter!" growled Bob Cherry. "He's only trying to make us dissatisfied. We shall make as good a show as those cads, anyway."

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"There's one part of our stock that will sell like hot cakes, anyway," said Harry Wharton. "That's the fireworks. They will go off like anything the day before the Fifth!"

"They're supposed to go off on the Fifth," suggested Nugent.

"Ow, don't be funny! Look here; we got the fireworks at two-thirds the retail price, by taking a lot, and there will be a handsome profit for the organ fund if we sell the lot. And I should think every blessed one would go, on the Fourth of November."

"I should think so," agreed Nugent. "They ought to sell, even if we have tiepins and toastracks left on our hands."

"May as well look up the study," Bob Cherry suggested, as the juniors left No. 1. "Some kid might take it into his head to raid the fireworks."

"Good idea!"

And Harry Wharton locked No. 1 Study, and put the key in his pocket. Vernon-Smith was standing in the passage, talking to Billy Bunter, and he glanced up as he heard the click of the key, and a sneering smile crossed his lips.

"Getting nervous about your treasures?" he grinned.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "there are fellows in the Remove who are cads enough for anything, you know, Smithy."

"You've locked Mauleverer up in your study," said Vernon-Smith, pressing Billy Bunter's toe with his foot.

The Famous Four were walking away, but they turned back at Vernon-Smith's remark.

"What's that?" asked Wharton.

There was no need to reply. The voice of the dandy of the Remove was heard, and it seemed to come from inside the locked study.

"Begad! It's too bad, my dear fellows! You might let me out!"

"My hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How on earth did you get in there, Mauly? I didn't see you inside."

"Begad, you know—"

"Where were you?"

"Under the table, you know."

"Eh!"

"Getting deaf, begad?"

"What on earth does he mean?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Open the door, Harry."

Wharton unlocked the door, and threw it open. He lighted the gas, and the chums looked round the study. There was no sign of Lord Mauleverer.

They exchanged amazed glances.

"What on earth has become of the chap?" asked Bob Cherry, utterly mystified.

He looked under the table, but there was no sign of Lord Mauleverer. They looked out into the passage. Billy Bunter and Vernon-Smith had strolled away, grinning at one another. From a study further up the passage an elegant figure stepped out, and came down towards No. 1. It was Lord Mauleverer.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Why, there he is!"

Lord Mauleverer stopped, and nodded.

"Yaas, here I am," he said. "What's wanted, my dear fellows?"

The Famous Four stared at him.

"How on earth did you get out of the study?" demanded Bob Cherry.

His lordship looked puzzled.

"Walked out!" he said.

"Eh! But we were in the doorway!" shouted Wharton.

"You!" said Lord Mauleverer, in amazement. "You were in the doorway of my study! I'll bet you were not."

"No, ass! In the doorway of this study!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Well, I haven't been in this study," said Mauleverer, in surprise.

The juniors regarded him fixedly.

"You haven't been in this study?" Nugent demanded.

"Begad, no!"

"You weren't locked in?"

"Certainly not!"

"You didn't call to us to let you out?"

"No fear!" said his lordship. "You must be wandering in your minds, my dear fellows. I've only just come out of my own study."

"But I heard your voice!" shouted Bob Cherry. "I heard— Oh," he broke off—"oh, you silly ass! You fat-heads!"

"Eh! What's the row now?" demanded Wharton, surprised by this unexpected attack.

"You jesser!"

"What!"

"You fathead!"

"Look here—"

"Didn't you notice Bunter in the passage?" roared Bob Cherry. "It's some more of his giddy ventriloquism. My hat!"

I'm fed up with Bunter! I've been suffering from too much Bunter for whole terms and terms. Let's go and slaughter him."

"Good egg!" Wharton re-locked the study, and the juniors rushed down-stairs in search of Billy Bunter. They found him in the common-room, relating the story of the voice in No. 1 Study to a circle of grinning juniors.

They rushed upon the fat Removite. Billy Bunter was a little short-sighted, and he did not see them coming till they were fairly upon him. Then it was too late! He was seized by many hands, and swept off his feet, and brought down upon the floor with a mighty bump. He roared.

"Oh! Yaroooooooooop!" "Funny bargee, ain't you?" gasped Bob Cherry. "So are we! This is our kind of fun! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! ow! ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooo! Help! Oh! Fire! Oh!"

Bump!

"This is how we appreciate your giddy ventriloquism," chuckled Nugent. "This is how we show it. These are our notes of admiration. Bump him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the fat ventriloquist sat upon the floor of the common-room, gasping, as the chums walked away. The fellows round him were still grinning—indeed, they were grinning more than ever. They seemed to regard the bumping of Bunter as funnier than the story he was telling.

"Ow!" groaned Billy Bunter. "Groo! Beasts! Yow!"

And he did not ventriloquise any more that evening.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Bazaar.

AFTER dinner the next day the Greyfriars fellows started for Friardale. Nearly the whole school went. The fellows who were not taking part in the sale were going to buy things, so all were able to help in one way or another.

The bazaar was being held in the Assembly Rooms—quite a spacious building for Friardale.

Mr. Lambe welcomed the juniors on their arrival, and Mrs. Lambe had sweet smiles for all of them—and Miss Lambe had sweeter smiles still, especially for the senior boys.

Quite a crowd of the Cliff House girls arrived with Miss Penelope Primrose, the headmistress of Cliff House.

Marjorie Hazeldene shook hands cordially with Harry Wharton & Co.—and it was plain enough that she would have preferred to remain with them; but Hazel marched her off to Vernon-Smith's stall.

The Bounder greeted Marjorie and Clara with the greatest politeness. Bolsover major, and Hazeldene, and Billy Bunter were assisting at Vernon-Smith's stall, which was next to Harry Wharton's. There was no doubt that the Bounder was making a good show; and Mr. Lambe complimented him upon it.

The Assembly Rooms were crowded with local people as soon as the bazaar was opened—village folk, and children, and schoolboys, and district visitors, and all kinds of ladies of certain and uncertain age, who referred to the vicar as "dear Mr. Lambe." The vicar's fat and urbane smile pervaded the whole proceedings like sunshine.

Later in the afternoon, a number of fellows from Highcliffe School wandered in. Harry Wharton frowned at the sight of Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, and Vavasour of Highcliffe. He knew that there would probably be friction—there was never any love lost between Greyfriars and Highcliffe. Ponsonby & Co. stopped first at Vernon-Smith's stall, however. They were on good terms with the Bounder of Greyfriars, a circumstance which did not help to make Vernon-Smith popular in his own school.

"Blessed if I ever thought of seeing you at this game, Smithy," Ponsonby remarked, with a stare of surprise at the Bounder. "Have you turned over a new leaf?"

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"Exactly!" he said.

"What's the little game?" said Gadsby. "You don't care twopenny for any rotten old organ funds. What are you up to?"

"Putting Wharton's nose out of joint," said the Bounder cheerfully.

The Highcliffe fellows laughed.

"Good!" said Ponsonby. "Hear, hear! Anything we can do to back you up?"

"Buy things."

"Ahem! Anything easier?"

Vernon-Smith lowered his voice.

"Yes," he said, almost in a whisper. "You see that Wharton's got a stock of fireworks?"

"Yes—he'll do a good sale with them, I should think."

"They'll go off pretty well, on the Fourth of November," Gadsby remarked.

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"That's what I want them to do."

"Eh? What do you mean?" said Ponsonby.

"If a spark were dropped there—"

"Phew! Might set the stall on fire!"

"No danger of that. Look here," muttered the Bounder;

"I've got a cigar-lighter in my pocket—you open it and there's a flash of flame, you know—just enough to light a fuse. If you could put it to the crackers—they've got 'em tied up in bundles—"

"Too jolly risky!" murmured Ponsonby uneasily.

"Absolutely!" muttered Vavasour.

"It would muck up Wharton's show," said the Bounder.

"It would be one in the eye for that gang, for all the likings they've given you Highcliffe chaps."

"Absolutely. But—"

"Well, take the cigar-lighter."

"I'll do that; but—"

"It will be safe enough. Some of you can pretend to buy things, and keep attention off Ponsonby while he does the trick. Now's your chance—Wharton's talking to the vicar."

Ponsonby slipped the cigar-lighter into his pocket.

The Highcliffe fellows moved towards Wharton's stall. Harry Wharton was speaking to the vicar, who had paused to address to him a few words of encouragement. The stout vicar was standing off and on, as a sailor would say, all the time, bearing down upon the helpers one after another, and rolling out grateful or encouraging sentences. Dear Mr. Lambe was very popular with his flock; especially with the single ladies who expended their superfluous energies upon the poor of the parish.

"Quite a successful stall, my dear lad, quite!" said the vicar. "I must say that I am—ah—extremely gratified by the way Greyfriars has—ah—taken up this matter. I have not the slightest—ah—doubt that this bazaar will really prove to be the great success of the year!"

"I hope so, sir," said Wharton demurely.

"We all do our best," said the vicar. "Your dear school-mate, Smith, is doing his best. One of your closest friends, I presume—eh?"

"We're in the same form, sir," said Wharton diplomatically.

"Yes—ah—yes, indeed!"

Ponsonby & Co. were looking over the things. Bob Cherry and Nugent came forward to serve them, rather suspiciously. Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour turned over article after article, and asked the prices, and sniffed, and gradually exasperated the Greyfriars juniors. Ponsonby stood close by, with his hands in his pockets, apparently regarding the crowd, and the Removites did not notice him particularly. But Ponsonby had his eyes very much open. He waited till Wharton was engrossed by the vicar, and the other fellows were fully occupied with the Highcliffians, and then he did his work.

There was a sudden sputter of sparks.

Ponsonby moved away quickly.

Gadsby swung round.

"Great Scott!" he shouted. "Look out!"

There was a yell of alarm.

"Fire!"

"Look out!"

"Fire!"

Bang, bang, bang! Whizzzz! Fizzzz! Whizzzz! Bang!

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Wharton. "What—"

"Goodness gracious! What—ah—oh—ah—goodness gracious!" gasped the vicar.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Whizzzzzz!

The bundles of crackers were exploding and jumping about, the squibs and Roman candles were shooting off together. There were clouds of sparks, a cloud of smoke, and deafening detonations. Cries of alarm were heard from all sides.

"Water!" roared Bolsover major. "Douse it—quick!"

"Fire!" shrieked Billy Bunter.

"It's all right!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Keep your heads—there's no danger! It's only the fireworks going off."

"My hat!" ejaculated Miss Clara. "Only!"

"Dear me!" said Marjorie. "How can it have happened. Ponsonby was leaning there—close to the fireworks!"

"You don't think he'd do it on purpose, Miss Hazeldene?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, in a tone of shocked surprise.

"I hope not!" said Marjorie.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The last of the fireworks exploded.

Some of the more excited of the crowd had made a rush for the doors. Two or three old ladies had fainted, and girls were shrieking, and boys were yelling. There was danger of a panic, which might have ended in disaster. Fortunately, however, those who kept their heads succeeded in stilling the disturbance.

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The explosion being over, and the scattered sparks trampled out, the crowd realised that there was no danger.

But comments were passed very freely upon the juniors who had had fireworks on their stall, and had allowed them to catch alight.

The vicar was frowning. He was very much annoyed by this untoward accident, which had clouded over the bazaar which had opened so auspiciously.

"However did you—ah—manage to set the fireworks going, Wharton?" he exclaimed.

"I can't understand it, sir," said Harry, in bewilderment. "They can't have caught fire by accident—it's impossible."

"The impossibility is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You do not mean to say that one of you set them alight on purpose?" exclaimed the vicar, in amazement.

"I'm afraid somebody did, sir—but not one of us."

"Dear me—dear me! A most unfortunate occurrence!" And the vicar sailed away.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another grimly. Their stall had been almost completely wrecked. The Highcliffe fellows had strolled away, and the Greyfriars juniors could guess the reason.

"It was Ponsonby & Co.," muttered Wharton.

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Must have been!" said Nugent. "I suppose we can't go after them and bump them—it wouldn't do at a church bazaar."

Wharton laughed.

"No; we'll punch their heads some other time, the rotters. Our show is mucked up now, and no mistake. There's a third part of our stock gone—and the people are fighting shy of our stall now!"

"The Bounder's doing a good bizney!" growled Bob Cherry.

There was no doubt about that. The Bounder was in the full swing of it, and the two charming girls who were helping attracted many customers who would not have paused on account of the Bounder. Vernon-Smith was going strong—very strong—and there seemed little doubt already who would receive the match football offered by the Head of Greyfriars as a prize.

But there was no help for it. The Bounder seemed destined to triumph, and the Famous Four could only make up their minds to grin and bear it.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. Business Before Pleasure.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked on, not with envy certainly, but with exasperation, at the success of the Bounder. They would not have objected to his success if it had been fairly won; but it wasn't. He had captured Marjorie and Clara to serve at his stall, and he had contrived the explosion of the fireworks—they were assured of that. One of the Highcliffe fellows had done it,

but the suggestion had come from the Bounder, and they did not need telling so. The most saleable part of their stock had been destroyed, and the explosion had injured a great deal of the remainder, and a good many people were avoiding their stall in case of further accidents. There was no doubt that the Famous Four's stall was a "frost."

It could not be helped, put it was very exasperating. The Bounder was going ahead. He was getting rid of his stock at a great rate. His prices were low, and that was unusual enough to make the things go. Marjorie and Clara were charming saleswomen.

"Well, we're dished this time!" Bob Cherry remarked, sitting down, as there appeared to be nothing to do.

Harry Wharton nodded.

Hardly anybody but their own personal friends of Greyfriars stopped at the stall, but there was always a crowd round Vernon-Smith's.

"Dished and done!" said Nugent. "I suppose we can't even take Marjorie to tea; it's tea-time, you know, and the refreshment department is all right."

Wharton frowned.

"I don't see why not," he said. "Look there. Vernon-Smith and Hazel have gone over to speak to Miss Primrose—they're out of sight. Why not capture the prizes while they're gone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll jolly well have a try, anyway," said Nugent.

"The tryfulness shall be terrific, my worthy chums," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Vernon-Smith and Hazeldene had gone. They would be back soon, probably; but in the meantime there was time to strike while the iron was hot. The chums of the Remove strolled over to Marjorie and Clara, and were greeted with charming smiles.

"How are you fellows doing?" asked Miss Clara.

"Rotten!" said Wharton frankly.

"I am sorry!" said Marjorie softly.

"It was the giddy explosion—that's settled us," said Wharton. "It was as much as the Baa Lambe could do to keep sweet."

"It was very unfortunate."

"Yes; it will be unfortunate for the chap who did it, too, some time," growled Bob Cherry, under his breath.

"We wondered if you would like to come to tea!" Harry Wharton remarked. "It's tea-time, you know."

Marjorie hesitated.

"But Vernon-Smith and Hazel left us in charge of the stall," she said.

"Oh, that's all right! Here's Bolsover and Bunter; they can look after the stall. What are they here for?"

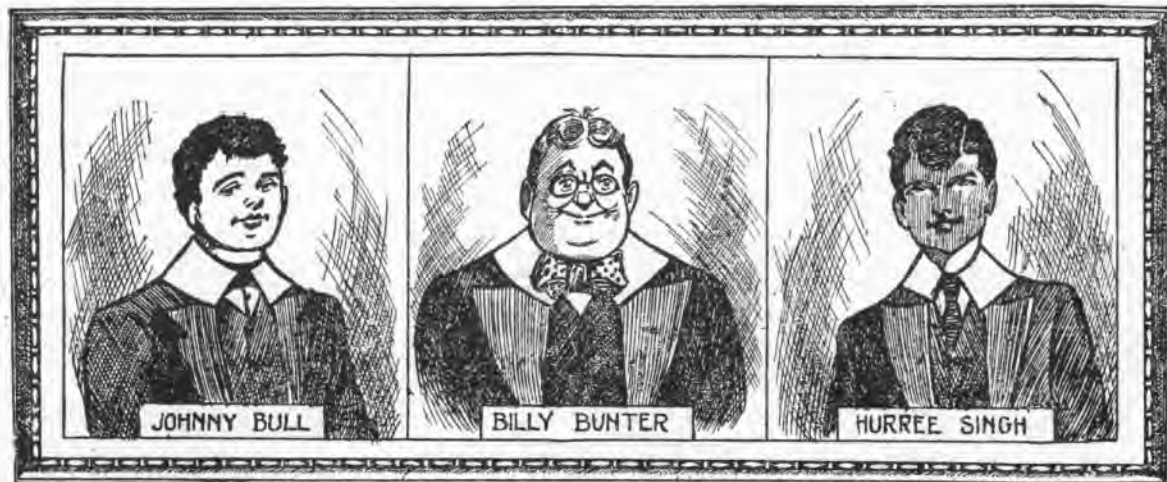
"Not for ornament, I should think," murmured Johnny Bull.

Marjorie turned to Bolsover major with a sweet smile.

"Do you mind?" she asked.

Bolsover major could not very well say that he did. So he said that he didn't. And Marjorie and Clara tripped

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No. 3.—TOM BROWN : VERNON-SMITH : and WUN-LUNG.



Bang! Bang! Whizzzzzzzz! The bundle of crackers on the stall were exploding and jumping about, the squibbs and Roman candles were shooting off together. There were clouds of sparks, a cloud of smoke, and deafening detonations. "Good heavens!" gasped Harry Wharton. "What——" "Water!" roared Bolsover major. "Quick!" (See chapter 10.)

away with the Famous Four in the direction of the refreshment-room. They disappeared in the crowd. Harry Wharton's stall was left unattended, but as there was no customers it did not matter very much.

Five minutes later Vernon-Smith and Hazeldene came back. The Bounder glanced round for the girls.

"It's all right," he said.

"Oh, it's all right, is it?" said Bolsover major grumpily.

"Yes; I've ordered tea—a really ripping tea!"

"Rather late in the day."

"What do you mean? Where are the girls?" asked Vernon-Smith anxiously.

"Gone to tea!"

"What?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Wharton & Co. have taken them to tea. Marjorie asked us to look after the stall while they were gone, and left apologies for not waiting till you came back. She said they wouldn't be gone long—but my opinion is that they'll be gone exactly as long as Wharton can keep them."

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The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"You silly asses!" he exclaimed. "What did you let them go for?"

"Oh, really, Smithy——" said Billy Bunter.

Bolsover grunted.

"How were we to help it?" he said. "Hazel ought to have stayed here; he might have known that Marjorie would bolt if she had a chance. She was spooled into coming here at all, and you know it."

"Oh, you fathead——"

"Look here——"

"You silly chump——"

"Ahem! Ahem-in-mm!"

It was the voice of the fat vicar. Vernon-Smith turned scarlet, and swung round. Mr. Lamb affected not to have heard the exchange of compliments, though, as a matter of fact, he had heard every word.

"I hope you are—ah—progressing satisfactorily beah!" said the vicar.

"Oh, yes, quite, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.
 "Yaas, I really think we shall make this the great success of the yah!" remarked the vicar. "Really! Yaas! Ah!"
 And he rolled away.

"I suppose Marjorie will be back soon," Hazeldene remarked pacifically. "I really don't see any harm in the girls having tea with Wharton, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith sniffed.
 "Well, I do," he said. "Come with me; I'm going to look for them. You come, too, Bunter."

Billy Bunter moved with alacrity.
 "Good!" he said. "I'm frightfully hungry, Smithy."

"I'm hungry, for that matter," said Bolsover, surlily.

"Well, somebody must stay here," said Vernon-Smith.

"You can come later—we sha'n't be very long."

And Hazeldene and Bunter and the Bounder walked away together, and threaded their way through the throng.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the Cliff House girls were already having their tea. They were seated round a table to themselves, which was laden with good things. Marjorie and Clara looked very bright and cheerful. And the Famous Four seemed to have recovered their spirits.

"Not going to join them, are you?" asked Hazeldene, as the Bounder moved directly on towards the table.

"Certainly. I suppose you're going to have tea with your own sister," said Vernon-Smith coolly, "and I'm with you."

"There won't be room at that table," said Hazeldene easily.

"We can take the next; that will be better for—for Bunter."

"Oh, I can feed anywhere!" said Bunter.

The Bounder smiled unpleasantly.

"It's not only feeding you're going to do," he said. "You're going to make them sit up. That's what I've brought you for."

The Owl of the Remove looked very uneasy.

"I—I say, Smithy, I'd rather not, you know."

"What's that got to do with it?" asked Vernon-Smith unpleasantly.

"Look here, I don't want to ventriloquise till after tea—"

"Do you want any tea?"

"Yes, of course I do!"

"Have you got any money?"

"No; I've been disappointed about a postal-order, and—"

"Then you want me to stand you some tea?"

"Well, I s'pose you're going to stand me some tea, as you've brought me here!" said Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Not unless you do as you're told," said the Bounder.

"You'll do exactly as I tell you, and you'll do it before tea, or you'll get nothing."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"I mean bizney!"

"Ahem! Of course, I shall be very glad to do anything you like, Smithy, old man!" said Billy Bunter. "I'd do anything for a chap I like as much as I do you."

"Good! Then we sha'n't quarrel," said the Bounder calmly.

"But I—I'd like a little refreshment to go on with."

"You won't get it!"

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. But he was quite in the hands of the Bounder, and he knew that he had to toe the line.

Vernon-Smith stopped at the next table to Wharton's, and pulled it a little closer to the other. He smiled most agreeably to the Famous Four and the two girls. He did not appear in the least annoyed at their desertion.

"I had gone to order tea for you, Marjorie," he said.

"You didn't tell us," remarked Miss Clara.

"No; but I thought it was understood. But it's all right; we'll all have tea together," said the Bounder easily.

"Yes; that will be very nice," said Marjorie.

"Oh, ripping!" said Bob Cherry. "Simply top notch, in fact."

"The top-notchfulness will be terrific."

And Vernon-Smith gave his orders, and at the same time gave Billy Bunter a warning glance. The Greyfriars ventriloquist prepared for business.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Lambe is Very Much Annoyed.

M^R. LAMBE passed the tables, and bestowed a nod and a fat smile upon the juniors and the girls. The portly figure of the vicar disappeared behind a great mass of ferns, whence the murmur of his voice could be heard as he chatted with Mr. Bunny, the curate.

"Wharton—ah—will you come ovah heah?"

Harry Wharton glanced round.

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"Was that the vicar?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bob Cherry. "He's on the other side of those ferns, jawing to Bunny."

"I wonder what he wants? I—"

"Wharton! Ah! Did you heah me?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "I'll be back in a tick, kids."

And Wharton quitted the table and passed round the bank of ferns. Mr. Lambe was standing there, chatting with Bunny.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

The vicar glanced at him.

"Yes, my deah boy?" he said. "What is it? Ah!"

Wharton looked puzzled.

"You called me, sir," he replied.

Mr. Lambe looked puzzled in his turn.

"I called you?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir; I thought so, at least."

"Not at all, my lad," said Mr. Lambe. "Quite a mistake. I was talking to Mr. Bunny, and I certainly did not call you. Ah!"

"Sorry, sir."

Harry Wharton returned to the tea-table.

"Well, what was it?" said Johnny Bull. "The vicar like a cup of tea?"

"No; he says he didn't call me."

"He jolly well did! I heard him!"

"Wharton!"

"There he goes again!" said Frank Nugent.

"Wharton! Pray come heah!"

Harry Wharton went round the ferns again.

"Yes, sir?" he said.

The vicar glanced at him in astonishment.

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

"You called me, sir!" said Harry in bewilderment.

"I did not," said Mr. Lambe, with some asperity. "Really Wharton, if this is a—ah—joke, I really fail to—ah—see the point of it!"

"But I heard you, sir!"

"You could not have—ah—heard me when I did not speak," said the vicar. "I am really—ah—surprised at you, Wharton—ah—really!"

"I am sorry, sir. I certainly thought I heard your voice," said Wharton, looking curiously at the vicar. It seemed impossible to surmise that Mr. Lambe had been drinking, but certainly—

"Well, I did not call you," said Mr. Lambe.

"Very well, sir."

Wharton departed.

"Most extraordinary thing!" said the vicar testily to Mr. Bunny. "Most extraordinary! The boy should really not play his schoolboy jokes here."

"Most improper!" said Mr. Bunny.

"Very inconsiderate, I think," said the vicar.

"Most inconsiderate!" said Mr. Bunny.

"Not really like Wharton, who is generally a very thoughtful and sensible lad," said Mr. Lambe more placably.

"Exactly!" said his faithful echo. "I have observed that he is a very thoughtful and sensible lad."

Mr. Lambe started. A voice came from behind the mass of ornamental ferns, or at all events appeared to come.

"You should have seen the old duffer's face!"

Mr. Lambe turned crimson. He recognised the well-known tones of Harry Wharton; and he had not the slightest doubt, of course, that Wharton was telling his companions how he had "pulled the leg" of Mr. Lambe. The vicar was naturally incensed. Mr. Bunny turned his face away. It seemed to him that the earth must come to an end, when a mere human being had ventured to allude to his vicar as a duffer. Mr. Bunny simply dared not look at Mr. Lambe. Mr. Lambe stood trembling with anger.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Lambe, finding his voice at last. "Did you—did you hear that remark, Mr. Bunny?"

"I—I heard something. I could not believe my ears!" gasped Mr. Bunny. "I refuse to accept the evidence of my senses, absolutely."

"Whose voice was it?"

"Wharton's, undoubtedly."

"And he referred to me as—as—" The obnoxious word would not pass the vicar's lips. "It is extraordinary—unheard of! Goodness gracious! What are the schoolboys of the present—ah—age coming to! Dear me!"

"He did not think you could hear him," murmured the curate.

"I shall soon—ah—undeceive him upon that point," said Mr. Lambe grimly.

And he rolled round the ferns to the tea-table. The juniors and the girls all looked up as he arrived, thinking that he had come for a cup of tea. The cloud upon his brow surprised them a little.

"May I pour you out a cup of tea, Mr. Lambe?" asked Marjorie brightly.

The vicar shook his head.

"Thank you, Miss Hazeldene; no. I have come here to speak a word to Wharton!" Mr. Lambe fastened a fixed and severe glance upon the captain of the Greyfriars Remove, Wharton!

"Yes, sir!" said Wharton, puzzled by the vicar's look and tone.

"I heard your remark!"

"Eh?"

"I was standing, sir, at no great distance, and I—ah—heard your words!" said the vicar crushingly. "Wharton, I should recommend you to speak of your elders with more respect, and especially, sir, dignitaries of the Church! I am surprised at you, Wharton—I am surprised and shocked! Indeed, I am disgusted!"

Harry Wharton gazed at him blankly.

He had not the faintest idea what the vicar was driving at, but he could see that Mr. Lambe was very annoyed and very angry.

"What is the matter, sir?" he exclaimed.

Mr. Lambe frowned heavily.

"Do not pretend that you do not know," he said. "I repeat that I heard your remark."

"But—but what remark, sir?" stammered Wharton.

"I shall not repeat it," said the vicar majestically. "I am surprised at you, Wharton, and ashamed of you! That is all. I shall leave you to your conscience."

And the vicar stalked away with great dignity.

Harry Wharton was dumbfounded.

"What on earth is the matter with him?" he exclaimed, when he found his voice at last. "What have I done to get his back up like this?"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Blessed if I know!" he said.

"The blessedness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The honourable vicar seems to have lost his esteemed temper."

"I do not understand it," said Marjorie. "Perhaps you can get him to explain presently, when he is calmer."

Wharton nodded. He was feeling very much troubled in mind by the vicar's action. It seemed as if nothing at all would go right that day.

"I suppose he can't be squiffy?" murmured Nugent.

"Oh, Franky!"

"Well, it's jolly queer his calling to you two or three times, you know, and then saying he didn't, and then fancying he heard you say something or other. It's as if the place was haunted with giddy, mysterious voices," said Frank.

Wharton started.

"Mysterious voices!" he ejaculated. "Oh, what asses we are! There's Bunter sitting at the next table all the time!"

"My hat!"

"The giddy ventriloquist!"

Harry Wharton sprang to his feet. But Billy Bunter had heard him, and he leaped up, too, and fled as Wharton made a movement towards him.

"Bunter!" shouted Harry angrily. "Come back, you young rotter!"

But Billy Bunter did not come back. He vanished in the crowd. Harry Wharton turned a face flushed with anger upon the Bounder.

"You put Bunter up to this!" he exclaimed.

Vernon-Smith looked at him with an air of polite inquiry.

"Up to what?" he asked.

"This rotten ventriloquist trick," said Wharton savagely. "You've got me into trouble with the vicar now, you miserable cad!"

Vernon-Smith flushed.

"Pile it on!" he said. "You're quite safe to slang a fellow as much as you like while there are ladies present."

Wharton clenched his hands. He turned away from the Bounder without another word. He was putting himself in the wrong again, as he seemed destined to do when he was dealing with the Bounder of Greyfriars. Vernon Smith and Hazeldene rose and walked away. Marjorie gave Harry Wharton a gentle glance.

"Never mind, Harry," she said. "You must find an opportunity of explaining to the vicar that it was Bunter's ventriloquism—"

"It sounds rather a steep explanation," said Harry. "It was too rotten to play a trick like that."

"We'll make Bunter own up!" said Bob Cherry. "Look here, I've finished my tea! You come along with me, Johnny, and we'll hunt Bunter down, and make him own up to old Lambe."

"But you can't!" said Harry. "He won't do it!"

"We'll persuade him. Come on, Johnny!"

And Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull walked away together, leaving Wharton and Nugent, and Hurree Singh with the girls. Harry Wharton broke into a laugh.

"Bob means business," he remarked. "I shouldn't wonder if Bunter is booked for a warm time."

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"Serve him jolly well right!" said Nugent. "It's rotten to put you on bad terms with the vicar. Hallo! There he is!"

Mr. Lambe could be seen at a distance. Harry Wharton half rose. Marjorie Hazeldene gave him an encouraging look.

"Go and explain to him, Harry!"

"He doesn't look as if he will listen to me," said Wharton hesitatingly. "Still, I'll try."

He moved towards the vicar. Mr. Lambe gave him a severe look, and turned his back. Harry Wharton returned to his table with a very red face. He had been cut!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Explains.

"I SAY, Smithy—" "It was all right," grinned Vernon-Smith. "Yes, but I say—" "I'm quite satisfied, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked at him. Vernon-Smith had just retailed the scene at the tea-table to Bolsover major, who was chuckling over it.

"That's all very well, Smithy," said Bunter; "but I'm not satisfied."

"What's the matter with you?"

"I haven't had my tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'm frightfully hungry, Smithy."

"Oh, go and feed!" said the Bounder. He tossed the fat junior a half-crown carelessly. Billy Bunter caught it, and blinked at it thoughtfully.

"Will you have this back out of my postal-order?" he asked. "Or shall I put it down to the old account?"

"Oh, buzz off, and don't talk rot!" said Vernon Smith brusquely.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Buzz off, and don't bother!"

And Billy Bunter grunted and departed, without settling the important question whether the half-crown should be paid out of the postal-order—when it came—or put down to the old account.

But the shadows were soon chased from Billy Bunter's face, as he found himself seated at a little table covered with a half-crown's worth of solid eatables. He was just beginning when two Removites came up to the table.

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

"Found you, have we?" remarked Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter blinked up easily.

"I say, you fellows, I'm sorry I can't ask you to have anything," he said. "I'm sincerely sorry, but I've got barely enough anyway."

"We don't want you to give us anything," Bob Cherry explained. "We're going to give you something, as a matter of fact."

"What is it?" asked Bunter. "I should like some jam-tarts. They've got jolly good jam-tarts here. But my tin wouldn't run to 'em."

"It's not jam-tarts," said Bob Cherry, grinning.

"Sponge cakes, then," said Bunter eagerly. "I wanted some sponge cakes, but I couldn't manage it. Smithy is frightfully mean about money."

"It's not sponge cakes."

"What is it, then?" asked Bunter, blinking suspiciously at the two juniors.

"Thick ears!" said Bob blandly.

"Eh?"

"A nice set of thick ears—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Unless you come at once and explain to Mr. Lambe that you were ventriloquising, when he thought he heard Wharton's voice," said Bob.

"But I—I wasn't—"

"Cheese it! You know you were," said Bob angrily.

"I—I mean it was only a lark," stammered Bunter. "Besides, old Baa Lambe is a duffer, isn't he? You know he is."

"So you call him a duffer?"

"You see, I—I—"

"And he thought it was Wharton!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, I'm rather a dab at imitating voices, you know," said Billy Bunter complacently. "Of course, it was only a lark."

"It's a lark that's got to be explained to Mr. Lambe," said Bob Cherry, grasping Billy Bunter by one arm. "You take his other arm, Johnny."

"Right-ho!"

Bunter struggled.

"I—I say, you fellows, lemme alone! I—I can't explain to Mr. Lambe. He—he would be awfully waxy if he knew I'd called him a duffer," stammered the Owl of the Remove.

"Yes; and you let him think Wharton had called him one."

"It—it was a lark, you know," said Bunter feebly.

"Well, this is a lark, too," said Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

"I—I—I—I won't!"

"Yank him along, Johnny!"

"What-ho!" said John Bull.

"I—I say, you fellows— Oh! Ow! I won't come! Yow!"

Billy Bunter caught hold of the tea-table as the two sturdy juniors dragged him away. He laid hold of the table to save himself. But the light tea-table was not built for that. It rolled over sideways in Bunter's grasp, and there was a terrific crash as crockery and eatables and drinkables went to the floor together.

"Oh!" roared Bunter. "Look what you've done! My grub! Oh! Leggo! Help!"

"Kim on!" said Bob Cherry, unheeding.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the fat voice of Mr. Lambe, in startled tones. "Goodness gracious! What has happened?"

"Here's the vicar!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"If you please, sir, Bunter wants to speak to you," said Bob Cherry. "We were just bringing him to you, sir."

"Indeed! Good gracious!"

"I don't!" roared Bunter.

"Yes, you do!" said Bob Cherry, compressing his arm till Bunter squeaked. "Don't you remember? You've got to explain to Mr. Lambe about ventriloquising, and imitating Harry Wharton's voice."

"Goodness gracious!" said Mr. Lambe, in astonishment.

"Ow! I didn't! I—I—I—"

"You see, sir," explained Bob Cherry, "Bunter is a giddy ventriloquist, and he was imitating Wharton's voice when you thought Wharton called you a duffer, sir."

"Upon my word!"

"I wasn't!" howled Bunter. "I didn't! I wasn't there! I wasn't on the spot at all. I was minding the stall for Smithy! Ow!"

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Lambe sternly. "What! Why, I saw you there, Buntah, when I spoke to Wharton! You were sitting—ah—at the adjoining table, Buntah."

"I—I—I mean I was there!" stammered Bunter. "What I mean is, I was sitting at the next table, and I distinctly heard Wharton say what he did."

"Goodness gracious! What a dreadful—ahem!—dreadful prevaricator!" said Mr. Lambe. "Buntah, I regard you as—h'm!—ah—a prevaricator of the deepest—ah—dye!"

"Oh, really, sir! You see, sir—"

"I see that you have spoken—ah—untruthfully," said Mr. Lambe severely. "Cherry, will you kindly tell Wharton—ah—I am sorry! I was deceived by this wicked boy! Buntah, you are—ah—a young rascal, sir!"

And Mr. Lambe sailed away.

"That's cleared up," said Bob Cherry, with satisfaction. "You're so good at clearing up, Bunter, you can start on your food now. It wants clearing up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter scowled at the chums of the Remove, and looked in dismay at his feet. The eatables were not very eatable now, and a waiter was standing by, waiting for some settlement for the broken crockery. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull strolled away, and left the Owl of the Remove to settle matters with the waiter. It was only fair that Bunter should be made to realise that the way of the transgressor was hard.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry has an Idea—And the Bouncer has Another.

THE bazaar was over, and the Greyfriars fellows streamed home in the dusk of the November evening. Harry Wharton & Co. did not have the pleasure of seeing Marjorie and Clara home to Cliff House. That duty was claimed by the Bouncer and Bolsover major, with Hazel-dene. It could not very well be helped; but the Famous Four looked after them with clouded brows, after saying good-bye to the Cliff House girls. Wharton thrust his hands deep into his pockets as he strode away towards the school.

Bob Cherry burst into a chuckle as they walked down the shadowy lane. Harry Wharton glanced at him rather irritably.

3

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"I can't see anything to chuckle about," he said. "It seems to me that we've been dished and done all along the line."

Bob Cherry nodded.

"I know we have," he said. "It can't be helped. Life's full of ups and downs, you know, and we're coming in for some of the downs. But I was thinking. You know what to-morrow is?"

"Bonfire day," said Nugent.

"Yes; and we're going to have a bonfire in the Close."

"What about it?"

"Well, the proceedings won't be complete without a guy and a procession. I was thinking that an effigy of Vernon-Smith would make a good guy. We can burn the Bounder in effigy, you know. I can get some of his old clothes. He's given some to Gosling to sell, and I can get them from Gosling. And we can make up a cardboard face and make it look like the Bounder. I think—Hullo, hullo hullo!"

Bob Cherry paused suddenly and looked round. A pair of large spectacles glimmered in the darkness of the lane.

"I say, you fellows!" said Billy Bunter affably. "I'll walk with you if you like—"

"You rotter!" roared Bob Cherry. "You were walking on the grass, so as to get near and hear what we were saying."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You fat rotter!" Bob Cherry grasped the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder and shook him. "Now—"

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Yow! I didn't hear a word! Ow! If you shake me I'll like t-t-that, you ass, you'll m-m-make my spec-spectacles f-f-fall off—"

"Shake, shake, shake!"

"Yow! And if you break 'em you'll have to—ow! pay for 'em! Yow! I—I didn't hear a—yow! word! I don't know that you're going to b-b-burn the Bounder in effigy, and I—I—I—Ow!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down in the lane with considerable violence, and the chums of the Remove walked on and left him there.

"Bunter knows the wheeze now, Bob," Nugent remarked.

"Well, it won't make any difference," said Bob Cherry.

"They can't stop us! We'll burn the Bounder in effigy all the same. It will be a lark!"

Most of the Greyfriars juniors that evening were thinking about the celebration of the Fifth of November on the morrow.

The Head had given permission for a bonfire to be built in the Close, and fellows of all the lower Forms had lent assistance in collecting fuel.

Quite an imposing structure had been built, to be reduced to ashes on the evening of the Fifth, and the juniors were well provided with all sorts and conditions of fireworks, with which to make night hideous on the famous anniversary.

Bob Cherry, thanks to Billy Bunter, found that his wheeze of burning the Bounder in effigy was known to all the Remove, but he went ahead all the same. He was very busy that evening in Study No. 13, and Mark Linley and Wun Lung and Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh obligingly took their preparation into Study No. 1 to do. Bob Cherry had Study No. 13 covered with all kinds of things—old clothes, and straw for packing, and paint, and chalk, and rags, and sawdust.

He had obtained an old suit of clothes belonging to Vernon-Smith from the porter, and he stuffed them out with rags and shavings and sawdust, and sewed them together, in what he considered was a good imitation of the Bounder's figure. With a head made of cardboard, and painted with hideous features, and an old silk hat on top, Bob Cherry considered that the effigy ought to be easily recognised as Vernon-Smith.

He was deep in his arduous employment when the Bounder looked into the study late in the evening. Wharton and Nugent were helping him, and they had, among them, produced an effigy that was certainly hideous enough. Whether it would be recognised as the Bounder was another question; but to make all sure, Bob Cherry adopted the device of that ancient Greek gentleman who wrote under his picture, "This is an ox," in case there should be any mistake about the matter. Bob wrote in large letters upon a sheet of cardboard, "This is the Bounder!", and pinned it upon the breast of the figure. He had just finished it when the Bounder & Co. looked into the study.

Bob Cherry glanced round.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo!" he remarked. "Do you see the likeness?"

The Bounder looked at the hideous effigy.

He did not seem annoyed. He laughed.

"Is that meant for me?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"You are very complimentary. I shall have an effigy of you going round the Close to-morrow evening, but I'll guarantee that it's a bit more life-like than that!"

"Don't you think the features are very like?" grinned Bob.

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ONE
PENNY.

"I can't say I do. I just looked in to tell you that I'm going to have the prize," said the Bounder.

"How do you know?"

"The vicar has telephoned to the Head. I took three times as much at my stall as was taken at any other Greyfriars stall."

"Well, I'd rather be beaten by a cad than beat any other chap by caddish means," said Harry Wharton. "You wouldn't have beaten us if you'd played the game."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, you were beaten, anyway," he said. "The sooner that you chaps realise that I am top dog in the Remove, the better it will be for you. I fancy my effigy to-morrow will beat that thing hollow!"

"We'll see," said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders again and walked out of the study.

He was looking very thoughtful, and a grin was lurking round his mouth. It was evident that some scheme was working in the Bounder's active mind, and Bolsover, in the study, looked at him curiously.

"What are you thinking about, Smithy?" he asked. "I can see you've got some wheeze in your head."

The Bounder laughed.

"I'm going to have an effigy of Bob Cherry for the bonfire procession round the Close to-morrow evening," he said.

"Yes?" said Bolsover.

"And it is going to be a remarkably life-like one."

"You haven't got much time to get it made, then."

"It's made already."

"Made already!" said Bolsover in astonishment.

The Bounder nodded.

"I don't quite catch on," said Bolsover.

Vernon-Smith lowered his voice and whispered. The Remove bully started, and burst into a loud laugh.

"My hat! What a lark if you can work it!"

"We can work it among us," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "You and I, and Snoop and Trevor, and Stott and Elliott. We can manage it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whatever was the scheme the Bounder had whispered to his confederates they kept it to themselves that evening. The Bounder did not even confide it to the members of the Co. He knew that the fewer there are to keep a secret the more the secret is likely to be kept.

Bob Cherry had finished his effigy by bedtime, and he locked it up in his study when the Remove went to their dormitory.

He glanced at the Bounder in the dormitory, and grinned. The Bounder grinned, too, as he thought of what he had planned for the morrow.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Little Mistake.

THE Fifth of November dawned grey and misty over Greyfriars. The rising-bell clanged out through the chilly air, and Bob Cherry, the first to wake in the Remove dormitory, sat up and yawned.

"That blessed Gosling gets earlier and earlier, I believe!" grunted Bob Cherry. "It's not seven yet—it can't be!"

"It is," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Tumble up!"

"Groo! It's cold!"

One by one the Remove turned out. Billy Bunter remained last in bed, as he generally did. Even Lord Maul-e-ver, the slacker of the Remove, was always up before Bunter. Bunter blinked out of bed, shivered, and pulled the clothes about his ears.

"Call me before you go down, Smithy," he murmured. And he closed his eyes again and went off to sleep.

Bob Cherry approached his bed.

"Bunter!" he roared, with his mouth close to the fat junior's ear.

Bunter started, and lifted his head suddenly. It crashed against Bob Cherry's chin, and the humorous Bob started back with a yell, clapping his hand to his jaw in anguish.

"Ow, ow, ow!" he groaned.

"Oh, oh, oh!" gasped Bunter. "What—what was that? Ow!"

"Oh, you ass!"

Bunter rubbed his head.

"I knocked my head against something hard!" he exclaimed. "Did you shove a chunk of wood against my head, Cherry?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "He did!"

"Ow!" groaned Bob. "It was my head, you silly chump! Oh!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Groo! You lazy slacker! Gerrup!"

"Oh, really, I'm going to have another five minutes," said Bunter. "I hope you're hurt!"

And with that charitable wish, Bunter closed his eyes again. Bob Cherry rubbed his chin ruefully.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grinned, and tapped his chum on the shoulder. He held up a jumping cracker—one of those pleasant contrivances that explode six times in rapid succession after being lighted once.

"Good egg!" murmured Bob.

He took the cracker, and approached Billy Bunter's bed again.

The fat junior was already snoring. Bob Cherry lighted the fuse of the cracker, and placed it under Bunter's bed.

The Removites looked on, grinning, and waiting for what would happen.

Bunter's deep and steady snore was suddenly interrupted.

Bang!

Billy Bunter started out of his slumber.

Bang!

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, dear! What—what—"

Bang!

Billy Bunter leaped up in bed in wild alarm. For the moment he thought that an earthquake had visited Greyfriars, and that the worst of its effects were being felt in the Remove dormitory.

Bang, bang!

"Ow! Oh! Help! Fire!" roared Bunter.

The Remove yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter leaped wildly out of bed, dragging the bedclothes after him. He caught his foot in them, and stumbled, and rolled over on the floor, roaring. The cracker expended its last bang as he rolled.

"Oh! Ow! Help! Yarooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat up, enveloped in the tangled bedclothes, and blinked round him.

"Wh-wh-what was that?" he gasped.

"It's all right," grinned Bob Cherry. "Only an invention for waking up lazy slackers in the morning. Please to remember the Fifth of November—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you rotter!" roared Bunter. "It's against the rules to explode rotten fireworks in the dormitory."

"That wasn't a rotten firework—it was a jolly good one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter scrambled up. He looked inclined to rush upon Bob Cherry, for a moment. Bob Cherry picked up a sponge from his washstand, and dipped it into cold water, and the Owl of the Remove thought better of it.

"Beast!" he grunted. "Ow! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ought to be grateful for being got up," said Bob Cherry indignantly. "Suppose Quelch had come along and roused you out with a cane?"

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he heard the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, from the door.

"How dare you explode fireworks in the dormitory?"

"I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder, as Bob Cherry gazed in surprise at the door of the dormitory, which was closed.

Bob Cherry gasped.

"You—you ventriloquising fathead!" he exclaimed, glaring at Bunter. "I'd have sworn that it was old Quelch's voice!"

Bunter chuckled, and, a little relieved at having startled Bob Cherry, he turned to his dressing. Bob Cherry turned to his washstand, and as he did so the door of the dormitory opened and Mr. Quelch looked in. The master of the Remove had heard the explosions in the dormitory, and he had hurried up at once. Fireworks indoors were strictly forbidden at the school, for good reasons; but Bob Cherry had forgotten about the rule.

"Who exploded that cracker?" demanded Mr. Quelch sternly.

Bob Cherry heard him, but he did not trouble to turn round from his washstand this time. He believed, naturally, that it was some more of Billy Bunter's ventriloquism.

"Who was it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob Cherry, without turning his head. "Enough's as good as a feast, you know; and now I listen, I know that that squeaky yaup isn't old Quelch's voice."

"What!" gasped Mr. Quelch, scarcely able to believe his ears.

"Oh, shut up!"

"What! What! What! Are you aware whom you are speaking to, Cherry?" thundered the Remove-master.

"Yes, fathead," said Bob Cherry, who was splashing away merrily at his washstand, and had his eyes shut as he sponged

his face, and so was quite unconscious of the looks of horror on the faces of the rest of the Form. "Yes, you chump!"

"What! What!"

"I'm talking to a silly ass," said Bob Cherry.

"What!"

"And if you don't stop playing the giddy goat, I'll come and wipe up the floor with you!" continued Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch stood petrified.

He had certainly never been addressed like that by any member of his Form before; and he could scarcely believe his ears.

"You—you impertinent young scoundrel!" he gasped, at last, as soon as his voice came back to him.

"Oh, cheese it!"

"What!"

"Ring off!"

"R-r-ring off!" stuttered the Form-master.

"Yes, before I bung a cake of soap at you, you duffer!"

Mr. Quelch rushed at Bob Cherry. The most patient of Form-masters could not be expected to be talked to like that. He grasped the Remove by the shoulders, and swung him away from the washstand, and then his open hand rose and fell upon Bob Cherry's unprotected limbs. Bob roared and struggled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Why, what— Quelch, by gosh!"

"Oh, you ass, Bob!" gasped Wharton. "Didn't you know—"

"Ow! Oh! It—it's all right, sir!" panted Bob Cherry.

"I—I—"

Spank! Spank! Spank!

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"You impertinent young rascal—"

"I—I—I didn't mean to be impertinent, sir!" gasped the unfortunate Bob. "I—I didn't know it was you!"

"What! How dare you say so? Do you mean to tell me that you do not know my voice?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I thought it was Bunter ventriloquising!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Surely you don't think I would speak to you like that, sir? Oh!"

"Oh! I see!" said Mr. Quelch, mollified. "You did not know it was I!"

"Ow! No! Oh!"

"Very good," said Mr. Quelch, releasing him. "In that case, I will excuse you, Cherry. But I should recommend you to be a little more careful next time. I came here to see who had been exploding fireworks."

"Ow! I did, sir!"

"H'm! Well, I have punished you," said Mr. Quelch considerably. "Do not do it again, Cherry."

"Ow! All right, sir! Ow!"

Mr. Quelch left the dormitory. He left Bob Cherry groaning dismally, and the rest of the Remove shrieking with merriment.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Fifth of November.

BOB CHERRY had recovered his spirits before the day was over, however. He had had a severe spanking, but he forgot all about it by the time lessons were over, and it was time to prepare for the evening's celebration. The juniors had been anxious lest it should rain; but the evening turned out to be fine, much to their relief. The big pyre was dry, and all ready to be ignited, and Bob Cherry's effigy of the Bounder, after being carried in solemn procession round the Close, was to be placed upon it and consumed. The Bounder did not seem to mind in the least. He took the joke up against himself with perfect good humour. That he intended to exhibit an effigy of Bob Cherry, in his turn, was known to all the fellows, but nothing had been seen of it so far. If the Bounder had the effigy in his possession he was keeping it very dark.

Vernon-Smith & Co. were seen whispering together several times, and grinning, as if they had some little joke that was known only to themselves. Vernon-Smith had taken the rest of the New Co. into his secret now, whatever it was, and they were very much tickled by it.

The lighting of the bonfire had been fixed for seven o'clock. It was soon after half-past six that Bob Cherry and his friends brought the "guy" out into the Close. The November evening had set in dark, but fine.

There was a shout of laughter from the fellows in the Close at the sight of the effigy. Certainly, without the placard Bob Cherry had affixed to it, no one would have recognised it as the Bounder.

But several of the juniors pretended to see a likeness, for the sake of the joke against Vernon-Smith.

"Sure, and it might be his twin brother, intirely," Micky Desmond remarked. "It's a portrait painter or a sculptor ye ought to be, Bob Cherry."

"Yaas, it's wonderful," said Lord Mauleverer. "The same cast of features—especially the nose and mouth! Marvellous, begad!"

"I can do these things, you know," said Bob Cherry modestly. "Now, you'll have to tie it on that chair, or it'll tumble off. Here's a rope."

The effigy was tied in a sitting posture upon an old chair, which was to be consigned to the flames along with it. Then several of the juniors raised it to carry it in the procession. Just as they were starting, the voice of Mr. Quelch was heard from the dusky doorway of the School House.

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Pray come into the Form-room for a moment."

"Yes, sir. You chaps start; I'll be after you in a jiffy," said Bob.

He ran into the house.

Bob Cherry had not the least idea what Mr. Quelch wanted to see him in the Form-room for, unless it was about some forgotten imposition. He hurried into the Form-room. The light was not on there, and the dying fire shed a faint glimmer. Bob Cherry paused in the doorway, and stared round him in surprise. He could not imagine what Mr. Quelch was doing there in the dark.

"Are you here, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

It was the Bounder's voice.

As the reply came, four or five dusky figures leaped upon Bob Cherry.

Then he understood.

It was not Mr. Quelch who had called him into the Form-room—it was some more of Billy Bunter's ventriloquism. And he had walked blindly into a trap—into an ambush laid by Vernon-Smith & Co.

Bob Cherry struggled, but it was quite unavailing; the odds were too great. He was borne to the floor, with the Bounder & Co. sprawling over him.

Bob hit out furiously, and there was a yell from Bolsover major.

"Ow! My nose! Yow!"

"Got him!" gasped Stott.

"Rescue!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Rescue, Remove!"

"Stuff something into the rotter's mouth!" growled Bolsover, who was nursing his nose. "We shall have the whole swarm of them here."

"Res—Ow—ow! Grooooh!"

Vernon-Smith crammed his handkerchief into Bob Cherry's mouth. While the others were holding the junior down, Vernon-Smith knelt beside him, and carefully wound a piece of twine round his head, fastening the handkerchief in Bob's open mouth, so that he could not possibly get rid of it.

Bob Cherry spluttered and choked into silence.

"Fasten the brute up!" said the Bounder.

"Ha ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry wriggled.

His hands were tied together behind his back, and then his ankles were bound. He was now quite helpless in the grasp of his enemies.

Vernon-Smith lighted the gas in the Form-room.

It glimmered down upon the grinning Co., and the red, furious face of their prisoner. Vernon-Smith looked down upon the wriggling Bob with a cheerful grin.

"I rather think we've got you," he remarked.

"Grooh!" said Bob faintly through the gag.

"Ha ha, ha!"

"Do you know what we're going to do?"

"Grooh!"

"We're going to have a Bob Cherry effigy," explained Vernon-Smith blandly. "And as it's easier and cheaper, we're going to have the genuine article."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled his followers.

Bob Cherry glared at them, not understanding yet.

"Get out the chair!" said Vernon-Smith.

Snoop brought an old chair from the corner of the room, where it had been placed in readiness. Bob Cherry was lifted up, and placed upon the chair in a sitting posture. Then fresh cords were produced, and he was tied to the chair, with cords passing round and round him, continually knotted, till he was a mass of knots and cords.

Then he understood!

Vernon-Smith had said that his effigy of Bob Cherry was to be life-like. It would be very life-like, for it was to be Bob Cherry himself!

"Regular guy, isn't he?" grinned Snoop.

"Ha ha, ha!"

"Born for the part!" said Vernon-Smith. "It couldn't really be improved upon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only a few touches of paint," said the Bounder, taking a colour-box and a brush from his desk. "That's all that's needed."

Bob Cherry glared at him in furious silence. Outside, in the Close, could be heard the shouts and laughter of the juniors celebrating the Fifth, and the explosions of crackers.

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Kivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

EVERY MONDAY.

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ONE PENNY.

and the whizzing of squibs. The celebrations had started, but Bob Cherry was left out of them so far. He was soon, however, to take a distinguished part!

Vernon-Smith daubed colour upon his face. He painted the upper half of the face a bright scarlet, and painted large green circles round the eyes.

The effect was utterly ludicrous.

The Co. shrieked with laughter at the sight of the unhappy Bob.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bolsover, wiping away his tears.

"He's too funny to live! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Snoop.

Vernon-Smith fastened a fool's-cap on Bob Cherry's head. Then a sheet was draped round him to conceal his person, and was tucked into his collar. It could not now be seen that the junior was tied to the chair. Vernon-Smith took a cardboard Guy Fawkes' mask, and cut it across, and fastened the lower half upon Bob's face. The lower half of the mask was a bright blue in colour, and the top edge of it just met the coating of scarlet paint which covered the upper half of Bob's face. Bob understood the Bounder's motive—the mask concealed the gag in his mouth, as the sheet tucked round him concealed his bonds. If the young rascals carried him out into the quadrangle, no one could possibly tell by looking at him that he was a living boy—he looked like an utterly ridiculous Guy Fawkes effigy. He could move nothing but his eyes.

Vernon-Smith had just finished affixing the mask when the Form-room door opened, and Harry Wharton looked in.

"Bob Cherry here!" he asked.

"We're here," said Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton stared at the figure in the chair.

"My only hat!" he exclaimed. "What's this?"

"That's our effigy."

"Great Scott! Is that meant to be like Bob Cherry?" exclaimed Wharton, laughing.

"Don't you see a likeness?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

Wharton quitted the Form-room, without the faintest suspicion that he had been looking at Bob Cherry in person. Bob made frantic efforts to speak, but in vain. Vernon-Smith & Co. burst into a roar of laughter as Wharton departed.

"Ready now!" said the Bounder. "Bring him out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Bounder & Co. raised the chair from the floor, and bore it out into the Close.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Another Guy!

"HA, ha, ha!"

"Great Scott! What a giddy monster!"

"Faith, and it's a broth av a bhooy, intirely!"

"Yaas, begad!"

Many exclamations greeted the appearance of Vernon-Smith with his effigy.

The Bounder and his comrades carried the chair upon their shoulders, and the juniors thronged round to look at the "guy," as they supposed it to be, and shouted with laughter. It was more ludicrous to look at than the effigy of the Bounder which was now burning merrily in the flames.

The bonfire had been lighted, and the flames were leaping high towards the sky, casting strange lights and shadows among the elms of the old Close of Greyfriars.

There was a continual detonating of crackers and squibbing of squibs and whizzing of rockets.

Harry Wharton came out of the School House, looking very puzzled. He had searched high and low for Bob Cherry, but he failed to find him. The junior seemed to have disappeared. Mr. Quelch was standing on the School House steps, looking away towards the bonfire, and Wharton stopped to speak to him.

"Can you tell me where Bob Cherry is?" he asked.

"Cherry?" said Mr. Quelch. "No; I have not seen him since lessons, Wharton."

Wharton jumped.

"Didn't you call him into the house, sir, about a quarter of an hour ago?" he asked.

"No!" said the Remove-master in suprise. "I certainly did not!"

"You—you did not, sir?"

"No, I did not. Why should you fancy I did?"

"Oh! I—I suppose I was mistaken, sir!" stammered Wharton.

"You certainly were."

Wharton rushed away; he understood now. If Mr. Quelch had not called Bob Cherry in, it must have been Billy

Bunter. There was nobody else at Greyfriars who could imitate the Remove-master's voice so exactly.

Bunter was with Vernon-Smith & Co. Wharton caught sight of the fat junior in the light of the bonfire, and rushed up to him and caught him by the shoulder. Bunter jumped.

"Ow! Oh, really, Linley—"

"Where is Bob Cherry, you fat rotter?"

"Oh, is it you, Wharton?" said Bunter. "Oh, really, how should I know where Bob Cherry is? Have you lost him?"

"Lost, stolen, or strayed?" grinned Bolsover major.

"Ha ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton shook the Owl of the Remove.

"You called Bob into the House!" he exclaimed. "I know it was you, and not Queleh. Have you rotters been playing any tricks on him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear chap, I've got no time to talk about Bob Cherry," said Vernon-Smith airily. "Bring that effigy along, you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What have you done with Bob Cherry?" demanded Wharton angrily.

"He's in the Close," said Bolsover.

"If you look round you'll see him," added Snoop.

And the Co. roared afresh.

Harry Wharton looked round. There were swarms of juniors to be seen in the light of the bonfire, which was now blazing high. But Bob Cherry was not to be recognised among them.

Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent joined him.

"Where's Bob?" asked Nugent.

"These rotters have done something with him!" said Wharton wrathfully.

"He's in the Close, and not far from you," said Vernon-Smith.

"Where, then?"

"Oh, look round you!" said the Bounder. "Come on, you chaps!"

And they started forward again, roaring with laughter. Loud yells greeted the appearance of the guy as it was paraded in the light of the blazing bonfire.

"Look here," exclaimed Wharton, stepping in Vernon-Smith's way, "if you don't tell me what you've done with Bob Cherry—"

"Here he is," said the Bounder.

"Where?"

Vernon-Smith pointed to the guy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared his followers.

"Don't be an ass!" said Wharton. "I don't mean your silly effigy; I mean Bob Cherry. Where is he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't tell me, I'll jolly well have your guy down and jump on it!" roared Wharton.

The Co. almost shrieked.

"He'll have it down," shrieked Bolsover, "and jump on it! Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"Come on, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "We'll smash up their effigy, anyhow!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

And the chums of the Remove rushed upon Vernon-Smith & Co.

The chair upon which the living guy sat lurched and reeled, and the juniors plumped it down upon the ground.

Harry Wharton laid hands upon it, and recoiled with a cry.

"What—what— Oh!"

"What's the matter?"

"It's alive!" gasped Wharton.

"What?"

"It moved! It's warm!"

"Faith, and it's draming ye are!" said Micky Desmond.

"How could a guy be alive, ye omadhaun?"

"Its eyes are moving!" yelled Bulstrode.

"Great Scott!"

"Begad! Yes, it's alive!"

"My hat!"

"The alivefulness is terrific!" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur.

There was a shout of amazement from the juniors, and they gathered round the guy. The flare of the fire fell full upon the face of it, and the eyes could be seen working and rolling and glaring as if moved by some cunning mechanism within.

Wharton stared at the guy, dumbfounded for a moment.

Then he sprang towards it and tore the Guy Fawkes mask off the lower part of the face.

The gagged mouth of Bob Cherry was revealed!

The juniors gazed at the unfortunate Removite for a moment, and then there was a tremendous yell.

"It's Bob Cherry!"

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and here's another guy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton dragged the handkerchief from the unfortunate guy's mouth.

Bob Cherry gasped and spluttered frantically.

"Ow, ow! Groo! Oh, lemme loose! Oh!"

"Bob!" gasped Wharton.

"Bob Cherry! Oh, my Aunt Maria!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you silly asses!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ow! Cut me loose, can't you? I'm going to slaughter Vernon-Smith! Ow! Yow! Lemme go, can't you! Stop cackling, and set me free, you giggling hyenas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors simply roared. Even Harry Wharton was laughing as he opened his pocket-knife and cut Bob Cherry's bonds.

Bob Cherry glared at his hilarious chums.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded wrathfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's another guy!" roared Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove it in the bonfire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling asses—"

"Oh, Bob, old man!" gasped Wharton. "If you could see your chivvy you'd yell, too! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a shame!" said Nugent, grinning. "Ha, ha! It's a—ha, ha!—shame! So sorry, Bob! But you do look a coughdrop! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry snorted and tramped away towards the School House. His chums went with him to comfort him, but they could not help laughing.

It was not till Bob Cherry was washed clean that he recovered his good-humour. But when he reappeared in the Close again he was greeted with one tremendous yell.

"Here he comes! Another guy! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bob Cherry was glad to return to the shelter of the School House, followed by yells of laughter. And for days after the Fifth of November Bob Cherry could not appear in public without some voice yelling:

"Here's another guy!"

THE END.

(Next Monday's issue of "The Magnet" Library will contain another grand, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. and Vernon-Smith & Co., entitled "THE GREYFRIARS CRUSADERS!" By Frank Richards. Order your copy in advance. Price 1d.)

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TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREWFerrers Lord, millionaire, and owner
of the Lord of the Deep.Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer, 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 specially 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. "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 in 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 bring back my diamond." He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and for five months pursues Nathan Gore through Europe, New Zealand, Tenerife, and back to London, never once being able to catch him up. While in London, he hears that Nathan Gore has bought from the Dutch a remote island named Galpin. Lord immediately purchases an island four miles south of Gore's, christening it Ching-Lung. Learning that Gore is fortifying his island, and has actually fitted out warships for his own use, Ferrers Lord arranges a hurried expedition, and in a few hours the whole party are aboard the Lord of the Deep, bound for the Island of Ching-Lung. Ching-Lung lives things up on board by introducing a gramophone into the fore-castle at night-time. He takes records in the voices of Barry and other members of the crew, but makes a great mistake by bringing in Maddock, who at the time is on duty. After a time Barry & Co. tumble to the joke, and after turning the light out, wait in the fore-castle to take vengeance on Ching-Lung.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Plotters!

"Whisht!" muttered Barry. "He's hoidin' up yonder!"
"Gan could eat up that braggin' ass Joe at one bite!"
went on Maddock.

"He could gobble him!" said the voice of Prout.
"And munch up O'Rooney like a chocolate-drop!"
"Simply swaller him, by hokey!" said Prout.
"Whisht!"

Barry uttered a warning hiss, and spat on his hands. None of them intended to show any mercy that night. It was necessary, however, not to recognise their tormentor, or to pretend not to do so.

"Turn on the light near the dure," whispered Barry.
"He's behind wan o' the lockers! Troth, Oi'll pound him for this!"

The light shone out, but its rays were too feeble to penetrate more than half the length of the roomy fore-castle.
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Barry crouched low, and began to advance. Joe and Prout, both barefooted, bent double, and crawled after him.

"Then up I came with my little lot!" remarked a marvellous imitation of Prout's voice.

"There's a little lot goin' to jump on yez in wan minute," thought Barry.

"And the air went blue for miles——"

"Yez'll be blue all over in no time!" thought Barry.

He held up his hand. The voice was very clear. Before him, indistinct in the gloom, rose a heap of sea-trunks and boxes. These offered an admirable hiding-place. Barry felt certain that their tormentor was concealed amongst them. He rose slowly, erect, and Prout and Joe followed his example.

"Oi'm goin' to rush him!"

"We'll all rush him!" said Prout.

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Library in advance.

"Then go!" cried Barry.

They went.

Barry did not go far, though he was well ahead. A blood-curdling shriek burst from him. He had found the electrified plate. It was like jumping into molten lead, and Barry turned a back-somersault with great suddenness. He did not want to hurt himself, apparently, or he would have selected Prout's chest to alight upon.

All the same, he did alight on Prout's chest. Not expecting a visitor, Prout was not prepared to receive him. He left Joe to receive them both, and, like three human balls, they rolled across the floor.

"Good-bye, Dolly, I must leave you!" sang the voice. And then, changing the tune, it begged them plaintively to "Come Back to Hair On!" and if they hadn't any hair, to come back with whiskers on.

The men were dumbfounded. Barry, Prout, and Joe picked themselves up speechless, and began to feel their damaged parts. Then Prout rose. Amid deathly silence he spoke:

"Misther O'Rooncy—"

"S-s-sor t-to y-y-you!" stammered Barry.

"You've hoaxed us! By hokey, you have!"

"Ut's—ut's a loie, Tom!" groaned Barry.

"I say you've hoaxed us! By hokey, I say you've been doin' it all the time!"

"So he has!" snapped Joe savagely.

"I'm goin' to kill you!" said Prout.

Barry was too far gone to be troubled even by this cheerful news.

"Make a starrrt, thin!" he moaned. "Oi don't care!"

"You've bilked us!"

"Cover me mouth, thin!" sobbed Barry. "Cover ut and lishen!"

A pillow was placed over Barry's head after a short argument, in which Barry swore that he was as innocent as a new-laid egg, and Joe sat on it. They held their breath to listen.

"Bedad, Oi'm O'Rooncy," said the voice, "and ivry wan's a looney ixcept me!"

Barry was innocent. He could not possibly have talked through the pillow and the carpenter. Prout glared round. He took the laces out of his boots and winked. He twisted them together. Every man did the same, and found himself armed with a whip that would hurt without breaking any bones.

"Charge!" cried Prout.

They charged with a will and a yell.

The five leaders naturally reached the plate first. Electric shocks are nasty with bare feet. They are also nasty to sit and roll on when dressed in thin sleeping-garments. There was trouble, but all the kicks and shrieks and struggles could not drown the music. It struck up that famous pianoforte piece, "We got it hot all round," and the attacking squadron was hurled back in a wriggling heap.

"It's one of the grammyfuns!" growled Prout, wiping his bald head.

"It's a red-hot 'un!" moaned Joe, rubbing his tingling feet.

Barry examined it from a respectful distance. He saw the steel plate with its many circular holes, and heard the unknown singer telling him that he, or she, loved him for himself alone.

"O'll lux yez!" growled Barry, seizing his rubber-soled sea-boots. "Electricity won't come through these! Arrah! What-ho!"

There was a small cheer of admiration when Barry was seen standing on the plate.

"Get me a crowbar," he said.

Joe hurried for one. They did not notice the faces at the window. Ching-Lung had glided down and unfastened the door. He relocked it the moment Joe returned. Barry borrowed a rubber tobacco-pouch, and managed to grip the crowbar with it. He drove it under the edge of the plate.

"We'll get to the bottom of this in wan go!" he said.

Barry pushed down the bar. He was going to stop that music, or hear more about it. But all at once Barry dropped the crowbar.

"Snuff!" he yelled. "At-choo! At-choo!"

It filled the air like a thin brown cloud, and it was puffed gently through the holes. All began to sneeze against time.

"He does!" hissed Barry, whose eyes were red and watery. And they all swore this grim and horrible oath:

"At-choo-o-o-oooh!"

Ching Loses the Game.

Joe did what ought to have been done before—threw a blanket over the plate. This shut off the sniff, and also served to muffle the sounds to some extent. The machine was giving out weird peals of fiendish laughter, mingled with cries of "Rats!" "Does it tickle?" and "Go and soak your heads!"

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"Toe the line!" said Barry grimly.

They toed the line.

"Frinds," said Barry, "a monsther in human form: has made this noight hideous for us. He has broken our gentle slape wid horrid noises. At-choo! He has filled th' air wid snuff. He has violated all our roights as min and Britons. What shall we do to this base ruffian?"

"Cut his pigtail off," suggested a voice, "and make him swallow it!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" screamed the instrument.

"Good!" said Barry. "But we must disguise. Joe, lend us your black apron."

These the men put on, and looked ghastly enough. To make recognition practically impossible, they donned their great oilskin capes and hats.

Prout raked out a rusty bullseye lantern. Each man held a whip made of bootlaces in one hand, and a naked knife in the other.

"Marrch, but go aisy and widout a sound!" said Barry.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" roared the gramophone, which seemed trying to laugh itself into a fit.

They wore no boots. Prout tried the door, and said something rude.

"Not fast?" asked Barry. "If it is, he's skulking round."

"It always sticks a bit," said Joe. "Oh, drat you!"

The door opened unexpectedly, and used Joe's nose as a door-stopper. The nose was damaged, but the door did not appear to feel any pain. The instrument laughed hysterically.

"Shut up, you silly chugmump!" snapped Prout.

"You've cracked me scent-bottle!" said Joe madly.

"Not I. It's only bent a bit. I expect it'll come straight. Hush!"

"Whisht!" said Barry. "We must go to wurrk loiko ginerals. He's so crafty that we can't tell what dodges he'll be after thryin'. Oi'll go up to his cabin wid six of yez, and the rest, wid Tom in command, will march the other way, for he may be on the prowl. Lam into him for all yez know. Paste him, and don't spare. Lather him, and lather him till he squeals for mercy, and thin be blound-deaf in both oies, and deaf-blound in both ears. Divoide!"

The avengers separated on their deadly mission.

Needless to say, Gan-Waga and Ching-Lung had not waited to be tamely captured. They had watched the whole of the proceeding, and both had grinned until their mouths threatened never to return to their normal size again.

"Son of the North," said Ching-Lung, "it is time to wander. I must depart to see a gentleman about a dog."

"We gets hurt if we stoppes, hunk, Chingy?" grinned Gan.

"I am of opinion that we shall be severely jarred, Ganus."

"What me do den, Chingy? Where we go?"

"Come and bring the chairs. I have a splendiferous idea, Quick!"

The men were just putting on their masks. Followed by Gan, Ching-Lung fled down the gallery to the store-room. He unlocked the door, and swiftly switched on the light. An iron ladder led down into the room, and above the door swung a crane, used for raising and lowering articles. The corridor was not very wide. The crane ran along a rail below an iron joist, so as to give room for the crane-man to work.

"Haul out that flour-sack!" said the prince quickly. "Roll it over. Now for the rope, Ganus, and the belt. Round the top—so; underneath—so; and then buckle. That's how to fasten it. Tug away!"

The sack spun up.

"What's dat fo', Chingy?" asked the puzzled Gan.

"Patience—patience! I'll be back in no time!"

It was rather risky to run to the saloon, but Ching-Lung took the risk. Then he paid a flying visit to the gallery. He could hear a whisper of voices as he sped back.

"They'll go to my cabin first," he thought; "but they won't find much there, Gan."

"Hunk, Chingy?" said the Eskimo.

"Up you come. We're ready!"

To the astonishment of Gan, Ching-Lung ran the crane to the full extent of the rail, and locked it there. The sack almost touched the ground, and there was a space of twelve or fifteen feet between sack and bulkhead. The sack practically filled the gallery.

"I say, Chingy—"

"Silence, my son! Never speak to the man at tào wheel!"

Ching-Lung had procured a goodly amount of loot in his swift raid. The loot consisted of a couple of rugs, a bottle of claret, a plate of sandwiches, and a bottle of ginger-beer. He had also stuffed some biscuits and cigars into his pocket. He put the two chairs against the bulkhead, tied a long, stout cord, to the sack, and turned off the light.

"Sit down now!" he whispered.

The mysterious preparations had puzzled Gan, but an inkling of their meaning was dawning upon him.

"S-sh!"

They were coming. Ching-Lung braced himself, and pulled the cord towards him. He let it go and took another pull.

Again he relaxed the pressure, slowly at first, and then faster and faster the sack began to swing like a great, noiseless pendulum.

"Adn't we better turn up a light?" asked the voice of Joe.

"We've passed it!" said Prout. "There's another at the top. By hokey, keep your harms and feet awake; for he's like a heel, and he'll slip by you if he can! Hush!"

Prout thought he heard something. It was perhaps the slight creaking of the crane. Prout's right ear was more reliable than his left, and he turned to bring it into play.

There was no play about the object that hit Prout. When a bag of flour gets on the move, it is as deadly as a battering-ram. It came along, and, finding Prout in the way, it gently, but firmly, removed him. Prout said "Ooch!" in XYZ sharp, and clutched at the darkness as he rose from the floor. He fell upon the bosom of Joe, and, being in a tender mood, he clasped two other men lovingly round the neck.

Then all four said "Ooch!" prettily, and sat down together.

To be accurate, they did not exactly sit. Prout was the only one who sat. In the darkness he took Joe's face for an easy-chair, and another sailor's face for a footstool. It was a mercy he had no boots on, or the man's beauty afterwards would have caused a dog-fight anywhere.

The sack had not finished. It was working up steam finely, as if getting ready to "loop the loop." Some idiot got on the line as the sack was coasting downhill. Of course, he got hurt. He took a dive into space, and knocked down two men. They all said "Ooch!" and other things. Then they began to hit each other.

Ching-Lung turned on the light and surveyed the stricken field, while cries of "Help—help!" rent the evening air. Prout, Joe, and five sailors lay on the ground, wondering what time it was. They thought it had struck at least fifteen. And the sack swung gaily to and fro.

"Hallo!" cried Ching-Lung. "Is this a footer match? Rugby, ain't it? Who's winning? Have you scored anything yet, Tommy? Well played, sir! A beautiful scrum—splendid—glorious!"

"Ho, ho, hoo!" grinned Gan-Waga, in raptures. "Dey all so ugly, dey nots dare show deir faces! Yah!"

Slowly the men sat up; sadly they rubbed themselves; deeply they groaned.

"Dey looks as mis'rables as if dey gets de sack, Chingy!" said Gan.

"Drink, blubber-biter!" said Ching-Lung, pointing to the ginger-beer. "Your wit is good, though your language is not flowery. Imbibe the fizzy ginger-beer, and wolf the hammy sandwich!"

Gan opened his big mouth and roared.

"Hallo, here's the Baron O'Rooney!" chirped the prince. "And with him his masked assassins! What ho, within there! Wilt have a stoup of sack, baron? Let me squirt it over you!"

"By hokey, every rib in me is bust to matchwood," moaned Prout.

"I'm as sore as if I had been pickled in hot salt!" groaned Joe.

"Ow, ow!" grunted the other victims.

Now that the sack was working at high pressure, Ching-Lung tied the cord to his ankle, and took a pull at the claret. Barry and his followers grinned as they examined the wreckage. They were thankful they had not come this way.

"Like a glass of claret and a biscuit, Barry?"

"Wid all the joy in life, sor!" said Barry.

"Come and fetch 'em, then!" chuckled the prince.

"Thanks!" smiled Barry. "Oi'm not hungry or thirsty!"

It was impossible to squeeze past the sack, and to face it would be almost as bad as to try to juggle with a little earthquake. They began to feel savage. The way Gan laughed, taunted them, while the way he devoured sandwiches and drank ginger-beer would have angered a saint.

"He doied!" said Ching-Lung imitating Barry.

"T-choo, 't-choo, 't-choo, 't-choo-ey!" sneezed Gan.

"I swear it! Swear it with me!"

"Atchoo-o-o-oosh!" sneezed Gan-Waga. "Ho, ho, ho, ho! Chingy, you killess me!"

"Frinds," went on Ching-Lung, who had heard most of the conversation in the fore-castle, "monsters in human form have troid to make the noight hideous for us! They have broke our slape—atchoo—wid visions of their ugly mugs, and by fallin' down, kickin', squealin' and yellin'! What shall we do—atchoo—to these base ruffians?"

"We give dems snuffs and sacks dems, Chingy!" piped Gan. "Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho-o-o!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 248.

A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Rivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"He has spoken!" grinned Ching-Lung. "My, what luscious claret! Come and have a glass, Tommy!"

"Come and have some ginger-beer, Barry!" said Gan.

The masked men glared and turned sorrowfully away. Ching-Lung fell upon Gan's bosom, and they mingled their tears of joy.

"We shall have to stick here a bit," said Ching-Lung.

"They'll wait for us, and they won't think twice about hiding us if they catch we two merry, merry boys. Oh, we! Oh, us! Gan, we have more brains than they've got in Parliament! Oh, us! Oh, ooh, ow—us!"

"We all rights wid the rugses, Chingy! We sleeps here!"

"Nothing but lyddite shells can shift us, my bonnie boy!"

They toasted each other, finished the refreshments, and lighted their cigars. Occasionally they caught a glimpse of masked men.

"Oh, we sacks dems proper, Chingy!" cooed Gan gleefully.

"We did! Oh, us! Perhaps I have said that before, but repeat it. Oh, us! They won't stick the fore-castle long, unless they can stop that thing. Your giddy songs are just coming along now, and, if they can stick your music, they're stickier than paste. Oh, us!"

"Oo-er!" grunted Gan. "Dem songses all rights, Chingy!"

"Right enough for scaring crows out of a cornfield as right as rain. We can wait as long as they can wait. Beautiful breeze that sack makes, doesn't it? They can't get over that sack without artillery, that's—"

The grin left Ching-Lung's face suddenly.

"Merrily—merrily oh!" came the voice of Barry.

"Trundle her along, me hearties!"

Clank, clank, clank!

"Kape her straight there, and moind yez don't lave a kink goin' round the corner!"

Clank, clank, clank!

"Dished!" gasped Ching-Lung.

Round the corner whizzed a hose-drum, wheeled by Joe and Prout. The drum advanced, reeling off the hose.

"Bedad, there's a foire!" cried Barry excitedly. "Didn't Oi tell yez Oi smiled burmin'?"

"So you did!" said Prout. "Where is it?"

"Them cigars!"

"We surrender!" said Ching-Lung. "Barry, we sur-

render!"

Ching-Lung did not fancy a cold sousing. He had never thought of the hose-pipe. The masked men had crowded up behind, leaving Joe to work the hydrant. They grinned and chuckled.

"Oh, look here, Tom!" said Ching-Lung. "We chuck up the sponge!"

"'Tt will be a wet sponge in wan minute!" said Barry.

"Hi, he's going to bolt!"

Swish! There was room for the water to pass the sack, and it passed it. It smote Ching-Lung on the scarf-pin, and flattened him up against the bulkhead like a spread-eagle. Barry altered his aim to give Gan a drink. Gan's mouth was a fair-sized target. Barry hit it. Loud and joyous was the laughter. In desperation Ching-Lung tried to hide behind the sack. He clasped it in his arms. Half a dozen men seized it, ran it forward and let it go. Barry dodged under it, and fired at the swinging prince, while Gan was dragged out by the nape of the neck and bootlaced until he howled again.

"I surrender! I surrender!" cried Ching-Lung. The stream stopped, and the draggled, washed-out Ching-Lung dropped into a chair.

"Speak the terms, Tom!" grinned Barry.

Prout stepped forward and saluted.

"The terms is these, your 'Ighness—extra grog to-morrow—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Cigars all round—"

"Yes!" sighed Ching-Lung.

"And your 'Ighness must stop that darned thing in the fo'e's'lo!"

Ching-Lung paled and shuddered.

"Let it run down!" he said. "It'll soon do that!"

"No, sor!" put in Barry. "You come and shlop ut, or Oi foire!"

Ching-Lung gave in. There was no chance of escape. The gallery was blocked, and in his damp position he could not take refuge in the store-room. But the deadly gramophone and all its evil works! Oh, pip!

"All right!" he said.

They tied a rope round him, and led him away. Barry locked the fore-castle when they had got him safe within.

The gramophone was grinding out one of Gan's awful, blood-freezing songs, which went like this:

"Kwag-wag-tchook-blunk-blunk!
Wag-kwag-tchook-blunk-blunk!
Tchook-blunk-wag-kwag!"

etc., for ever and ay.

"Now stop it!" said Barry.

There was more under that plate than met the ear, though what met the ear was more than sufficient for most people. Ching-Lung had told the electrician what to do, and the electrician had done it.

"By holkey, we're waiting, sir!" said Prout.

"Your 'Ighness will take a chill!" said Joe.

What Ching-Lung wanted to take was his departure. He looked about him despairingly, and then, setting his teeth, he advanced.

"Lend me a couple of rubber tobacco-pouches!"

A dozen were offered him. Shutting both eyes and screwing up his nose, Ching-Lung lifted the plate. The awful strains rang loud and full.

"Urry up afore we peg out, sir!" groaned Joe.

Ching-Lung put his hand into the hole.

"Murder!" he yelled.

He had stopped the music, but a stream of liquid had shot up and drenched him. It was more of Barry's scent. With a groan of horror and loathing, Ching-Lung rolled across the floor. The men turned white, then blue, and finally green, as the ghastly stench met them.

They shrieked and bolted.

So did Ching-Lung. He dropped into the bath, hating himself, and turned on both taps. He had lost the game.

Tapping the Cable—The Whole Truth at Last—A First Glimpse of Loneland.

Ching-Lung did not show himself the next day. Rupert and Ferrers Lord quickly heard the story of his adventures, and laughed over it hugely. Their comment was, "Serve the little wretch right!" Yard-of-Tape, the cook, reported that sundry stores were damaged by water, and a notice was posted that the damage would be made good by stopping the cost out of the men's pay. The men only grinned. They knew that Ching-Lung would pay, and he did.

The Lord of the Deep was wearing Galpin Island that was, or Loneland, as Nathan Gore had taken upon himself to rechristen it.

Rupert was dressing, when the engines were stopped. About ten minutes later he walked into the saloon.

"Good-morning, old chap!"

"Good-morning, Rupert!" said Ferrers Lord, extending his hand.

The great window was unshuttered. Rupert looked out into the darkness. The Lord of the Deep lay motionless.

"Why this thushness?" he asked. "Nothing wrong?"

"Nothing at all, my dear boy," said the millionaire, who was studying a chart. "We are going to have it lazy. Our friend Gore came to an arrangement with the Mid-and-South-Central Pacific Company to run a cable from his island and join it to theirs. He was to lay it himself, and he has done so. I am trying to find it."

"Why?"

"To see if we can glean any news. Ah, just read that, Rupert. Prout is signalling."

A lamp was flashing dimly through the water.

"What does he say?"

"Cable—cable putrid, I think. Yes, cable pu-pu-putrid." The millionaire laughed.

"He has found it at last!" He put his hand on the switch of the light and flashed a message questioning the last word.

"I fear you have made a mistake, Ru. Ah, there it is. P—t—d. Parted, Ru!"

"Parted!" said Thurston. "What an idiot I am. I thought I could read the morse alphabet by sight, or sound, as fast as you like to slip it off. Parted, to be sure! Funny Prout should drop on the place where it is damaged."

"Yes, very curious. In that case it is no use staying here."

The bulb winked out:

"Come back."

Ching-Lung arrived at the sound of the breakfast-bell. Holding his nose, Rupert waved him away.

"Begone, violets!" he said. "Fade; wither away."

"You needn't be so haughty, even if your father did live next door to a soapworks!" grinned Ching-Lung. "Lord, old chap, I've paid the pursey for the ruined grub. It's like your meanness to insist on payment. I'm hungry, and the man who speaks about hose-pipes or perfumes gets the coffee-pot at his head. Lord, my boy, you look the picture THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 248.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY — Every Wednesday. — II — OUR COMPANION PAPERS — II "THE PENNY POPULAR" — Every Friday. —

of health, just like the portrait of one of those Johnnies you see in the newspapers, who have been cured of heart-disease, broken-ribs, mumps, wooden-legs, and chronic blindness, by Puddler's Pale Pills for Poodle-faced People. Pass the clipp, if you please."

It was a busy day. The weather was fine, and the boat was raised to the surface. From stem to stern she was cleaned and scrubbed, and polished and scraped. Prout and Mad-dock were slung overboard in their diving-suits to examine the exterior. Clothes were washed, and hung up to dry, after being rinsed in fresh water. Suits were brushed, stockings were darned, kits were inspected—and Gan-Waga was reported for not possessing either a tooth-brush or pocket-handkerchief. For this terrible offence he was shaved with the top of a sardine-tin, and ducked in a bucket of soap-suds. For reporting him Prout was served in the same way, except that they shaved his bald head instead of his hairy chin.

Long before the evening came the submarine was as neat and trim as a new pin. A good many fish were caught when the work was over, and a good many yarns were told. The cry came, "All below!" and the Lord of the Deep sank, and churned away.

"You chaps don't get enough work," said Ching-Lung, entering the fore-castle. "You're fattening up like Christmas turkeys. You do nothing but sleep and eat. I'll set you a task—"

"Mr. Thurston wishes to see your Highness," said a sailor, saluting.

Ching-Lung forgot all about the task, but he sent four pairs of roller-skates down. The average sailor cuts a queer figure on roller-skates, and bumps and groans and screams of laughter filled the fore-castle until "Lights out!" sounded. Next morning several of the men were limping; Prout had a bump of knowledge on the back of his head, and the other casualties were two black eyes, a badly-twisted nose, various lost teeth, and innumerable bruises.

"Well," said the millionaire at breakfast, "we are here, boys."

"I am well aware that we are here," said Ching-Lung. "I am here, thou art here, and Rupert is thither. If you come hither, and I go thither, you will be here, and we—What am I snuffling about?"

"Take no notice of him, old chap," said Ching-Lung. "I presume by 'here' you mean to impart that grateful information that we have got to Galpin Island? Two lumps, Ru, you boulder! Cream! More like cream than cream, the nasty, frozen chalk-and-water! Two lumps for little Chingy, and six for little Gan. So we've arrived? When do we go ashore?"

"We have not been invited, Ching," said the millionaire, with a quiet smile.

"I'm not going to wait for a gilt-edged card from Nathan Gore, my son. Has he got 'Trespassers will be lynched' up, and 'Beware of Man-traps and Spring-guns,' and 'Mind the Bull'?"

"We shall see," said Ferrers Lord, smiling again.

"But seriously, Lord," said Thurston, extending his plate, "what are our plans? Are we going to make him turn up the jewel?"

"If we can, Ru."

"By force?"

"By force if necessary."

"Don't talk about it," said Ching-Lung: "that's the whole topic. It sickens me. Here, sausage. If you can't eat it wear it on your watch-chain. Never mind about Nathan Gore. If we can't go on his island, we'll go on my name-sake. You did say you'd called it after me—eh?"

"Certainly!"

"And why and wherefore and whence this honour, dear friend?"

"Well," said Ferrers Lord, "it's an empty sort of place."

"Oh!" said Ching-Lung.

"Absolutely worthless to anybody."

"O-oh!" said Ching-Lung violently.

"A wild, useless, no-or-do-well sort of place."

"Ow!" said Ching-Lung. "How much obliged I—I—I am! Oh, thanks, thanks, indeed!"

"Ho, ho, hoo, ho-o-o-oh!" roared Gan-Waga. "Warum-harums places! Ha, ha, ha-ah!"

"You couldn't have chosen a better name, old chap," said Rupert. "The puzzle is, why did you buy such a charming spot. Are you going to build villas on it?"

(To be continued.)

There will be another long and thrilling instalment of this splendid adventure serial in Next Monday's issue of "The Magnet" Library. Order a copy in advance—Price 1d.

My Readers' Page.



OUR TWO
COMPANION PAPERS
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AND
THE PENNY POPULAR
EVERY FRIDAY.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THE GREYFRIARS CRUSADERS,"

By Frank Richards.

This splendid, long, complete school tale deals further with the feud between Harry Wharton & Co. and Vernon-Smith & Co., of the Remove Form at Greyfriars. The junior football eleven take it upon themselves to uphold the honour of the Remove Form against a miscellaneous team, captained by Vernon-Smith, and calling themselves

"THE GREYFRIARS CRUSADERS."

As usual, the Bounder manages to take a mean advantage of his rivals, with the result that once again Harry Wharton & Co. have to give him best.

"THE INVINCIBLE TRIO" GOING STRONG!

The magnificent reception which has been accorded to our new companion paper,

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"

has also had the effect of adding to the popularity of the original companion papers, the "Gem" and "Magnet" Libraries, with the result that "The Invincible Trio"—as these three famous little papers were aptly termed by a reader lately, are going stronger than ever. While looking forward just as eagerly to their copies of the "Magnet" and "Gem" every Monday and Wednesday, my chums have already begun to depend upon "The Penny Pop." to provide them with just the sort of really first-class reading matter they want to last them over the week-end. My friends quite evidently realise that this is the particular function of "The Penny Pop."—to fill the week-end gap—and while they would not think for one moment of missing a single issue of either of the two original companion papers, at the same time they heartily welcome the new-comer in that it fills a long-felt want most perfectly. This is the reason why all three of "The Invincible Trio" of splendid companion papers are booming together. My chums are quite "in the fashion" in reading "The Penny Pop." every week, because

EVERYBODY'S DOING IT!

WHAT MY READERS THINK.

An Encouraging Letter from a Scottish Chum.

Perth, N.B.

"Dear Editor,—I feel I must just write a few lines to congratulate you on your magnificent new paper, 'The Penny Popular.' I have read each of the numbers issued so far, with greater and greater pleasure. I have been a reader of the good old 'Magnet' since it first started, and about six months ago, after seeing some pictures of it in 'The Magnet,' I started to take in the 'Gem,' too. How I wished I had begun to read this splendid paper before! The school tale in it is as good as the one in 'The Magnet,' and you could not wish for higher praise than that, dear Mr. Editor, could you? I then thought 'The Magnet' and 'The Gem' the best papers in the world, and now 'The Penny Popular' comes along, and I am bound to say, after reading it, that it must be placed in exactly the same class as the two original companion papers. I wonder why it is, Mr. Editor, that the three papers you edit are so different to all other weekly story papers? They are so much jollier and 'rippinger' altogether, and absolutely in a class by themselves! But I must not go on like this, or you will be getting 'swelled head,' so I will just say that that nickname the three companion papers have received suits them just exactly—'The Magnet,' 'The Gem,' and 'The Penny Popular' certainly do make up 'An Invincible Trio!'"

"You ardent reader,

"DUNCAN R."

Well, Duncan R., your extremely nice letter has left very little for me to say, except "Thank you very much!" "The Penny Pop." certainly has met with a wonderful success, and the way my chums have backed me up in my new venture has touched me very much indeed.

As for my three papers being so "different," I think I may flatter myself, without being accused of having the "swelled head" you are afraid I shall get, that the three little companion papers are somewhat different from the ordinary run of penny weekly story-papers. I try to make them so—I try to make them always a little better—and it gives me the greatest gratification to say that I have never so far met with anything but the most encouraging results.

GENERAL HINTS ON BALL-PUNCHING.

The Wrong Position of the Head.

In ball-punching, as in all other pastimes conducted on a scientific basis, there are many things to avoid. One of these is the wrong position of the head in action. Do not turn your head completely away from the ball at any time, for if you do you will be unable to watch it closely. Watch the ball continually, as you would an opponent in the ring.

Of course, there are various occasions when you should duck or otherwise avoid the bounding ball, but, unless you are striking the ball with the back of the head, keep your eyes on it.

A Good Arm Exercise.

A simple one arm exercise, which every beginner will particularly appreciate, is as follows, and to execute it you must necessarily stand closer to the ball than in the right and left positions. Stand with the feet from six to twelve inches apart, and on the same line; raise, say, the right elbow, and strike the ball in the middle with its point.

As the ball rebounds strike it again and again. At first the movement will be somewhat tiring, but not for long.

When you have become proficient with the right elbow, try the left. You will need more practice than with the right to educate the left arm, unless you happen to be left-handed.

After a week or two you will be considerably surprised at the power you will find yourself capable of putting into one of these elbow blows.

After you have become adept at using your elbows singly, you may then alternate them just as you have been told to do with the right and left leads.

The Left-Hand Hook.

Hooks are very valuable blows. They are delivered at close range, and therefore have great speed.

Stand with the feet about fourteen inches apart, and advance the left foot about six inches before the right.

Bend the elbow sharply. Raise the fist to a point on a line with the left hip, and pivoting on the ball of the left foot, keeping the right foot steady, shoot the fist to the middle of the ball. Then bring the fist back and repeat. Hold the right fist in front of the breast or chin as a means of defence. The result of this blow will be to send in the ball in a slanting direction.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Reader from No. 1 (Northampton).—At this early stage in the career of "The Penny Popular"—our latest companion paper—I am afraid I am unable to promise definitely to grant your request.

J. Edwards (Huddersfield).—To become a wireless telegraph operator, your best course would be to write for particulars to The Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co., Finch Lane, Cornhill, E.C., enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

An Old Reader (A. B.).—A. W. Gamage Ltd., Holborn, London, E.C., sell a good and inexpensive book on conjuring.

THE EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 248.
A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale
of the Rivals of Greyfriars next Monday.

"THE GREYFRIARS CRUSADERS!" Please order your copy of "THE MAGNET" Library in advance.

OUR SPLENDID NEW FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

A POST-PONED CAPTURE.



1. 'Twas the time of the battle of Waterloo, and the two lads in the picture looked like being captured by the Frenchies, when an eighteen-carat idea occurred to one of them—



2. And they rigged up a signpost like so, and, fixing the old gee-gee there, did a merry Marathon off as quickly as you like. "See, mes enfants!" cried the French captain. "Is it not that is the duke? Let us make of the capture!"



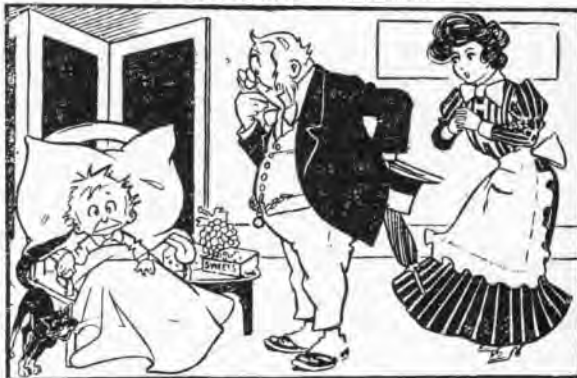
3. So up the hill they went at a double, and when they got there—well, they made a lot of strange remarks in French which showed that they weren't pleased at all, at all!

IT SPOILT THE EFFECT!



Angus was a proud laddie, to be sure, as proud as he was patriotic; but it was a shame his young brother had tied his braces to the bonnet, instead of the ribbons upon it. It quite spoilt the effect, so it did!

A SCHOLARLY DIAGNOSIS.



Mother: "Is it very serious?"

Doctor: "Yes, madam; it is a most serious case of 'Dont-wanttogotoschoolitis!' "

A QUESTION OF TOUCH.



"He has a wonderful touch, hasn't he?"

"Yes; he touched me for twenty pounds this evening."

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Jeweller: "Your watch is magnetised. Have you been near a dynamo, or anything attractive?"

Bertie: "Well, I've been calling—er—on a very attractive young lady!"

FRIGHTENING HIMSELF!



Dad: "Jimmy, run for the police! There's a burglar under the bed; I can see his legs!"

PROOF POSITIVE!



"Do you really love me, George?"
"Didn't you give me this tie, dear?"
"Yes, love—why?"
"Well, ain't I wearing it?"

THE "SPARE" BED.



Farmer Hayrake (who has accepted the invitation of a friend to stop one night): "Well, they said it was a spare bed, and, by gum, it is! It's the sparest bed I ever set eyes on!"

A "SOUND" SPECULATION.



"Are your daughter's singing lessons worth the price you are paying for them?"
 "Oh, yes; I've just bought the house next door for £700! A month ago they wanted a thousand for it!"

VALUE FOR MONEY.



Old Lady: "Well, I'll give you tuppence—not because I think you deserve it, mind, but because it pleases me!"

Tramp: "Thanks, ma'am! Couldn't you make it a tanner, and thoroughly enjoy yourself?"

A HAIR-RAISING STORY!

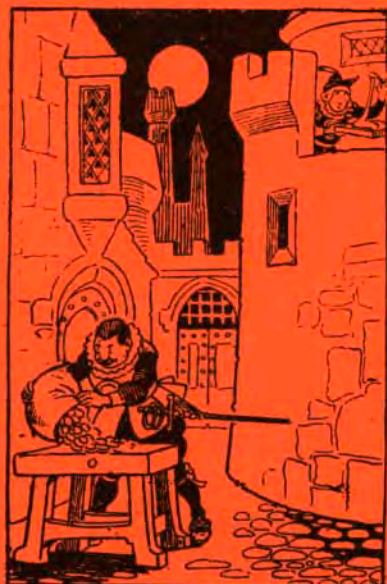


1. "How on earth can I see with these heads of hair in front of me?" roared Uncle Growser. "Why do you charge half a guinea for a stall when there's nothing to be seen?"



2. Then an attendant came along and removed the ladies' hair—so, giving them a ticket for it. So Uncle Growser managed to see well. No, we don't know which theatre this happened at!

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!



1. "Gadzoos!" said the bold, bad baron. "I have done vastly well, forsooth!" And he started to count the golden ducats which he had collared from the travellers.



2. But the merry page, who was having a light lunch of bread-and-treacle, spotted the good red gold, and, said he, "I'll have some, so I will!" And he did, too, thuswise.



3. What-he! When the baron returned and found the stuff gone—dear, dear, he was vexed! However, the page supplied his girlie-girlie with chocolates for weeks after.