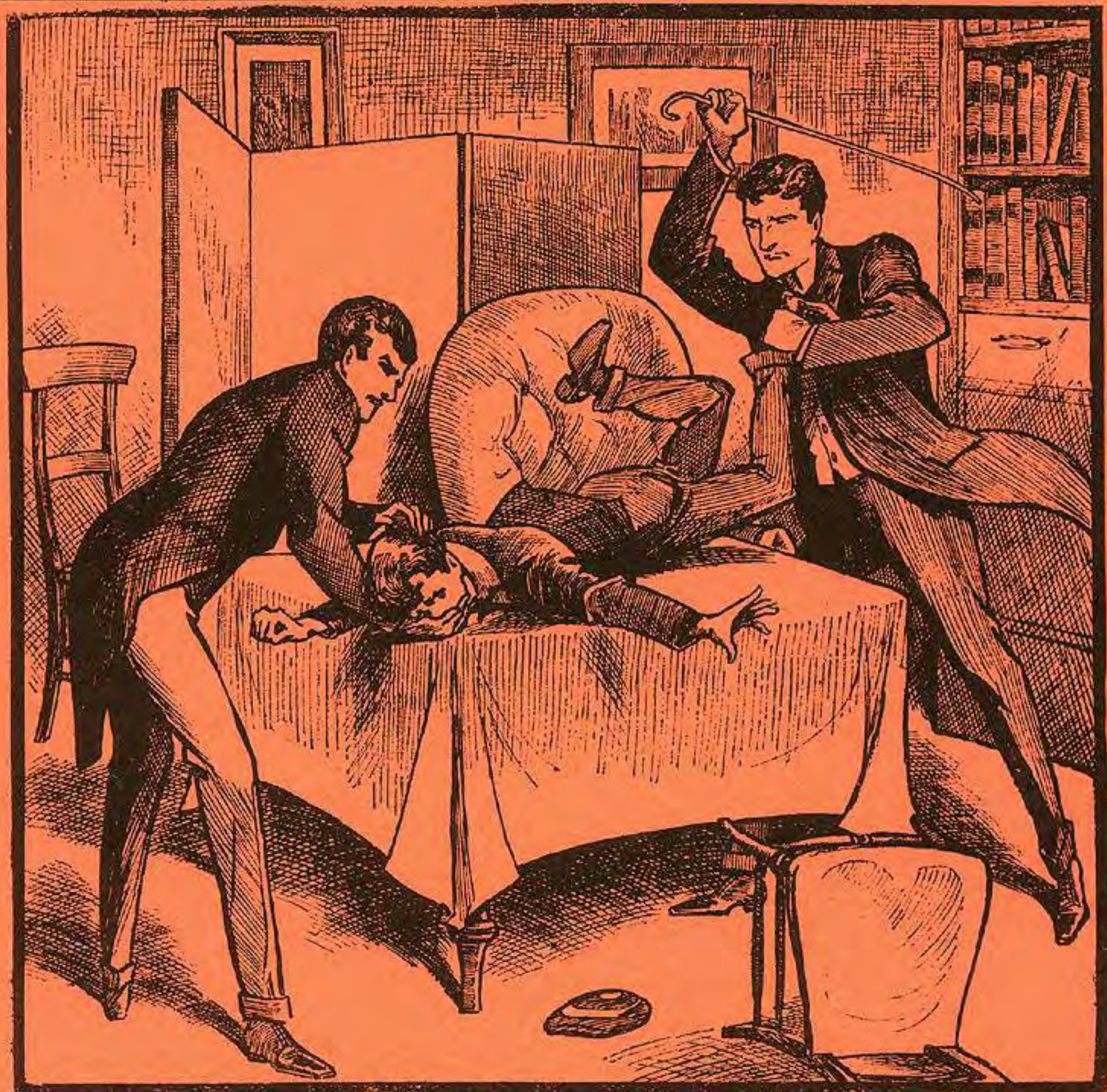


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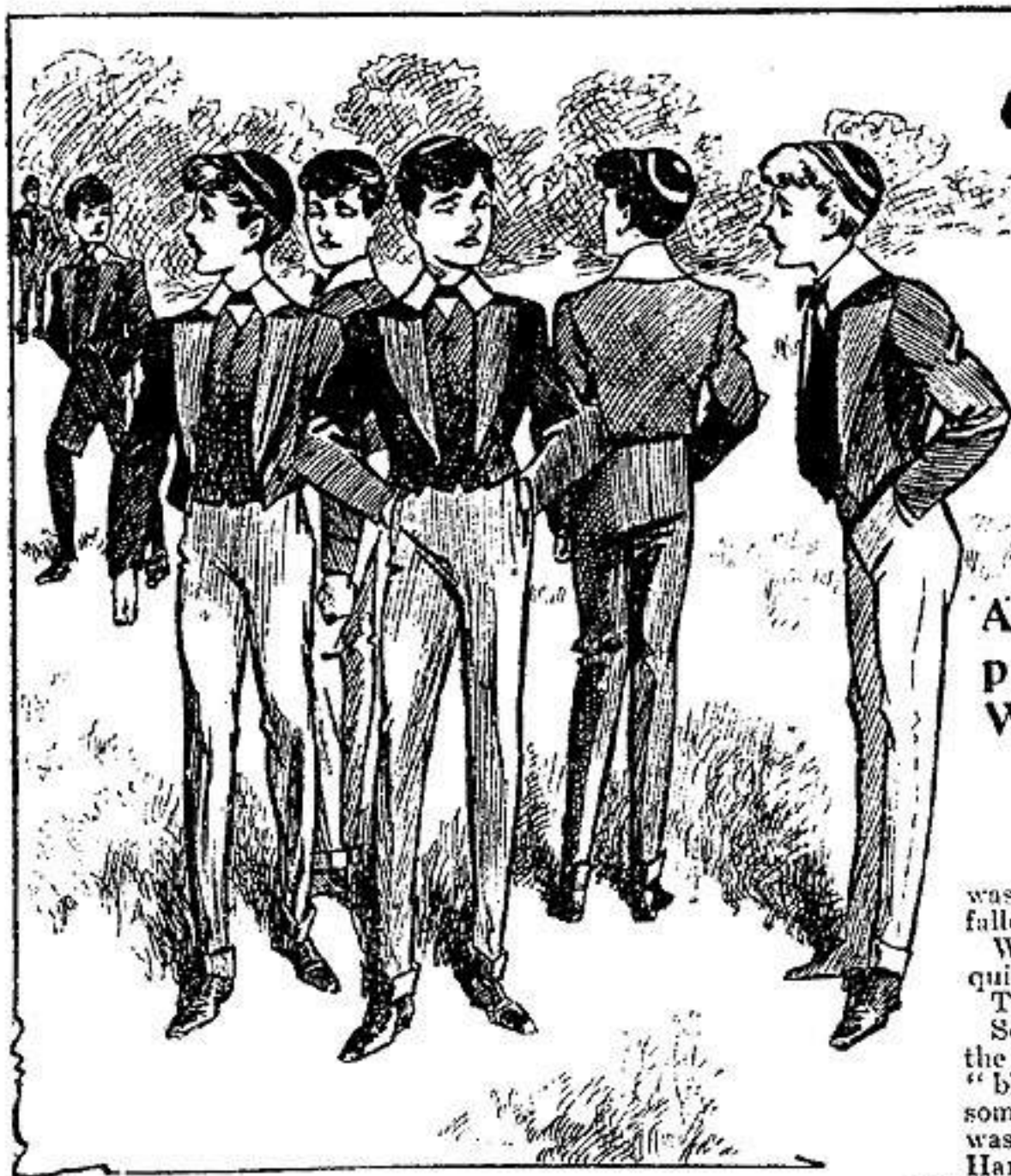
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Barred by the Fags!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of HARRY WHARTON & Co. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Outcast.

HARRY WHARTON stopped suddenly. He was crossing the old Close of Greyfriars towards the School House, in the falling dusk, when he heard a sound from under the old elms. The Close was growing very dusky, and under the wide-spreading elms the shadows were very thick. Wharton paused and peered into the darkness under the trees.

Harry Wharton had been down to the village of Friardale with a message from Wingate of the Sixth, the Captain of Greyfriars, and he was returning a little late—and very hungry. Across the Close glimmered the light from the window of No. 1 Study in the Remove—where Nugent and Bob Cherry were getting tea and waiting for him. But Harry Wharton forgot the cheerful study and the cosy tea that awaited him as he heard that strange sound under the shadows of the elms. It was a sob he had heard.

"Hallo! Who's there?" called out Wharton, as his eyes failed to penetrate the gloom.

Silence!

Whoever it was that had sobbed there in the darkness

was silent now—now that he knew that the sound had fallen upon other ears.

Wharton thought he caught the sound of a quick, quivering breath, but he could not be sure.

The junior hesitated.

Someone was in trouble—bad trouble, he imagined by the sob. Wharton did not want to surprise a fellow "blubbing." But the thought that it was probably some fag who had been ill-used made him pause. If it was trouble of that kind, it would be taken in hand by Harry Wharton & Co.

Wharton stood looking under the trees, and in a few moments there came a sound again—a gasping breath, evidently in the effort to check a sob.

The Remove did not hesitate any longer. He plunged into the deep shadows under the trees. Upon one of the old oaken benches there a diminutive form was dimly visible. Wharton dropped a hand on his shoulder.

"Buck up, kid," he said. "What's the matter?"

A pale tear-stained face was turned up to him.

"Young Wingate!" exclaimed Harry, recognising the fag.

"Yes!" muttered Jack Wingate.

"What's the trouble?"

"N-n-nothing!"

"Then, what are you blubbing for?"

"N-n-nothing!"

Wharton stood regarding the fag with some anxiety. It was certainly not for nothing that Wingate minor of the Third had stolen to that dark and secluded spot, there to sob out his sorrows.

Wharton had known before that Jack Wingate was in trouble with his Form. Jack Wingate was the younger brother of Wingate of the Sixth. No doubt, when he came to Greyfriars he had looked upon himself as a favoured

person, because his major was Captain of Greyfriars. He had been cheeky to seniors, and lofty in his manners to the other fags; and he had been brought to his senses in the roughest possible way. The Third Form of Greyfriars were not likely to stand swank from a fellow-fag, because his brother happened to be captain of the school. And the Captain of Greyfriars was not likely to get himself mixed up in fag quarrels because his minor had a swelled head. And so Jack Wingate had found himself "up against it" with a vengeance.

Wingate major, instead of backing him up unquestioningly as he had expected, had given him good advice, and counselled him not to be a fool. It took the minor some time to realise that that advice was worth more to him than favouritism. And by the time he realised it, and resolved to act upon it, he had set all his form against him—and once that was done, it was not easy for it to be undone.

Wharton was aware of all that; and he thought he could guess what was the matter with Jack Wingate now. And Wharton was interested in the fag. Wingate of the Sixth was the idol of the juniors, and many of them would have been glad to help his minor—if he had been a fellow whom it was possible to help.

Jack Wingate tried to keep back the sob that was struggling in his breast; but he did not succeed, and it came gasping out.

"Have they been ragging you, kid?" asked Harry.

"Ye-es."

"Hurt?"

"It—it isn't that!" sobbed the fag. "I—I don't mind that! I'm not afraid of a ragging! But—but—they—"

"Well, what did they do?"

"They've sent me to Coventry!" said the fag. "Tubb and Paget say I'm barred by the Form, and—and they won't speak to me, or let me come into the Form-room, and—and—"

His voice broke.

"And you feel rotten about it?"

"Yes!"

"You see, you put their backs up in the first place," said Wharton. "If you'd been a bit more careful—"

"I know that. But—but now—"

"Now the harm's done."

"Yes."

"It's hard cheese, if you've made up your mind to play the game, and drop your nonsense," said Harry. "Have you?"

"Ye-es."

"What about Bolsover minor of the Third?" said Harry.

"He's a decent kid. I spoke to him once about you, and he said he would stand by you."

The fag's face flushed in the dusk.

"He—he was decent; but—but I got his back up, too!"

"What did you do?"

"He drops his H's, you know, and—and I told him—and—"

Wharton frowned.

"Well, that was caddish," he said. "Bolsover minor can't help having had some bad luck when he was a kid, and it's rotten to twit him with what he couldn't help!"

"I—I know it was. I was a beast!"

Wharton relented again.

"Well, if you look at it in that light, there's some hope for you," he said. "The Third Form will come round in time, if you play the game."

Wingate minor shook his head.

"They won't!" he said, with conviction. "Tubb says they're fed up with me. Paget says he'd give a term's pocket-money to see me booted out of the school. Bolsover minor hasn't spoken to me since I—I twitted him about his H's."

"Have you told him you are sorry?"

"Well, no. He'd think I was doing it to make up, because they've sent me to Coventry. I—I'm not going to eat

humble pie. I'd rather be in Coventry. But Tubb—"

"You could go for Tubb," suggested Wharton. "Why not lick him?"

Wingate minor grinned faintly through his tears.

"I've tried that," he said.

"How did it work out?"

"He licked me!"

Wharton smiled.

"Well, that wasn't much of a success, certainly," he said.

"But look here, kid—are you in earnest about this? Do you really want to make the fags look on you as a decent chap, and stop what's being done now?"

"Of course I do!"

"No more rot, you know—swanking because your major is captain of the school, and threatening to tell him things. I've heard that you've done that!"

"I—I have, but—but I was new here, you see. I didn't know the ropes," said Jack Wingate, miserably; "and my major didn't back me up, either. He gave me a long jaw."

"Just what you needed!"

"Ye-es. But I'd play the game all right now, if—if they'd give me a chance. But they won't! I'm barred by all the chaps now. I have to mope about by myself, and—and I'm sick of it. I wish I could go away from Greyfriars!"

The sobs broke out again. "I wish I was dead!"

"Chuck that!" said Wharton, sharply. "That's silly rot. What you've got to do is to buck up, and show you're made of decent stuff. If you do that, the fags will come round—they're bound to. You've got their backs up; and now you've got to get them down again. See?"

"Ye-es."

"Keep a stiff upper lip," said Harry. "I think, perhaps, I—we—can help you a bit, if you really mean business."

"I do. I do!"

"Good. Then I'll talk it over with the chaps in my study, and we'll see if anything can be done," said Harry. "No. 1 Study always gets there, you know!"

"Th-hank you, Wharton!"

"And now, cheer up, and put a good chivvy on it!"

Wingate minor grinned a little. He already felt better; sympathy, and a friendly understanding, were what he needed in his loneliness. He rubbed his face with his handkerchief, and Wharton made him walk back with him to the School House.

Harry Wharton's face was very thoughtful as he went up to No. 1 Study in the Remove. He had promised to help the outcast of the Third; and he meant to do it; but he did not see yet how it was going to be done; and he did not know how his chums would take the idea.

But it was true, that, as Wharton had said, No. 1 Study generally "got there." Whatever it was that No. 1 Study took up, they generally made a success of it. And Wharton left the fag with new hope in his breast.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Hunted Down!

NO. 1 STUDY looked very bright and cosy when Harry Wharton entered it.

Outside, night was settling over Greyfriars, and a keen wind from the sea stirred the branches of the old elms. But within the study all was cheerful and cosy. A big fire blazed in the grate, and Bob Cherry, in his shirt-sleeves, was frying eggs over it, his ruddy complexion growing ruddier and ruddier. Frank Nugent was cutting a loaf into huge slices, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian junior, was toasting them, dodging out of Bob Cherry's way, and frequently having narrow escapes from the frying-pan. Johnny Bull was opening a brand-new jar of jam with a big pocket-knife. The chums of the Remove all looked round as the leader of the famous Co. came in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "You're just in time. These eggs will be down in two jiffies and a shake."

"You look pretty well done, yourself!" grinned Wharton. Bob gasped.

"Yes, it's warm. That ass Franky made the fire too big. But the eggs will be done to a turn!"

"And the esteemed toast will be ripping!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Good egg. I'm hungry!"

"You're late," said Nugent.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes; I had to see about Wingate's bat in Friardale, and I met young Wingate as I came in, in the Close, and stopped to talk to him."

There was a sniff from Johnny Bull.

"That kid's in trouble as usual," he remarked. "The fags have all got their backs up about him. Queer that a jolly good chap like old Wingate should have such a rank outsider for a brother as young Wingate."

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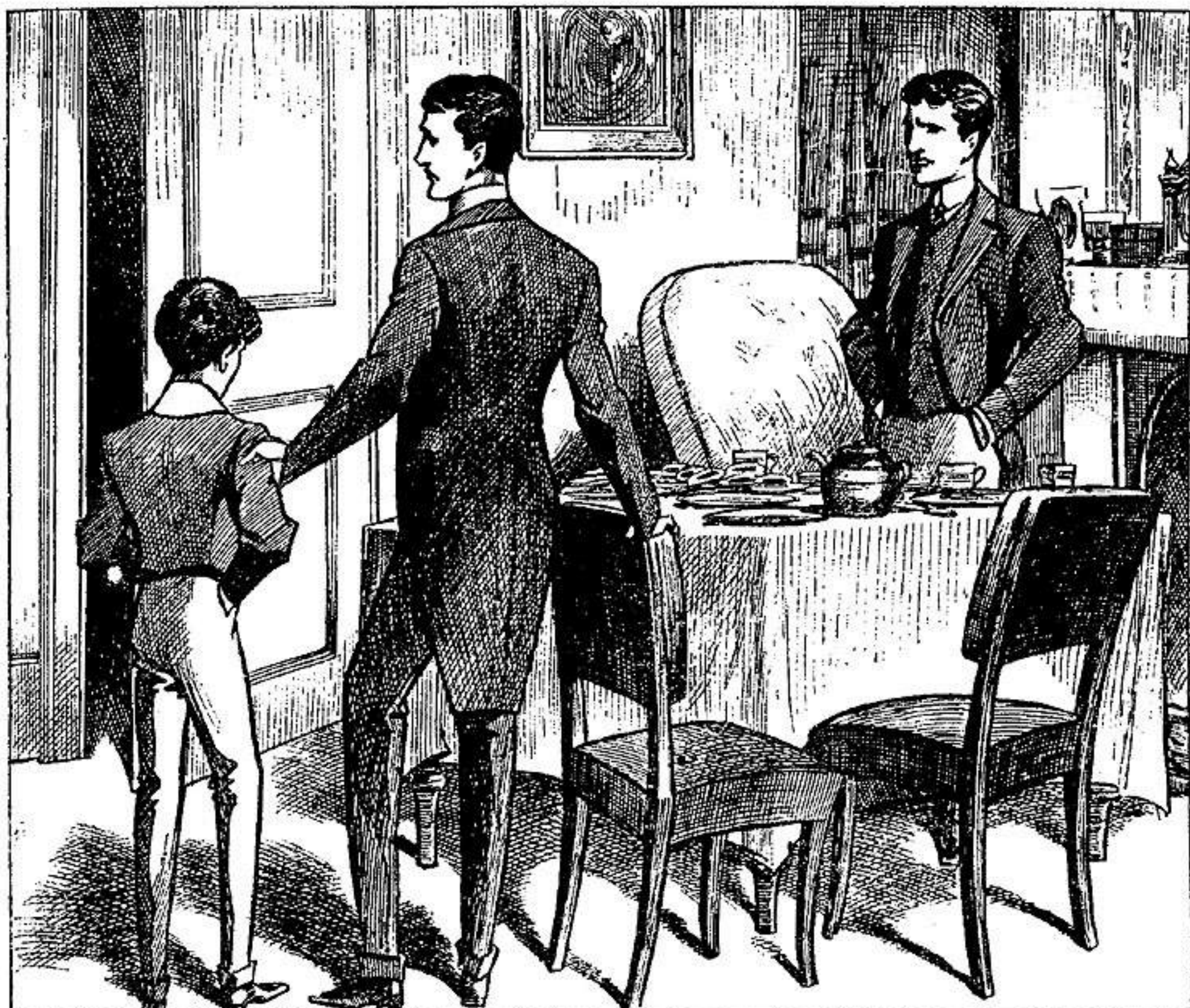
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"It's all right, kid," said Wingate major, reading the outcast of the Third's expression. "I'll take you back and talk to the fags." Jack nodded in a hesitating manner. "I—think I'd better stand by myself," he said.
(See Chapter 4.)

"He's got his good points," said Harry. Another sniff from Johnny Bull.
"He keeps 'em dark, then," he said. "The second day he was here, he told me—me—to go and fetch his cap! Me!" Harry Wharton laughed.
"He was fresh here then," he said. "He's been spoiled at home. And he came here expecting to run the school. I think, because his major is Captain of Greyfriars. He's been disappointed about that. But—"
Nugent held up his hand.
"I can see what's coming," he exclaimed: "and you can cheese it! This study isn't taking cheeky fags under its wing. The Co. have got something else to do. Wingate minor would be getting on all right if he had behaved himself. And we can't declare war on the Third because they won't stand his rot."
"I should rather say not!" said Johnny Bull emphatically.
"Besides, it wouldn't do any good to the kid himself," went on Nugent judiciously. "There's nothing the fags get so wild about as fellows in an upper Form interfering with them. You know how we get ratty when Coker of the Fifth chips in in our business. It's the same thing."
"The samefulness is terrific!"
"Yes, but—"
"But me no buts," grinned Nugent: "we aren't taking any!"
Wharton pitched his cap into a corner of the study, and sat down at the table. He had expected some opposition.

from his chums, and he was ready for it. He started on the eggs, which were, as Bob Cherry proudly remarked, done to a turn.
"I'm going to oil my bat after tea," Nugent remarked, by way of changing the subject.
"About Wingate minor—"
"That's all about Wingate minor," said Nugent affably.
"I'm talking about bats."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And I'm talking about Wingate minor."
"Well, don't."
"He's had a rather severe lesson, you know," said Wharton. "As a matter of fact, he isn't a really bad chap, only a young ass with a swelled head, and he's had most of that knocked out of him. And I think it's up to us to help him out, if we can. I don't quite see how we're going to do it, but I think we ought to try, if only for old Wingate's sake. Wingate major has done us a lot of good turns."
"Well, that's so," said Johnny Bull. "But what can we do? We can't order the Third to take him to their bosoms, and weep over him."
"Ass! There's young Bolsover; he'd do anything we asked him, and we'll ask him to help the kid out. And—and we could have Tubb and Paget here."
"What for?"
"Feed 'em, and talk to 'em like giddy Dutch uncles, and put it to them straight. What do you think of that for an idea?"

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"Rotten!" said Nugent.

"Look here—"

"Rotten!" added Johnny Bull, after thinking a moment.

"Ass! I tell you—"

"Rotten!" said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added that the rottenness was terrific.

Wharton went on with his tea, looking a little ruffled. The task of helping Jack Wingate out of his troubles was difficult enough, without opposition in his own study. But it was evident that the Co. were not enthusiastic on the subject.

"Speaking of cricket—" went on Nugent imperturbably.

Wharton laughed, in spite of himself.

"Blow cricket!" he said. "We're not playing cricket yet, anyway. Young Wingate—"

"The first match of the season will be with Redclyffe."

"I know that. Young Wingate—"

"I met a Redclyffe chap yesterday."

"Blow Redclyffe!" roared Wharton.

"Well, blow young Wingate, if you come to that!"

"Look here, Nugent—"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"I think a chap might expect to be backed up in his own study, when he's trying to do the right thing," said Wharton, in an aggrieved tone.

Nugent rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Well, that's so," he agreed. "But—"

"Old Wingate is worried about his minor," said Harry.

"Has he told you so?"

"No, duffer; but anybody can see it! I think we ought to try to do something about it, if we can."

"Can't do anything for a sneak," said Bull. "Young Wingate sneaked to Loder, the prefect, and the Third can't get over that. They're quite right, too."

"Well, he was new here then. And Loder encouraged him, too, just to worry old Wingate. He's been through it a lot since then, and he hasn't sneaked. I think—"

Wharton broke off as there came a sudden sound of hurrying feet in the passage outside. There was a yell of voices in the distance, and more tramping of feet in the passage.

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Sounds like a giddy riot!" he exclaimed.

"What the— Oh!"

The study door was hurled suddenly open, and a breathless fag rushed in. It was Wingate minor. He rushed right into the study at top speed, and brought up against the table, and there was a yell from the chums of the Remove. The table reeled under the shock, and crockeryware and eatables shot off it in a flood.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

"Oh!" roared Nugent, as his tea swamped over his knees, and the teapot hit him on the chest. "Yaroooh!"

"You young ass!"

"What the—"

"They—they're after me!" panted Wingate minor. "I—I—"

There was a trampling of feet outside. A crowd of fags swarmed in the doorway—Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor, and a crowd more of the Third. They were red with running, and with excitement; and they were evidently after Wingate minor.

"Here he is!" roared Tubb.

Jack Wingate darted round the table, and stood there panting.

"Have him out!" shouted Paget.

Wharton stepped in the way of the fags as they were swarming into the study. Bob Cherry picked up a cricket-bat, and ran to his side. Tubb & Co. halted. The Famous Five of the Remove were rather a "handful" to tackle in their own quarters. Jack Wingate stood protected by the Removes.

"Now then, what do you kids want?" demanded Wharton.

"We want Wingate minor."

"What do you mean by rushing in here, young Wingate?" roared Johnny Bull. "Do you think we want every inky ragamuffin at Greyfriars here?"

"Look at our blessed crocks!" said Bob Cherry.

"Come out, sneak!" roared Tubb.

"I—I'm not coming out!" panted Wingate minor. "You beasts!"

"Have him out!"

"Hand him over, Wharton, if you don't want us to wreck the study!" exclaimed Paget of the Third. "We're going to scalp him!"

"Hold on a minute! What has he been doing?"

"Mind your own business!" roared Tubb. "We're going to scalp him! I suppose you ain't a prefect by any chance, are you?"

"This study belongs to me! If you come a step further in, you'll go out on your neck!" said Wharton.

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"Hand over that sneak, then!"

"We're not going to hand him over!" said Wharton. "Not till we know what he's been doing, anyway! What's the trouble?"

"Well, I don't mind explaining," said Paget. "Shut up, Tubb, and leave it to me!"

"Look here, Paget—"

"Shut up! Wingate minor has been sneaking again!" said Paget.

"I haven't!" quavered Wingate minor.

"There, he says he hasn't!" said Wharton.

"Oh, he's a fibber!" said Paget. "He has! Old Twigg, our Form-master, has been jawing Tubb! Says he understands that a set is being made against Wingate minor in the Third, and we're to stop it. Catch us stopping it! Now we've got old Twigg down on us. We've tried to cure that worm of sneaking! We've ragged him, and we've sent him to Coventry; but it's all no use; he's a born sneak! Now we're going to slaughter him! See? And if you Remove bounders try to stop us, we'll slaughter you, too!"

"Yes, rather!" roared Tubb.

Wharton held up his hand.

"Let's have this out!" he said. "Wingate minor says he didn't sneak! Give him a chance to explain!"

"What's the good of listening to his whoppers? He sneaked to Loder the very day he came here, and got all of us into trouble! Now he's sneaked to Twigg, and Twigg is going to keep an eye on us! Told Tubb so, didn't he, Tubb?"

"Yes; and gave me fifty lines just for saying that we couldn't stand a beastly worm like young Wingate!" growled Tubb.

"I—I didn't sneak!" quavered Wingate minor. "Mr. Twigg asked me—asked me—how I was g-g-getting on in the Third, and—and he got it out of me that I—I wasn't getting on with the chaps. That was all. I didn't mean to sneak. I didn't know Mr. Twigg was going to speak to Tubb. And—and he wouldn't have given Tubb lines if Tubb hadn't checked him."

"Listen to the rotter!" said Tubb. "Of course I checked him when he interfered in our bizney! I should think so!"

"Now, be reasonable—" began Wharton.

"Reasonable, be blowed!" said Tubb, with great energy. "We're going to have that young rotter out of here, and slaughter him! Are you going to hand him over?"

"No!"

"Then we'll take him! Come on, you chaps!"

"Line up!" roared Harry Wharton.

The excited fags rushed to the attack. There were six or seven of them in the study already, and the doorway was crammed, and there were a crowd more in the passage. The odds were heavy against the Famous Five; but they lined up gallantly, and stemmed the rush. Wingate minor, or no Wingate minor, they weren't going to allow Third-Form fags to carry matters with a high hand in the Remove study.

In a moment there was a wild, and whirling combat raging in No. 1 Study.

The table, the crockeryware, and the chairs went flying right and left, as the swarm of fags struggled with the five Removes.

"Sock it to 'em!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Rescue, Remove!"

"Down with the eads!" roared Tubb.

Harry Wharton went down with Tubb and Gibbs clinging to him. Nugent was under the overturned table, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull disappeared under a swarm of fags. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was pinned in a corner defending himself against an overwhelming attack. Wingate minor was grasped by three or four pairs of hands, and dragged bodily to the door, struggling and kicking.

"Got him!"

"Have him out!"

"Hurrah!"

Wingate minor went out into the passage in a whirl of shouting fags. The Third-Formers bore off their victim in triumph; and they left No. 1 Study a wreck.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Retribution.

HARRY WHARTON sat up and rubbed his nose, and blinked dazedly round the study. His fingers came away very red. Nugent wriggled out from under the table. Bob Cherry sat in the fender, with one foot in the frying-pan, with his collar hanging by a single stud, and his jacket ripped up the back. Johnny Bull was sorting himself out of a heap of broken crockeryware. The study looked as if a cyclone had struck it suddenly—a particularly severe cyclone.

The uproar had brought other Remove fellows out of their studies, and they stared in at the open door of No. 1, and grinned.

"I guess there's been trouble here," remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "What was it—an earthquake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" groaned Bob Cherry, feeling his eye, which had a beautiful circle in an art shade of blue round it. "Ow! Ow!"

"Groooh!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton dabbed his nose with his handkerchief. He rose rather painfully to his feet, and glared at the grinning juniors in the doorway.

"Clear out!" he grunted. "There's nothing to cackle at."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess you look funny," said Fisher T. Fish. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"You ass, Wharton!" grunted Johnny Bull, picking pieces of teacups and saucers out of his hair. "You frabjous ass!"

Wharton glared.

"Was it my fault?" he demanded.

"Yes, it was. This is what comes of sticking up for fags," growled Johnny Bull. "Ow! I've got about ninety-nine cuts all over me!"

"Look at my eye!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Well, look at my nose!" said Wharton.

"Blow your nose!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton dabbed his nose again savagely. The claret was flowing freely. The Famous Five, as they picked themselves up after the unequal combat, looked as if they had been wrestling with a runaway motor-car or a threshing-machine.

"I wonder what they're doing to young Wingate now?" growled Johnny Bull. "Serve him right, whatever it is!"

"Never mind young Wingate," said Harry Wharton. "It isn't a question of young Wingate now. The Third have ragged a Remove study, and they've got to have a lesson. It's a matter for the whole Form. Call out all the fellows."

"What are you going to do?" grinned Bolsover major of the Remove.

"Rag 'em!"

"Well, that's a good idea."

"I guess so."

"The goodness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The esteemed fags must be taught an honourable and ludicrous lesson."

"Yes, rather!"

"All the giddy Form are going on the warpath," said Wharton. "Call 'em up!"

Most of the Remove were on the spot already. And though they grinned at the sight of the wrecked study, they were all ready to follow their leader to take reprisals. Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove, and his word was law in such matters. And all the Removites felt that such an indignity had to be wiped out. The Third Form—mere fags, who had no studies of their own, and foregathered in a Form-room—inky-fingered youngsters who were of no account whatever—had dared to invade the sacred precincts of the Remove! It was an unspeakable outrage, and it called for vengeance hot and strong. As Ogilvy remarked, such an insult had to be wiped out in blood—from the nose, of course.

It did not take long for the captain of the Remove to gather his forces.

Then the juniors made their way to the Third Form-room.

There was a sound of laughter in the Form-room as they approached it. The fags were evidently making merry over their raid into the Remove quarters, all unconscious of the vengeance that was about to fall upon them.

Wharton opened the door of the Third Form-room quietly.

The fags were all there. They had the Form-room to themselves till the time for evening preparation, when Mr. Twigg would come in. Some of the fags were cooking fearsome things at the Form-room fire; some were sitting on the desks and talking; most of them were grinning over the discomfiture of the Famous Five. Wingate minor was not to be seen. The unfortunate outcast of the Third had broken away from his captors in the passage, and had fled into his major's study, where even the boldest spirits of the Third did not care to follow him. But the Third did not care very much; they had ragged the Remove, and were victorious, and highly satisfied.

But the laughter died away as the Removites came swarming in at the door.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Tubb. "You Lower Fourth bounders can get out of here. This is our Form-room."

Wharton did not deign to reply. He waved his hand.

"Sock it to them!" he said.

The Form-room door was slammed and locked. Then the Removites rushed on. The Third scattered all over the room before that terrible onslaught. They had no chance. Tubb and Paget and some of the bolder spirits put up a fight, but

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they were knocked right and left. Sounds of woe and wailing filled the Form-room.

Fags were bumped and rolled over. Their jackets and collars were dragged off or ripped open, and their faces were splashed with ink. Lockers and desks were turned out, and the contents hurled far and wide. Mysterious things which were being cooked at the Form-room fire were plastered over the faces of Tubb & Co., and in their hair, and jammed down their backs.

In five minutes the Third were howling for mercy.

"There!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I think that's enough. I don't think those young beggars will raid the Remove again in a hurry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" groaned Tubb. "Clear out, you beasts! Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Remove, satisfied with the lesson they had given the Third, swarmed out of the Form-room, leaving that apartment filled with weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Tubb rubbed jam out of one eye, and ink out of the other, and blinked round at his defeated and dismayed compatriots.

"Ow!" he said. "Yow! What—what a set of awful beasts! Ow! We'd better get this room a bit tidy before old Twigg comes in—yow!—or we shall get gated for a dog's age. Groooh!"

Harry Wharton & Co. returned to No. 1 Study. They had some tidying up to do, too. But they had vindicated the dignity of the Remove, and they were satisfied.

Frank Nugent broke into a sudden chuckle as he swept up broken crockery.

"Well, where does the cackle come in?" demanded Wharton.

Nugent chuckled again.

"I was thinking of your new wheeze," he said. "Is this the way you are going to help Wingate minor? I fancy the Third will simply eat him, after this."

"Phew! I didn't think about that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton looked dismayed. The fags had been taught a valuable lesson, and the dignity of the Remove was avenged. But as for Wingate minor, the outcast of the Third, it was only too probable that his last state would be worse than his first.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Major and Minor.

WINGATE of the Sixth was in his study with Courtney when his minor came in. Jack Wingate was looking flustered and breathless, though he had paused in the Sixth Form passage to recover himself a little before entering. The Captain of Greyfriars glanced at him, and knitted his brows a little. It was easy enough to see that there was something wrong with Wingate minor again.

"Well, what is it, kid?" asked Wingate patiently.

Jack flushed.

"I haven't come to complain about anything," he said.

"Good. What do you want, then?"

"I suppose you don't mind my coming into your study, do you?" faltered Jack. "I'll get out if you like."

The Greyfriars captain laughed good-humouredly.

"Don't be an ass, kid. Stay as long as you like. But I can see that you're in trouble again. I thought I heard a yell just before you came in. Are the Third after you?"

"Yes," Jack admitted.

"What do they want?"

"They want to catch me."

"Well, I suppose they do, as they're after you," said Wingate. "But what do they want to catch you for? What have you been doing?"

"They say I've been sneaking."

Wingate's brow darkened.

"And have you?" he asked shortly.

"No."

"Well, that's better. Mind you keep clear of Loder, the prefect. He encouraged you to tell him tales before, simply to get you into trouble with the other fags. You'd have seen that if you'd had any sense. Loder didn't and doesn't care two pence for you. He was up against me, and getting at me through you."

"I understand that now," said Jack humbly.

"Is it Loder this time?"

"No; it's Mr. Twigg. He talked to me, and—and he was very kind, asking me how I was getting on, and so on," said Jack, keeping back his tears with difficulty. "I didn't mean to sneak, but—but he had it all out of me in no time—how I was ragged and sent to Coventry. I never meant to sneak—"

I forgot about that. But Mr. Twigg called Tubb into his study, and spoke to him about it, and warned him not to keep it up, and—and Tubb was cheeky, and got lines, and then—they put it all down to me. I suppose I ought to have been more careful, but I didn't mean to sneak all the same. Only they won't believe me now."

Wingate nodded.

"It's because you did sneak once," he said.

"Yes, but I wouldn't do it again, now I understand. Loder simply made me do it, that time."

"And the fags want to scalp you for setting old Twigg on their track, I suppose?"

"That's it," said Jack, with a grimace.

"And you can't go back to the Form-room?"

The fag shivered.

"I don't want to," he said. "I ran into Wharton's study in the Remove to get away from them, and they wrecked the study. They collared me, but I got away in the passage, and came here. I don't know what to do."

"Well, you've got yourself into a pack of troubles, and no mistake!" growled his brother.

Jack's lip quivered.

"I don't want to bother you, George," he said. "I'm sorry I came here now; but—but they were after me, and I had to get away, and I know they wouldn't dare to follow me in here."

Wingate chuckled.

"It would be bad for them if they came ragging in this study," he remarked. "Blessed if I know what to do with you, kid. I can't leave matters as they are, and I'm not going to let the Third slaughter you, especially as you're really not to blame this time. I think I'd better take you back to the Form-room, and speak to them. Sit down and have some tea first."

"Yes, sit down, kid," said Courtney kindly. "There's plenty of jam, and you can make some more toast."

Jack Wingate accepted the invitation gladly. The captain's study was a haven of rest and refuge for the outcast of the Third.

He had not had his tea, and it was late. He found that his painful experience had not interfered with his appetite, and he attacked toast and sardines and jam and cake.

And he felt better when he had had his tea. But the trouble of the return to the Third weighed upon his mind.

"It's all right, kid," said his major, reading his expression. "I'll take you back, and talk to the fags."

Jack nodded in a hesitating manner.

"I—I think perhaps I'd better stand it by myself," he said.

"Why?"

"Well, the chaps are always saying that—that I try to be your favourite, because you're my brother," said Jack, flushing, "and—and it was like that at first. But you told me that favouritism would be worse for me than letting me alone."

"So it would."

"Then you'd better let me go back by myself."

Wingate shook his head.

"I don't want you to be tarred and feathered, or anything like that," he said, with a grin. "This is where I'm bound to step in. The fags are getting outside the limit, and they want checking. If you're finished, I'm ready."

"All right," said Jack.

And Wingate and his minor quitted the study.

It was nearly the hour for evening preparation for the Third. Wingate opened the door of the Third Form room, and found that the fags had almost finished tidying up after the Remove raid. There was a murmur from Tubb & Co. at the sight of Wingate minor, and the glances they gave the Captain of Greyfriars were not pleasant.

"Hallo!" said the Greyfriars captain, looking round.

"Have you been having a riot here?"

"We've been raided!" growled Tubb.

"You've been doing some raiding yourselves, I think."

"Wingate minor been sneaking again?" asked Gibbs, with a sneer.

"No, my minor hasn't been sneaking," said Wingate, quietly. "But you kids will have to keep a bit better order. I heard you myself yelling in the passage."

The fags were grimly silent. They liked old Wingate well enough. In the late election for school captain, the Third had voted almost as one man for George Wingate. But they would not stand his minor at any price.

Jack Wingate had made himself thoroughly unpopular; and a feeling of that kind it was hard to remove—and even Wingate's influence could have little effect upon it.

"Now, I want to speak to you fellows," said Wingate, in a friendly tone. "My minor is a new boy here, and he's made mistakes."

"No doubt about that," said Tubb.

"Ear, 'ear!" said Bolsover minor.

"But you ought to give every fellow a chance!" urged

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Every Wednesday.

Wingate. "Now, I'm not talking to you as a prefect, but in a friendly way. Give my minor a chance, and don't let's have any more of this eternal ragging."

The Third-Formers made no answer. They did not like to refuse old Wingate. But giving Wingate minor a chance was as far from their thoughts as ever.

Wingate bit his lip.

"Well, anyway, if there's any more ragging you'll hear from me!" he said. "Understand that! I won't allow it!"

And Wingate quitted the Form-room.

The fags looked at Wingate minor. Jack's heart was beating faster. He was left alone amid his enemies, and most of them would gladly have ragged him. But after the warning from the captain of the school, they hesitated.

"So you've been sneaking to your major now instead of to Loder, young Wingate?" sneered Gibbs of the Third.

"No, I haven't," said Wingate minor. "I'm not a sneak. I—"

"Rais!"

"You are!"

"Oh, don't talk to him!" said Tubb, contemptuously. "He's not worth it. He's a born sneak, and he can't help it. Let him alone! We're jolly well not going to be ordered to be chummy with a sneak. Let him keep out of our way, that's all. He's in Coventry, and I'll punch anybody's head who speaks to him!"

"Ear, 'ear!" said Bolsover minor.

Mr. Twigg entered the Form-room a few minutes later. He found the boys quite quiet and orderly in their places. Before beginning preparation as usual, Mr. Twigg addressed a few words to his Form.

"I have a few—or—words to say to you, my boys," said Mr. Twigg, in his portentous manner. "It has come to my knowledge—or—that a persecution is going on in this Form—ahem—directed against a new boy. I wish this to cease at once. Understand me? I shall keep my eye open! I decline to allow Wingate minor to be the object of persecution. Now we will proceed!"

And they proceeded.

But Mr. Twigg's well-meant interference did not improve matters for Jack Wingate. The only impression it gave was that the "sneak" had curried favour with the Form-master; which was a heavy item to be added to the account against him. The fags gave him grim looks while Mr. Twigg was speaking, and Jack Wingate's heart sank. Mr. Twigg's kind-hearted interference, his brother's interposition in the affair—neither was likely to benefit him—rather the reverse. He understood fully now what his brother—in the ripeness of his own experience—had told him; that he would have to fight his own battles, and that favouritism, or any suspicion of it, would only make matters worse for him. If he had only understood matters better when first he came to Greyfriars—but it was too late to think of that now. What was he to do?—that was the question, now that he was branded as an incurable sneak, and barred by the fags!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

The Sneak.

"WHAT the dickens—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look at that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter and loud exclamations drew fellows to the spot from all quarters.

A peculiar procession was parading to and fro, in a part of the Close which was hidden by the elms from the windows of the schoolhouse.

Wingate minor was the chief figure in it.

Cords had been tied to his arms, and he was being led along by a crowd of fags, who jerked at the cords whenever the lad tried to halt.

Upon Jack Wingate's chest was pinned a large piece of cardboard, which bore the word in large-daubed capitals:

"SNEAK!"

Another daub of ink had been disposed on his nose, and another on either cheek, so that his appearance was, to say the least of it, curious.

Fellows gathered on all sides to view the procession.

Tubb, Pager, Gibbs, and Bolsover minor of the Third held the cords by which the victim was being led along, and nearly all the rest of the Third crowded round.

They were chanting as they marched:

"Sneak! Sneak! Sneak!"

"Rotter! Rotter! Rotter!"

"Yah! Yah! Yah!"

That highly-intellectual chorus was bawled out by all the fags.

Jack Wingate's face was very red, save where the black ink was daubed upon it. He struggled every now and then



"Are you going to hold out your hand, Tubb?" Tubb made a grimace, and held out his hand. Loder gave him a swish with the cane that elicited a wild howl from the Third Former. (See Chapter 5.)

to get away, and then his persecutors jerked at the cords, and he was nearly pulled over.

"Hallo, hallo hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "This is too thick! Let that kid go, Tubb! Do you hear?"

Tubb glared defiance.

"Mind your own business!" he exclaimed.

"Let him go, I tell you!"

"He's a sneak, and we're showing him up!" said Paget. "It's nothing to do with you Remove chaps. You can slide out!"

"Yes, rather!" said Coker of the Fifth, coming up with Potter and Greene. "Let the fags alone, you Remove chaps. The kid is a sneak, and he wants showing up!"

"Look here, Coker—"

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"Sneak! Sneak! Sneak! Rotter! Yab!" roared the chorus of fags.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then there was a shout:

"Cave!"

"Here comes Loder!"

"Bunk!" shouted Tubb.

And the fags broke and fled in all directions.

Jack Wingate was left with the cords tied to his arms, and the placard on his chest, as Loder the prefect came up.

Loder had heard the uproar, and he had come to see what was the matter. He burst into a laugh at the sight of Wingate minor in his peculiar guise.

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NEXT
MONDAY;

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

"So you're making trouble again, Wingate minor," said the prefect.

"It wasn't my fault!" he said.

"What have you got this stuck on your chest for? Who stuck it there?"

"Tubb!"

Jack Wingate bit his lip the next moment.

He realised that he had sneaked again, without intending it. Loder's eyes glinted.

"Take it off!" he said. "I'll see Tubb about it. We can't have these disturbances going on in the Cleso. They're turning the place into a bear-garden!"

"I—I say—"

"Well?"

"I—I didn't mean to say Tubb," faltered Jack Wingate.

Loder stared at him.

"Wasn't it Tubb?"

"Ye-es, but—"

"And somebody else too? Who were the others?"

"I—I don't want to give anybody away. I didn't mean to say it was Tubb. I—I don't want anybody to be punished!"

Loder laughed.

"That doesn't rest with you," he said. "As a matter of fact, the fags have got you downright—you are a sneak! But we can't have this kind of thing going on. I'll see Tubb about it. He will have to express his opinions in a rather more orderly way!"

"I—I say, Loder—"

"Hold your tongue!"

Another Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

And Loder strode away.

Wingate minor remained silent, in deep distress. He could have bitten off his tongue for giving Tubb's name; it had slipped out without intention; but he knew how the fags would regard the matter. It seemed that the unfortunate junior would never be able to set himself right with the Third. If he had resisted Loder's inquiries, and refused to give the names of his persecutors, it would have proved that he was not a sneak; the fags would have had to admit it. But he had done the reverse; and he knew that Loder would not fail to let Tubb know that he owed his punishment to the "sneak."

The tears came into Jack Wingate's eyes.

He tore off the placard, and threw it on the ground, and moved away, the most miserable boy in Greyfriars.

Meanwhile, Loder looked for Tubb. He found him in the tuck-shop. Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor were there, discussing jam-tarts and ginger-pop in the most innocent way in the world. They did not look as if they had rushed away from a rag, barely in time to escape detection. They did not even look round as Loder came into the tuck-shop with a cane in his hand.

"These tarts are prime!" Tubb remarked.

"They is!" said Bolsover minor. "Look 'ere, I've got another bob—my major gave me one—and we can have six more!"

"Jolly good. Mrs. Mimble, six more tarts, please—two-penny ones!"

"Yes, Master Tubb."

Loder, the prefect, halted and looked grimly at the three juniors.

"Oh, here you are!" he said.

Tubb glanced up innocently.

"Yes, here we are, Loder!" he said. "How do you do? Fine morning, ain't it?"

"Have some tarts, Loder?" said Paget, with eager hospitality. "They are really good. It's Bolsover minor's treat."

"No, I won't have any tarts!" said Loder. "I've come here to see Tubb. You tied Wingate minor up in the Close, Tubb, and put a placard on him."

"I did?" exclaimed Tubb, in astonishment.

"Yes, you. That kind of thing isn't allowed. There's such things as law and order that have to be considered, you know!"

"How do you know I did it?" demanded Tubb.

"Wingate minor told me!"

Tubb gave a snort of the most profound disgust.

"He told you?" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"He gave you my name, did he?"

"Yes."

"The rotten sneak!" said Tubb, clenching his fists. "He's—he's simply unspeakable. I never heard of such a thoroughgoing rotter! Look here, Loder, you know the Head said once that listening to tales was as bad as telling tales, so—"

"Hold out your hand, Tubb!" said Loder, grimly.

"But look here, Loder—"

"Are you going to hold out your hand, Tubb?"

Tubb made a grimace, and held out his hand. Loder gave him a swish with the cane that elicited a wild howl from Tubb.

"Yow-ow-ow-oh!"

"Now the other hand," said Loder.

"Oh, I say, Loder, I—"

"The other hand?" rapped out the prefect.

Tubb reluctantly put out the other hand. Swish!

"Yaroop!"

Loder quitted the tuck-shop. Tubb put his hands under his armpits, and squeezed them hard, and set his teeth. He made a negative motion with his head as Bolsover minor pushed the tarts towards him.

"Not now," he muttered.

"It's rotten," said Paget sympathetically. "I wonder young Wingate didn't give our names as well as yours. What a rotten sneak!"

"Orrible cad!" said Bolsover minor.

Tubb groaned.

"I'll make him sorry for it," he said between his teeth.

Tubb left the tuck-shop, still squeezing his hands hard. Loder had hurt him. As he tramped across the Close Tubb came upon Wingate minor. Jack Wingate hurried up to him. He had washed the ink from his face.

"Tubb," he exclaimed, "I'm sorry—"

Tubb glared at him.

"You rotten sneak!" he said between his teeth.

Jack flushed scarlet.

"I didn't mean to sneak!" he gasped. "I—I—"

"You gave Loder my name."

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"He asked me, and—and I spoke without thinking. I—I—"

Tubb gave a sarcastic laugh.

"I'll teach you to think before you give my name again, you sneaking cad!" he said.

"Tubb, I—I'm sorry! I didn't mean—"

"Get out of the way!"

"I—I say—"

"Take that, then?"

Tubb hit out vengefully, and Wingate minor caught the blow full on the mouth. He fell heavily, and Tubb strode on without even looking at him again, and entered the School House. Jack Wingate staggered dazedly to his feet. He was dizzy from the blow and the fall, and a thin stream of red was running from a cut lip. Gibbs of the Third, who was watching him, burst into a mocking laugh.

"Now go and tell Loder," he sneered.

Jack Wingate did not reply. He moved away towards the School House without a word, but with a misery in his breast that would have touched the hardest of his persecutors if he had understood it. And he did not tell Loder.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. The Peacemaker.

"I'VE got it!"

Harry Wharton made that remark as the Remove came out of their Form-room after last lesson that day. Wharton had been thinking deeply—not of his lessons—and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had given him fifty lines for the same. But the captain of the Remove did not mind the lines. He had been thinking out the affair of Wingate minor, and he had decided what to do.

"I've got it!" he announced in the passage.

"Got what?" asked Nugent. "The remittance you were expecting?"

Wharton laughed.

"Yes, I've got that," he said. "But it wasn't that I was speaking of."

"Then what have you got?"

"An idea."

"Ideas are cheap," said Johnny Bull. "I'd rather have tea, if you've got your remittance. Is it a good one?"

"Two quid from my uncle."

"Hurrah! We shall be able to spread ourselves a bit now," said Frank Nugent, with great satisfaction. "We can have a little party in No. 1 Study."

"Just what I was thinking of."

"Oh, if that's the idea, it's all right," said Bob Cherry.

"We'll have Tom Brown, and Hazeldene, and Penfold, and Linley, and Fish, and—" Nugent was going on with the list, when Wharton held up his hand.

"Hold on, Franky."

"Don't you want the fellows?" asked Frank.

"This isn't going to be a Remove party," Wharton explained.

His chums looked at him in astonishment. In the many "brews" that took place in the junior studies, fellows generally asked other fellows of their own Form.

"Not a Remove party?" said Johnny Bull. "You're not thinking of asking Coker of the Fifth, I suppose, and Potter, and that set?"

"No fear!"

"Temple and Dabney of the Fourth?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I'd rather have our own fellows. What's the good of having Temple swanking in the study, making out that it's a gracious thing to have tea with the Lower Fourth? Pah!"

"I'm not thinking of Temple and Dabney of the Fourth. Blow the Fourth!"

"Not a giddy senior party?" asked Frank Nugent. "You're not going to ask the prefects, I suppose? In the first place, they wouldn't come; in the second place, we couldn't stand 'em if they would."

"Blow the prefects!" said Harry cheerfully.

"Don't say it's a master!" implored Johnny Bull. "If it is, you'll have to excuse me. If we have a master to tea once in the term, and sit up and behave ourselves like prize dogs at a show, that's enough. No good doing the Eric bizney more than once in a giddy term. Leave me out if it's a master to tea."

Harry Wharton laughed again.

"It's not so bad as that," he said. "I should have thought you'd have guessed. I've been thinking it out, and have got a jolly good idea. You know the old saying, how a wife can keep a husband good-tempered—'Feed the brute'?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Well, it's a good wheeze in every way. I've been thinking how to deal with Wingate minor and the fags of the Third—"

"Blow Wingate minor!" roared Johnny Bull. "I'm fed up with Wingate minor."

"Yes, rather!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific," purred Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh, "and the fedupfulness is also great."

"Rot!" said Wharton. "I tell you I'm going to help him, and you fellows are going to help me. It's up to us. Old Wingate has done us good turns, and one good turn deserves another."

"Well, we're in for it, I suppose," said Bob Cherry, with a comical groan. "What's the programme? Count on us."

"Well, I've been thinking of talking to Tubb and the rest, but it's no good talking to them. But it occurred to me that it's a good wheeze to feed the brutes. Especially fags, you know—young beggars like that will eat anything they can get, and be happy. Fill 'em up with tarts and cakes and things, and they'll do anything for you."

The juniors grinned.

"Well, there's something in that," agreed Nugent, "but it's a wicked waste of a good feed."

"It's in a good cause. I think that we'll ask Tubb, Paget, Gibbs, and Bolsover minor—that's four of them—to a feed in No. 1 Study. We'll have the best feed we can get for the money, and—and, in short, feed the brutes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When they've fed a bit, and got into good tempers, Wingate minor can come in late to tea, you see. They'll be softened by ginger-beer and tarts, and, besides, they won't like to make a fuss in another fellow's study—nobody would."

"Ahem! I don't know whether the Third make polite distinctions of that sort," said Frank Nugent.

"Well, it will be up to them to be decently civil to Wingate minor under the circumstances, you know," urged Wharton, "and if they clear out they'll have to miss the rest of the feed, and we'll keep the best things till the last, you see."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what do you think of the idea, you fellows?"

"Wicked waste of a feed."

"Rotten!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

Wharton grunted.

"Well, rotten or not, you're going to help me, I suppose? After all, you'll get the feed, too; there will be plenty for nine or ten chaps out of two quid. And you can all make contributions, if you like."

"Thanks!"

"You're going to back me up?" demanded Wharton.

"Yes," groaned Nugent. "Any old thing! I think you might draw the line at having fags in the study. They'll jam everything, sure as a gun, and leave tarts on the carpet and sardines everywhere. I know 'em! But we'll back you up, great chief! Wah! The great white chief has spoken!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then come down to the tuck-shop and help me get in the supplies," said Harry Wharton briskly.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter of the Remove joined the Famous Five as they were leaving the School House. "I say—"

"Busy!" said Harry Wharton, jerking his arm away as Bunter caught hold of his sleeve. "Run away and play, Bunt."

"I heard what you said—"

"You hear what everybody says. Buzz off!"

"I say, you fellows, if you're going to stand a feed, I can help you, you know. You know what a jolly good cook I am, and I don't mind putting my postal-order towards the expenses, if it comes in time."

"Ha, ha, ha! It's not likely to come in time," roared Bob Cherry. "How many terms have you been expecting it, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Of course, if you don't want me in the study—"

"You've hit it; we don't."

"Ahem! I suppose you don't mind if I happen to mention to Tubb what I heard you fellows saying—"

"You can come to the feed, Bunter," said Harry Wharton hurriedly. "We shall want some help with the cooking, anyway."

Bunter beamed.

"Good! I'll help you do the shopping, too. I'll taste all the tarts and the cakes and the pies, to make sure that they're all right. I don't mind taking any amount of trouble for fellows I really like."

"If you take that trouble, it won't be the only trouble you'll be booked for," growled Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

The chums of the Remove entered the school shop, Billy Bunter toddling in with them. And the orders they gave brought the sweetest of sweet smiles to the plump face of Mrs. Mimble, the keeper of the tuck-shop. The Famous Five all added contributions to the sum to be expended, and the amount of provisions they laid in might have lasted them if Greyfriars had been besieged by an invader. All the juniors were carrying parcels when they left the tuck-shop and

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returned to No. 1 Study with the supplies. Then they set to work to prepare tea, and it was a spread that was likely to make the mouths of the Third Form fags water.

Harry Wharton was firmly convinced of the excellence of his scheme for acting as peacemaker in the Third. And his chums were backing him up heartily, whether they were convinced or not. It only remained to see how it would turn out.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Kind Invitations.

"HALLO," said Tubb of the Third, "what's this?" Bolsover minor had just come into the Form-room, where Tubb and Paget and Gibbs were discussing the question of tea. The fags usually had tea at the long tables in the dining-room, but sometimes, when funds were healthy, they stood themselves tea in the Form-room. Tubb and Paget and Gibbs were debating solemnly whether a tea could be obtained for the sum of fivepence-halfpenny—the total amount of their financial resources, pooled for the purpose.

Bolsover minor had a card in his hand, and he held it out to the chums of the Third with a grin on his face.

"What is it?" asked Tubb.

"An invitation."

Tubb brightened up.

"To a feed?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Good. Can you take me?"

"Yes; and Paget and Gibby."

"Oh, good!" said Paget. "Where is it—in a study?"

"No. 1 Study in the Remove."

Tubb rubbed his plump hands.

"Good!" he said. "Wharton always stands a good tea when he asks anybody—not that I've had tea with him myself. It was like his cheek to muck up the Form-room for us the other day; but we wrecked his study, so accounts are square there; and I don't bear malice, for one."

"Not at tea-time, anyway," suggested Gibbs.

"They're doing the thing in style this time," said Paget, looking at the invitation card.

"First time I've seen a thing like that in the school."

"Orlright, ain't it?" said Bolsover minor.

The invitation was certainly impressive, and the fags felt very much flattered. Fags weren't often asked to tea in studies, even junior studies, and certainly it was very distinctive to have a gilt-edged invitation-card sent to them. The card bore an inscription in Frank Nugent's elegant hand:

"No. 1 Study requests the pleasure of Tubb, Paget, Bolsover minor, and Gibbs's company to tea in the study at six precisely. N.B.—A good spread. R.S.V.P."

"R.S.V.P.," said Tubb. "That means something, I suppose?"

"It means they want an answer, fathead!" said Paget.

"Then why don't they say so?"

"That means 'Repondez s'il vous plait,' ass! It's French!"

"Don't see why they couldn't say it in English," said Tubb obstinately. "I suppose it isn't a lark, is it?"

"It's all right," said Gibbs. "We've only got to repondee—see?"

"Where did you get this, Bolsover minor?"

"Nugent handed it to me in the Close."

"Have you reponged?" asked Gibbs.

Bolsover minor chuckled.

"I ain't!" he said.

"I suppose you mean you haven't?" said Gibbs loftily.

"I mean I ain't," said Bolsover minor.

"Shut up, Gibby!" said Paget. "Hasn't it been agreed that Billy is to talk what grammar he likes, without being chipped?"

"Oh, all right," said Gibbs, "my mistake! Look here, if you haven't reponged, the sooner somebody goes and repongs, the better."

"I'll go," said Paget. "You can leave this to me. I'll do the polite thing."

"Back up, then!" said Tubb. "If we're late in answering, they may ask somebody else instead. I saw them go into the tuck-shop, so I think it will be something decent; and I know Wharton had a remittance to-day. But what are they asking us for, I wonder?"

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"Pleasure of our company, p'r'aps," said Bolsover minor. Tubb sniffed.

"Tain't that," he said.

"Don't see what else it can be," said Gibbs. "They might be asking old Paget because he's got a cousin a marquis; but they're not that sort. Vernon-Smith asked him once because of that, didn't he, Paget?"

Paget grinned.

"Yes. But No. 1 Study wouldn't," he said. "Perhaps there's some game on. But, anyway, we're going to get the tea!"

And Paget hurried away to No. 1 Study to give the answer to the polite invitation.

No. 1 Study looked very busy when the fag peered in at the door.

It was a quarter to six now, and tea was for six, so the Famous Five had no time to lose in getting the spread ready. Billy Bunter had taken his jacket off, and had his shirt-sleeves rolled up, and was cooking away like a Trojan. The Owl of the Remove was making himself very useful for once; but he was rewarding himself as he went along with a succession of "snacks" which would have made up a good square meal for anybody else. But they only whetted William George Bunter's appetite.

"Hallo!" said Paget.

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

"We've got the invitation," said Paget.

"I hope you're coming?" said Wharton politely.

"Yes, rather—I—I mean, yes, we shall be very pleased to accept your invitation," said Paget, with dignity. "We will be here at six precisely."

"Good!"

And Paget retired.

He rejoined the fags in the Form-room.

"Well?" said Bolsover minor, Gibbs, and Tubb together.

"It's ripping!" said Paget. "I've seen what they've got—sardines and ham and baked potatoes!"

"Oh, good!"

"Bunter's there, and he's frying bacon—good gammon cachers, too, and eggs."

"Ripping!"

"There's a big dish of jam-tarts—twopenny ones—"

"My hat!"

"And a plum cake—"

"Hurrah!"

"And I saw three tins of pineapple—"

"My word," said Gibbs, "they're going it! And—and they've laid in all that to entertain us. I must say it's very decent of them."

Tubb looked puzzled.

"Blessed if I know what they're doing it for!" he said.

"Us?" said Paget.

"Yes; but why?"

"Oh, ask me another! Why, it's going to be the feed of the term!" said Paget.

"Anybody else coming?"

"I didn't ask. There won't be room for many more in the study. We shall make nine, with those five, and then there's Bunter, that's ten. Of course, we shouldn't object if they squeezed in a few Remove chaps as well."

"No," said Tubb generously. "We'll let 'em do as they like."

"There was jelly, too, and strawberry jam," said Paget, "and a lot of other things. Of course, I couldn't stare at the stuff."

"You seem to have made a pretty good inventory, all the same," grinned Tubb. "Blessed if you don't make me feel famished!"

"Six o'clock yet?" asked Gibbs.

Paget consulted his watch.

"Ten to," he said.

"Ahem! It's only civil to be a bit early at a party," Gibbs remarked causally.

Paget shook his head.

"More classy to be a bit late. Shows you don't care much for the show, you know."

"But we do," said Gibbs.

"Yes, I know we do, idiot; but we don't want to give the impression that we never get a decent feed ourselves, do we?"

"Certainly not!" said Tubb emphatically. "Only—only I don't think we ought to be late, as they're doing us so decently."

"I should suggest five minutes after six," said Paget firmly.

To which his three comrades responded, with wonderful unanimity, "Rot!"

"You'll need the time," said Paget. "Gibbs had better go and put a clean collar on. Chap ought to keep up appearances."

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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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"What's the matter with my collar?" demanded Gibbs warmly.

"Well, it looks as if you'd slept in it," said Paget, eyeing the collar critically.

Paget was very careful in matters affecting his personal appearance, and a little bit given to dandyism. He was quite alone in his glory, in that respect, in the Third-Form at Greyfriars.

"You let my collar alone!" growled Gibbs. "There ain't time to change it!"

"It's only eight minutes to six."

"Sure your watch ain't slow?" asked Bolsover minor.

"Quite sure!"

"My belief is," said Gibbs firmly, "that it is six o'clock now! I dare say you forgot to wind your watch last night, Paget."

"Rats!" said Paget.

"It's only polite to be a bit early at a special entertainment like this," added Gibbs. "I think we ought to go. Besides, you know what Bunter is. As soon as he begins on the tommy, it will be a race to get something to eat."

"There's heaps!"

"There won't be when Bunter's had time to wire in! Let's go!"

"I'm for being a few minutes late," said Paget.

"Well, I'm for being a few minutes early."

"Look here—"

"No need for us all to go together," said Gibbs, as an after-thought. "I will just drop in casually, and you chaps can drop in after me. Then Paget can be a quarter of an hour late, if he likes, if that's very classy. I'm not struck on being so classy myself. I'm hungry."

"Look here, Gibbs—"

But Gibbs was already disappearing through the doorway of the Form-room. Paget sniffed.

"Look here, you chaps," he said, "I consider— Where are you going?"

But they were gone.

Paget sniffed again.

Then, with all the aristocratic repose he could summon for the occasion—as befitting the cousin of a marquis—he made his way to No. 1 Study in the Remove, after his friends.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Feeding the Brutes—And the Result.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. welcomed their guests with much courtesy and urbanity.

Harry Wharton was in deadly earnest over the matter. The Co. regarded it more or less humorously. But they all played up well. The spread was to be a success, and it should achieve its object of establishing peace in the Third-Form, if they could manage it. If the method of "feeding the brutes" established peace, it was worth while. The Co. had their doubts, but they did not say so. They followed their leader. After all, it was very meritorious to be peacemakers—especially if it worked.

"Hope we're not too early?" said Tubb, as he came in, followed by his hungry army.

"Not at all!" said Wharton.

"You couldn't be too early," said Nugent, with solemn politeness.

"Jolly glad to see you!" said Johnny Bull, adding to himself, under his breath: "And gladder still to see the last of you." But that was not heard.

"The gladfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "It causes the joyfulness to expand in my esteemed heart to behold the honourable and ludicrous countenances of my august friends."

And the chums of the Remove placed chairs for the guests. Chairs had been borrowed from other studies along the passage, so there was a sufficient supply. There was not room for all of them at the table; but five were ranged at the table, four being occupied by Tubb & Co., and the other left vacant. Billy Bunter, having donned his jacket after his arduous exertions, plumped down into the vacant chair at the table.

"Gerrup?" said Bob Cherry.

Bunter blinked at him.

"This is my place, ain't it?" he demanded.

"No. You can sit on the fender."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Gerrup!"

"That chair's for the guest who's coming later," Wharton explained.

"But I say, you fellows—"

Johnny Bull took hold of the back of the chair, and tilted Bunter out upon the floor. There was a terrific roar from the fat junior. He was holding a tart in each hand, and the tarts found their way into his collar and waistcoat as he rolled over.



The grinning Grammarians deprived their prisoners of their collars and neckties, and gathered up the toppers, which had fallen off in the struggle, and crowded away down the path with their booty. Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another in dismay. (An incident from "D'Arcy's Dodge!" the grand long, complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co., by Martin Clifford, contained in this week's issue of "The Gem" Library. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)

"Ow! Beast!" roared Bunter.
Johnny Bull set the chair to the table again. Bunter picked himself up. He glowered at the grinning juniors through his big spectacles.
"I've a jolly good mind to leave the study at once, and refuse to stay to tea!" he said savagely.
"Oh, don't do that!" implored Bob Cherry.
"I've a jolly good mind to!" said Bunter loftily. "However, I'll stay, if Bull will behave himself! I don't like this horseplay!"
"You'll get some more of it if you take that chair again!" said Nugent.
"Oh, really, Nugent—"
"Ring off, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "Pour out the tea, Franky. Do you take sugar, Tubb?"
He flourished the tongs.
"Yes," said Tubb. "Four lumps!"
"Here you are!"
"I must say that this here bacon is prime!" said Bolsover minor.
"Glad you like it," said Wharton, courteously.
"It's simply spiffing!"
"Ahem! You mean ripping," murmured Paget, sotto voce.
"Spiffing," said Bolsover minor—"simply spiffing! I'll trouble you to pass the hogs!"
The feed proceeded without a hitch.
The Removites sat where they could, and helped themselves how they could; but the four fags were most comfortable at the table. And the supply of tuck was simply unlimited.
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Seldom, or never, had the Third-Formers sat at such a festive board.

Their faces beamed with smiles, and they talked freely and cheerfully. There was no allusion to the late strained relations between the Remove and the Third. No one could have suspected, looking at them, that Tubb & Co. had lately wrecked No. 1 Study; and that the Famous Five had ravaged the Third Form-room. The hatchet was buried now, and, as the poet says, all was calm and bright.

There came a tap at the door—a timid tap—when the guests of No. 1 Study were about half-way through their tea.

"Ah! Our last guest!" said Wharton, with a cough. "Come in!"

The door opened.

Wingate minor appeared in the doorway, hesitating, and looking into the study. Tubb, Paget, Gibbs and Bolsover minor exchanged rapid glances.

"You know young Wingate, of course," said Wharton, genially. "Come in, kid. Here's your place—between Paget and Tubb!"

"Th-hank you," faltered Jack Wingate.

Tubb and Paget pushed their chairs as far as they could from Jack Wingate's. They glared at him as hard as they could glare. The merry chatter died away in the study. A most discordant element had been introduced at the merry feed. Jack Wingate was in Coventry; and the other fags did not intend to speak to him. But it was difficult to keep that up when they were all guests of the Famous Five, sitting together round the hospitable board in No. 1 Study. And the Removites chatted on cheerfully, taking both Jack

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Wingate and his deadly enemies into the conversation, so that the ice had to be broken.

"Didn't know young Wingate was coming!" grunted Tubb, at last.

"Shurrup!" murmured Paget across Jack's shoulders. Paget was a great stickler for good form.

"Br-r-r!" growled Tubb, who didn't care twopence for good form. In fact, he would have stated his opinion of Jack Wingate aloud there and then, but for the fact that the tea was not finished. He did not want to risk a row in the study while there were more good things yet to come.

"Pass the eggs to Wingate minor, will you, Tubb?" said Harry Wharton, handing the dish to Tubb.

Tubb had no choice about the matter.

"Eggs?" he said to Jack Wingate.

"Thank you!" murmured the outcast of the Third.

Tubb grunted.

In spite of the efforts of the Removites to keep the conversation from flagging, it flagged.

The fags were silent; but their jaws were not idle. Whether in desirable or undesirable company, they had not lost their appetites, and they continued to do full justice to the good things provided by No. 1 Study.

Jack Wingate was silent, too.

He would gladly have taken advantage of the occasion to make friends with Tubb & Co.; but the fags evidently did not intend to give him an opportunity.

Excepting when they were compelled to by some manoeuvre of Wharton's, they did not even glance at him; and they did not address a word to him.

"You're not eating, kid," said Bob Cherry, encouragingly. "Try the cake, Wingate minor!"

"Thank you," murmured Jack. "M-may I pass you the cake, Tubb?"

"No!" said Tubb, grimly.

"Would you like some c-c-cake, Paget?"

"Thank you," said Paget, with elaborate and cutting politeness. "I should not at present care for any cake."

"You kids getting ready for the cricket?" said Nugent, to lead the talk into safer channels.

"Yes," said Tubb.

"I'm getting a new cricket-bat," said Wingate minor.

"Good. You should get Tubb's help in selecting a cricket-bat," said Wharton. "Tubb knows a good bat when he sees one, and he'll help you get good value for your money. You'll lend him a hand with it, won't you, Tubb?"

"No," said Tubb, "I won't!"

"Ahem!"

"Shurrup, Tubb!" whispered Paget, anxiously.

But Tubb had finished his tea now. He had glanced thoughtfully at the plum cake, and debated in his mind whether he could find room for any; and decided that he couldn't. And so he had no longer the motives for politeness that he had had previously. Tubb suspected Wharton of having "planted" Wingate minor on him purposely, in this way; and Tubb was annoyed. The reason for this handsome entertainment was now revealed, and Tubb felt that the "plant" absolved him from the claims of gratitude. Tubb pushed back his chair and rose.

"Thank you for the feed, you fellows," he said. "I'll be getting along now."

"Oh, don't hurry away!" said Wharton anxiously. "Wingate minor hasn't finished."

"Blow Wingate minor!"

"Ahem!"

"Shurrup!" whispered Paget.

"Yes, chuck it!" said Bolsover minor, in a stage whisper. "If you don't like that sneak being 'ere, Tubb, you can 'ook it; but be civil!"

Tubb snorted.

"Sit down, old chap, and have some of the jelly," said Harry Wharton, affecting deafness.

"I'm not sitting down with a sneak!" said Tubb.

Jack Wingate flushed crimson.

"If you mean me—" he began.

"I do mean you, you toad!"

"Shut up, Tubb!" roared Paget.

"Look here—"

"This is a plant!" said Tubb, glowering at the dismayed chums of the Remove. "They know that the Third has sent this sneak to Coventry, and they've planted him on us. What?"

"Ring off!"

"Rats! If they want a sneak here, they can have him—I'm off!"

"I'm not a sneak!" said Wingate minor. "And you're a cad and a pig, Tubb!"

Tubb jumped.

"What! My hat! I'll—"

"Order!" bawled Bob Cherry.

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But Tubb was not to be called to order. He had already laid his grasp upon the captain's minor; and Wingate of the Third was dragged back over his chair. He clutched at Tubb, and they fell together. Jack Wingate had a jam-tart in his hand, and he promptly jammed it in Tubb's eye. Tubb roared.

"Grooh! You young beast—"

There was a crash as a chair was kicked over. Tubb and Wingate minor rolled against the table, and the table rocked. A cup of tea shot over Bob Cherry's trousers, and Bob Cherry gave a yell like a Red Indian on the warpath.

"Stop it, you rotten fags!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"You—you—" gasped Tubb.

"You—you—" panted Jack Wingate.

"I'll smash you—"

"I'll—"

The Removites grasped the fighting fags, and dragged them asunder. Tubb was swung round to the door.

"Out you go!" growled Johnny Bull. "On your neck!"

"Here, I'm not going to stand that!" exclaimed Gibbs, jumping up. He had finished his tea now, and he was ready for action. "Let Tubb alone!"

"Rats!"

"Rescue, Third!" bawled Tubb.

Bump!

Tubb descended with a violent concussion in the passage outside No. 1 Study. Gibbs and Bolsover minor and Paget had rushed to his rescue; even Paget forgetting the laws of politeness in the excitement of the moment. The chums of the Remove seemed to have forgotten their politeness, too. It was an unhappy ending to a feed which was to have established peace. Bolsover minor followed Tubb out of the study with his arms and legs flying in the air, and he landed on Tubb, as that youth was struggling to his feet. Tubb yelped, and rolled over again under the weight of his chum.

Bump! Bump!

"Yow-ow!"

"Yaroo!"

Paget and Gibbs followed Bolsover minor, in rapid succession.

The floor of the passage outside No. 1 Study was strewn with gasping, infuriated fags.

Slam!

The door of the study closed forcibly after them.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. Jack Wingate was silent and long-faced. Wharton looked exasperated; his chums were grinning.

"Well, the brutes have been fed!" said Nugent, chuckling.

"Oh, rats!" snapped Wharton.

"What price the giddy peacemaking now?" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you cackling asses!" roared Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frabjous duffers—"

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

And Wharton himself, after a few moments, joined in the laugh. He had done his best; but undoubtedly he was not born to be lucky in the role of peacemaker.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

BOLSOVER MINOR entered the Third Form-room, and stopped suddenly. It was afternoon, a half-holiday a few days after the high tea in No. 1 Study, when the "brutes" had been fed to no purpose by the Remove peacemakers.

The Form-room was deserted that bright spring afternoon—save by one junior. It was Jack Wingate. He was seated at his desk writing a letter, with his chin resting on the palm of his left hand. He was so deeply occupied that he did not hear Hubert Bolsover come in; and Bolsover minor regarded him curiously.

Jack Wingate's face was pale and troubled, and there was a suspicious wetness about his lashes. Bolsover minor's heart smote him. Bolsover minor had been through some hard times when he first came to Greyfriars. The fact that he had been lost in his early youth, and had been brought up in a slum, and had never succeeded yet in getting rid of the traces of it, had told very heavily against the one-time street-arab. Matters had come round all right; and his major was very kind to him now, too; and life seemed cheerful enough to the junior who had once been Billy, the newsboy. But the fag remembered the hard times, and he felt sorry at that moment for Jack Wingate. He hesitated, and then crossed over to the desk where the outcast of the Third was sitting. Jack Wingate was in Coventry, but Bolsover minor did not care just then.

"Hallo, kid!" he began.

Jack started, and looked up.

"Feeling pretty down in the mouth, I suppose?" said Bolsover minor, uncomfortably.

Jack nodded.

"Rather lonely in 'ere by yourself, ain't it?" said Bolsover minor.

"I sha'n't be here long now, I hope," said Jack. "I'm writing to my father to ask him to take me away."

"Oh!" said Bolsover minor.

Jack looked down at his letter again. Bolsover minor followed his glance, and he saw that in two or three places the ink was blotted by the tears that had fallen from the fag's eyes. His heart was softened.

"You needn't 'ave made sich a muck of things, you know," he said, after a pause. "The chaps would have been all right if you'd let 'em. Some of them was down on me when I come 'ere first, because I ain't been educated. But they come round. Cause why? I always played the game. I didn't go sneaking to a prefect when I was ragged. I whacked out for myself, and when I couldn't do that I stood it and grinned!"

"You had more sense than I had," said Jack.

"Well, yes, I s'pose so," agreed Bolsover minor, somewhat surprised that Jack Wingate recognised the fact. "You was an ass, you know! And—and I wanted to 'elp you, after Master Wharton spoke to me, and you—"

"I answered you like a cad," said Jack.

"Yes, you did."

"I was sorry afterwards," said Jack, in a low voice.

"Why didn't you say so then?"

"I was a fool, I suppose."

"Oh!" said Bolsover minor.

He thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and stood regarding the new boy in silence for some time. There was a change in Jack Wingate; the fag could see that. Undoubtedly his experiences at the school, rough as they had been, had done him good in some ways.

"Look 'ere," said Bolsover minor, at last, "I'll tell you what, young Wingate. If you really mean that you're not going to ride the high-horse any more, or sneak, or anything like that, I'll see what I can do for you."

"It's no good," said Jack miserably. "It's too late for all that. I'm going to leave the school."

"S'pose your governor won't take you away?"

"He will if I ask him, I think."

"Wot about your major?"

"I sha'n't mention it to him till I'm going. It will be a disappointment to him," said Jack, with a quivering lip. "But it can't be helped."

Bolsover minor wrinkled his boyish brows thoughtfully.

"Give it another chance," he said. "Chuck that letter into the fire, and try again. I'll stand by you if you're decent, and I'll try to bring the other fellows round."

Jack's face flushed a moment hopefully.

"But I'm sent to Coventry," he said. "If you speak to me, the other fellows will send you to Coventry, too."

Bolsover minor's jaw looked very square.

"Let 'em!" he said.

"But—but I don't want to get you into trouble," faltered Jack.

"Don't you worry about that. I can look arter myself," said Bolsover minor. "Besides, the other fellows will come round, too, if you play the game."

"I'm going to do that, as well as I can," said Jack.

"That's the style," said Bolsover minor encouragingly. "Stick to that, and you'll be all right. I'm going to stick to you, too. Shove that letter in the fire, and see how it works. I'll speak to Tubb and Paget about it."

"You're very kind," faltered Jack Wingate.

"That's all right."

Bolsover minor left the Form-room, looking very thoughtful. He had taken on a difficult task, and he knew it. But Wharton had asked it of him; and he owed Harry Wharton a debt of gratitude that he could never forget. And he was really sorry for Wingate minor.

"Hallo, where have you been?" exclaimed Tubb, as Bolsover minor came out into the Close. "Come on! We're going to punt round Gibby's footer!"

"Wherefore those giddy wrinkles in your brow, Bilty, my son?" asked Paget. "What have you got in your noddle now?"

"I've just seen Wingate minor!" said Billy abruptly.

"Oh, never mind Wingate minor! The fellows are waiting for us!" said Tubb.

"I've just spoken to him."

Tubb snorted.

"And what do you mean by speaking to him, when he's in Coventry?" he demanded angrily.

"Don't you think that's lasted long enough, Tubby?"

"No, I don't."

"I think he's had a good lesson," urged Billy. "And—and I think he's had enough. Why not give him a chance?"

"Rot!" said Paget. "He's had his chances! And he's a

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ONE
PENNY.

sneak all the way through! Let the cad alone! I'm fed up with him, for one!"

"Same here!" said Tubb emphatically.

Bolsover minor shifted uneasily. He had expected opposition from his friends, and he realised that the task before him was harder than he had anticipated.

"I jest found him writing home to his pater to take him away," he remarked.

"Hurrah!"

"Look 'ere, it's rotten for him to go like that, you know!"

"Ripping, you mean!" said Tubb. "Why, we shall be rid of the sneaking cad altogether if his pater takes him away! Let him go ahead!"

"I persuaded him to chuck the letter in the fire!"

Tubb and Paget glared at their chum.

"You did what?" gasped Tubb.

"Made him chuck the letter in the fire!" said Bolsover minor firmly.

"What for, you ass?"

"I think he ought to have another chance."

"I suppose you're going to take him under your wing—is that it?" sneered Tubb.

Bolsover minor nodded.

"I was thinking of it," he said.

"You—were—thinking—of—it!" said Paget, in measured tones. "You know that the rotter is sent to Coventry, and barred by all the Third. And you're thinking of taking him under your wing? Have you gone off your silly rocker?"

"I think he's had enough," said Bolsover minor doggedly. "Why not give him a chance?"

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Now, look here, you chap, do be pally, and back me up in this!" urged Bolsover minor. "If he turns out as rotten as you think, it's easy enough to round on him again. But give him a chance, that's all—just a chance to show that he's decent!"

"Back you up!" growled Tubb. "More likely knock you down! That outsider is barred by the Form, and any chap who speaks to him will be sent to Coventry along with him!"

"Then you can send me to Coventry along with him!" said Bolsover minor, with a flash in his eyes.

"We jolly well will, if you speak to that cad!" said Paget sharply.

"I'm going to speak to him! I've promised him to stand by him."

"What about us?" shrieked Tubb. "Are you chucking over your old pals, to take up with an outsider and a sneak, you rotter?"

"No, I ain't! But I'm going to give him a chance!"

"You can go and eat coke!" said Tubb. "He's barred by the fags, and if you have a single word to say to him, you'll be barred, too!"

"Then bar away!" said Bolsover minor defiantly. "I'm going to keep my word to him!"

"Fathead!"

"Same to you, Tubby!"

And Bolsover minor walked away with his hands in his pockets, whistling. But he did not feel so cheerful as he looked. He understood the odium he would bring upon himself by the act of backing up the outcast of the Form. But he did not mean to turn back now. He had given Jack Wingate his word, and he intended to keep it. And he hoped that it would work out satisfactorily in the long run. Bolsover minor was of an optimistic disposition.

It certainly did not look like working out satisfactorily. When the fags came in to tea, Bolsover minor and Jack Wingate entered the dining-room together. There was a murmur from all the Third; so loud that Mr. Twigg looked round from the head of the table to see what was the matter.

Tubb nudged Paget furiously.

"Do you see that, Paget?" he whispered.

"Yes, ass!" growled Paget. "Don't upset my beastly tea over my beastly bags, you chump!"

"He's chumming with that outsider!"

"Yes, he is, the ass!"

"If he speaks to young Wingate, the Form won't speak to him!" said Tubb. "That's settled! Bolsover minor's going to be sent to Coventry, too!"

"Yes, rather!" said Gibbs.

"There is a great deal of whispering at this table," said Mr. Twigg mildly. "Pray be more quiet, my boys!"

Bolsover minor and Jack Wingate sat down side by side. Jack was looking very self-conscious; but Bolsover minor was as cool as the historic cucumber.

He nodded genially to Tubb, pretending not to see that youth's glare of speechless rage.

NEXT
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"Pass the jam, Gibby!" he said.
Gibbs passed the jam mechanically.

And Bolsover minor made a good tea. After tea, when the fellows crowded out of the dining-room, Bolsover minor found himself the centre of a crowd of the Third. They wanted to know what he meant, as Tubb explained; and they wanted to know badly.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Comrades in Coventry.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! There's trouble in the Third," said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five came out of the School House after tea in the study.

"As usual!" yawned Nugent.

"The usualfulness is terrific!"

The chums of the Remove paused to watch the crowd of fags in a corner of the Close near the School House. They were evidently very much excited. Bolsover minor was leaning against the wall, with his hands in his trousers pockets, and Jack Wingate stood by his side with flushed face and gleaming eyes. Tubb of the Third was brandishing a large, knuckly, and not over-clean fist at them.

"You rotter!" he shrieked.

"Oh, dror it mild!" said Bolsover minor. "I ain't a rotter! Nothin' like it!"

"You are!"

"I ain't!"

"I tell you——"

"And I tell you——"

"Order!" said Paget, in his drawling and elegant tones. "Let's settle this thing quietly! Bolsover minor, you know that that sneak is in Coventry!"

"Yes," Bolsover minor.

"Then what do you mean by speaking to him, and palling with him in this way?"

"I think 'e's 'ad enough."

"The rest of us don't think so."

"Can't 'elp that."

"Do you set yourself up against the whole Form, Bolsover minor?" roared Tubb.

"Look 'ere, I think the kid's 'ad enough, and I'm not goin' to be down on 'im no more," said Bolsover minor, his grammar growing more mixed as he grew more excited. "I don't 'old with it!"

"You cheeky young ass——"

"Look here," said Gibbs, "if you talk to that outsider, you join him in Coventry! You'll be barred by the Third, same as he is! That's understood!"

"I don't care!"

"You—you rotter!" howled Tubb. "Going back on your old pals, to chum up with a sneak, and a tell-tale!"

"Rats!"

"I'm done with you!" said Tubb, with a dramatic gesture.

"Orlright," said Bolsover minor, "if you're done, you may as well buzz off, and give us a bit of a rest!"

Tubb seemed on the verge of a fit.

"Look here, you're not going to cheek the Form like this!" said Tupper of the Third. "If you don't leave that cad alone, you'll be ragged as well as cut!"

"Oh, rats!"

Tubb waved his hand.

"Collar him!" he shouted. "We'll duck the pair of them in the fountain, and then we'll see what they say!"

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a rush of the angry and excited fags.

Bob Cherry glanced at his comrades.

"This is where we step in, I think," he remarked. "We don't want to get mixed up in fag rows; but they're not going to duck young Billy!"

"No fear!"

"Come on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five rushed at the crowd of straggling fags.

Bolsover minor and Jack Wingate, with their backs to the wall, were putting up a stout fight, but they had no chance against such odds.

They were going down, with a swarm of fags over them, when the Famous Five rushed in and snote Tubb & Co. hip and thigh.

Bolsover major of the Remove, the biggest junior at Greyfriars, followed Harry Wharton & Co. to the rescue of his minor.

The six Removites cleared the fags away almost in the twinkling of an eye.

Tubb & Co. retreated, breathing fury.

Bolsover minor staggered up, assisted by the grasp of his elder brother. Percy Bolsover stared at him curiously.

"What are the fags ragging you for, kid?" he demanded.

Bolsover minor gasped.

"Oh, it's only a row," he said.

"The kid's playing the game, and acting like a decent chap," said Harry Wharton. "Stick to it, Billy, and it will work out all right."

Bolsover minor nodded.

His major frowned.

"Are you backing up that Wingate kid?" he asked.

"That's it, Percy."

"More fool you!" said his elder brother. "What are you doing it for?"

"Well, the chaps are 'ard on him."

CONTRASTS.—No. 3.

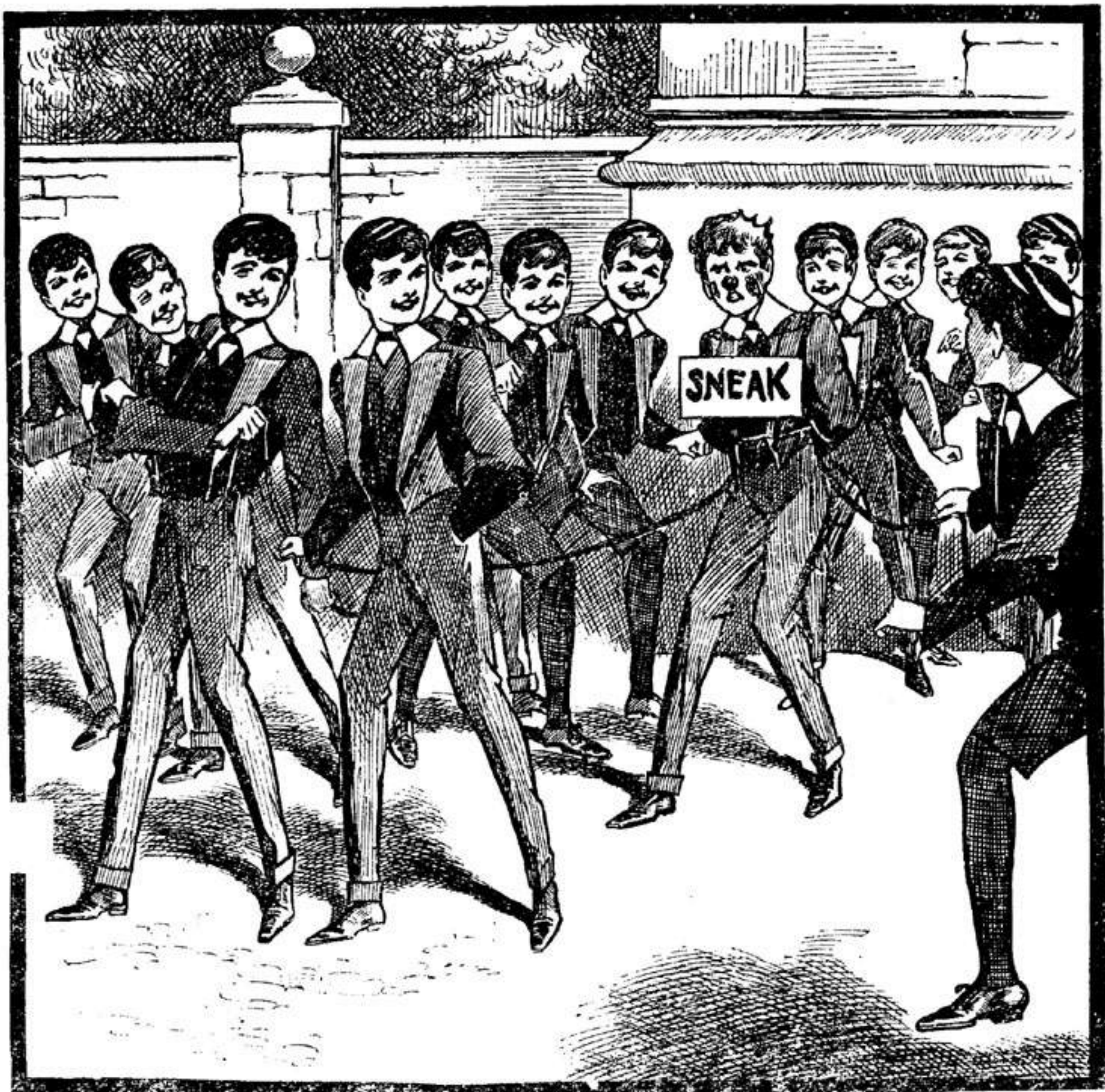
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The fag's persecutors chanted as they marched along with their victim, "Sneak! sneak! sneak! Rotter! rotter! rotter! Yah! yah! yah!" Jack Wingate's face was very red, save where the black ink was daubed upon it, and he struggled every now and then to get away. (8 & Chapter 5.)

"What business is that of your?"

Bolsover minor rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Well, I dunno, - it's my business of mine," he admitted.

"But it's 'and on the kid, you know, and I want to 'elp 'im."

Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, stifled. He did not understand that kind of thing at all.

"Well, the best thing you can do is to let him alone, and make it up with the other chaps," he said. "That's my advice."

And he walked away.

Bolsover minor looked worried. He looked up to his major very much, and generally followed his counsel. But in this matter he could not help feeling that he was right, and his elder brother wrong.

Harry Wharton & Co. went on their way, leaving the two rescued fags to go into the School House. Tubb & Co. were watching them from a distance, ready to pounce upon them again at the first opportunity. Jack Wingate was looking very despondent.

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"I've got you into a lot of trouble," he said to his companion.

"Oh, that's nothing."

"But it is something," said Jack. "I—I don't like the idea. It would be better for you if you left me alone. I'll try to stand it without dragging you into my troubles."

Bolsover minor shook his head.

"Don't you worry about that," he said. "The fellows will come round. They're sure to, in the long run. Tubb's a good sort, only rather laxy, and Page's as good as gold. They'll come round in time."

Jack Wingate nodded, but he looked, and felt, very doubtful.

And Bolsover minor did not feel quite so confident as his words implied. He realised more and more now the difficulty of what he had undertaken. But he was not the fellow to turn back.

Tubb & Co. came into the Form-room for evening preparation, and found Bolsover minor and Jack Wingate there with their books.

Bolsover minor approached his old friends. He hoped to find them in a more subdued temper, and to be able to talk to them reasonably. A row was impossible just then, at all events, as Mr. Twigg was expected every minute in the Form-room.

"Tubb, old man——" began Bolsover minor.

Tubb seemed afflicted with a sudden deafness. He did not turn his head, nor appear to be in any way aware of Bolsover minor's existence.

"Tubb!"

Still no answer.

"Tubb!" shouted Bolsover minor, growing red in the face.

Tubb stared at him then, but did not speak.

"Look 'ere, Tubb," said Bolsover minor wrathfully, "what's the matter with you? Ain't gone deaf all of a sudden, I s'pose?"

Tubb did not speak. He gave his former friend a look, and then turned upon his heel and walked away towards the fire.

Bolsover minor bit his lip. He understood that! He turned to Paget with an almost appealing expression on his face. Paget had always been his firm supporter in the Third Form; Paget was the fellow he relied upon most. But Paget was in a new mood now.

"Paget, old fellow——"

Paget looked him up and down, and turned his back.

Bolsover minor's face was scarlet now. Some of the fags grinned, but most of them had stony faces. The whole affair had evidently been pre-arranged by Tubb & Co.

"Gibbs!" said Bolsover minor appealingly.

Gibbs swung away, whistling.

"Tupper, old man!"

Tupper went to his desk and sat down.

Then Bolsover minor's eyes flashed. He glared round at the fags.

"So I'm in Coventry, too, am I?" he exclaimed angrily.

No reply.

"Well, you can go and eat coke!" said Bolsover minor. "I don't care twopence! Rats!"

And he went to his desk, and sat down beside Jack Wingate. His defiance was received with stony silence.

Bolsover minor had defied the Form, and now he was getting the penalty. He, as well as the junior he befriended, was barred by the fags.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Tried and True.

HARRY WHARTON was worried.

As a rule, Third Form affairs did not greatly interest the heroes of the Remove. Rows among the fags came and went, and left the Remove undisturbed. What might be going on among the Third and the Second did not trouble the Remove any more than it troubled the great and mighty Sixth.

But circumstances were different now.

Wharton had appealed to Bolsover minor to do something for Jack Wingate, and young Bolsover, impelled by the debt of gratitude he owed to Wharton, and by his own good nature, had done his best.

If the matter had turned out successfully, Wharton would have congratulated himself upon his abilities as a peacemaker.

But his peacemaking seemed, as Nugent remarked, destined to end always in a "muck-up."

Instead of getting Jack Wingate out of trouble, he had got Bolsover minor into it!

That was how it seemed to have worked out.

Bolsover minor had boldly taken the bull by the horns, as it were, and "palled on" with the outcast of the Third.

And the fags, instead of following his lead, and coming round, had taken the opposite line, and sent him to Coventry as well as the captain's minor.

Wharton could not congratulate himself upon the result of his interference in the weird and complicated politics of the Third Form.

And it worried him. For two or three days now Bolsover minor had been sent to Coventry by his Form, and although he did not complain, Wharton knew how it must be troubling him. Bolsover minor was of a friendly and chummy disposition. He disliked being on bad terms with anybody, and especially with his old friends. But Tubb and Paget and the rest showed no sign of coming round. If Bolsover minor chose to throw over the sneak, they would receive him again into their select circle with open arms. So long as he was friendly with Jack Wingate, they would have nothing to do with him.

That was the fixed attitude of Tubb & Co., and they showed no disposition to depart therefrom.

"Well, what's the trouble?" Frank Nugent asked one afternoon, as he saw a deep wrinkle of thoughtfulness in his study-mate's brow.

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Wharton frowned.

"I was thinking of that kid," he said.

Nugent yawned portentously.

"Wingate minor again?" he asked, in a tired voice.

"No, ass! Bolsover minor."

"Oh, these minors!" said Frank. "My own minor in the Second Form is enough to turn any chap's hair grey. One's own minors are bad enough, without getting mixed up with other fellows' minors."

Wharton laughed.

"Bolsover minor is being barred by his Form," he said.

"Well, he wouldn't get much satisfaction out of being jawed to by a set of fags," said Nugent. "I dare say it's a pleasant rest for him."

"Don't be an ass, Franky. It's rotten for him."

"Well, in that case I'm sorry. What are we going to have for tea?"

"Blow tea! It was my fault that young Bolsover got into this scrape. I asked him to do something for Jack Wingate."

Nugent nodded.

"Yes; I told you at the time you were an ass," he said.

"If you want me to say it again, I will—you're an ass!"

"What can we do now, Nugent?"

"Have tea."

"I mean about young Bolsover."

"Forget his existence."

"Oh, don't be a giddy goat!" exclaimed Harry, exasperated. "I've got him into a scrape, and I've got to get him out of it somehow."

Nugent looked serious at last.

"Well, I'm blessed if I see what you can do," he said. "I dare say the fags will come round in time, when something else happens to take up their attention. These things always fizzle out by themselves in the long run."

"This doesn't look like fizzling out. Young Bolsover looks down in the mouth every time I see him."

"Let him chuck Wingate minor over, then, as the fags want him to. It was like his cheek backing up a sneak, even if you did ask him."

"Jack Wingate isn't such a bad sort. But I do seem to have made matters worse instead of better, and that a fact," said Harry Wharton ruefully.

Nugent grinned.

"And if you chip in again you'll most likely make 'em worse still," he said. "Better leave 'em to stew in their own juice."

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"I don't know."

"Don't feed 'em in the study again, for goodness' sake!" said Frank imploringly. "It doesn't do any good, besides being a sinful waste of good grub."

"Br-r-r!" said Wharton.

Nugent grinned, and walked away to the tuck-shop to get the supplies for tea. Harry Wharton stood with his hands in his pockets, and his brow moody. He had meant well, but the result of his efforts had been unfortunate. He felt that it was up to him to do something now, but he could not quite see what. He caught sight of Bolsover minor in the passage, and bore down upon him. The fag was not looking cheerful. His unfriendliness with his old friends was weighing very much upon his spirits.

"Well, how are you getting on now, kid?" Wharton asked.

Bolsover minor tried to grin cheerfully.

"Oh, alright," he said.

"Still in Coventry?"

"Yes."

"I say, kid, I didn't mean to bring this on you," said Harry hesitatingly.

"That's alright, Master Harry. I know you didn't."

"But I've done it, all the same, it seems."

"Can't be helped," said Bolsover minor philosophically. "And I dessay the fellows will come round."

"Look here, kid, I don't hold you to it," said Harry.

"You said you'd do what you could for young Wingate, but I don't hold you to doing it. You can do as you like, so far as your promise to me is concerned."

"That's alright, Master Harry. I ain't goin' back on Wingate minor."

"How do you get on with him?"

"He's a good chap enough."

"No more sneaking?"

Bolsover minor shook his head.

"No; he's a white man all through, when you know him," he said. "and he's said the same to me that you 'ave—to leave him alone and make friends with the rest."

"Well, that shows he's decent," said Harry.

"Yes, it does; and I'm sticking to him," said Bolsover minor. "The other fellows can go and eat coke for all I

care. Don't you worry about me, Master Harry, I'm orlright."

And Bolsover minor nodded cheerily, and went on to his brother's study. Bolsover major was going to help him with his lessons. Bolsover major, however, had something to say on the same subject when the fag reached his study.

"It seems that you've been sent to Coventry by your Form, Hubert," Bolsover major said abruptly, as the fag placed his books on the study table.

"Oh, that's nothin'," said Billy.

"I think it is something!" said his brother, tartly. "Considering how necessary it is for you to have friends in the school, I think you're playing the giddy goat. The Third have treated you very well, considering where you came from, Hubert."

Hubert coloured.

"I 'spose so, Percy," he said.

"A young chap like Paget is specially useful to you," went on Bolsover major, "he's the cousin of a marquis, and might be a lot of use to you. You ought to remember those things."

"I—I never thought about his bein' of use to me, Percy," faltered the fag.

"Well, you should. You've quarrelled with him, and the rest, on account of a rotten young sneak—and it's time you chucked it."

"Young Wingate is orlright, Percy, if the chaps would give him a chance. Everybody makes mistakes, you know."

"Oh, rot! Look here, the best thing you can do is to throw him over, and make it up with Paget and the rest."

"That wouldn't be cricket, would it, Percy?"

"You do as I tell you," growled his brother. "Paget's asked you home to his place for the vacation. You won't be able to go if you don't make it up with him."

"I 'spose not."

"Well, then, you can see what's got to be done. Give that young cad Wingate the go-by, and stop playing the giddy goat!"

Bolsover minor was silent.

"Are you going to do as I say?" demanded his brother, with a frown.

"I—I can't go back on a chap, can I?" said the fag.

"You're an obstinate young ass!"

"Look 'ere, Percy—"

"Will you do as I advise you?" demanded Percy Bolsover, savagely. "I'm advising you for your own good, and I'm your elder brother, ain't I? Didn't the pater tell you that you were to take my advice?"

"Yes; but—"

"Well, will you do as I say?"

"What do you want me to do, Percy?" asked the fag, wretchedly.

"Throw that young cad over!"

"I—I can't!"

"You mean you won't?" demanded Bolsover major, angrily. The bully of the Remove was speaking in his most bullying tone now; he was quite like the old Percy Bolsover whom Billy had known when he first came to Greyfriars. All the kindness he had shown his minor of late was gone now, and Billy felt the difference acutely. But the fag was steady and true. He felt what it was right for him to do, and he intended to do it, even at the cost of a quarrel with his brother. He had taken Jack Wingate up of his own accord; and unless Jack did something mean and underhand to justify him, he had no right to drop him again. And Jack had done nothing of the sort; whatever he had done in the first days when Greyfriars was new and strange to him, he was playing the game fairly and squarely now. If Bolsover minor had never had anything to say to him, that would have been all right; but he could not desert him now without feeling that he was a "funk."

Bolsover major was staring angrily at his brother. He did not and could not understand the fag's motives; nature had made the major's character on a lower plane than the minor's, though Percy Bolsover was far from recognising the fact.

"Well, what are you going to do?" demanded the Remove bully, sharply.

"I can't throw over a chap who's done nothing to call for it, Percy."

"He's nothing to you, you young ass!" growled Bolsover major. "Do you think he wouldn't throw you over fast enough, if it suited him?"

"I don't think he would."

"Of course he would, like a shot. Drop him—he'll do you no good, and he's no use to you. That's my advice."

The fag was silent.

"Well, will you do as I say, for the last time?" demanded Bolsover major.

"I can't, Percy!"

Bolsover major pointed to the door.

"Then you can get out of my study," he said, "and don't come back till you've made up your mind to do as I tell you!"

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Bolsover minor left the study in silence, and without another look at his brother. His heart was very heavy as he went.

It was the last straw!

He carried his books miserably into the Form-room. Paget was there, but Bolsover minor did not look at him. To his surprise, however, Paget came over towards him.

"Look here, Billy," he said, with something of his old cordial manner. "Hasn't this gone on long enough, you young duffer?"

"Too long, I think!" said Bolsover minor.

"Then why don't you stop it?"

"Tain't for me to stop it," said Bolsover minor. "I'm ready to be friends again, as soon as the others are!"

Paget sniffed.

"You know we're all ready, Billy; as soon as you drop that cad Wingate minor. We're not going to have anything to do with him. Throw him over, and we'll all be the same as we were before!"

Bolsover minor shook his head.

"I can't do that!" he said.

"You silly young ass!" growled Paget. "I suppose you're not doing this simply out of obstinacy, are you? Have you got a bee in your bonnet?"

Bolsover minor grinned faintly.

"I've took up with the kid," he said. "I've found him a decent chap. I know he was a bit rotten at first, but he's dropped that. Now I've took up with him, how can I chuck him up? It wouldn't be cricket!"

"Oh, rats! Your old pals come first. Let the cad alone!"

"Can't be done!"

"Then you're keeping this up, you young ass?"

"I ain't going back on a chap who trusts me!"

"Oh, rot! Look here—"

Tubb came into the Form-room. He glared at Paget.

"You talking to that fellow!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know he's in Coventry, Paget?"

"I'm trying to make him see sense!" said Paget.

"Leave him alone!" growled Tubb.

Paget and Tubb left the Form-room together, and Bolsover minor was left alone. Jack Wingate came in, and he sat down rather timidly on the form beside Billy. The latter was looking decidedly glum.

"I—I say, I can't stand this!" said Jack Wingate, miserably. "I'm not going to have you dragged into my troubles in this way. I heard what Paget said. Look here, Bolsover, you'd better do as he says—leave me alone to shift for myself!"

"Rot!" said Bolsover minor, tersely.

"You'd better."

"Rats!"

"I—I shall write to my people to take me away," faltered Wingate minor. "I've made a rotten bad start, and I shall never get on in this school. I may make a better beginning somewhere else. It—it will be rotten for the pater and mater, that's all; but—but it will be best for me to go. Don't you think so?"

"No, I don't!" said Bolsover minor, gruffly. "Stick it out! It's up to you to stick it out, and you'll pull through somehow!"

"But you—"

"Oh, never mind me."

"But I can't help minding you," said Jack miserably.

"You're the best chap I've ever known, and I've got you into rotten trouble."

"Bosh!" said Bolsover minor. "Shut up, and let's tackle these French verbs. What's the giddy imperfect of recevoir, first person subjunctive?"

And Bolsover minor insisted upon talking verbs, and Jack Wingate had to let him have his way. It did not occur to Bolsover minor in the least, but he was showing a grit and courage equal to that which has won distinction upon wider battlefields than a junior Form at school. And grit and courage, in the long run, generally bring their own reward; though for Bolsover minor, so far, they seemed destined to bring nothing but trouble.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Tar and Feathers!

"QUIET, you ass!" said Paget.

"Quiet yourself, you chump!" said Tubb.

"Shurrup!"

"Well, ring off, then!"

"Look here—" began Gibbs.

"You shut up, Gibby!" said Tubb and Paget together.

"The rotter will hear you chaps, if you keep on jawing," remarked Tupper.

Another Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

"Cheese it, Tuppy!"

The four fags were hidden in the deep shadows of a landing, in a corner of the big staircase. Paget was keeping watch over the banisters, in the dark passage below. The passage ought not to have been dark; but the unusual circumstance was accounted for by the fact that Paget had turned the gas out there.

The fags were in ambush.

"Mind that stuff!" said Tubb. "You shoved the pail, Gibbs!"

"I didn't," said Gibbs. "You did it yourself, with your clumsy hoof, Tubb!"

"If you're asking for a thick ear, Gibbs——"

"Well, if you can give me one——"

"I'll jolly well——"

"If this is how you chaps are going to keep quiet, you'd better shout out to young Wingate that we're laying a trap for him!" said Paget sarcastically. "It would be simpler, you know!"

"Oh, rats!"

Paget peered over the banisters again.

"See anything?" asked Tubb.

"How can I see anything, fathead, when it's dark? I'm listening."

"Sure young Wingate's coming this way?"

"I know he is. He's been working in the Form-room, and he must come this way when he's finished; and he can't be long now. I shall see the light when the Form-room door opens, and then we shall hear him."

"It wouldn't do to make a mistake," said Tupper, uneasily.

Paget sniffed.

"You trust your uncle, and don't jaw," he said. "We're not going to make a mistake. This is where the sneak gets it in the neck."

And the fags chuckled.

"Keep that pail still!" growled Tubb.

"Berrr!"

"I don't want tar all over my bags, you fathead. There will be a row over this—it's against the rules to tar and feather sneaks in the Form-room passage——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup! He can hear you cackling from the Form-room, if you keep on like a set of giddy hens!" said Paget.

"Got the feathers ready, Tubb?"

"Yes; in this bag!"

"The tar first, and then the feathers," said Tupper. "Mind you don't get any tar on you. It's not easy to wash off in a hurry; and we don't want to give ourselves away. There will be a row about it."

"I should jolly well say so; and the sneak won't have a chance of giving us away this time!" said Tubb, with great satisfaction. "He won't even see us—especially when the tar's on his napper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup!" murmured Paget, straining his ears over the banisters. "I thought I heard something then."

"Has the door opened?"

"No."

"Then there can't be anybody in the passage."

"Might be somebody coming back from the school library," whispered Paget. "We don't want to be spotted here."

"Crumbs, no! We should have to explain away the tar and the feathers, if it happened to be a prefect."

"Quiet!"

There was a sudden gleam of light in the darkness of the broad, flagged passage below for a moment. Then it vanished as a door was heard to close.

The fags breathed hard.

They knew that Wingate minor had come out of the Form-room and closed the door after him, and was in the dark passage.

"Ready!" murmured Paget.

"Quite ready!"

Tubb heaved the pail of tar—borrowed from Gosling, the school porter, without Gosling's permission having been asked—up on the edge of the banisters, and waited. Gibbs was close behind him with the bag of feathers, open and ready for hurling at the unconscious victim below.

They waited breathlessly.

Tarring and feathering the sneak was an idea that had occurred to Paget, with the view of making an example of Wingate minor. But for obvious reasons it had to be done secretly. Jack Wingate could not be relied upon to take his "gruel" without complaint; he was expected to give the names of the raggers to a master or a prefect if he knew them. Therefore the raggers had taken precautions. Jack

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Wingate might guess whom they were; but he could not prove it.

All was ready, and the fags grinned silently as they waited. Footsteps came along the passage below the stairs.

There was an indistinct murmur of a voice, as of someone muttering to himself in surprise and annoyance at finding the lights out. The footsteps were just below now.

"Go it!" murmured Paget.

Tubb inverted the pail of tar.

Whizzzzzzh!

The sticky contents of the pail swooped down upon the unprotected head below. Guided only by sound as he was, Tubb aimed well. There was a gasping, choking cry in the darkness, and the fags knew that the tar was swamping over the head and shoulders of the fellow who was passing below.

"The feathers, quick!" breathed Paget.

Whiz! went the contents of the bag of feathers.

They settled down in a cloud in the darkness upon the unfortunate victim.

There was a gasping yell, a sound of wild spluttering.

"Grooh! Oh! Help! Ah! Oh! Grooh! You villains—oh!"

"Oh!" muttered Paget. "That's not young Wingate's voice!"

And Tubb, in a frozen whisper, said the single word:

"LODER!"

They realised what they had done!

It was Loder of the Sixth—a prefect—whom they had tarred and feathered in mistake for Wingate minor!

Loder the prefect!

They stood frozen with fear.

Then there was a cull in the passage, and they recognised the voice of Wingate minor.

"Hallo! Is anything wrong?"

Paget ground his teeth.

"The young cad!" he muttered, as if it were a great sin on the part of Jack Wingate to arrive too late for the tar and feathers. "The rotter! The——"

"Let's cut!" whispered Tubb.

There was a sudden blaze of light.

A match had been struck.

For an instant the four fags stared down into the passage below. They saw Loder the prefect, his face and shoulders and hair completely hidden by a thick swamping of tar and feathers. They saw Wingate minor standing with a flaring match in his hand, and a look of startled horror on his face. Some sound made him look upward, and his eyes met those of the fags glaring over the banisters.

Then the match went out.

The four fags fled up the stairs. They fled into a box-room, and the tar-pail and the bag were hidden in an empty trunk. Then they fled from the box-room, and by a roundabout way made their retreat to the junior common-room.

Their faces were pale as they foregathered there and looked at one another in the light.

"It's no good!" muttered Tubb. "He recognised us. He caught my eye."

"Not Loder?"

Tubb chuckled involuntarily, in spite of his uneasiness.

"No, not Loder—his eyes were too bunged up to see anything. Wingate minor."

"He knows all of us!" muttered Gibbs.

"And he'll give us away!"

"No doubt about that."

"We're in for it. Who'd have thought that Loder would be coming along the passage just at that minute? What did you turn out the gas for, Paget, you ass?"

"Don't jaw me," growled Paget. "How was I to guess that Loder would come along? Just like Loder—always shoving himself in where he's not wanted."

"Wingate minor will give us away!"

"Of course he will."

"Then what——"

Paget granted.

"We shall have to face the music, that's all," he snapped.

"It means a flogging, at least," whispered Gibbs.

"I know it does."

"Let's go and see——"

"Ass! Let's keep off the grass. No good being spotted near the scene of the crime!" said Paget.

And the four hapless raggers waited in the junior common-room. They had the room to themselves; every other fellow in Greyfriars had swarmed into the Form-room passage to discover the cause of the strange and wild noises that were going on there.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Sneak

"GROOH! Grooh! Waw-w-w-w-p!"

"Great Scott!"

"Grooh-oooh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?"

The gas was lighted in the passage now.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 269.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

It illuminated a strange scene.

Fellows had gathered from far and near, and they gazed at Loder the prefect in alarm and wonder and mirth.

Loder was quite unrecognisable.

There was tar in thick layers upon his hair, upon his face, upon his shoulders. His collar was thick with tar, inside and out; tar was running down his jacket and trousers. And to the tar innumerable feathers were sticking.

Tar was in his eyes, in his nose, and in his mouth. It clung lovingly to his hands as he gouged it away from his face.

Loder was making the strangest possible noises under his coating of tar and feathers. But for his voice his identity would have remained a mystery.

"Grooh! Hoooh! Oh!"

"Is it Loder?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Well, it doesn't look like Loder," grinned Nugent. "It looks like a giddy Christy Minstrel who has been rolling in a chicken-run!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I think it must be Loder. It sounds like Loder."

"Grooh! Oh! I'll be the death of them! Ow!"

Walker of the Sixth caught Wingate minor by the shoulder. "Who did this?" he exclaimed, shaking the fag. "Did you have a hand in it?"

The fag started.

"I? Oh, no, Walker."

"But you were here?"

"Ye-e-s, I was here."

"Who did it, then?"

"I—I didn't."

"Jolly clear that the kid didn't," said Carne of the Sixth. "That stuff's been chucked over Loder from the stairs. Wasn't it, Loder?"

"Grooh! Yes! Ow!"

"Who did it, Loder?"

"Grooh! I don't know! It was dark here," mumbled Loder. "I'd been to the library for a book, and I found the light out as I came back—grooh!—and then this stuff swamped over me—ow! There was somebody on the stairs——"

"You didn't see him?"

"Grooh! No; how could I?"

"One of those Remove bouncers," said Walker. "I'm jolly sure of that."

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"Where were you?" demanded Walker.

"In my study, and Marky was with me—I've got a good alibi," grinned Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I know who's mucked up Loder like this!"

"I—I'll find him out!" gasped the prefect, rubbing at the tar with his sticky fingers. "Grooh! I'll skin him alive—ow!"

Walker went some way up the stairs, and found there plain traces of the tar on the banisters, but he found no traces of the perpetrators of the outrage. They were far enough away by that time!

"Bless my soul, what is this?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, hurrying upon the scene. "Dear me! What—what——"

"It's Loder, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Loder! Bless my soul! How——"

"Somebody's been tarring and feathering him, sir," grinned Bob Cherry.

"The tarfulness is terrific, sir."

"Good heavens! Who has done this, Loder?"

The prefect gasped.

"I couldn't see, sir. I think there were more than one—I heard them scuttling away. Ow! Some of the juniors, of course, sir."

"The light was turned out," Walker explained. "Loder came along in the dark, and got it in the neck—ahem!—I mean on the head."

"Did no one see who it was?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "The perpetrator must be discovered and severely punished. It is outrageous!"

"Grooh!"

"Was no one else here?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Wingate minor was, sir."

Mr. Quelch turned towards the fag. Jack Wingate had made a movement to retreat, but Walker of the Sixth had taken hold of him and stopped him. Wingate minor had to stay and face the music.

"You were here, Wingate minor?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Were you concerned in this outrage?"

"I had been in the Form-room, and I came out when I'd finished my work, and found the passage dark. I wondered what the gas was turned out for, and I had stopped to feel in my pocket for some matches when I heard Loder yell."

"Did you strike a match?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "Then doubtless you saw who it was that hurled this tar over Loder?"
 Wingate minor was silent.
 "He must have, sir," said Walker.
 "Answer me, Wingate minor," said Mr. Quelch severely.
 "Did you or did you not see the perpetrators of this outrage?"
 "Yes, sir," stammered Jack Wingate.
 "Who were they?"
 "They—they were on the stairs, sir."
 "I did not ask where they were, but who they were?" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Give me their names at once!"
 Jack did not reply.
 "Do you hear me, Wingate minor?" thundered the Remove master.
 "Yes, sir."
 "Then why do you not answer?"
 "I—I can't, sir."
 Mr. Quelch stared blankly at the fag.
 "You cannot! What do you mean? I order you to give me the names of the boys you saw at once—at once! Do you hear?"
 "Ye-es, sir."
 "Then give me their names!"
 "I can't, sir."
 "Are you mad, Wingate minor? Why cannot you give me the names, if you know them?"
 "It would be sneaking, sir."
 "What!" Mr. Quelch's voice sounded like the roll of distant thunder. "What! Are you aware whom you are speaking to, Wingate minor?"
 "Ye-es, sir."
 "Give me the names at once!"
 The fag did not speak.
 "Am I to understand that you refuse to answer me, Wingate minor?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a quieter but very ominous tone.
 "I can't, sir."
 "Very well! As you are not in my Form, I shall not deal with this matter. Loder, I recommend you to get yourself cleaned, and then to take Wingate minor before the Head. In that way the perpetrators of this shocking outrage will be discovered."
 "Very well, sir," mumbled Loder.
 And Loder, muttering between his teeth, hurried away to a bath-room to clean himself. It was not a brief nor an easy task. Loder was a good hour in the bath-room, and when he emerged his face was scarlet with rubbing, and the tar and the feathers were still clinging to his ears and his hair, in spite of his greatest efforts. Apparently Loder would have to wait for the remnants to wear off with the course of time.
 Meanwhile, the crowd had dispersed—most of them chuckling. Loder the prefect was not popular—especially among the fags. There were few, if any, of the fellows who felt sorry for Loder. But a good many fellows felt sorry for the ragers, when they should be discovered.
 The discovery was certain. Wingate minor knew their identity, and he would tell. He would have to tell.
 His refusal to answer Mr. Quelch came to all the fellows as a surprise. But he was a "sneak," and he would tell. And even a fellow who was not a sneak would have found it difficult to keep silent if questioned by the Head.
 "What rotten luck!" said Harry Wharton. "This will about finish Wingate minor's chances of getting right with his Form. He'll have to tell the Head who it was, and he will be called a sneak for ever and ever."
 "Well, it will be sneaking if he does," said Johnny Bull.
 "It wouldn't be easy to refuse to answer, and take a licking."
 "I'm afraid he won't do that."
 "Blessed if I know why he didn't answer Quelch!" said Nugent. "Quelch was very ratty. But the Head will make him talk."
 "Yes; it's rotten!"
 The chums of the Remove returned to their study. Wingate minor was there, waiting for them.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

True as Steel!

JACK WINGATE was looking very pale.
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, not unkindly.
 "In a pickle again, as usual, I see!"
 "It wasn't my fault," said Jack Wingate. "I—I couldn't help seeing them. I wish I hadn't seen them. I—I say, I've come here to speak to you, Wharton."
 "Go ahead, kid!"

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"They're going to take me in to the Head, and he'll ask me who it was," said Jack, with a quivering lip. "It will be sneaking if I tell him, won't it?"

Wharton nodded.

"But—but how can a chap refuse to answer the Head?" asked Jack. "I—I might be expelled from the school if I disobey the Head."

"Well, that's not likely. You might, of course. You'll be licked, anyway, I think."

"Would you advise me to tell him?"

Wharton shifted uncomfortably.

"No fear!" he said, after a pause.

"You'd advise me to refuse?"

"I—I don't know. I don't want to land you in for a flogging. That's what it might come to," said the captain of the Remove.

"What would you do in my place?"

Wharton hesitated.

Jack Wingate's eyes were upon his face, watching him eagerly.

"You—you might tell me," said Jack eagerly. "I—I don't quite know what I ought to do. I don't want the Third to say that I've sneaked again. But—but can I refuse to answer the Head? Would you?"

"Well, yes, I think I should, whatever came of it," said Harry. "I think I should keep mum in your place, and take my gruel; but, of course, it's easy to say so, when I haven't got to go through it."

"That settles it."

"What are you going to do?" asked Bob Cherry, as the outcast of the Third turned towards the study door.

"Keep mum."

And the fag left No. 1 Study.

The chums of the Remove exchanged doubtful glances.

"Do you think he'll have nerve enough to keep his word?" said Bob Cherry, with a whistle.

"I don't know. I hope so. But if he refuses to answer the Head, it will mean trouble for him—the worst kind of trouble."

"Poor kid!"

Wingate minor met Tubb of the Third, and Paget, at the end of the passage. The two young scamps were looking extremely worried.

"Hallo, I was looking for you!" said Tubb. "Loder wants you in his study."

"Very well."

"You saw us on the stairs?" said Paget.

Wingate minor nodded.

"Why didn't you tell Quelch? Nugent minor says that he asked you, and you didn't answer. Why didn't you?"

Jack Wingate flushed.

"Because I'm not a sneak."

Tubb grinned derisively.

"Do you want us to believe that you're not going to give us away?" he demanded, in contemptuous tones.

"I'm not going to give you away," said Jack Wingate quietly.

"Rats!"

"Yes, it's not much good pitching us that yarn," said Paget, with a shake of the head. "When it comes out that it was us, and we get scragged, we're not likely to believe that it came out by accident."

"Not much!" said Tubb.

Jack Wingate winced.

"I am not going to say anything," he said.

Paget gave him a curious look.

"I suppose you know what we were there for?" he asked.

"I've guessed."

"It was a mistake the stuff going over Loder," said Tubb.

"I thought so. You meant it for me?"

"Yes. And if Paget hadn't been so jolly clever putting the light out, you'd have got it!" said Tubb. "Of course, Loder was bound to come along at the wrong moment, and shove his nose into it. That's Loder all over!"

Jack Wingate smiled bitterly.

"You were going to swamp that muck all over me?" he said. "Well, you were a cad!"

"Proper treatment for a sneak—tar and feathers," said Tubb. "We weren't going to let you know who did it, or you'd have sneaked again. But, of course, you struck a match, and saw us on the stairs—guessed it was us, I suppose?"

"I didn't—I—I—"

"Well, Loder wants you in his study. There's fresh laurels for you to gather in the sneaking line," said Paget satirically. "You'll have the satisfaction of knowing that when you've peached on us, we shall get a worse licking than we've ever given you. Now pile in!"

"I've told you—"

"Oh, rats!"

Tubb and Paget turned their backs upon him, and Wingate

minor, with a quivering lip, made his way towards Loder's study. He went slowly; he was in no hurry to arrive there. Whether Loder meant to take him before the Head, or to deal with the matter himself, Wingate minor did not know; but in either case the results would be equally painful for him. Bolsover minor was waiting for him at the end of the Sixth-Form passage.

"I—I've just heard about it," said Bolsover minor eagerly. "I was out when it happened. The fellows say you know who tarred Loder."

"I know," said Jack.

"You're not going to tell?"

"No."

Bolsover minor looked greatly relieved.

"That's right!" he said. "Stick to your guns, and don't give in! A licking isn't much, though Loder's lickings are rather thick, I admit. But don't sneak!"

"I'm not going to."

"Good for you!" said Bolsover minor.

Jack Wingate nodded to his only friend, and pursued his way. He knocked timidly at Loder's study door, and opened it. Loder and Carne and Walker of the Sixth were in the study, evidently waiting for him. Loder was still spotted with tar that had declined to come off, and his face was red with rubbing, and very savage in expression.

"Oh, here you are!" he growled. "Come in, and close the door!"

Wingate minor obeyed.

Loder took up a cane from the table, and bent it in his hands. Walker stood by the door, with the evident intention of stopping the fag if he tried to bolt. Jack Wingate drew a deep, quivering breath. He was in for it now—he knew that.

"You saw the young beasts who threw that tar over me?" said Loder.

"Yes, Loder."

"Who were they?"

No answer.

"Were they Wharton and his lot?"

"No."

Loder looked disappointed. He would have been glad to find the Famous Five guilty of the outrage. And he was puzzled, too. He had plenty of enemies among the fags, but he could not think of any but No. 1 study who would have had the nerve to tar and feather him in the Form-room passage, angrily.

"Then who was it?" he demanded.

"I can't tell you, Loder."

"I heard you say that to Mr. Quelch," said Loder, with ominous quietness. "Mr. Quelch recommended me to take you to the Head; but I'm going to question you myself first. I advise you to answer me."

"I can't!"

"I suppose you are depending on your brother to look after you?" sneered Loder.

Jack Wingate coloured.

"I wasn't thinking of my brother," he said. "and I don't want to drag him into it. He can't help me in this."

"Quite right; he can't. And he happens to be out now; he's gone over to Courtfield," said Loder. "I fancy you were reckoning on him; but I shouldn't let him interfere. I'm a prefect, and entitled to deal with the matter. You understand that?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then. I don't want to lick you; but I want the names of the fellows who swamped me and feathered over me. You understand?"

"I understand, Loder."

"Then give me their names."

"I can't!"

Loder swished the cane in the air, but he was still patient. He wanted to lick the raggies, not Wingate minor. Wingate minor could be licked afterwards for venturing to banter words with a prefect.

"Is that all you've got to say?" said Loder.

"No. I—I know who they were, and—and I know it was an accident, Loder, that you got the stuff on you. It was meant for somebody else."

"Oh, was it?" said Loder. "I don't quite believe you."

"It's true."

"Who was it meant for?" asked Walker.

"Me!"

"You?" said Loder, in amazement.

"Yes."

"What! You say that the fellows, whoever they were, were hiding on the stairs to swamp you with tar and feathers?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 231.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

and they got me by mistake, and now you won't tell me who they were?" Loder exclaimed.

"I can't tell you!"

"Why not?"

"Because I'm not a sneak!"

Loder gritted his teeth.

"I don't want any of your rot!" he said. "Tell me the names at once, or Carne will hold you down across that table while I thrash you!"

"I can't tell you!"

"You prefer the thrashing?"

"Yes."

"Then you shall have it, by James!" said Loder, between his teeth. "Collar him, Carne!"

"What-he?" grinned Carne. "I fancy we'll make him speak between us!"

"I'll make him speak, or else cut the skin off his back!" said Loder.

Wingate minor did not resist. He knew that that would be useless. The big Sixth-Former tossed him across the table as if he had been an infant, and held him there with a powerful grip. He was face downwards on the table, and he was powerless in the grasp of the senior. Loder made the cane whistle in the air.

"Are you going to tell me now?" he demanded.

"No!" gasped Jack Wingate.

"Then, take that!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Lash! Lash!

The cane descended with cruel force. Slash! Slash! Slash!

A scream of pain broke from the fag.

"Hold your row!" snarled Loder. "Will you tell me now, you chucky cub?"

"No!" panted the fag.

Slash! Slash! Slash!

"Jam your hand over his mouth, Carne," growled Loder, as Wingate minor shrieked again. The boy was no coward; but the terrible pain of the castigation would have drawn howls of pain from a far older and stronger fellow. "Keep his rotten mouth shut—we don't want all the school here?"

"Groo-gurglo!" came from the fag, as Carne grasped him over the mouth, and stifled back his cries.

The cane rose and fell again, with savage force.

"Now, then, will you speak? Let him speak, Carne."

"No!" gasped Jack, writhing with pain. "You coward! You brute! You can kill me, and I won't say a word!"

"By James!" said Loder, white with fury. "You shall tell me, or I'll half kill you, at all events. Hold the cub!"

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Jack Wingate writhed under the fierce lashes. But his determination never faltered. He was taking the thrashing that was due to Tubb and Peget and Gibbs and Tupper; but he did not falter! He was not a sneak!

"Hold on," muttered Carne, anxiously. "Better go lightly, Loder! He looks as if he were going to faint!"

Loder ground his teeth.

"I'll cut him to pieces, if he doesn't answer!" he snarled.

"But, I say—"

"Oh, rot!"

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Carne drew back from the fag.

"Hold him yourself, then!" he said, angrily. "I'm not going to have a hand in this. You're going too far!"

"Get out of the way, then!"

Loder grasped the fag with his left hand, and lashed with the cane again. The door of the study burst suddenly open.

"You said!" shrieked Wingate of the Sixth.

It was the Captain of Greyfriars.

He made one rush at Loder, and his fist swept through the air, and came upon Gerald Loder's jaw with a crack like a pistol-shot, and Loder went down in a heap. The next moment Wingate caught his half-fainting minor in his arms, and drew him from the table. Jack leaned heavily on his shoulder, and Wingate, holding him, turned his blazing eyes on the bullies of the Sixth. Carne and Walker exchanged glances, and left the study. Loder sat up dazedly, and glared at Wingate with deadly rage in his face.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wingate Minor's Triumph.

WINGATE clenched his hand hard.
 "Get up, and I'll knock you down again!"
 Loder did not get up.
 "You brute! How dare you lay hands on my minor?"

"Do you know what's happened?" yelled Loder furiously.
 "Yes," said Wingate, scornfully. "I know you've been tarred and feathered—not more than you deserve. But my minor didn't do it."

"He knows who did!"

"And you were licking him to make him tell?"

"Yes."

"You brute!"

Loder staggered to his feet, keeping the table between him and the angry Captain of Greyfriars. There was a buzz round the open door of the study; a crowd of fellows had gathered from far and near. As a matter of fact, it was Bolsover minor who had found Wingate major in the Close, and informed him of what was going on in Loder's study.

"Look here, Wingate," said Loder thickly. "That young cub knows who swamped far over me. Mr. Quelch ordered him to tell, and he wouldn't. He left him to me to deal with."

"He didn't," said Harry Wharton's voice at the door.

"He told you to take him to the Head, Loder."

"Clear away from my study!" shouted Loder furiously.

"Oh, rats!" said Coker of the Fifth. "You're a bully and a brute, Loder. If Wingate hadn't chipped in, I was coming myself to stop you. I believe in keeping kids in their places, but you're a cruel beast. That's plain English!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney of the Fourth.

Loder rubbed his jaw where Wingate's heavy fist had struck him. Jack Wingate was standing unsteadily upon his feet. His face was white and drawn with pain. As he looked at him, Loder realised that he had gone too far. He would never have dared to take Jack Wingate before the Head in that state. If Dr. Locke had seen a fag treated in such a way, the bully who had done it would have found himself in serious trouble. It was quite likely that if Jack Wingate had appeared before the Head just then, Loder would have been sacked from Greyfriars. And he would certainly have left no one behind to mourn him.

"Has the brute hurt you much, kid?" asked George Wingate, anxiously.

"I—I'm all right," stammered Jack.

"Look here, Wingate, that young cub's going to tell me the names of the rotters who swamped that far over me!" shouted Loder.

"I won't!" said Jack.

"You hear him?" said Loder, between his teeth. "That's the way for a fag to talk to a prefect, Wingate?"

"Yes, such a bullying brute as you are," said Wingate.

"You'll let him alone. You had a right to lick him, but not to treat him as you were doing, you hound! A drunken bargee wouldn't have thrashed a kid like that."

"If you don't leave him for me to deal with, I shall take him to the Head."

"Very well," said Wingate, "we'll go to the Head—and see what he thinks of the state my minor's back must be in. Come on, Jack."

"I—I say—"

Loder's fury faded away all of a sudden. He turned pale.

"I—I don't want to take him before the Head, so far as that goes," he faltered.

Wingate smiled grimly.

"I dare say you don't, in that state," he said. "You know jolly well you wouldn't remain a prefect long after it, you cur."

"I'm going to find out who put that tar over me."

"Are you going to let my minor alone?" demanded the Captain of Greyfriars. "If you want anything more with him, you can come to the Head now and have it out. If you drop the matter now, it's dropped for good. You understand? Are you coming to the Head now, or are you going to let it drop?"

"I don't mind letting it drop," muttered Loder.

"That settles it, then."

Wingate major led Jack from the study. Loder slammed the door after them, gritting his teeth as he did so. His own brutality had baffled him of his vengeance on the unknown raggers. The matter had to drop now. It was only through Jack Wingate that he could have hoped to discover the guilty parties; and now Jack Wingate was out of his power.

"Come into my study, kid," said Wingate, pushing his way through the crowd in the passage. "You want looking after now."

The crowd dispersed as the Greyfriars' captain's door closed behind the big Sixth-Former and his minor.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

But in the junior common-room there was a ceaseless buzz of voices. The juniors discussed the matter with amazement and undying interest. The attitude of Wingate minor had amazed them—even Harry Wharton had never expected it, or Bolsover minor. This was the fellow who had been hurled by the fags as a sneak—this lad who had stood a terrible castigation at Loder's hands, rather than betray the very fellows who had been hardest upon him—and who had been intending to rag him at the moment when Loder received the ragging by mistake.

Bolsover was jubilant. He was sorry for the suffering his chum had gone through; but he was jubilant at seeing him vindicated before the Form. He clapped Tubb of the Third on the shoulder, in the common-room. Tubb was looking surprised and perplexed and shamefaced. He could hardly believe that Jack Wingate had proved, under that terrible test, as true as steel; if there had been room for a shadow of a doubt, Tubb of the Third would have doubted; but there was no room.

Wingate minor was true blue! He had been wronged; he had not been given a chance. Bolsover minor was the only fellow who had seen that he was decent, and had stood by him, and Bolsover minor had been sent to Coventry for his pains. Tubb of the Third was feeling very remorseful, and his comrades shared his feelings.

"Well, what do you think of Wingate minor now, Tubb?" demanded Bolsover minor triumphantly.

Tubb grunted.

"Well, I must say he's decent," he said. "Blessed if I understand him!"

"He didn't sneak," said Gibbs.

"Well, he sneaked once," said Tubb, in self-defence.

"That was when he was new here, and didn't know the ropes. I told you so, but you wouldn't take any notice. Could you have stood that licking, Tubb, without opening your mouth?"

Tubb hesitated.

"I—I hope so," he said.

Bolsover minor grinned.

"But it was ripping of him to stand it without giving us away," said Tubb. "Look here, you kids, he's a decent chap, and—and we're going to treat him decently. He's not in Coventry any more."

"No fear!" said Paget.

"And—and we'll tell him it's going to be all right," said Tubb. "He's a giddy brick, that's what he is, and I don't mind admitting that I've been a bit off-side. Let's see him as he comes out of old Wingate's study."

"Right-ho!"

And the fags swarmed away to meet their new hero. Bob Cherry grinned at Harry Wharton as he watched them go. The chums of the Remove had been interested spectators of the scene.

"I fancy young Wingate's troubles in the Third are over now, Harry," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I think so, and I'm jolly glad!" said Wharton.

Jack Wingate came out of his brother's study a little later. He was looking very pale, and twisted uneasily as he walked. He was likely to be a long time getting over that thrashing. He started as he caught sight of the crowd of fags waiting for him at the end of the passage.

"Here he is!" sang out Gibbs.

"I—I say—" stammered Wingate minor. "Let me alone, I—I can't stand any ragging now. I'm simply done in!"

"Ragging, old son!" said Paget, hugging him joyfully. "We're not going to rag you, my innocent infant. Let me catch anybody ragging you, and I'll strew the hungry churchyard with his giddy bones!"

Jack Wingate looked amazed.

"But what—what—"

"You're not a sneak," announced Tubb solemnly. "The Third have made up their minds to look over what you did when you first came here—about—and to—to—"

"To stand by you, and try to make up for being a set of silly idiots," said Bolsover minor.

And Jack Wingate was marched off in triumph by the shouting fags.

He went with them like one in a dream.

He was too confused quite to realise what it all meant, or how it had come about, but one thing was clear—his troubles in the Third Form at Greyfriars were over. It rested with himself to keep the place he had won, and there was no doubt that he would do that. For the present the hero of the hour in the Third Form was the junior who had been for so long a time Barred by the Fags!

THE END.

Next Monday's long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled "BOB CHERRY'S CHASE," by Frank Richards. Order a copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

OUR THRILLING ADVENTURE SERIAL. START THIS WEEK!

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!"

Whilst crossing the Atlantic on his way to England—where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," is to be put up for auction—Nathan Gore, the American millionaire and jewel-collector, receives a message from his agent in London to say that the diamond has been bought by his hated rival Ferrers Lord, who is the owner and inventor of the wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep.

Nathan Gore swears he will obtain possession of the diamond, and on the night of his arrival in London, he goes to his rival's house, and, taking the stone, leaves in its place the message: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing 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 accepts the challenge, and a few hours after the robbery the chase is started. For five months, accompanied by his two friends—Ching-Lung, a Chinese prince, and Rupert Thurston—he pursues Nathan Gore, travelling once round the world, but never being able to overtake him. At last Ferrers Lord wearies of the game, and the Lord of the Deep's bows are turned to England once more. Rupert Thurston is arrested at Calais for piracy, but Ferrers Lord and his crew rescue him. In the meantime, on board the submarine, Prout gets knocked over in the corridor by something flashing past in the dark.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Tables Turned.

"Ow, ow, ow!" Prout yelled. "Ow, ow, ow! By h-hokey! I'm de-de-determined! I'm— Hel-help!"

"A-r-r-r! Murdaire! What is ze mattaire?"

A light gushed into the corridor. Yard-of-Tape, startled by the shouts, dashed open the door of the galley. The chef rushed out, and dimly saw a human form stretched on the floor. Staggered and aghast, he reeled back, imagining that a murder had been committed. The rear portion of his ankles met an obstacle, and Yard-of-Tape took a hasty seat. It was a warm seat, but a wet one. Water gushed around, for the Frenchman was using Rupert's foot-bath as a chair. For a moment he was utterly bewildered and speechless. Then he opened his mouth, and let out a long, shrill, blood-curdling:

"A-r-r-r!"

Beeswax, the Malay youth, had been dozing close to the galley fire. He had eaten almost a whole leg of mutton, and he was drowsy in consequence. But that scream awakened him. He dashed out. Two human forms lay side by side, for Yard-of-Tape had rolled from the bath. Like his master, Beeswax reeled in terror. The back of his head bumped against the bottom of the fire-bucket, and, tilting upwards, the bucket discharged its icy and dusty contents over the cook's boy.

It was altogether an extraordinary and noisy condition of affairs. The Malay youth, his eyes almost dropping out of his head, left the neighbourhood at express speed. Suddenly the corridor blazed with light, and there was a mighty

"Pip-pip-pip!"

"Save me!" yelled the steersman.

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

"A-r-r-r!" shrieked Yard-of-Tape. "Stop eet! Oh, my belle France, stop haire!"

"Pip-pip!"

A motor-car was rushing towards them. In it were two cloaked and masked figures. The car itself was of a very unusual pattern. It bore a suspicious resemblance to a large trunk mounted on four cycle wheels. The tyres were enormous, as they consisted of air-pillows tied to the rims. Had Prout and the cook been able to examine the machine more closely, they would have discovered the beautiful simplicity of the motive-power.

The machine was propelled ingeniously, though Ching-Lung had not troubled to patent the invention. The body of the car was simply a lidless and bottomless box, and to propel it the two chauffeurs had only to run along.

In front of the car a large buffer protruded—a pole, with a couple of air-pillows attached to it. Ching-Lung called the buffer a biffer. The car was almost as wide as the corridor. It carried two brilliant lamps.

"Hi-yi! Get out of the way!" roared the driver.

"Flys, or we shall tickles haire!" screamed the second motorist.

It was too late to dodge into the galley. Prout bolted, but Yard-of-Tape slipped on the wet floor.

"Pip-pip!"

The buffer hit Yard-of-Tape, and lifted him to his feet. He clung to it wildly. The car rode over the footpath, and every light went out. On whizzed the car, taking the cook with it.

"Murdaire! A-r-r-r! Ze nightmaire haf me, and ze terrible earthquake haf bur-r-st!" moaned the cook. "Eet is ze dream from ze pickles. A-r-r! I die! I fall! I fade

Another Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

away to nozings! A-r-r! Shall I not awake till I am dead?"

"Steady, Ganus!"

He reached down, and his fingers closed on the rope that was coiled up. There was a hook fastened to it. A gleam of light shone from the door of the swimming-baths.

"Look out, or you'll get jarred! I've hooked her up. Over you go!"

"I lookings out," grinned Gan. "Mind the orange-peels, Chingy!"

They vaulted out of the car.

"Push, Gan!"

They drove it straight for the open door. It rushed through to the very edge of the bath. Then the rope brought it up with a terrific jerk.

"Murdaire!" howled Yard-of-Tape.

They saw him shoot into the air in spread-eagle fashion. He went underneath with a loud splash.

"Dear me!" said Ching-Lung. "What ever can the man be doing, Blubberbiter?"

"He is a bads juggins, Chingy," lisped Gan; "but we haves tickles haire much."

"He is an eighteen-carat ass, Gan!" said Ching-Lung. "Let us abscoot and perkedaddle before the cops chase us for motoring at more than twelve miles a month!"

"Pip-pip!"

Ching-Lung switched on the lights of the two lamps as the head of Yard-of-Tape rose from the water. The car went gaily along.

"It is a beautiful motor," said Ching-Lung.

"She is so butterfuls that I could tickles haire for nevers!" smiled Gan.

"Such a splendid car to run downhill!" said Ching-Lung. "And there is no smell of that nasty petrol. If she once starts running—why, she'd fall off a roof as fast as the winner of the Gordon-Bennett cup, and get to the ground as quickly. What shall we call haire?"

"Oh, let us call haire the Ticklehaire, dear Chingy," said Gan sweetly.

"Hist! We are pursued!" said Ching-Lung.

The soaked and angry cook had got out of the bath. He had a mop in his hand. He absolutely flew down the corridor.

"Ar-r-r-r!" he squealed. "I vill haf ze blood of you upon zo hands of me! Vile chiens! Vicked curs! Bad villains! I vill murdaire you for zis so great outrage on a son of France! Ar-r-r-r! Vicked dogs zat you are, ten million goblins of ze blue colour you vill outrage me no more! Stop! Vill you stop?"

"Can't stop, cocky; got a train to catch!" shouted Ching-Lung. "Chase yourself!"

"Go aways, rudes man," said Gan, putting his finger to his nose, "and oils yo' whiskeraires!"

"Come and kiss me, dearie!" added Ching-Lung.

They had both turned their heads to look at the enraged cook. The movement was fatal. Prout, even angrier than the cook, had stretched a rope breast-high across the corridor. Ching-Lung and Gan went over the back of the car on their faces.

"By hokey," growled the voice of Prout, "I've cotched yer!"

Prout turned the footbath over Ching-Lung, and sat on it, while the enraged cook prodded Gan in the neck with the mop, and wiped his wet slippers on Gan's hair.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It ut a wake, or only a proize-fought?"

The burly O'Rooney loomed out of the gloom, and he surveyed the beautiful and thrilling scene with a grin.

"By hokey, it's a funeral job, Barry!" said Prout.

"O'll come, wid pleasure, thin," said Barry, "purvoidin' the mourners gets whisky and pork-pie. Which is the corpse? Is it the wan whose hair Mossoo is gintly brushin'?"

"That's one on 'em, and t'other is underneath."

"And this, I presume," remarked Barry, setting the motor on its wheels again, "is the hearse. Faith, ut's a very iligant hearso intoirly! What a row thim corpses do make!"

"Don't stand and jabber, you lump of toffee!" snapped Prout. "Get down that rope, and lay out the first body. Sit on his face, Tapey, if he hollers. Hurry up, Barry! By hokey, it don't do to stand round whistling when you've got a bloomin' heel to deal wi' like the bloke under this 'ere tin pan!"

"Ow! Take dats dirty mops out of mouthses!" spluttered Gan.

"Be quiet, corrpse!" said Barry. "What d'yez mane by talkin' whin we're workin' our fingers to the very bone to give yez a dacent funeral?"

"Ar-r-r-r! Zilence, dog of ze blue colour!" hissed Yard-of-Tape.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Pull that pole off!" snarled Prout. "Ere, let me do it. By hokey, you're all thumbs! Sit on this, Barry, and keep the sea-cook inside! I'll gi' 'em a motor-car!"

Barry took a seat on Ching-Lung's prison, and filled his pipe. Prout unshipped the buffer, and swiftly, with a seaman's skill, tied the grunting Gan to it. Then he peered at the bath, and smiled grimly as he spied Ching-Lung's pigtail. He got hold of it gently but firmly. Ching-Lung was not a person to be trifled with. He was almost slippery enough to escape down a drainpipe.

"Now," whispered Prout, "I've got one end of him. Lift the thing quick, Mossoo, and you drop on him in a bloomin' lump, and collar his feet! Twig, Barry? Do it when I sneezes!"

Prout took the rope between his teeth, to have it ready, and Yard-of-Tape clutched the mouth of the footbath. Barry, with hands extended, prepared to do his share.

"At-ish-oo!"

The bath was whipped away. The next instant Ching-Lung and Barry were rolling about the floor in a by no means loving embrace. But Ching-Lung had little chance, for Prout had anchored himself firmly to the pigtail. Hissing out "Ar-r-r-r!" the cook clung to the prince's legs, and it was quickly over. They strapped him up beside Gan.

"Troth," said Barry, "Oi niver seed a swater pair of corrpse! Whoy do tears rise unbiddin widin my oies?"

"I dunno," chuckled Prout. "Why?"

"Well, yez wudn't ixpect thim to rise widin my whiskers, wud yez, Tom?" answered Barry. "I will compose a little poem on the touchin' and heart-breakin' soight:

"Darlints, yez are dead;
Yer precious loives have fled.
And av yez conthradict us,
We'll cosh yez on the head—
Ker-flop,
Wid a mop!"

The prisoners glared sullenly, but said nothing. It was no good to talk. They had apparently lost the game. Prout took the air-pillows from the wheels, and fastened them across the chests and backs of his captives. Barry came out of the galley with two bunches of carrots, and these, sobbing bitterly, he reverently laid upon the bosoms of the dead.

"Get a couple of boards, Mossoo," said Prout. "Them you rolls the duff on'll do."

"Ar-r-r-r!" hissed the cook.

The boards were placed across the box, and the prisoners were lifted on. Yard-of-Tape and Prout were quite happy again.

"Forrard!" said Prout.

Barry wept bitterly, and they joined in his sobs as the funeral procession moved slowly and sadly on.

"And to think—ow!—to think that av they's lived they'd been aloive this blissid minute!" moaned Barry.

"By hokey, life is but a wale of tears!" said Prout.

"More tears than beers, Tom."

"Ar-r-r, my dear friends, ze fat von vas too mooch fat to haf ze light of him put out zo queeck!" said Yard-of-Tape. "Eet r-rend ze heart of me so terrible zat I am blind vit ze grief of eet. Ar-r-r-r-r! Oh!"

Ching-Lung ground his teeth. He knew where they were going. The car was run into the swimming-bath.

"Good-bye, beloved!" said Prout.

"Farewill—farewill, for evermore, until we mate upon the shure!" said Barry. "Lit me kiss thim wance."

"If you do," howled Ching-Lung, as Barry's bearded lips approached his brow, "I'll poison you!"

"I'll murders you!" roared Gan.

"Pace, pace, my swate lost wans!" grinned the Irishman. "Whoy shud yez get ixcoited over a mere throifle loike bein' dead? Pace! Hush! Whisht! Oi'm surprisid at yez! Lift, Tommy—lift!"

The car was slowly tilted up.

"By hookey, hold on a minute!" cried Prout.

He darted across, and seized a coil of thin rope. In a minute it was round the corpse, and its ends tied to rings on different sides of the bath.

"Let the funeral proceed now, by hokey!" said the steersman.

Again the car was raised, and the corpse slid into the water with a pleasant gurgling splash. It floated away until the cord pulled it up. The air-pillows kept it on the surface. Then, sobbing as if their hearts would break, Prout, Barry, and the cook buried their tear-stained faces in their handkerchiefs, and staggered away, after putting out the light.

"Great snakes!" groaned Ching-Lung.

"Oh, Chingy, we dids not tickles haire dats times!" moaned Gan. "Oh, no; we dids not tickles haire at all!"

"Can you move, idiot?"

"No; I all tied, Chingy!"
"So am I. I'll shoot the brutes yet! Chutney from China, ain't it c-c-cold!"

"I nots coldses, Chingy!" said Gan.

"No; you fat juggins, you wouldn't be cold in a refrigerator! We're what we called old Yard-of-Tape—a couple of eighteen-carat asses! Oh, pip! If I can only get out, I'll— Swooch! Ow!"

Ching-Lung yelled. Something came through the gloom and hit him in the eye. It broke, and plastered itself over his features.

It smelled uncommonly like an over-ripe tomato; and from the darkness a voice like unto the voice of Thomas, the steersman, warbled:

"By hokey, did I tickle haire?"

"I am sure you did tickle haire!" said Barry.

"A-r-r-r! Eet seems ze true fact vit ze coppaire bottom zat you tickle haire mooch, mon ami!" said the chef.

Then the captives heard smothered giggles and hoarse snorts.

"You rascals! I'll lynch you later!" cried Ching-Lung.

"Give ut some more fruit; ut's thirsty and faint wid hunger!" remarked Barry.

"Wa-a-ow!" shrieked Gan.

Something buzzed round and round his head, and then hit him with a squelch. Prout had a long bamboo pole, and to the pole a tomato was attached. He left most of the fruit in Gan's face.

"By hokey, I have tickled haire again!" chuckled the steersman.

"Bedad, ain't we makin' 'em laugh some!" said Barry. "They'll laugh to dith!"

There was more giggling and snorting. Ching-Lung felt savage as well as cold.

"Them motor ears is dangerous inventions!" said Prout.

Silence came. In vain the prince struggled to get free. He almost swooned as he heard loud shouting.

"Walk up, walk up, walk up!" howled Barry O'Roonney. "Come and see the soight of twinty loifetoimes! Come and see the twin-tiddlers a-swimmin' on their native foam! A soight for sore eyes and tired tinkers! The finest show in the wur-ld! Don't doic afore yez sees ut!"

Bam! Bam! Boom! thudded a drum.

A dozen lights flashed out, and Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga saw that the place was crowded with grinning sailors.

"What do yez think of ut?" asked Barry.

And sixty voices answered like one:

"We should all like to tickle haire!"

Ching-Lung's Wonderful Hair-Restorer.

Joe's abilities were not limited to the sawing, planing, and nailing of wood. He was, in addition, the cook's right-hand man, and ship's barber.

Joe preferred horse-clippers to scissors when he cut hair, for as the clippers cut down to the very skin, there was no risk of making mistakes. However, the men who did not wear beards preferred to shave themselves, for Joe used a razor sometimes as he used a saw, and it hurt.

On one particular afternoon he was removing the superfluous locks of Benjamin Maddock when Ching-Lung stepped into the fore-castle.

"Afternoon, sir!" said Joe, saluting his Highness with the scissors.

"Good-afternoon, Joseph! How goes it, Ben?"

"Fairish, sir!" answered Maddock, with a grin. "Come for an 'air-cut, yer 'Ighness?"

"Dear me, how witty you are!" said the prince. "Ha, ha, ha! You ought to write that joke out and frame it, to hang up in a padded room! Ha, ha, ha! I shall laugh myself into a fit! Why don't you spring it on Prout, of the bald and shining pate?"

"He did, sir!" put in Joe.

"And what was the result?"

"I believe he got a thick ear," said Joe. "He ran his lug agen Prout's fist, or summat."

Joe winked, Ben looked foolish, and the prince chuckled.

"As a matter of fact," said Ching-Lung, "I was thinking of having my pigtail off!"

"Wha-at!" gasped the two men, glaring.

"I find it such a deuce of a nuisance. I really can't keep it in order. I happened to be taken with a cough at dinner last night, and jerked my head, and it shot slap into the gravy—like so. Hem!"

"Ow—drat it!" roared Joe.

Ching-Lung had merely coughed gently; but, cracking like a whip, the pigtail had hissed through the air, and given Joe a stinging cut across the nape of the neck.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" said Ching-Lung. "Dear, dear! Why do you get in the way so, oh, Joe?"

"So, oh, Joe be b'iled!" snarled the carpenter. "You clipped a piece out of me, drat you!"

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NEXT
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"You are rude—you are vulgar!"

"And you're a blitherer, that's what!" hissed Joe.

"Joe, do you wish to be put in irons?" asked Ching-Lung sternly.

"If I'd got a bloomin' at-iron 'andy, I'd cosh you wi' it, if I 'anged!" said the carpenter savagely.

Maddock stared aghast at such rank mutiny, while Joe held his neck.

Ching-Lung looked thoughtfully and sadly at the carpenter.

"By Jove, I believe you would!" he said. "Maddock, retire!"

"What, sir? Wi' only haf me wig off?" gasped Maddock.

"Retire!" thundered Ching-Lung.

"B-but—"

"Get out!" bellowed the prince. "You can get the other half shifted later on!"

Maddock could only obey. Joe was rather doubtful as to what to expect until he saw, with both eyes, and a feeling of relief, the tender, loving expression on Ching-Lung's face.

"Joe!"

"Sir!"

"Jo-sir, or josser, whichever you like!" said Ching-Lung.

"Look here, have you ever seen anything like this? You're a bit in the hair-oil and scissors line, so it ought to interest you. Give me those shears!"

The carpenter handed over the scissors, and watched eagerly. Ching-Lung produced a small bottle, and let a few drops of liquid fall upon the steel.

"Gosh!" said Joe.

His eyes were as round as footballs. Under his very eyes the scissors were growing a full-sized head of hair and side-whiskers to match. Joe gazed in utter wonder and amaze. He could see the hair growing.

"Well, let me be condashed!" he gasped. "Well—Oh, gosh!"

"Queer, isn't it?" said Ching-Lung. "I found out that stuff by a mere fluke. You sprinkle it on a brick, and you get a giddy scrubbing-brush in three wags of a guineapig's tail! It'll grow whiskers on anything, from bald pates to oranges. I gave a chap some once, and the ass used it too strong. He has to shave and get his hair cut thirty-six times a day. And, if that isn't a true lie, may my features fizzle!"

Joe took the hairy scissors, and slowly closed his left orb. The juggling had been superb, and for the moment he had been quite taken in. But Joseph was cunning, deep, and sly.

"Any green?" he inquired. "Do you twig any, sir?"

Ching-Lung tittered.

"Not many acres of it," he answered. "It was a neat trick, though. The fact is, Joey, Prout's napper gets on my nerves. I can't stand bald heads. When I see some poor fly skating on Prout's shiny thinking-tank, I'm all of a tremble, thinking the little beggar is going to slip off and break its legs. Really, the chap ought to try a hair-restorer. This isn't bad stuff. Will you make him a present of it, Joe?"

It was a difficult thing to deceive the wily Joe. He scented mischief at once. All the same, he accepted a bottle, nicely wrapped up and sealed, and made for the wheelhouse.

"The plot worketh!" grinned Ching-Lung. "Let us forth and hark."

Joe went up the ladder.

"Summat for yer, Tom!" he said, handing up the bottle.

Prout reached over for it.

"What is it, by hokey?"

"Dunno," said the carpenter. "Adn't you better open it?"

Prout tore off the wrappings. His teeth came together with a loud snap and his face turned purple as he read on the label: "Tincture of Tripe and Boiled Bluebottles, for Bald Heads. Directions: Rub in with a lump of coal, and then poison yourself." The enraged steersman gave such a roar that Joe smelt danger, and wisely went away.

"By hokey!" hissed Prout. "It's my bloomin' bald head now, is it? I'll get that Joe, and make the varmint drink the lot! Tincture of tripe and boiled— Rub in wi' a lump of coal, by hokey!"

"Let your whiskers grow, let your whiskers grow! Don't spend your time in shaving!" said Joseph, in the distance.

"Pull 'em out by the roots—they'll make laces for your boots; and think of the money you'll be saving!"

It was not Joe, but Ching-Lung, who gave this advice. Prout shook both clenched fists, and vowed a grim and ghastly vengeance. About five minutes afterwards Gan-Waga crawled up the ladder.

"Oh, my butterfuls Tommy!" he chirped. "How goeses it?"

"Go an' expire!" growled the ruffled steersman.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

Another Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

"I not goes and perspires!" said Gan. "What de matters, yo' ole sore wid a bear heads?"

Gan meant "bear with a sore head," a bear in such a condition being credited with anything but an angelic temper. Prout looked daggers, and worse.

"Was you lookin' round for a chance of sudden death, Heskimo?"

"I was nots lookings rounds at alls, ole huffy mug!" snapped Gan.

"By hokey, you'll look square soon, instead of round! You talk about my bare 'ead agen, that's all!"

"I nevers dids," said Gan. "I sooner punches it. Yo' a nasty tempers walrus! Yah! I nots 'fraids of yo', Mister Thomas! I good minds not to give yo' dis."

Gan thrust another parcel into Prout's hand, and slid down the ladder at high speed. It was another bottle. Prout raved and danced as he savagely perused the label: "Pale Pigwash for Pink Pates. Lather it on, and kindly choke yourself!"

Prout could bear no more. His hairless head had always been his sensitive point, although it was thick enough. Prout was bald at five-and-twenty, but he had not got used to it yet. He absolutely boiled over as a voice, increasing in power as the singer came nearer, chanted:

"Come back wid hair on, Mavourneen, Mavourneen!
Come back again whin yer locks sharrt to sprout."

"By hokey, I'll brain that Irishman!" snarled Prout, baring his mighty arm. "It's a bloomin' conspiracy! Come along, my boy! I'll make yer teeth dance forty jigs, by hokey! He's comin'—yes, he's comin'!"

Footsteps were heard below. Someone was ascending the ladder. That someone was still singing, and the brogue, as thick as a Cheshire cheese, proclaimed that someone to be Barry O'Rooney.

"Golden and curly are her tresses.
Swatheart moine—swatheart moine!"

"Yer nose'll be curly in no time!" growled Prout. "I'm 'ere and waitin', by hokey!"

"Get yer hair cut!" chirped the songster.

"You're going to get your throat cut!" muttered Prout. "Drat him! Ain't he comin'?"

The footfalls appeared to be retreating. Prout kept his hand on the wheel. Voices were muttering in the distance, and he heard the cook's shrill laugh. Again footfalls sounded.

"At last!" hissed Prout.

"There's 'air—there's 'air!
Yez hear ut ivrywhere.
Wheriver yez go, ut's the wan ould crow—
'There's 'air—there's 'air—there's 'air!'"

Barry was singing like a lark. Prout leaned forward cautiously. He saw a round, dark object emerging from the gloom. Prout clutched at it, but it evaded him. It shot

up past his arm and struck him in the face with a soft and flabby squelch.

"Wow!" yelled Prout.

His features were bedaubed with some sticky substance. He scooped his eyes clear. The object was no longer round, but very much flattened. It was bobbing about in front of him. It gave him a bang on the left ear, and a second bang on the right one. Then it presented him with an upper-cut and an under-cut with great deftness. Every time it struck him there was the same nasty squelching, and dark-coloured liquid squirted about.

Prout took refuge behind the wheel, and peered through the spokes. His senses of smell and taste informed him that the liquid was tar. He could not see very well, but the mysterious object appeared to be a football fastened to a pole. And as he gazed and coughed, a board rose into view and hung before him. On it was chalked:

"TRY OUR BLACKBETTER CURE
FOR BALD COCOANUTS.
It Never Fails!"

The board dropped out of sight. Prout looked round fiercely. His black and tarry hands seized the coiled hose-pipe. He pointed the nozzle downwards.

"By hokey," he growled—"by hokey, try some of that!"

The pipe bulged out, and the water shot from its nozzle and hissed down into the gloom.

"Ar-r-r-r!" shrieked a terrified voice. "Ar-r-r-r!"

Yard-of-Tape was in the way. The innocent often got what he guilty deserve, and the chef was as innocent as a new-laid egg. The torrent rolled him over and muffled his yells. With a smile on his blackened countenance, Prout began to wrap up the hose.

"That's a bit back!" he murmured. "I baffled one on 'em, anyway."

Yard-of-Tape was not smiling even a small piece. He sat in a wet, cool pool, his back against a bulkhead, moaning to himself. He had bumped his head in lying down so quickly.

"Eet is zat ze ship is sink," he thought. "Ar-r-r-r! She has sprung ze leak, and shall go to ze bottom! Ar-r-r-r!"

He held his head, and rocked himself to and fro. Then it dawned upon him that the vessel was taking a long time to go down. Prout just then came to the head of the ladder.

"By hokey," he said, "how d'ye like my wet wash for fat fossils?"

Then Yard-of-Tape arose in his wrath. He said not a word. His heart was too full to speak.

"Ar-r-r-r!" he pondered. "So zat vas eet? He pour ze insult and ze vataire ovaire me both at vonce. Ar-r-r-r! Scoundrel! Villain! Oh, but I shall have ze revanche so terrible! Ar-r-r-r! How shall eet be done? Ze knife—ze revolver! No; ze death for him is too quick. Ar-r-r-r! Cur of a Prout! Dog of a Thomas! You shall squirt me again nevaire! Ar-r-r-r-r!"

Yard-of-Tape, chilly and dripping, went back to the galley and selected his biggest rolling-pin. Slowly, cautiously, noiselessly, he began to climb the ladder. It was to attack Thomas Prout unexpectedly, for Thomas Prout could be very nasty in a row.

"Ar-r-r-r! Chien-dog! You shall squirt ovaire me ze vataire nevaire!" granted the fierce Frenchman.

"Tickle haire, Gan!" whispered Ching-Lung.

Joe, Gan-Waga, and the prince were peeping out of the swimming-bath. Gan gripped a flat board and stole forward. He brought it down across the Frenchman's back. The impact sounded like the report of a pistol. Yard-of-Tape descended at a run, uttering piercing shrieks of terror.

"Hi! 'Ere, what's the row down there?" asked Prout.

"Ar-r-r! I am muraire! I am— Ar-r-r!"

"Great Scotland, man! Now, what—?"

Yard-of-Tape had got hold of somebody. There was a noise of scuffling. Half bursting with laughter Ching-Lung switched on the light.

"Ar-r-r!"

Yard-of-Tape recoiled back, aghast. He had been endeavouring to wipe up the floor with Rupert Thurston. Rupert was lying in a pool, a look of blank astonishment on his face. That look was too much.

"Oh, he must have tickles haire!" lisped Gan.

Then Gan, Joe, and Ching-Lung fell up against each other and roared with mirth, while the begrimed face of Thomas Prout appeared at the top of the ladder.

"By hokey," said the steer-man, "what are yer a-smolin' at?"

(Another instalment of this amusing and exciting serial story next Monday.)

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My Readers' Page

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The Editor
is always
pleased to
hear from
his Chums,
at home or
abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

By Frank Richards.

Our next long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, entitled as above, brings Bob Cherry's worthless cousin, Paul Tyrrell—formerly known to Greyfriars as Yorke, the football pro—on the scene again. This enterprising young gentleman manages to defraud Lord Mauleverer, the millionaire of the Remove Form, of a considerable sum of money, and though his youthful lordship takes his loss very calmly, Bob Cherry is simply furious. He goes in chase of his swindling cousin, together with his chums, and long and adventurous the quest proves to be. As with all else, however, the end comes at last, and

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

is brought to a triumphant conclusion.

SHILLINGS FOR STORYETTES!

In this week's issue of "The Gem" Library I am again giving up a whole page to a most popular form of competition, for which many of my chums have begged for a long time. I am offering cash prizes for postcard "Storyettes," and all readers of the Invincible Trio of Companion Papers are hereby invited to bombard me with postcards containing their best jokes and most interesting little stories. For every one of those used each week in "The Gem" Library "Storyette" page cash payment will be made. Each of my readers' efforts should be written on a postcard, and addressed to "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

Every effort will be considered on its merits alone, and each reader can send in as many as he likes. I should advise all my chums to turn to the "Storyette" page directly they get their "Gem" Library next Wednesday.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

A London Reader.—My advice to you is to insert an advertisement in the local paper. If well worded, it should bring you in the required trade. A small advertisement will only cost a trifle, and will easily repay itself in your case.

A. G. M. R.—A book on cricket can be bought at a very low cost at Messrs. Gamage & Co.'s, of Holborn, London, E.C.

T. Barlow (Manchester).—I am glad to hear from you once again.

"True Friend," and "An Every Week Reader."—The first number of "The Magnet" was published on Feb. 15th, 1908, and was called "The Making of Harry Wharton." The first "Gem" was published on March 16th, 1907, and was called "Scuttled."

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AND WHAT IT OFFERS.

There are no free passages to Western Australia; but the Orient Royal Mail Line have a special rate for men who have had agricultural experience, and who also possess a capital of £100 or more. For these men the fare is about £7 to £9.

If you do not possess the required capital, but have the necessary experience, there is a special passage out that costs £12 and upwards.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 269.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"BOB CHERRY'S CHASE!"

All further particulars as to passages can be obtained from the Agent-General for Western Australia, at 15, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

Should you inform the Agent-General of the ship that you are emigrating by he will write to Australia, and you will be met by an official at Fremantle, who will assist you to find lodgings and work.

There are, as a rule, a number of very good situations for domestic servants. The situations are remunerative, as far as wages go, but the maids are expected to do all the work of the house unassisted.

To give you an idea of the trades that usually offer plenty of openings for willing and quick workers, I herewith give the usual wages of some of the chief ones:

Farm-hands and stockmen, 15s. to 30s. weekly.

Shearers: These men get paid according to the number of sheep they shear. The usual rate is about 23s. for every hundred.

Painters are a class of men who are very much in demand, and can earn, with perfect ease, 10s. a day, whilst a plumber can obtain half-a-guinea a day.

A bushman can obtain about 25s. a week and his board and lodgings.

An ordinary labourer is paid from 30s. weekly.

Bakers are wanted in many of the great Western cities, and are paid 36s. to 80s. weekly.

Gold-mining is a very profitable way of earning a living, the wages paid ranging from £3 to £5 a week.

For any of these positions you should make personal application at the Government Labour Bureau, a branch of which will be found in nearly every large city in Western Australia.

For a position as a miner you should go to the mines and see one of the officials and inform him of your wants, and he will do his best for you.

The centre of the gold-mines is at Kalgoorlie, which is reached by railway from Perth, a distance of 375 miles, the third-class fare being just under £2.

Another large mine is to be found in the South-West, called the Collie Mine. The wage paid at this mine is between 12s. and 14s. a day; but if you are working in the buildings connected with the mines, and not actually in the mine, you will only be paid about 8s. or 9s. a day.

Wood-cutting is another good way of earning a living, the rate of pay being, as a rule, 4s. per cord (strip) of 128ft.

Any available information about Australia can be obtained from the Emigrants' Information Office, at No. 31, Broadway, Westminster, London, S.W.

THE EDITOR.

WHERE THE "TERRIERS" ARE ENCOURAGED.

Messrs. Rudge-Whitworth, Ltd., of Coventry, manufacturers of the well-known Rudge-Whitworth bicycles and Rudge motor bicycles, have set a splendid example to other large employers of labour by a sympathetic co-operation with their workpeople in assisting them in their duties as members of the Territorial Force.

In all their factories and offices—and their pay-roll covers over 2,500 hands—notices are posted as follows:

1. Staff.—Members of the staff at present entitled to one week's holiday at full pay will be allowed an extra week's holiday at full pay to make up the fortnight required for the annual training.

If an additional week's holiday is required, it may, if the state of work permits, be granted, without pay.

2. Workmen.—Workmen on the regular pay-roll will be allowed leave of absence for the fortnight's training, and will be paid the sum of £1, as a grant from the firm towards their lost time, providing they have made themselves efficient by number of drills.

This is a distinct step in the right direction, and Messrs. Rudge-Whitworth are to be congratulated on the liberal way in which they treat their employees. The country is bound to benefit by the enthusiasm and efficiency of their Territorials.

Another Splendid Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

LEFT HIM RAILING!



1. "Come back, you bad lad!" said the copper. "Not much, old son!" tootled Frayed Fred; and he made a rude face, and did a high jump over the railings. The copper, of course, did likewise.



2. But he didn't get over, for he got caught by the coat-tails on the spikes, as did Fred. But Fred was able to undo his coat and escape without it; the copper couldn't undo his tight belt.



3. So he got severely left in the above undignified posish. He couldn't have been anything like as smart as our one and only Frederick, could he?

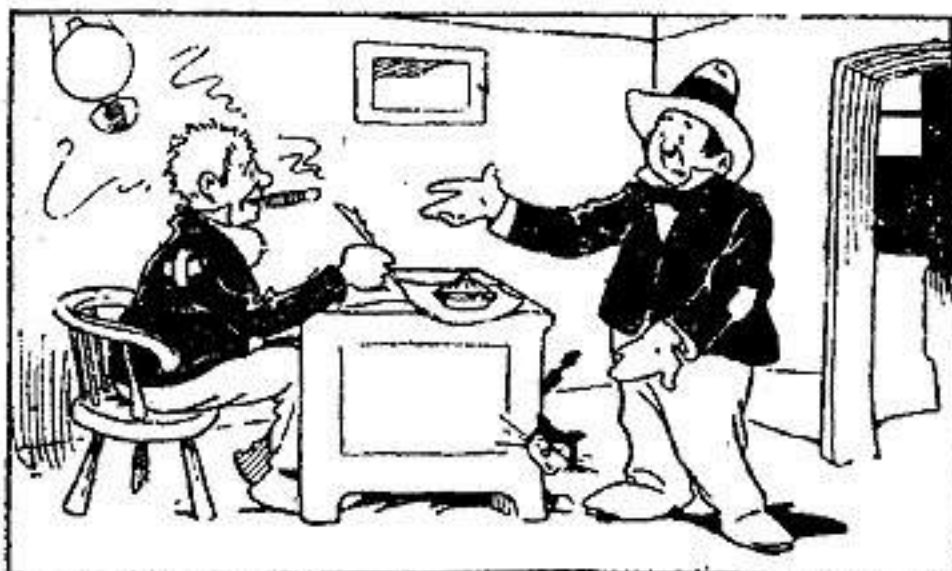
CAN HE?



First Comedian: "A man cut off my horse's tail last week. How can I sell him now?"

Second Comedian: "Oh, you can sell him wholesale. You can't sell him 'retail,' can you?"

JUST THE THING!



Tubbs: "What a curious paper-weight!"

Dubbs: "Yes, one of my wife's pies!"

A HORN-AMENTAL ARRANGEMENT!



1. "Bother and bust!" howled old Tiribis. "Somebody's been and very severely done in the grand old gramophone horn, and I've invited a college chum to come and hear my new records."



2. The old lad was in quite a fix. But suddenly he spotted the old blunderbuss. "The very thing!" he tootled, and he quickly removed the trumpet-shaped barrel—

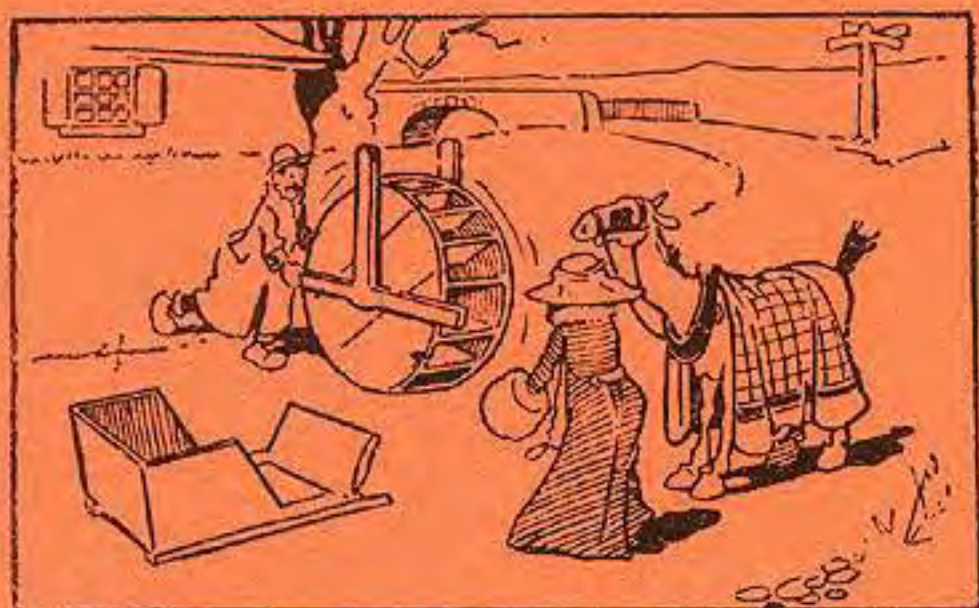


3. Which acted splendidly as a gramophone horn. So Tiribis and the friend of his youth were not disappointed after all, but had a jolly musical evening.

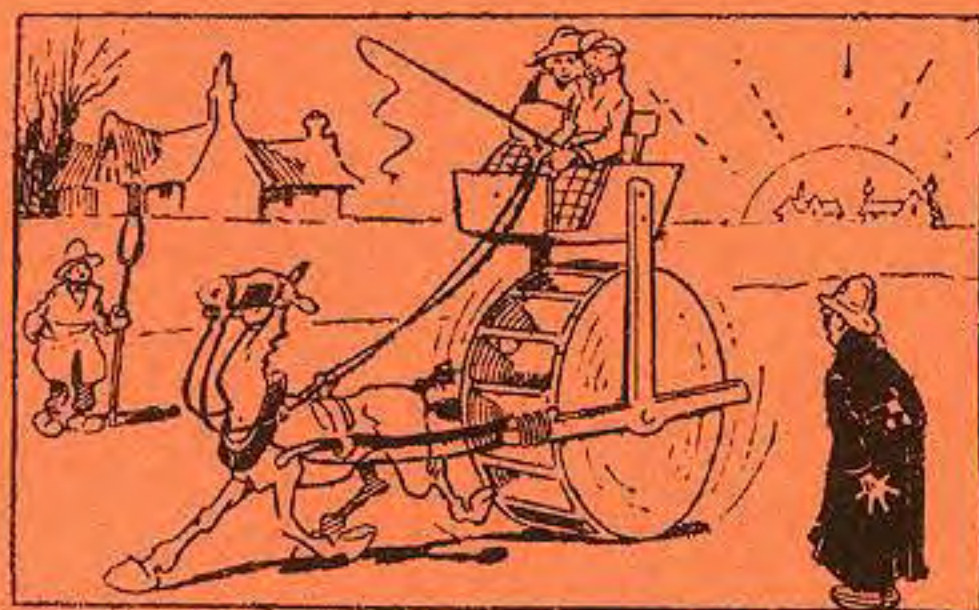
AN ALL-ROUND GOOD IDEA!



1. "We've only got the horse left now, our trap is broken. What can we do? How are we going to get home?" cried Jones.



2. But he noticed the old water-wheel, and in half a jiffy he had rolled it to the horse.



3. And with the aid of the top of his trap and the shafts he had now rigged up the above. Smart boy!

WOULD HE HAVE CAUGHT YOU?



First Comedian: "Can you tell me why K is like a pig's tail?"

Second Comedian: "Nope!"

First Comedian: "Because it is to be found at the end of pork!"

HE STARTED FROM THE BOTTOM RUNG TOO



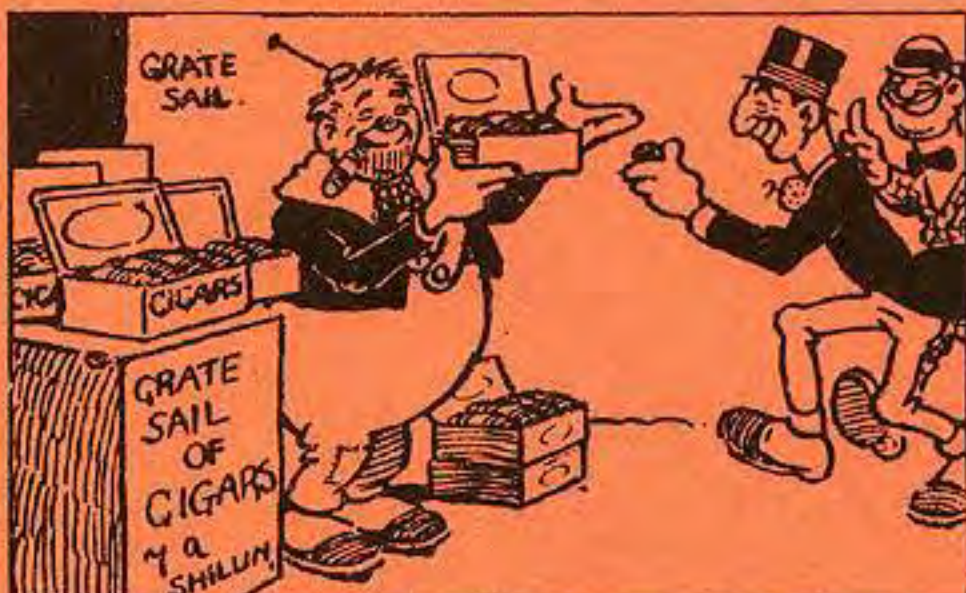
1. Percy Pickle, the pavement artist, was broke, as usual. He was strolling round when he came across a lot of broken ladders in a back-yard.



2. "Here's a chance to make a bit!" tootled Percy, and he quickly put the half-nelson on those old ladders, breaking away all the rungs.

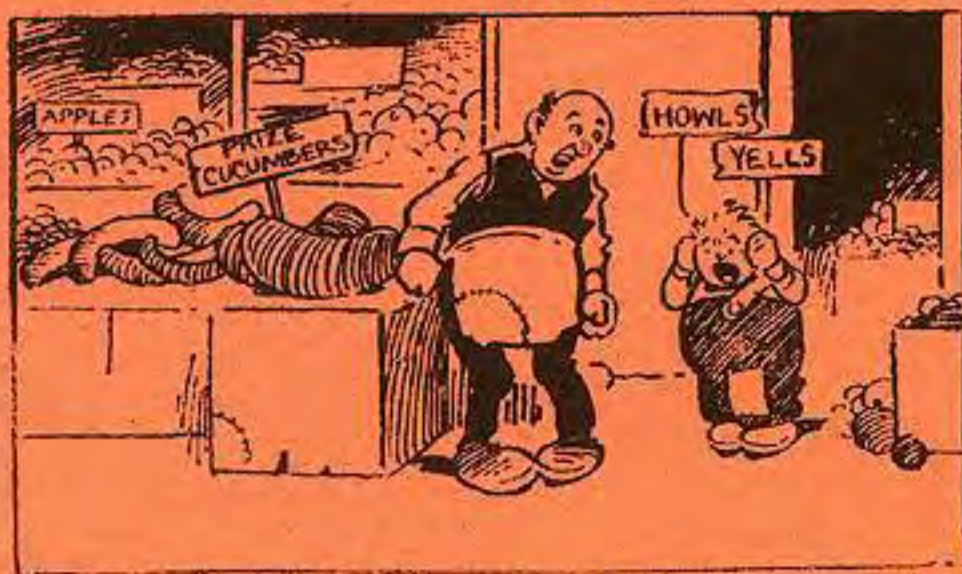


3. Then his famous artistic powers came into play. With a choice selection of chalks, he altered the appearance of those rungs, making them look like cigars.



4. And, setting up a stall, and putting the imitation cigars in pretty boxes, he soon disposed of the whole stock at a bob a box.

A CU-CUMBERSOME IDEA!



1. Old Plumnob, the greengrocer and vegetable-monger, was having a proper birthday of it, for his son and heir was howling like anything, and wouldn't stop.



2. At last the old boy couldn't stand it any longer, and he thought of a wheeze to quieten the kidlet. He manœuvred a few old shop-soiled cucumbers about like so.



3. Fixing them up as a nobby rocking-horse, as shown in the above sketchlet. Our word! Didn't that kidlet forget his howling quickly! We should shay sho!



TWO OF A KIND!

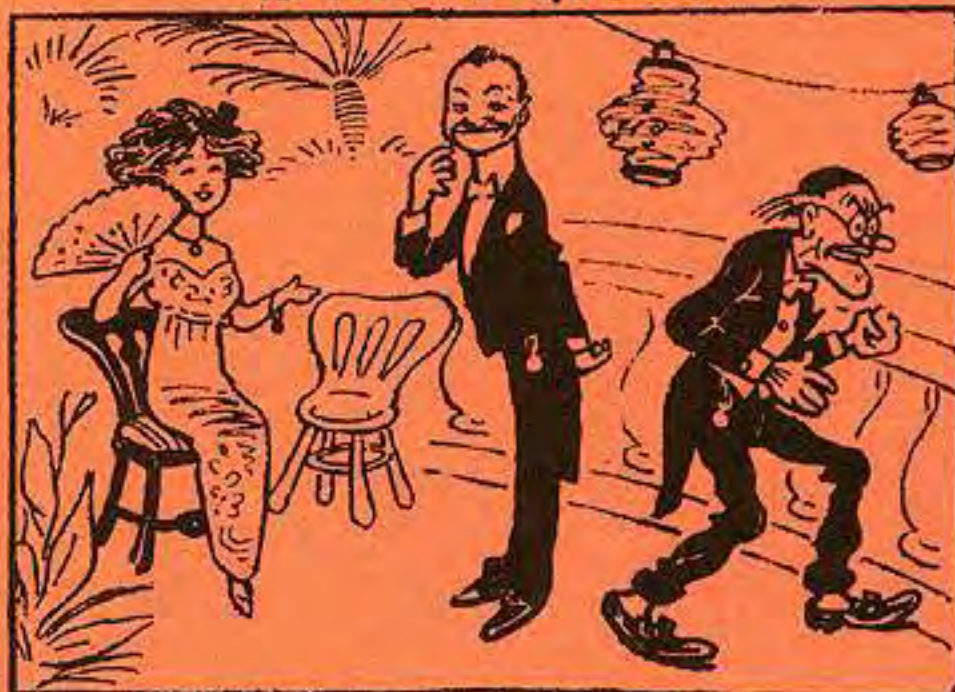
Small boy (to parent about to give monkey a copper): "Don't give it to him, give it to his father!"

A SPONGER!



Little Nephew: "Uncle, you must be a sort of cannibal." Uncle (on visit): "A what? What do you mean, sir? Why?" Little Nephew: "Cause ma said you were always living on somebody."

A PALM-Y QUERY!



He: "What has made the professor so wild?" She: "Oh, he was gassing about botany, and so I asked him if he had ever seen a pink palm. He said, "No," and I showed him my hand!"

BEING A LAWYER!



"Now, have you given me all the facts exactly as they occurred?" "I have, sir, the plain truth, an' ye will be able to put in all the rest yourself."