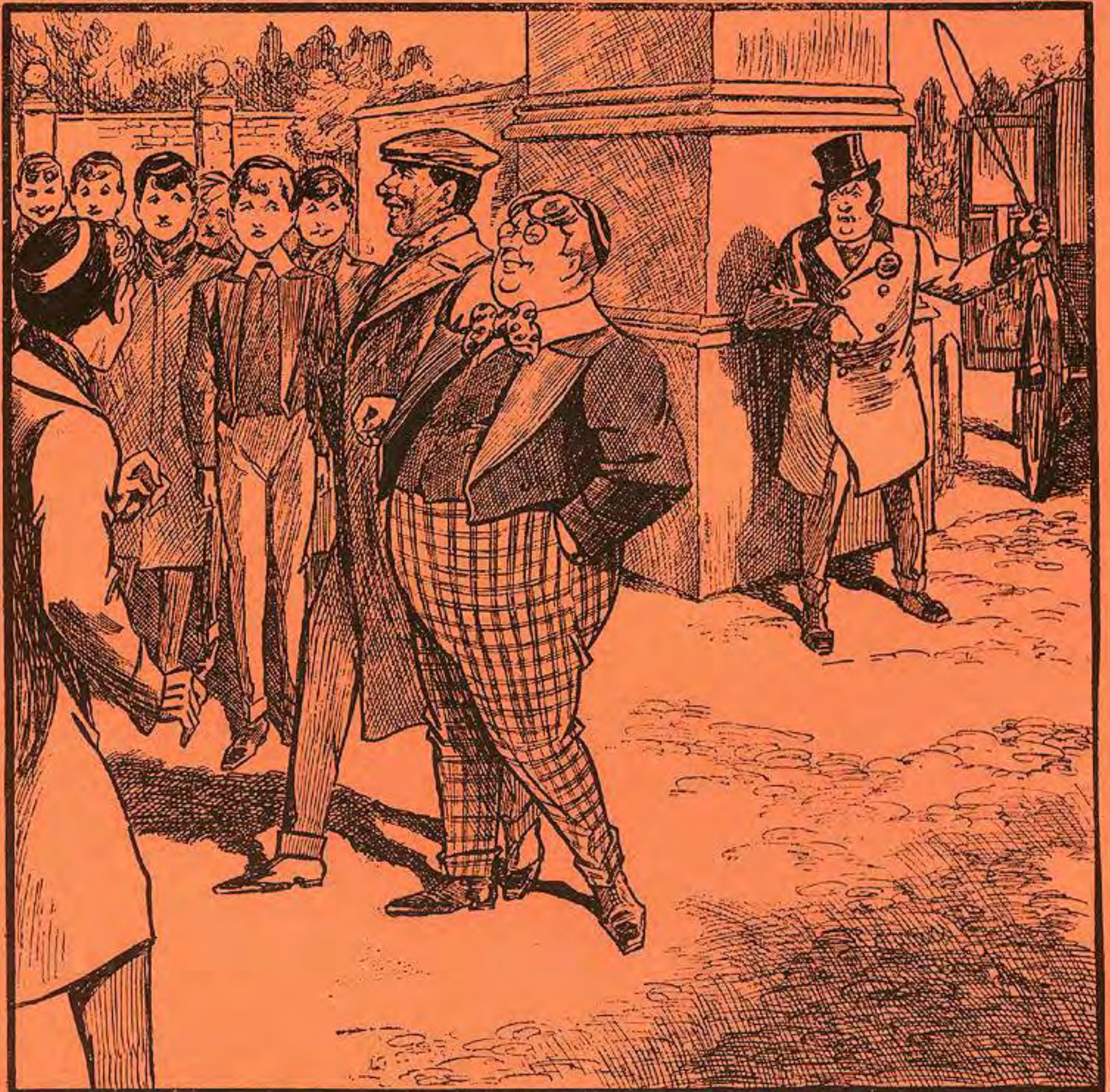


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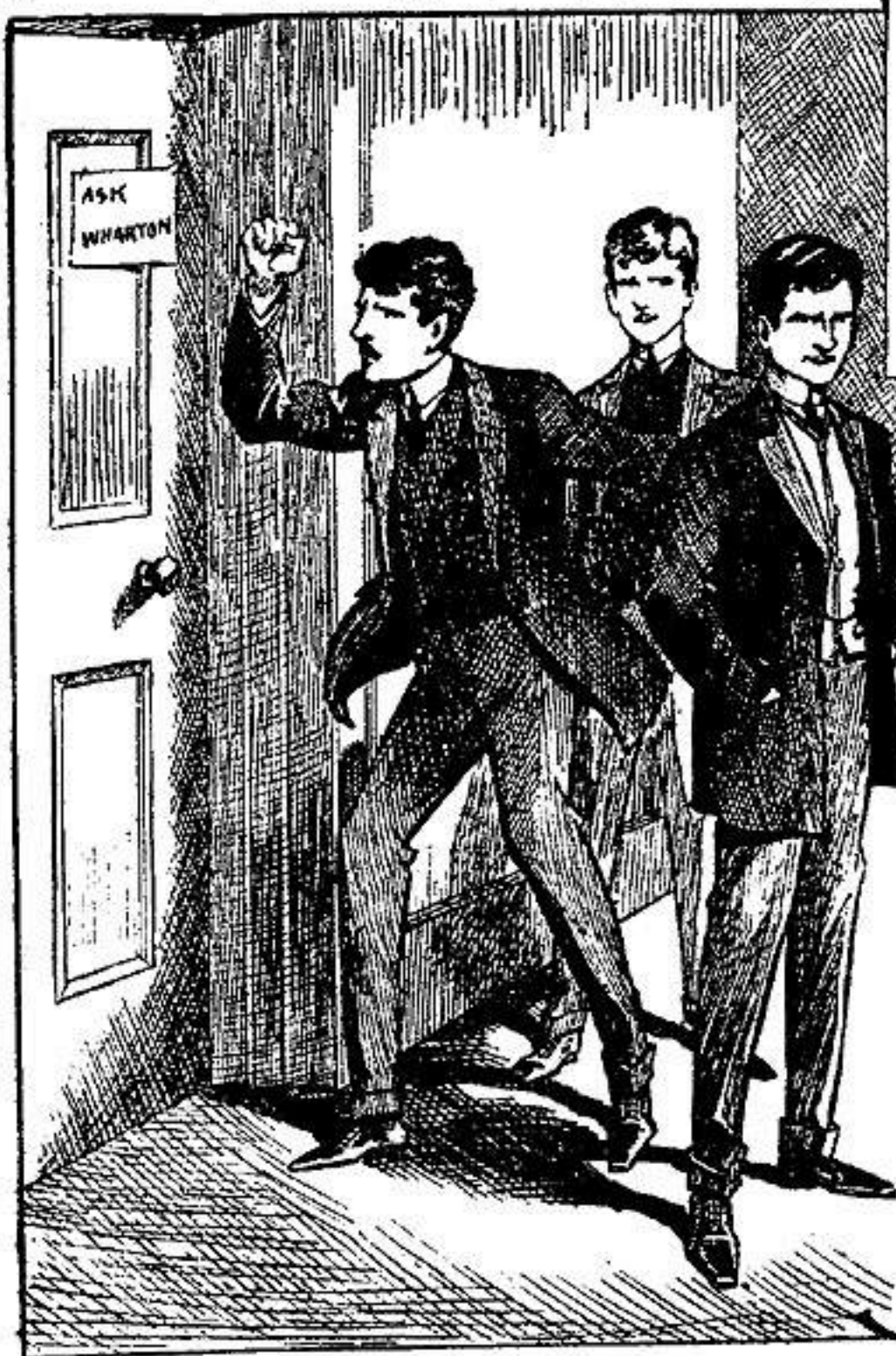
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& Co. at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Lord Mauleverer's Great Idea!

"W E'RE quite old pals," said Billy Bunter.
A dozen voices replied to Billy Bunter all at once,
and they all made the same reply:

"Rats!"

"But I tell you——"

"Rot!"

"I know him as well as anything. He——"

"Bosh!"

"But, I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up!"

"Cheese it!"

"Ring off!"

And Billy Bunter "rung off," not because he wanted to,
but because he simply couldn't make his voice heard. He
blinked indignantly at the Remove fellows through his big
spectacles. He had intended to make an impression—a great
impression—by his statement that he knew Diniwayo, but
the rude remarks hurled at him showed that he had not made
any impression at all. He had only confirmed the impression
the Removes had always had—that he could easily beat
Ananias in his own line.

It was a matter of great interest that the Remove fellows
were discussing, in the junior common-room at Greyfriars,
Tottenham Hotspur were coming down to King's Crawley

to play Crawley United, and as King's Crawley was within
reachable distance of Greyfriars, a crowd of the fellows had
made up their minds to get over to Crawley by hook or by
crook, and see the match.

The Greyfriars fellows did not often have an opportunity
of seeing a club like the 'Spurs, and Harry Wharton & Co.,
of the Remove, had especially made up their minds that they
wouldn't let that great opportunity slip.

But it was not only in the famous 'Spurs that they were
interested.

Crawley United were a good team, and they had one
special player who was very remarkable, being a South
African of native race, and almost as black as the ace of
spades.

Diniwayo had come over from South Africa with a South
African team, and, like a good many touring footballers
from overseas, had joined an English club, and remained in
England.

He was the best forward in the Crawley club, and some
of the Greyfriars fellows who had seen him play were loud
in his praises. To see him playing against such a team as the
'Spurs would be, as Bob Cherry remarked, an uncommon
treat.

"I've seen him once," Frank Nugent remarked. "He's
a little chap, but as strong as a horse, and quick as lightning.
It will be ripping to see him, and the 'Spurs, too. We've got
to get over to Crawley somehow to-morrow!"

"It's a question of ways and means," said Harry Wharton
—"the railway fares are pretty heavy; it's a good distance.
We might manage it on the bikes."

"I'm coming with you," Billy Bunter remarked.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry, not at all politely.

"I sha'n't ask you to pay my fare!" said Bunter, glaring
at him. "I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, so that
it will be all right. I really want to see Diniwayo again.
I know him well. Quite an old pal!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"In fact, I've thought of asking him over here, to see the
school," said Billy Bunter obstinately. "I think—— Yow!
Ow! Leggo my ear, Bob Cherry, you beast!"

Bob Cherry compressed Bunter's fat ear between his
finger and thumb with energy.

"Shut up!" he said.

"Ow, ow!"

"You don't know Diniwayo, and you're only gassing! Dry up!"

"Groo-oooh! Leggo!"

"I don't believe you've even seen him, you fat duffer!"

"Ow! Help! Leggo!"

Billy Bunter tore himself away, and rubbed his ear furiously.

"You—you beast! I tell you I know the chap! We're quite old pals——"

Bob Cherry made a spring towards him, and Bunter bolted from the common-room. Bob pursued him as far as the door, and Bunter went down the passage at a speed that would have done him credit on the cinder-path. Bob returned to his friends, breathing hard.

"The silly fat duffer!" he growled. "Talk about Ananias and Munchausen! Bunter could give them points, and beat them easily every time. Blessed if I ever knew such a gasbag! Now, about the Crawley match to-morrow——"

"What price a brake to Crawley?" said Johnny Bull.

"Rather too expensive, I should say. My contribution would be ninepence, exactly," said Bob ruefully.

"And mine a tanner," said Nugent, laughing.

"I could contribute half-crownfully," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Beastly to be short of tin at a time like this!" said Harry Wharton. "I suppose it will have to be the bikes. But it's a jolly long ride, and we mayn't get there in time for the kick-off. And we don't want to miss any of the match."

"No fear!"

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, came into the common-room, glancing about him. He caught sight of the chums of the Remove, and came over to them.

"Lookin' for you fellows," he remarked.

"Well, now you've found us," said Harry Wharton, "are you coming over to Crawley to-morrow to see the 'Spurs?'"

"Yaas: That's what I was going to speak to you about."

"I can see that blessed slacker biking it—I don't think!" growled Johnny Bull.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Couldn't do it, dear boy."

"How are you thinking of going, then—train?"

"No."

"Walking?" asked Nugent sarcastically.

"No."

"How, then, fathead?"

"Motor-'bus," explained his lordship.

The Removites stared.

"Motor-'bus!" howled Bob Cherry. "They don't run motor-'buses from here to Crawley, you frabjous duffer!"

"Yaas; I know they don't," said Lord Mauleverer, with a nod.

"Well, if they don't run motor-'buses, how can you go by motor-'bus?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"They don't run motor-'buses, but they'll run a motor-'bus," his lordship explained, with a chuckle. "We shall go in that!"

"Oh!"

"I want all you fellows to be my guests for the day," Lord Mauleverer explained. "You can make up the party, Wharton—if you don't mind. Too much fag for me. If I stand the 'bus, you can do the rest. What?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Willingly. But a motor-'bus for the afternoon will cost a heap of money."

"That's all right; I've got plenty of tin!" said the school-boy millionaire. "I thought it would be a good idea to take over a party, you know, to see the match. Don't see the 'Spurs every day, you know. I've telephoned to Court-field, and they can send a motor-'bus over to-morrow in

time to make the run to Crawley. Takes sixty chaps. Rather a good idea—what?"

The Removites fell upon Lord Mauleverer, and hugged him.

"Come to my arms!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Let me fold you to my watch-chain and weep!"

"Oh, begad——"

"Corn in Egypt!" said Nugent. "The right duffer in the right place! What a ripping thing it is to have a millionaire lying about loose!"

"Ha, he, ha!"

"The rippingfulness is terrific!"

"Ow! Leggo!" gasped his lordship. "Don't thump me in the back, you ass! Clear off! Is it a go?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Huray!"

"We'll take a feed in the 'bus, too," said Lord Mauleverer. "Nuff for sixty—what? Make a day of it, begad! Ask anybody you like—up to sixty chaps. Don't let 'em come and bother me, will you? If you thump me on the back again, Bob Cherry, I'll hit you in the eye! Ow! Chuck it!"

And Lord Mauleverer made his escape, considerably rumpled by the enthusiasm of the chums of the Remove. He left great joy behind him in the common-room. Lord Mauleverer had unlimited cash, and it was no more to him to hire a motor-'bus for an afternoon's excursion than it would have been to any other Remove fellow to hire a bike. And never had Lord Mauleverer's "filthy lucre" proved more useful.

His guests on that auspicious occasion were to number sixty, but the probability was that at least twice that number would want to board the motor-'bus when it came round to the gates of Greyfriars on the morrow.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Ask Wharton!

BILLY BUNTER came along the Remove passage, looking extremely bad-tempered.

Bunter was very cross.

Nothing, it is said, annoys an habitual fibber more than having his word doubted. And Billy Bunter was suffering from that annoyance.

Bunter's disregard for the truth amounted almost to a disease. It was his special pride that he knew everything that was going on; and nothing could ever be mentioned that Bunter did not know something about. Nobody could be referred to whom Bunter had not seen, or spoken to, or known intimately—according to his own account. And Bunter rattled off his fibs without stopping to think, with such facility that he almost believed them himself.

New boys, who did not know Bunter, were often impressed by him; but the fellows who did know him always took ninety-nine per cent. off his yarns—indeed, Bob Cherry declared that they ought to take off about two hundred and fifty per cent.

But when one of Bunter's specially whacking "whoppers" was disbelieved, instead of backing out of it as gracefully as he could, he would attempt to bolster it up with still more astounding whoppers.

The great interest the Remove fellows felt in the doings of Diniwayo, the black footballer, had made Bunter declare in his usual strain that he knew him quite well.

And the doubt with which that statement was received, made him declare still more emphatically that they were quite old pals.

As the black footballer was never likely to come within miles of Greyfriars, Bunter's statement could not exactly be disproved; but the juniors disbelieved it on principle. It was not impossible, of course—anybody might know Diniwayo—but they disbelieved it simply because Bunter stated it.

Sometimes, of course, Bunter was disbelieved when he was, on rare occasions, telling the truth—like the boy in the fable who cried "wolf!" so often when there was no wolf, that when the wolf really came, no one would heed him.

"The rotters!" Bunter muttered. "If Bob Cherry said he knew the Emperor of Timbuctoo, the fellows would believe him! The rotters!"

He knocked at Lord Mauleverer's door, and went in without waiting to be asked. Lord Mauleverer was seated in his armchair, gazing into the fire. It was a favourite way the slacker of the Remove had of passing an hour or so. He did not turn his head as Bunter came in.

"I say, Mauly, old man——"

No reply.

"Hallo, Mauly! Are you awake?"

"Yaas!"

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Loder, Carne, and Walker were tossed off the 'bus one after another. "Good-bye, Bluebell!" roared Bob Cherry. "Go home!" The 'bus gathered speed again, and the three seniors were left gasping and sprawling in the dusty road. (See Chapter 5.)

"Why don't you answer, then?"
"Tired!"
"Look here, I hear you're going to have a motor-'bus over to Crawley to-morrow," said Bunter.
"Yaas."
"You want me to come, don't you?"
"Ask Wharton."
"Wharton's a beast! I decline to speak to him. He has doubted my word!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity. "I suppose you don't want to leave me behind, do you?"
"Yaas."
"What?" growled Bunter. "Look here, Mauly, I'm coming!"
"Yaas."
"If you're going to take a feed in the 'bus, I'll help you do the shopping," said Bunter eagerly. "May as well get it done this evening, you know. Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day, Mauly."
"Yaas."

"Can I do the shopping, then?"
"Yaas."
"Hand over the cash, then!"
"Rats!"
"Now look here, Mauly——"
"Bosh!"
"I've had a lot of experience in that kind of thing," said Bunter persuasively. "I can get you value for money, you know. You hand me a ten-pound note, and——"
"Rats!"
"Well, make it a fiver!"
"More rats!"
Billy Bunter glared at Lord Mauleverer through his spectacles. His lordship always gave monosyllabic replies; they saved trouble. He was generally very easy-going; but he could be determined sometimes; and this was evidently one of the times. He was very careless with money, but not quite careless enough to trust a banknote in the hands of the Owl of the Remove.

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"Now, Mauly, old man," said Bunter, trying to keep his temper. "I really want to do you a favour, you know. It's settled that I'm going in the 'bus, isn't it?"

"Ask Wharton."

"I can give you an introduction, if you like, to the Crawley centre-forward—the black chap, you know," said Bunter. "I know him quite well."

Lord Mauleverer chuckled.

"Do you think I'm telling whoppers?" roared Bunter.

"Yaas."

"You—you—you— Look here, Mauly—"

Bolsover major of the Remove came into the study.

"Mauly, old man, I suppose I'm in the party to-morrow?" he asked.

"Ask Wharton."

"Blow Wharton! You're taking the party! Now, Mauly—"

"Left it all in Wharton's hands. Ask Wharton."

"You lazy ass!" shouted Bolsover major. "If I'm not in the party there will be a row, I can tell you that! Do you hear?"

"Yaas."

"Then what do you say?"

"Ask Wharton."

Bolsover major glared at the slacker of the Remove, and made a movement towards him. He came very near jerking his lordship out of the armchair, and bumping him on the floor. He realised, however, that that was not a judicious way of getting an invitation, and refrained.

Skinner and Vernon-Smith looked in at the open doorway.

"I say, Mauly, we're coming to-morrow."

"Yaas."

"We can have places in the 'bus—what?"

"Ask Wharton."

"Oh, hang Wharton! It's your 'bus, ain't it?" said Skinner.

"Yaas."

"You don't want Wharton to run the show, do you?"

"Yaas."

"Look here, Mauly; you're playing the giddy ox, you know."

"Yaas."

"Are you too big an idiot to arrange your own party yourself?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"Yaas."

"Better get along and ask Wharton," chuckled Vernon-Smith; and he went down the passage with Skinner. Bolsover major, after pausing a few moments to tell Lord Mauleverer what he thought of him—not in polite language—followed them; and Billy Bunter brought up the rear. Lord Mauleverer sighed. He did not want to move; but the dread of further visitors demanding places in the motor-bus made him exert himself to the extent of rising to his feet, and turning the key in the lock.

Five minutes later, Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, came along and thumped at the door. He turned the handle, but the door did not open. He thumped again, and shouted through the keyhole.

"I say, Mauly! Are you there, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"I guess I'm coming in that 'bus to-morrow!"

"Yaas."

"Well, can I come?"

"Ask Wharton."

"Wharton be blowed! I guess I'm asking you! Now, I'm coming. I guess I'm not taking nope for an answer! You hear me?"

"Yaas."

"Is it settled, then, you jay?"

"Ask Wharton."

Fisher T. Fish kicked at the door, and made a few remarks in choicest American through the keyhole, and stamped away down the passage. Lord Mauleverer sighed deeply, rose, and scribbled a couple of words upon a card, opened the door, and pinned the card outside. Then he locked the door again, and returned to his armchair.

In a few minutes there were fresh knocks at the door. The slacker of the Remove grinned, but did not speak. The powerful voice of Horace Coker of the Fifth came booming through the keyhole.

"Mauly! Mauleverer! Lord Mauleverer! Silly ass! Chump! Are you deaf or dumb? Fathead! If you don't answer me, I'll bust in the door and wipe up the study with you! I'm coming in your motor-bus to-morrow! Do you hear?"

No reply.

Coker of the Fifth kicked at the door again, and Potter and Greene, who were with him, joined in with great energy. But no sound came from within the study.

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"What does this blessed card on the door mean?" said Potter, pointing to it. Coker looked at the card; it bore two words in large letters:

"ASK WHARTON."

"Mauly, what does this card mean?" shouted Coker.

Silence!

Thump! Thump! Thump!

But only echoes replied from within the study, and Coker & Co. desisted at last, and went down the passage. They had decided to take the advice on the card, and "Ask Wharton."

During the next hour or so there were incessant knocks and calls and yells at Lord Mauleverer's door, to all of which the slacker of Greyfriars turned a deaf ear.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Many Applicants!

HARRY WHARTON was holding quite a reception that evening.

Study No. 1, which belonged to Wharton and Nugent, had never received so many visitors, and the two juniors found their preparation suffer considerably from so many interruptions.

Every fellow who applied at Lord Mauleverer's study concluded by coming along to No. 1 to prefer his request to Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, in whose hands his lordship had left the arrangements for the excursion.

As the motor-bus hired by his lordship would accommodate sixty persons, the party was to be a large one. But it was quite certain that there would be more applicants than there was room for in the largest of motor-buses.

The journey by rail to King's Crawley was an expensive one for schoolboys whose pocket-money was limited; and, besides, a run through the countryside in, or on, a tearing motor-bus would be very enjoyable. It would be a ripping excursion, apart from the football match at the end. And, besides the ride in itself, there was a match to be seen between a splendid league team of the First Division and the home team, which contained the remarkable and unique centre-forward, Diniwayo. And, still more, all Lord Mauleverer's guests were to be treated to their admission tickets, and there was to be a feed in the motor-bus on a gorgeous scale. The whole of the entertainment would cost Lord Mauleverer a small fortune. Considering what was "going," it was not surprising that nearly everybody at Greyfriars had made up his mind that he was going to be in the party that went over to Crawley by motor-bus.

It would be the event of the term, as Nugent remarked. And all the fellows had claims to be considered. Billy Bunter was first and foremost, as a personal friend of the celebrated Crawley centre-forward, Diniwayo. At least, that was how Billy Bunter put it.

But Bunter's mind was soon set at rest by the announcement that all the Remove were to go. Harry Wharton felt that his own Form came first, and the Removites rejoiced in the knowledge that they were all secure, whomsoever might be left out.

Wharton's announcement to that effect was received with cheers, and the Removites ceased from troubling, and, so far as they were concerned, Study No. 1 was at rest.

But there were others.

Temple, Dabney, & Co., of the Fourth, dropped in, mentioning in an off-hand way that they had decided to join the party.

"Go hon!" Bob Cherry remarked. Bob was sitting on the study table, having kindly come in to help Wharton deal with the swarm of applicants for places.

"We can let in a certain number of the Fourth!" said Harry Wharton. "We want to do the fair thing all round."

"Oh, rats!" said Fry of the Fourth. "'Tain't your party; it's Mauly's."

Wharton frowned.

"I'm appointed manager," he explained, "and that settles you. Hop it!"

"What!" said Fry.

"Get out; you're not coming!"

"Somebody's head will jolly well get punched if I don't come!" roared Fry.

Bob Cherry slid off the table.

"Mine do?" he asked.

"Hold on!" said Temple, dragging Fry back as he was rushing at Bob. "Cheese it, Fry! I say, Wharton, we came here in—ahem!—a friendly spirit."

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Wharton.

"Ahem! Fry will—er—express regret for his hasty remarks," said Temple diplomatically.

"Oh, rats!" said Fry.

"Chuck him out, Bob!" said Wharton, without moving. He had a list on the table before him, and was putting down names.

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "This way to the door, Fry."

There was a brief struggle, and Fry went through the doorway, head first. A loud bump sounded in the passage outside.

Temple and Dabney looked warlike, but they stopped at that. A scrimmage in Study No. 1 was not the way to get invitations.

"I'll—I'll smash 'em!" roared Fry, in the passage. "Back me up, you rotters, and we'll wreck the study."

"Shurrup!" said Temple. "Don't be obstreperous, Fry. Can't you behave yourself when you're visiting a gentleman in his own study?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney severely.

"Why, you—you chumps!" gasped Fry. "Weren't you saying that if they didn't let us come we were going to bump them all over their study?"

"Shut up!" roared Temple, growing rather red. Fry was letting cats out of the bag in a very injudicious way.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

"We're going to let a dozen of the Fourth come, and we'll leave it to you to select 'em, Temple, as you're captain of the Fourth," said Wharton. "But Fry doesn't come unless he apologises for hooliganism in this study."

"See you blowed first!" howled Fry.

"Now then, Fry," said Temple sternly. "Who's captain of the Fourth I'd like to know? You'll apologise at once!"

"I won't!"

"Then you'll be left behind to-morrow."

"Rats! You said that if they left us behind, we were going to raid the 'bus!"

"Shut up!" howled Temple.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's going to apologise, gentlemen," said Temple. "We'll make him. Dab, old man, take his other ear!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Fry, as his two chums took hold of his ears. "Loggo! I—I say, Wharton, I—I'm sorry I—I spoke! Yow-ow-ow!"

Wharton waved his hand.

"Right-ho! Your apology is accepted. Now clear out, all of you!"

And Temple, Dabney, & Co. cleared out. Fry rubbing his ears and growling ferociously. They passed Coker & Co. in the passage. Coker, Potter, and Greene came into Study No. 1 with amiable smiles on. As a rule, Horace Coker did not waste much politeness upon mere fags. But Lord Chesterfield himself could have found no fault with the politeness of Coker & Co. on this occasion.

"I understand that you're making arrangements for a run to Crawley to-morrow, Wharton, old fellow," said Coker affably.

"Quite right, Coker, old fellow!" said Wharton gravely.

"May we come?"

"That's putting it very nicely," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Your Aunt Judy would be pleased with you now, Horace."

"You cheeky young beggar. I—I mean— Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Coker. "I—I don't mind a little joke. Got our names down, Wharton?"

"Yes. All Fifth-Formers will be expected to wash their necks, and put on clean collars for the occasion."

"What!" roared Coker furiously. "Why, you cheeky little blighter—"

"Any Fifth-Former objecting to washing his neck and putting on a clean collar will be excluded," said Wharton calmly.

"I—I—I— Well—ahem!—all—all serene!" gasped Coker.

"I—I d-don't mind a little j-j-joke! So we're coming."

"Right! You can bring six of the Fifth with you; that's the limit."

"Good egg!" said Coker. And he departed with his comrades, quite satisfied, but mentally promising the Removites to remember their check afterwards.

As the news of the intended excursion spread, visitors flocked thicker and thicker to Study No. 1 in the Remove.

Paget and Tubb and Bolsover minor of the Third Form came in, and were delighted to hear that they could go, and bring a dozen of the Third. Then came Nugent minor and Gatty and Myers and Bunter minor of the Second, and they also were rejoiced to discover that they were among the accepted ones. Harry Wharton had generously resolved to give the fags a look-in.

Hobson of the Shell had delayed some time in making an application, and the other Shell fellows delayed with him. They felt it was rather below the dignity of the Shell to ask kids in the Lower Fourth for an invitation. As Hobson remarked to Hoskins, it was Wharton's place to come and ask them civilly. But Wharton showed no sign whatever of doing so, and it was soon clear that there was a terrific rush for places. And when they heard that Coker of the Fifth had condescended to approach Study No. 1 on the subject, Hobson & Co. felt that they could condescend, too. So they condescended, and dropped into Study No. 1 in an affable sort of way.

Wharton and Nugent were doing their preparation, but

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they suspended that important work as the Shell fellows came in.

"Ahem!" said Hobson. "Sorry to interrupt. Hope I'm not putting you out—"

"Well, you are as a matter of fact," said Wharton.

"Ahem! About this little excursion to-morrow—" said Hobson.

"The fact is, we wouldn't mind coming," remarked Hoskins.

"Go hon!" said Wharton. "You're rather late in making applications. But we want to do the fair thing all round, and we can take four Shell chaps."

"Oh, come!" said Hobson warmly. "You can make room for eight or nine of us at least."

"Can't be did!"

"The fact is, I've practically promised a lot of the fellows that I would make it all right for them," said Hobson.

"Then you can unpractically unpromise them," said Wharton cheerfully. "It can't be did! Total number's sixty."

"You don't want to take a crowd of fags, I suppose, when the Shell fellows are willing to come with you?" said Hobson majestically.

"Your mistake, we do!" said Wharton tersely.

"Now look here, Wharton—"

"Four places. Take 'em or leave 'em!"

Hobson & Co. exchanged glances. They were considering whether to make a violent attack upon the owners of Study No. 1 and wipe up the floor with them and wreck the study as a lesson in manners. Wharton and Nugent read their thoughts in their faces quite easily. Nugent picked up the inkstand, and Wharton, as it were, carelessly took the poker from the fender.

Hobson grinned in rather a sickly manner.

"Well, we'll come," he said.

"Right-ho! Now buzz off."

There was very nearly another outbreak at that, but Hobson & Co. managed to get out of the study without exploding. They gave expression to their feelings in the passage:

"Cheeky little beggars!"

"Good mind to wallop them, and chance it."

"But we want to go!"

"Yes, that's the rub!"

"We can wallop them after to-morrow," said Hobson consolingly. "We want to see that match and the darky centre-forward."

So the heroes of No. 1 Study were left unwalloped.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Full Speed Ahead!

ON the following morning it might have been observed—and, as a matter of fact, was observed—that most of the Greyfriars juniors were upon extremely good behaviour.

Never had classes been so punctual, so attentive, or so well-behaved.

The Remove was not generally a model Form, but it might have been taken for a model Form that Wednesday morning.

Every fellow who was booked for King's Crawley was prepared to go to any length in good behaviour rather than risk detention that afternoon.

Even Billy Bunter exerted himself in the Form-room, and surprised Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, by being considerably less obtuse than usual.

Virtue is its own reward, and there is sometimes no other. But on this occasion the virtue of the Greyfriars juniors was well rewarded. There were no detentions for the afternoon, and when morning classes were dismissed every fellow drew a breath of relief on finding himself safe outside his Form-room.

"Good luck!" said Bob Cherry, when the Remove came out. "All safe, sound, and sober! I thought Quelch was going to drop on Bunter when he construed 'Hæc orationes adducti' 'He led these speeches.' Smithy whispered to him just in time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter grunted.

"Blessed if I see the sense in all that rot!" he remarked.

"I think Julius Cæsar might have found something better to do than piling up blessed commentaries to worry school-boys two thousand years after he'd kicked the bucket! Blow Cæsar! Blow Orgetorix! And blow the Helvetians and the rest of the silly duffers!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry, with feeling. He rather agreed with Bunter on that subject. "Never mind. We're

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done with the Helvetians for to-day, and we can think about the Crawley United."

"When is the giddy motor-bus coming?" asked Bolsover major.

"Half-past one!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Time for dinner, and then we buzz off. It will take a good bit over an hour to get to Crawley."

"Good!"

The Removites looked very cheerful over dinner.

After that meal was over they put on their coats and crowded down to the gates to wait for the imposing vehicle that was to take them to King's Crawley.

A crowd of fellows of other Forms joined them there, to the number of considerably more than the sixty whom the motor-bus could accommodate.

There was a cheer as the big vehicle was seen snorting and grunting along from the direction of Courtfield.

The chauffeur brought it to a halt outside the gates of Greyfriars.

Loder of the Sixth came out with Walker and Carne, as the motor-bus stopped. The three seniors were far from being on good terms with the Removites, and they had not been offered seats in the bus. Harry Wharton had specially invited Wingate and Courtney of the Sixth, but they had decided to go over by train. Loder and his friends, however, had economically determined to save the fares by taking a free passage.

"We're coming with you kids," said Loder, with unusual affability. "I'm afraid a lot of juniors couldn't be trusted in a motor-bus by themselves."

"We've got the chauffeur," said Wharton.

Loder shook his head.

"That's not enough."

"And we've got the Head's permission," said Wharton bluntly. "And all the seats in the bus are taken. You'll excuse us, Loder?"

Loder scowled.

"We'll go on top, you chaps!" he said to his companions.

"Look here—" began Bob Cherry hotly.

The seats on top, of course, were preferred to the others inside, and Harry Wharton had reserved them for the Remove. Loder & Co., however, mounted the steps behind, and the juniors exchanged enraged glances.

As Loder and Walker were prefects, the juniors could not very well pitch them out, but they looked upon this invasion of their rights with exasperated eyes.

"The rotters!" said Bob Cherry. "There will be a crowd on top now. We're not going to leave anybody behind for them."

"No fear!"

"The no fearfulness is terrific!"

"All aboard!" sang out Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five stationed themselves on the steps, and allowed only Removites to go on top—with the exception of the three seniors who had taken the law into their own hands.

Fifth and Shell and Fourth crowded into the spacious interior of the bus.

Coker demanded a seat on top, and was politely but firmly refused, and he growled a little as he went inside. But the Fifth were not sacred persons like the Sixth, and they would have been pitched off the bus at short notice if they had given trouble.

The motor-bus was soon crowded inside and out.

Some of the fellows for whom there was no room jumped on the step, and clung there in defiance of the orders of the Famous Five.

"We're all right here," said Wylie of the Shell, "we'll hold on. The blessed engines won't break down, I suppose?"

"Tell the chauffeur to start, Mauly," said Harry Wharton. "We shall have the whole giddy school hanging on behind soon."

And the motor-bus started.

The fellows left behind waved their caps and cheered as the huge vehicle, swarming inside and out, rolled away down the road.

To accommodate sixty the seats had to be more crowded than was intended by the builders, and the addition of the three Sixth-Formers, therefore, made a considerable difference to the comfort of the Removites.

Loder and Carne and Walker insisted upon having plenty of room, and they occupied the space that was intended for four, and which Harry Wharton had intended for five or six. And they had taken the front seats.

The Famous Five were immediately behind them.

Lord Mauleverer had mounted beside the chauffeur. Mauleverer was an old hand at motor-driving, and as soon as the bus was out of sight of Greyfriars he intended to relieve the chauffeur at the steering-wheel.

Lord Mauleverer forgot his slacking habits when he was on board a motor-car, and on such occasions he had a taste

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for breathless speed, and he intended to let that motor-bus "rip" on its journey to King's Crawley.

The bus rolled and snorted away through Friardale amid shouts from the village urchins, who had seldom seen such a vehicle before, and took the road towards Redclyffe. Then Lord Mauleverer changed places with the chauffeur.

Loder of the Sixth looked down from above, and called out to him.

"What are you doing with that wheel, Mauleverer?"

"Holdin' it, my dear fellow!"

"You're not going to drive?"

"Yaas!"

"It's not safe!" shouted Loder. "Give the wheel to the chauffeur at once!"

"Begad!"

"Do you hear me?"

"Yaas!"

"Then do as I tell you?"

"Rats!"

"Stick to it, Mauly!" shouted the Removites.

"Yaas, I mean to!" said his lordship. "We're going to make a record on this journey. All funks are recommended to jump off before I put the speed on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going quite fast enough!" said Loder angrily.

"Not at all, dear boy!"

"We shall get to Crawley in time——"

"Yaas; but we're going to make a record."

Loder leaned over the front of the bus and shook his fist at his imperturbable lordship below.

"You're not to drive! Do you hear?" he shouted.

"Yaas!"

"Chauffeur, you're to drive!" shouted Loder.

"Sorry, sir! This young gentleman's my employer, sir," said the driver calmly. "I'm under his orders, sir."

"Mauleverer, I'm a prefect! How dare you disobey me?" yelled Loder.

"This is my bus, Loder, my dear fellow. If you don't like it you can get out and walk, begad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer was putting on speed now. The motor-bus sailed along at a breathless rate. It swayed considerably, especially when it bumped over ruts in the road, and at every jolt the juniors roared with delight. It was exciting to them, and as for danger, they did not think or care about it.

But with Loder & Co. it was different. They were not reckless juniors, and they set a high value upon their necks—too high a value, the Removites considered. Loder shouted and raved to Lord Mauleverer, but the schoolboy earl did not heed. Indeed, he did not take the trouble to reply again. He required all his attention for the road. Loder rose to his feet, with the idea of descending into the bus and coming to close quarters with his lordship from inside. But he hesitated. The fellows crammed inside the bus were enjoying themselves, and they were not likely to let Loder go through in peace. Indeed, the obnoxious prefect was very likely to be roughly handled if he ventured into the crowded interior of the bus.

"Tell that reckless young fool to slack down, Wharton!" said Loder furiously.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"This suits us," he replied.

"It doesn't suit me," roared Loder.

"Can't be helped. You shouldn't have come."

"You weren't asked," growled Johnny Bull.

Loder gritted his teeth.

"You'll slow down, or I'll give you a jolly good hiding!" he said, grasping his walking-cane. "I can't get at Mauleverer, but I can get at you."

"And we can get at you!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "If you handle that cane, Loder, we'll wallop you and drop you over the side."

"Drop him over anyway!" said Bulstrode.

"Good egg!"

"Collar the cad!" roared Bolsover major.

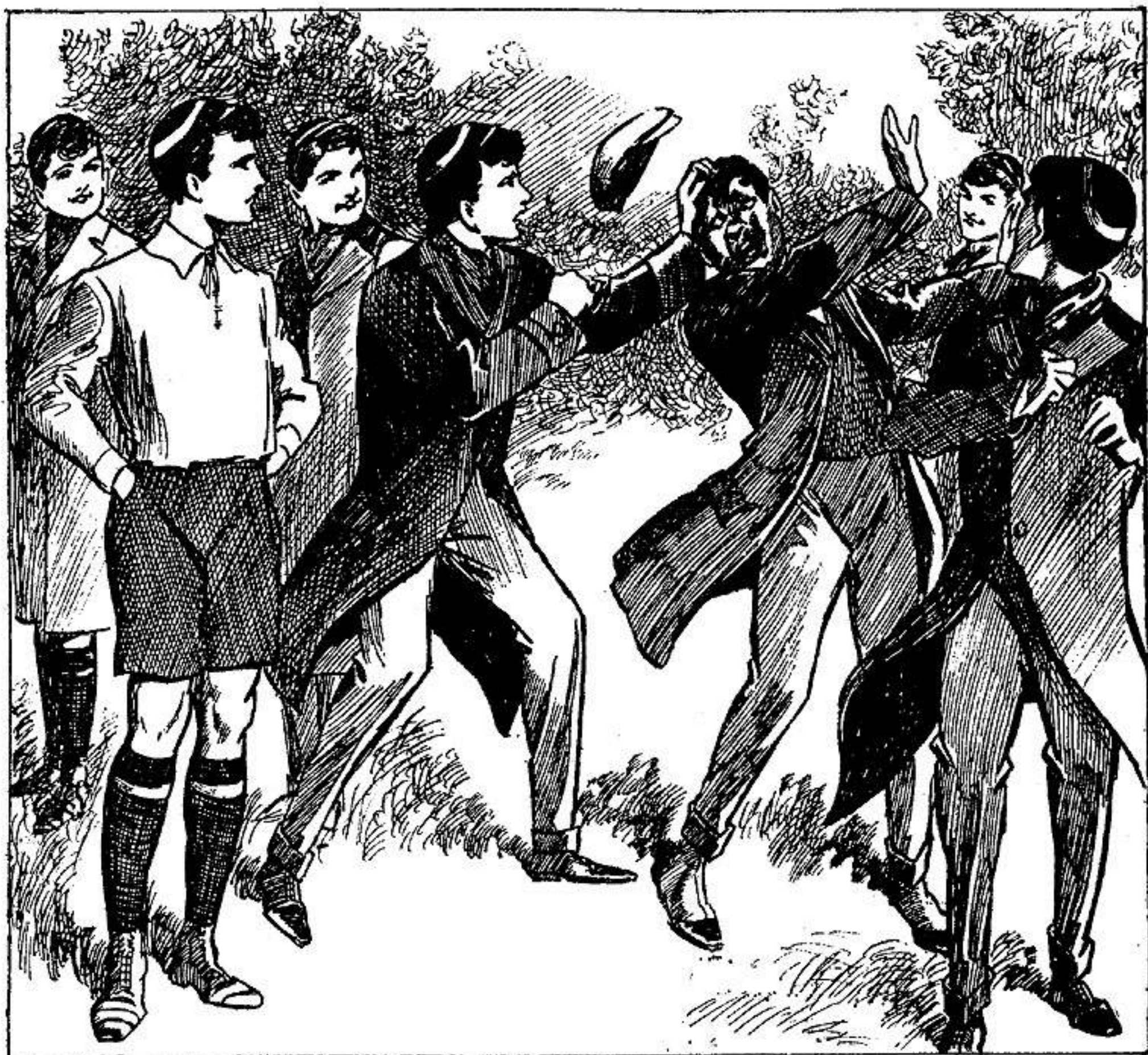
Half the Removites jumped up excitedly. The pace at which the bus was racing along was exciting in itself, and the juniors were in a reckless mood. Gerald Loder realised that it behoved him to be careful. He lowered his cane.

"Sit down, Loder," said Harry Wharton, "and shut up! Hands off, you fellows; mustn't handle a prefect—unless he gives trouble."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he gives us any trouble, we'll jolly well chuck him out!" said Tom Brown.

Loder sat down helplessly. As if to exasperate the prefect further, Lord Mauleverer was still putting on speed. The road was wide and lonely, and there was little danger with a good driver. Lord Mauleverer was a first-class driver;



Coker, of the Fifth, took hold of the black man's hair and gave it a jerk. There was a yell of pain from the owner, but the hair did not come off. "It—it—it's real!" stuttered Coker. (See Chapter 15.)

but the Sixth-Formers, naturally enough, had little confidence in the ability of a junior to handle the enormous vehicle. And the motor-bus was swaying and jolting in a most alarming manner.

"There's Redclyffe!" said Bob Cherry, as Redclyffe School came in sight.

"They've got a brake!" exclaimed Peter Todd, standing up and staring towards the school. "I shouldn't wonder if they're going to Crawley, too."

"There's Campbell in the brake!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Give 'em a yell as we go by!"

Redclyffe School were old rivals of Greyfriars, in football and cricket and other things. Redclyffe were evidently going to see the match at Crawley, and Campbell, the skipper of the football team, could be recognised in the brake, with several more of the eleven Greyfriars Remove had often played. The Redclyffians sighted the 'bus just as the big brake was starting from the gates of Redclyffe.

Campbell shouted to the driver, and the brake went down the road at a gallop. The Redclyffe fellows sent a yell back at the Greyfriars 'bus.

"Racing us, by Jove!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Put it on, Mauly!"

"Buck up, Mauly!"

"Go it!"

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"Yaas, begadi!" chuckled Lord Mauleverer. And the motor-bus fairly flew.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Loder Is Left!

"HURRAH!"

The crowd on the motor-bus roared with delight as the race began. Only Loder and Carne and Walker did not seem pleased. The pace was now simply terrific, and the three seniors expected the huge vehicle to lurch over at every turn.

The Redclyffians were going down the road in great style. They had a large brake, with six horses, doing the thing in style, as Bob Cherry remarked. But the Removites gleefully observed that they were doing the thing in better style than Redclyffe. Redclyffe had a big brake, but a motor-bus capable of accommodating sixty fellows was a bigger order than a brake.

And fast as the team of horses were, they really had no chance against the 'bus. Lord Mauleverer was covering the ground in great style, and the lumbering 'bus came rapidly nearer to the brake. They swept past the gates of Redclyffe, and gained fast upon the brake.

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"Put the brake on, you silly ass!" roared Loder. "There isn't room to pass!"

"We shall put the brake out, not on!" chuckled Bob Cherry, alluding to the Redclyffe brake, which was not the brake Loder was referring to.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove. "Go it, Mauly!" The 'bus was sweeping right down on the brake. The latter was keeping the middle of the road, and there certainly wasn't room for the Greyfriars fellows to pass. It looked as if Lord Mauleverer had made up his mind to run the brake down from behind.

That idea was evidently in the minds of the Redclyffians, for they shouted to the schoolboy chauffeur to slacken down. Campbell, a burly Sixth-Former of Redclyffe, shook his fist at Lord Mauleverer, as the space between the two vehicles decreased.

"Stop, you silly ass!" he roared. "Do you want to run us down?"

"Yaas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What?" yelled Campbell.

"But I'm not goin' to!" added his lordship.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A biscuit might have been tossed from the brake to the 'bus when Lord Mauleverer slackened down at last. The 'bus came on to within three feet of the rear of the brake, and then kept pace with it.

The Removites were all on their feet on top of the 'bus now, crowding forward to yell at the Redclyffians and chip them. The Redclyffians yelled back. But the motor-'bus was higher in the world, as Bob Cherry put it, than the brake, and from their coign of vantage the Greyfriars juniors were able to hurl things more solid than mere epithets.

Several of them had pea-shooters with them, with which they had intended to exasperate innocent passers-by during their ride to Crawley, and the pea-shooters were now brought into play for the benefit of Campbell & Co. Some of the Removites, too, had oranges and apples and nuts, that they had intended to consume on the journey; but they were all devoted now to a better cause.

Campbell gave a yell of wrath as an apple caught him on the ear, and an orange burst under his chin. He shook both fists frantically at the motor-'bus.

"Give 'em beans!" roared Bob Cherry.

"We haven't any beans, but here's an orange!" grinned Tom Brown. "Campbell, old man, will you have this in the other ear?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squash!

There was another yell of laughter as the orange smashed on Campbell's chin. Peas were rattling fast into the brake, and the Redclyffians were wild with wrath.

"Get aside and let us pass!" shouted Wharton. "We're bound to be first at Crawley, you know! Greyfriars always beats Redclyffe!"

"Hurray!"

Campbell wiped the orange from his chin, and brandished his fists again. A shower of peas peppered him, and he roared with wrath.

There was no help for it—the brake had to give ground. Campbell & Co. had intended to keep the 'bus back, and arrive before them at Crawley—assured, of course, that Lord Mauleverer would not take the extreme step of running into them. But the Removites' method of clearing the road was effective.

Campbell called to the driver to get aside, and the brake swerved to the side of the road, leaving room for the motor-'bus to pass.

Lord Mauleverer put on speed, and the great vehicle swept by, the Removites giving the Redclyffians a parting volley of peas and nuts and apples and yells as they swept past. The brake dropped behind.

"We are the giddy victors!" grinned Bob Cherry. "This is where we touch the giddy stars with our sublime heads, as Julius Cæsar says!"

"Ha, ha! It was Horace!"

"Never mind who it was—I don't care a button. We've beaten Redclyffe. They will be ratty when they get to Crawley and find us in the best seats!" chuckled Bob.

"Hurray for Greyfriars!"

"Hip-pip!"

The 'bus tore on, and the brake disappeared from view behind.

"I—I'm not going to stand this!" gasped Loder, as the

'bus rocked over a bump in the ground, Lord Mauleverer having taken a short cut through a decidedly rough lane. "We're hardly half-way to Crawley yet, and we shall be killed before we get there at this rate!"

"I'm expecting a broken neck every minute!" snarled Carne.

"Come down and make him stop!" said Walker desperately. "We'll pitch young Mauleverer off, and leave him behind!"

The three seniors rose together; but the Removites rose too.

"Mind what you're up to, Loder, my son," said Bob Cherry. "We're not in school now, you know. If you start looking for trouble, you'll find more than you want!"

"The morefulness will be terrific, my worthy and esteemed Loder!"

Loder made no reply, but began to shove his way along the aisle between the seats on top of the 'bus. Walker and Carne pressed behind him. The juniors barred the way, and Loder began to lash out viciously with his cane. It was a heavy cane, and the juniors who felt its weight roared with pain and indignation.

"Collar the cad!" yelled Johnny Bull, springing at Loder.

The prefect hit out savagely, and Johnny Bull was knocked down among the seats. But that was the finishing touch. Johnny Bull's chums piled on Loder & Co. at once, and the rest of the Remove backed them up with excited yells. The three Sixth-Formers disappeared under a struggling mass of juniors.

"Got 'em!" panted Bob Cherry. "Mauly, slacken down a bit, will you, while we chuck this rubbish off?"

"Yaas."

There was a grinding of brakes, and the motor-'bus slowed down. Loder and Carne and Walker were dragged along the top of the 'bus, and bundled down the steps. They resisted furiously, but they were helpless in the hands of so many.

All three of the seniors went bundling down, in the midst of a struggling swarm of juniors, and they were tossed off the 'bus one after another. And as they rolled in the dusty road, gasping and saying things that we could not possibly reproduce in print, the 'bus put on speed again, and they were left behind.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Go home!"

"You can walk the rest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three seniors jumped up. They were dusty and dishevelled, and their hats were gone. They rushed down the road in pursuit of the motor-'bus, yelling to the juniors to stop. But the juniors had no intention of stopping for them. They had got rid of their unwelcome passengers, and they did not mean to take them on board again.

Loder & Co. dashed after the 'bus frantically. They were landed in a lonely lane, half-way between Greyfriars and Crawley, and they had no chance whatever of finding a vehicle of any sort to take them on to Crawley, or to take them back to Greyfriars. And they did not relish the prospect of walking about fifteen miles.

But the 'bus simply raced away from them.

The juniors sent back derisive yells, till the three running figures disappeared in the distance behind, and were seen no more.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob, wiping away his tears. "Poor old Loder! Always looking for trouble—and finding it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I thought this ride was going to be a treat, but I didn't expect quite such a treat!" gasped Wharton. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Mauly!"

"Keep it up!"

"Pile it on!"

"Yaas, begad!" chortled Lord Mauleverer.

And the 'bus raced and thundered on. And not till they were approaching the confines of the town of King's Crawley did Lord Mauleverer relinquish the guidance to the driver. And it was at a somewhat more moderate speed that they thundered up to the gates of the Crawley United Football Ground.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Black Footballer!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were in good time for the match, thanks to the exertions of Lord Mauleverer. The motor-'bus was left in charge of the chauffeur en route.

outside the ground, and the Greyfriars army marched up to the turnstile, Lord Mauleverer at their head, with a bank-note in his hand.

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"Sixty, please!" he said.
"Sixty-five," grinned Bob Cherry. "There are some extras."

"Begad, yaas! Sixty-five, please!"
And the army marched in; and, thanks to their early arrival, they filled up the best seats in the grand-stand.

King's Crawley Football Ground was a large one, and the enclosure was capable of accommodating a good many thousands of spectators, and by the crowd that was pouring in at the turnstiles, it seemed that its accommodation would be fully taxed. Football enthusiasts were coming from near and far to see the match with the great team from London.

Billy Bunter was in a front seat, and he blinked round him with great interest. He could not see very far, and he growled at Lord Mauleverer for forgetting to bring his field-glasses.

"Looking for your friend Diniwayo?" chuckled Bob Cherry, giving the fat junior a dig in the ribs.

Bunter gasped.
"Ow! Yes; I'm looking for Diniwayo. Of course, I shall nod to him!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha! You may nod to him, but he jolly well won't nod to you!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Tell us another, and a smaller one!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Of course, I know the chap well—"

"Ananias!"
"I'm going round to see him after the match!" said Bunter loftily. "I'd take you fellows round and introduce you, only, as you doubt my word, I shall refuse to do anything of the sort!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, when you see me chumming with him, after the match, perhaps you'll believe me!" snapped Bunter.

"Yes; I'll believe you then!" grinned Bob. "Seeing is believing, you know. I suppose you know all the 'Spurs, too, don't you—every man-jack of them?"

Bunter grunted, and did not reply.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come the giddy Redclyffians!" said Bob Cherry.

And he stood up and waved his cap to Campbell & Co., of Redclyffe.

Campbell waved in return, but he waved a fist instead of a cap. The enclosure had been filling, and the crowd from Redclyffe had to be content with very back seats.

Bob Cherry chuckled.
"I shouldn't wonder if we have a rag with the Redclyffians before we get home," he remarked. "Well, it's all in the day's work. Campbell looks quite wild. These Sixth Form chaps don't like being chipped, somehow!"

"Hallo, there's the darkey!" exclaimed Bolsover major.
"A short, thick-set, very active-looking man, as black as the ace of spades, or very nearly so, had appeared from the entrance to the dressing-rooms. There was a loud cheer from the crowded enclosure.

It was Diniwayo.
The black footballer grinned, showing a beautiful set of gleaming white teeth, and raised his cap, revealing a thickly-growing mass of woolly hair.

He was a good-looking fellow, in his own way, and looked remarkably fit, active, and alert.

"That's the darkey!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There's your old pal, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Call out to him, Bunter!" grinned Nugent. "You can't pass an old friend over without speaking to him, you know."

"I'm going round to speak to him after the match," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Diniwayo went into the dressing-room, and disappeared, and the crowd settled down to wait for the match.

Meanwhile, the enclosure was quite filled.

Six or seven thousand people were waiting to see the match, with eager impatience.

There was a cheer when the teams appeared on the field at last.

Among the local spectators Diniwayo, the black footballer, was evidently very popular. The black centre-forward was the finest player in the Crawley club, and he had been the means of placing Crawley in a very good position, so far, in the Cup competition. Not that Crawley United had much chance of getting into the final; but it was something for the club to be still in the running. The Crawley directors had done a good stroke of business in securing the footballer from South Africa.

Tottenham Hotspur won the toss, and chose a goal, and the blue-and-white of the 'Spurs lined up opposing the red shirts of the Crawleys.

Crawley kicked off, and the match began.

The Greyfriars juniors were all eyes now. Harry Wharton & Co. were keen footballers, and they knew that there was

much to be learnt by watching first-class players. And the game was exciting from the start.

The 'Spurs were soon attacking hotly, and the game was all in the home half at first, and there were loud cheers as the ball went in from the foot of Cantrell.

But from the restart the luck changed, and the 'Spurs' goal was besieged, and then the black footballer showed all his quality.

His pace was wonderful, and his passing a marvel; and, in spite of a dogged defence, the Crawleys brought the leather through, and Diniwayo sent it in.

"By Jove, that darkey's jolly good!" Harry Wharton exclaimed. "It's ripping!"

"I guess he goes like greased lightning," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "But I guess they wouldn't have a nigger in a football team in the States. No, sir; we bar niggers!"

"Rats!" said Wharton. "What's the matter with him?"

"Colour, I guess!"

"Bosh!"
Fisher T. Fish sniffed. He had all the prejudice of the average American upon that subject—a feeling that was incomprehensible to his English companions.

"I guess I don't half like sitting here and watching a nigger!" he growled.

"Clear off, then!" grunted Johnny Bull.

But Fisher T. Fish did not clear off. He sat frowning. He did not join in the cheering that greeted Diniwayo's splendid goal, but shrugged his narrow shoulders and grunted. Evidently he did not see anything to admire in whatsoever might be done by a coloured gentleman.

"I jolly well wish Crawley United would come over and play our first some day!" Bob Cherry remarked. "We wouldn't mind a darkey—what?"

"No fear!" said Wharton, laughing. "But there couldn't be a match—Crawley is a professional side."

"The darkey isn't a pro., though," Bulstrode remarked. "He's playing for the United as an amateur. He lives in Crawley—he's studying with an engineering firm there. That's why he's playing for the local team. The directors got him for nothing. He'd be worth his four quid a week as a pro., though, I should say."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, who was watching the performances of the black footballer with the keenest interest.

Fisher T. Fish snorted.
"Sort of fellow-feeling for him, Inky, I suppose?" he asked.

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh looked round at the Yankee junior.

"If the esteemed Fish knew anything about the honourable matter, he would knowfully be aware that a Hindu is not a nigger," he remarked mildly. "The esteemed Fish is an esteemed ass!"

"Not much difference in colour, I guess," snapped Fish. The Yankee schoolboy was irritated by the admiration the juniors showed for the negro, and he seemed determined to make himself disagreeable.

"The difference is terrific, my esteemed, idiotic Fish. My complexion is brownful, and the complexion of the esteemed Diniwayo is blackfully darker," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, still quite good-temperedly.

"Waal, I guess I don't believe in making a fuss about a nigger."

"Shut up!" said Bob Cherry.

"I guess—"

"Shut up!" repeated Bob.

"Look here, I reckon—"

"If you don't shut up," said Bob. "I'll dot you on the nose! Fed up! Don't you understand?"

Fisher T. Fish apparently did understand, for he snorted and shut up.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Goal!

GOAL to goal was the score in the first half of the match. The players trooped off for the interval.

The game had been hard and fast, and very exciting. Joyce, in the 'Spurs' goal, had been kept very busy, and several times he had barely saved shots from the black centre-forward.

The Crawley crowd were in high spirits, evidently anticipating a victory over the famous London team.

During the interval Bob Cherry found a little harmless and necessary recreation with his pea-shooter. His target was Campbell of the Sixth Form at Redclyffe, and his aim was good. Campbell, who was chatting with another Redclyffe senior, gave a sudden jump as a pellet stung him on

the ear. He clapped his hand to his ear, and looked round in surprise.

"What on earth was that?" the Greyfriars juniors heard him exclaim.

"What's the matter?" asked his companion.

"I—I think it was a wasp—no, it couldn't have been a wasp," said Campbell, in astonishment. "Something stung me on the ear, Lucas."

Lucas chuckled.

"There's a young imp down there with a pea-shooter," he said.

Campbell turned red with wrath.

"Stop that, you young ass!" he shouted, shaking his fist over the heads of the crowd at Bob Cherry.

Bob grinned, and took aim again.

But Harry Wharton dragged him back into his seat.

"Cheese it, you ass!" he said, laughing. "You'll be chucked out if you play tricks here. You can pea-shoot Campbell after the match."

"I'll see you kids when you get outside!" yelled Campbell.

"We'll wait for you!" yelled back Bob Cherry.

"Shut up! Here come the 'Spurs!"

The players streamed on to the field again and lined up for the second half. Immediately all attention was given to the game, and Greyfriars fellows and Redclyffians forgot each other's existence.

The second half began with a brilliant attack by the 'Spurs, and for twenty minutes or more the Crawleys had nothing to do but defend.

The attack ended with a goal from Middlemiss.

"Two for the 'Spurs!" said Frank Nugent. "Looks like a win for Hotspur!"

"Wait till the darkey gets a chance," said Wharton.

There was a snort from Fisher T. Fish.

"Bet you that darkey's done!" he said. "He's no good! I guess I'd lay you a dollar against a red cent."

"You'd lose!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Look there!"

The Crawley forwards were going again in splendid style.

Diniwayo was the life of the front line. Never had he appeared in better form. The attack was hot and irresistible. The defence seemed nowhere against it, and the black centre-forward sent the leather in within three minutes of the kick-off.

There was a roar of cheering as the "pill" found the net.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Bravo, darkey!"

"Hurrah!"

Bob Cherry clapped his hands with reports like pistol-shots, and yelled gleefully.

"Two all!" said Johnny Bull. "It will be a close finish!"

The game went on as keenly as ever, but without a score, the defence being equally sound on both sides.

The minutes ticked away, and the spectators began to look at their watches.

"Five minutes to time!" Harry Wharton announced at last.

"Looks like a draw."

"Buck up, Crawley!"

"Go it, 'Spurs!"

"On the ball!"

The leather was in midfield. It went into touch, and was thrown in. The minutes were ticking off, and still the struggle was doubtful. Close on time now. The excitement in the crowd was almost breathless.

There was a sudden shout as the Crawley forwards broke away, Diniwayo going down the field like lightning with the ball at his feet.

Lightfoot and Weir closed on him, but he eluded them as if by a miracle, and, leaving his own line too far behind to take a pass, he dashed on. Brittan charged, but the black footballer eluded him by another miracle, rushed on, and shot for goal. The referee was raising his whistle.

Harry Wharton & Co. were on their feet now, their faces ablaze with excitement.

It was a gallant attempt to save the match on the very stroke of time, and all depended upon that lightning shot. Would it materialise?

Joyce was looking out, but the leather passed him—his finger-tips barely touched it—and it found a resting-place in the net. It was a shot that no goalie could have saved.

There was a thunderous roar:

"Goal!"

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

Pheep! went the whistle.

The match was ended.

Crawley United had won by three goals to two, and all three goals had been kicked by the black centre-forward.

No wonder the Crawley crowd cheered him almost deliciously!

They cheered and roared and yelled, and rattles and tin

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trumpets joined in to swell the din. Hats and caps were waved frantically.

The Greyfriars juniors were clapping and cheering as loudly as anybody, with the single exception of Fisher T. Fish. That free American citizen wasn't going to cheer a nigger. But nobody noticed or cared for Fisher T. Fish just then.

"Well, that was ripping!" said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath, when the players had gone off the field and the spectators were beginning to disperse. "Simply ripping! Jolly glad we came!"

"What-ho!"

"Time for you to go and see your pal, if you're going to see him, Bunter!" grinned Bob Cherry, giving Billy Bunter a playful dig in the ribs.

Bunter blinked at him. He had been thinking deeply. He was determined that the Greyfriars juniors should believe his statement, and he had been forming a scheme for that purpose. He nodded.

"Yes, I'd better go and have a word with him," he remarked.

"Ananias!"

"What's the good of keeping that up, you awful fibber?" said Johnny Bull impatiently. "You know we don't believe a word of it."

"You'll see. I suppose the 'bus will wait a bit while I go and see my old pal?"

"Oh, we'll wait!" grinned Bob. "But——"

"Then I'll go."

The juniors looked at him in surprise. Billy Bunter had a way of keeping up a "whopper" till the very last moment, but it really began to look as if he had been telling the truth this time. Of course, it would not have been a specially remarkable thing if he had had a personal acquaintance with the black footballer. The juniors had disbelieved him simply because he was Bunter.

"You don't really mean to say that you know the chap?" said Wharton.

"Just wait and see," said Bunter loftily.

"Of course, it isn't impossible," said Bob Cherry. "Anybody might know him, I suppose. Only Bunter pretends to know everybody that's talked about."

"He's quite an old pal," said Bunter. "I suppose I'd better go round to the players' entrance?"

"You can get to the dressing-rooms this way," said Johnny Bull; "and we'll watch you go in."

Bunter hesitated a moment.

"All right," he said.

And he made his way towards the exit by which the players had gone.

Wharton & Co. watched him. They were very interested. It would be a great occasion, as Bob Cherry remarked, upon which Bunter was discovered to have been telling the truth.

An attendant stopped Bunter at the exit, and the juniors watched him exchange a few words with the man, who then allowed him to pass.

"By Jove," said Wharton, "he's gone in!"

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes.

"I suppose I'm not dreaming?" he remarked. "He must have been telling the truth for once. Well, wonders will never cease!"

Johnny Bull grunted sceptically.

"He could make some excuse for going in," he said.

"He might pretend that he had a message for somebody."

"Why, so he could!" said Bob. "I never thought of that."

"Let's get back to the 'bus!" said Wharton.

And the Greyfriars party trooped out, and returned to the waiting motor-bus. The Redclyffe fellows were crowding out to their brake. The driver was putting the horses to. Campbell, the Redclyffe captain, looked round at the Greyfriars crowd, and frowned. He had intended to administer a severe lesson to the Greyfriars fellows; but he reflected that it was not very easy to administer instruction to a crowd of sixty-five fellows, when he had only half that number of Redclyffians with him. Bob Cherry gave him an amiable grin.

"Did you catch that wasp, Campbell?" he asked.

"Going to race us home?" asked Nugent pleasantly.

Campbell frowned darkly.

"Clear off, you cheeky youngsters," he said; "unless you're looking for a licking!"

"We are!" grinned Bob. "Where's the licking?"

"Come on!" chuckled Coker of the Fifth. "We'll wipe up the ground with you, with pleasure, my boy."

"Let's wipe up the ground with 'em, anyway!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Good egg!"

"Come on! Hurrah!"

And the Greyfriars fellows crowded forward. Campbell



With a sudden rush, the man who had come to Greyfriars as Dinjwayo the famous footballer, broke through the ranks of the juniors, and fled. "Oh, that villain Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "He's spoofered us again!" (See Chapter 15.)

made a grab at Bob Cherry, and in a moment three or four juniors were clutching at the big Sixth-Former. A minute more, and there was a general scrimmage.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. The Return!

"SOCK it to 'em!" bawled Bob Cherry

"Hurray!"

"Back up, Redclyffe!" roared Campbell.

The road outside the gates of the football enclosure swarmed with excited schoolboys, and the din was terrific. The odds were on the side of Greyfriars, but there were a good many seniors among the Redclyffians, which made matters more equal. In a struggling mass the crowd of excited fellows surged across the road. Inoffensive pedestrians were hustled out of the way, or scurried off in alarm.

Numbers told. The Redclyffians were driven back, and Campbell, struggling in the midst of a swarm of fags, was made a prisoner.

"Collar their blessed brake!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

And the Greyfriars juniors swarmed over the brake.

The motor-bus was snorting now, ready to start.

Campbell, struggling vainly, was jerked into the motor-bus, and half a dozen juniors sat on him to keep him there.

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Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull shifted the driver of the brake from his seat, and Bob Cherry took the reins.

"All aboard!" he sang out.

With a dozen Greyfriars fellows in it, laughing and cheering, the brake rattled away down the road.

The Redclyffians were rallying to return to the attack, and they gave a yell of wrath as they saw their brake dash away down the road.

"They've taken the brake!" shouted Lucas. "Come on and collar their 'bus!"

And the Redclyffians rushed at the motor-bus.

"Start!" yelled Lord Mauleverer. "Start, begad!"

The chauffeur started.

All the Greyfriars fellows who were not in the brake, had boarded the motor-bus, and they yelled defiance at the Redclyffians as they swept away.

There was a howl from a fat junior, who came bolting out of the football ground a little too late.

"I say, you fellows, stop for me!"

It was Billy Bunter. His visit to the black footballer, real or pretended, had kept him a little too long. He dashed desperately after the motor-bus.

"Stop!" he yelled.

"Can't be did!" shouted back Nugent. "Run for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE FACTORY REBELS!"

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.

The road was pretty well crowded with people leaving the enclosure, and it was impossible for the 'bus to put on speed. The Redclyffians ran their hardest in pursuit, and soon overtook the lumbering vehicle. They also overtook Billy Bunter, and the fat junior disappeared among them. His voice was heard, however, roaring:

"Ow! Ow! Help! Rescue! Yaroooh!"

"Bump him!" roared Lucas. "Bump him till they stop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Rescue! Yah, you funks, come back and help me! Oo, ow, ow!"

Bump!

"My hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "We can't leave him in their hands. Stop the 'bus! Call out to the chauffeur, Mauly!"

"Yaas."

They were a quarter of a mile from the football ground, and well out of the town. Bunter, in the hands of the pursuers, was a dozen yards behind the 'bus. The motor-'bus came to a halt, and Harry Wharton & Co. swarmed down into the road to the rescue of Bunter. The Redclyffians were bumping him, with great energy, in sight of his comrades, to induce them to stop—and they had succeeded. The Greyfriars fellows rushed to the rescue, and there was a terrific scrimmage over Bunter.

Johnny Bull caught hold of the fat junior, as the Redclyffians were driven back by the rush, and dragged him away. He heaved the Owl of the Remove by main force into the motor-'bus.

"Retreat!" shouted Wharton.

The Greyfriars party fell back towards the 'bus; but the Redclyffians were mingled with them now, and they pressed on to the attack. Campbell was still held a prisoner inside the 'bus, and they meant to rescue him, if not, to obtain possession of the 'bus.

They scrambled on the step behind, on the ladder, and up the sides. The attack was determined and desperate; but it was repelled with equal determination.

Again the Redclyffians were driven back, and Lord Mauleverer called to the chauffeur to drive on, and the 'bus started.

There was a running fight for some distance, but the attack was beaten off; the last of the Greyfriars juniors clambered into the moving 'bus, and then speed was put on.

The Redclyffians still pursued, but they were left hopelessly behind.

The Greyfriars fellows yelled back at them till they were out of hearing.

"Dished and done!" chuckled Tom Brown breathlessly.

"This is where we score!"

"Beaten to the wide," chortled Coker; "and we've got a giddy prisoner."

"And we've captured the brake!"

"Hurray!"

The motor-'bus overtook the brake a mile out of Crawley. Bob Cherry was going strong. He looked round and cracked his whip in salute.

"Let me gerrup, you young beasts!" came Campbell's suffocated voice from under a heap of juniors.

"What are you going to do with him?" grinned Nugent.

"If we had any tar and feathers——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerroff my chest! Ow!"

The red and furious face of the Redclyffe captain was all that could be seen of him. He was lying on his back on the floor of the 'bus, panting, with six or seven juniors pinning him down. Wharton wagged a forefinger at him.

"You're a prisoner of war!" he said. "But we're going to be good to you. Say you're sorry for being a naughty boy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And promise to be a good boy in the future, and we'll let you off, and send you back in your brake to pick up those benighted bounders."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I won't!" roared Campbell, writhing furiously. "I'll lick you all! I'll come over to Greyfriars and lick you! I'll——"

"Bunter, sit on his head!"

"Keep him off!" roared Campbell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you don't admit you're a naughty boy, we'll sit Bunter on your head," said Wharton. "You Sixth-Form chaps want teaching a lesson, you know. Now, say after me: 'I'm sorry I've been a naughty boy——'"

Campbell was almost suffocating with rage. For him—a Sixth-Former, a prefect, and captain of his school—to admit that he was a naughty boy, was a little too humiliating.

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But he looked apprehensively at the ample proportions of Billy Bunter.

"I—I——" he stammered.

"Very well, sit on him Bunter!"

The fat junior came forward grinning. He had been roughly handled by the Redclyffians, and he was quite willing to "take it out" of Campbell in return.

"Keep him off!" yelled Campbell. "I—I'll say anything! Only, keep that fat beast off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go ahead, then. Now——"

"I—I've been a naughty boy!" mumbled Campbell, choking with rage.

"Louder!"

"I've been a naughty boy!" shrieked Campbell, amid yells of laughter from the Greyfriars juniors.

"And I promise to be a good boy in future!" directed Wharton.

"And I—I—p-p-promise to be a good boy in future!" stammered the captain of Redclyffe.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Wharton. "Now you can go!"

And Campbell was bundled out of the motor-'bus, halted for the purpose. Bob Cherry had brought the brake to a halt. Bob and his companions clambered into the motor-'bus, and Campbell got into the brake. The motor-'bus started again, and the Greyfriars fellows shouted and waved their hands to the Redclyffe captain as he drove away to pick up the crowd of Redclyffians, a mile back on the road.

"Well, I think we've beaten Redclyffe this time!" Bob Cherry chuckled.

"The beatenfulness is terrific."

"Hurray for Greyfriars!"

"Hip-pip-hurray!"

"Put on the speed, Mauly!"

"Yaas, begad!"

Lord Mauleverer had taken the driver's seat now, and the motor-'bus swooped along the road at a spanking rate. The Greyfriars crowd burst into song, and their voices rang far on either side of the road as the motor-'bus rushed on, with gleaming lights through the gathering dusk.

Greyfriars was reached all too soon. And the juniors, as they swarmed in, agreed unanimously that the afternoon's excursion had been a tremendous success, and the best thing of the term, and there were cheers in the dusky Close for Lord Mauleverer.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Wingate's Bad Luck!

"I SAY, you fellows, is there a letter for me?"

Billy Bunter blinked up at the letter-rack after lessons on the following day, as he asked the question.

There was a letter for Bunter, and it was in full view, even of the short-sighted Owl of the Remove. Bunter evidently wanted to draw attention to that letter.

"Here's one!" said Bob Cherry. "What is it—your postal-order at last?"

"I'm expecting a letter from my pal Diniwayo," said Bunter.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Still keeping up that rot?" he said. "Why don't you start a fresh whopper, if you must tell whoppers?"

"Yes; that one's stale," said Nugent.

"Oh, really, you fellows! You know I went in to see Diniwayo after the match with the Spurs yesterday."

"We know you went in, but I expect you told some whopper to get admitted," said Bob.

Bunter coloured a little.

"Well, that letter's from Diniwayo, anyway," he said.

"Rats!"

"I'll let you see it if you like," said Bunter.

"Seeing is believing," assented Bob.

Bunter held up the letter.

"Look at the postmark!"

"Crawley!" Bob read out.

"Yes; it's from Diniwayo, you know. He lives in Crawley. He's studying in an engineering works there," said Bunter.

"A good many people live in Crawley," said Bob Cherry.

"In fact, I think I remember hearing that you've got a relation there—a chap in a solicitor's office, I think. I've heard you say so. A chap who goes in for amateur theatricals."

"You can see the letter if you like," said Bunter, with an air of offended dignity.

He slit open the envelope and took the letter out. Several fellows gathered round curiously. It was not, of course, a matter of the slightest importance whether Billy Bunter

knew Diniwayo or not. But it would be interesting to note whether, for once, the fat junior's "gas" was founded upon fact.

Half a dozen fellows read the letter together as Bunter held it up. It ran:

"Dear Bunter,—I will meet you in Friardale with pleasure on Friday afternoon. Come to the bun-shop, and we'll have tea and a chat. Your old pal,
DINIWAYO."

Bunter blinked at the juniors in triumph.

"What do you think of that?" he demanded.

"By George," said Bob Cherry, "it almost begins to look as if you'd been telling the truth. Are you ill?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to meet Diniwayo to-morrow," said Bunter.

"If my postal-order comes in time—I shall stand him a feed at the bunshop. If it's late, perhaps one of you fellows will lend me ten bob—"

"Perhaps," grinned Bob. "It's a rather big perhaps, though."

"I'd stand ten bob, begad, if it were true," said Lord Mauleverer. "But you are such a giddy fabricator, Bunter, dear boy."

"Can't you read?" said Bunter.

"Yaas; but anybody might have written that," said his lordship sagely. "We don't know Diniwayo's handwriting."

"If you doubt my word, Mauly—"

"Well, I do, as a matter of fact."

"Bet you!" said Bunter. "Look here! You say I'm not going to meet Diniwayo. I say I am. If I meet him will you stand a couple of quid—you've got plenty of dibs—for a really good feed?"

"Well, of all the cheek—!" said Wharton.

"Rot!" said Bunter. "Mauly doesn't stand to lose anything—if he's right. And he says I'm not going to meet Diniwayo."

"Begad!" said his lordship. "But, excuse me, how shall we know that you've met him? Chap can't take the word of Ananias."

"You can come with me."

The juniors stared.

This looked like real business, and they had to admit it. Lord Mauleverer gazed at the Owl of the Remove in astonishment.

"You mean that?" he asked.

"Honest Injun!"

"We'll all come," said Bulstrode.

"No, you won't," said Bunter promptly. "I'm not going to have a crowd staring at my old pal. He won't mind one chap coming with me, especially as Mauly's a lord. Mauly can come, and he can see whether Diniwayo meets me in the bunshop or not. If he doesn't I—I'll hand over my next postal-order to Mauly. If he does, Mauly stands a couple of quid for a feed."

"Done!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Right-ho! Then we start after lessons to-morrow," said Bunter.

"But you don't get the quids till I have seen the darkey," said Lord Mauleverer cautiously.

"That's understood."

And Bunter rolled away, leaving the juniors in a buzz.

"It must be true!" said Bob Cherry, in bewilderment.

"Bunter's telling the truth! What ass was it said the age of miracles was past?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The astonishment of the Removites was great. They felt that even Bunter wouldn't have the nerve to make that arrangement unless Diniwayo was really coming to Friardale. He stood to gain nothing but ridicule unless the black footballer turned up. If Diniwayo did not appear Bunter would have the walk to Friardale for his pains, and nothing more. It must be true!

"Blessed if I see how he came to know the chap," said Wharton. "Might have met him in Crawley when he's been over to see his cousin, perhaps. But—"

"The fat bounder always pretends he knows people who are talked about," said Bob. "Of course, he's nearly always lying."

"Looks like the truth this time."

"By Jove, it does!"

"I shall see to-morrow, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"I'd like to have a talk with Diniwayo; and it will be worth two quid to find that Bunter isn't constitutionally incapable of telling the truth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites looked forward with great interest to the result of that visit to Friardale on the morrow. Meanwhile, there was another matter which was of great interest to the Remove and Greyfriars generally. On the following Wednesday Redclyffe First Eleven were coming over to play Greyfriars, and Wingate's team had been hard at practice for a long time in anticipation of that match. Campbell and his men were a very tough team, and the Redclyffe match was always a tussle for the Greyfriars First, strong as they were.

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—**"THE FACTORY REBELS!"**

EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

And Wingate, the Greyfriars captain, had been unlucky lately with his team.

There had been a skating accident a few days before, and five members of the team had been in the water, and they had developed severe colds on the following day. Five of the best players in the eleven were now in the school sanatorium, and Wingate had five places to fill. There was no chance of any of them being recovered sufficiently to be in form for the match on Wednesday, and, as sorrows never come in single spies, but in battalions, two more of the First Eleven had been crooked in practice.

On Friday Wingate was the most worried fellow in Greyfriars School.

There were plenty of eager aspirants to fill the vacant places in the First Eleven; indeed, there was hardly a fellow at Greyfriars who wouldn't have given his little finger to get his cap for the First Eleven.

The trouble was not to get recruits, but to get recruits that were good enough to stand up to the mighty men from Redclyffe.

Campbell & Co. were known to be in splendid form, and the prospect was that Greyfriars First would be soundly drubbed. Indeed, it looked like being the simplest of walk-overs for Redclyffe.

Coker of the Fifth knew a way out of the difficulty. He suggested it to Wingate. Coker's idea was that the gaps could be filled quite adequately by the simple process of playing Horace Coker. Coker's presence, as he explained to the football captain, would make up for any deficiencies of the other players. Wingate's reply was brief and expressive, and Coker retired from his study with a frowning brow, and without having had his name added to the list of the First Eleven.

Wingate selected members of the Sixth and Fifth to fill the vacancies in his team, and kept the reorganised eleven assiduously at practice; but his hopes were not high.

Greyfriars at its best was not more than a match for Redclyffe, and with such a scratch team as that now at his command, Wingate felt that they would not have much of a look-in.

All Greyfriars took the matter very much to heart.

From the Sixth to the First Form all the fellows were keenly interested in the record of the First Eleven. They rejoiced over a victory, and sorrowed over a defeat, and they shared Wingate's worry when the team went to pieces.

With no fewer than seven new players in the eleven, the Greyfriars fellows admitted sorrowfully that it was going to be a walk-over, in all human probability.

"Of course, Wingate could play some of us!" Bob Cherry remarked; "but he's not likely to think of doing that."

"Better suggest it to him," grinned Vernon-Smith.

But that Bob declined to do. Wingate was not likely to receive amiably a suggestion that he should play Lower Fourth fellows in the First Eleven.

In his extremity the captain had looked outside Greyfriars for recruits, and he had secured a member of Courtfield Ramblers for the team; but the other ten men were all Greyfriars seniors. To add to his discomfort, he learned that Redclyffe would be playing a Friardale fellow who had played as an amateur for a County League team. The Friardale chap was twenty years old, and was said to be a wonderful winger. Some of the Greyfriars fellows grumbled at the idea of Campbell playing him in a school match; but there was no law against it, as Wingate remarked, and he himself had asked a Courtfield Rambler to play for Greyfriars on the great occasion.

Crowds of Greyfriars fellows gathered on Big Side whenever the First Eleven were at practice, watching them with keen anxiety, and noting their form.

But the wisecracks shook their heads over their prospects.

"Greyfriars will be licked this time!" Bob Cherry said sorrowfully, "and not only licked, but it will be a walk-over for Redclyffe. We beat Redclyffe at Crawley, but they're going to beat our First Eleven, and we shall be no more than square."

And the Co. dolefully agreed that Bob Cherry was right.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Black Friend!

BILLY BUNTER had an air of unusual importance when he came out of the Remove Form-room on Friday afternoon.

All the Remove fellows knew that he was going to meet the black footballer in Friardale that afternoon, according to his own account. And they wondered whether he would go, or whether he would find some excuse for crying off at the last moment. Billy Bunter showed no sign of

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.

crying up. He put on a clean collar, and brushed his silk hat, and came down inquiring for Lord Mauleverer.

Lord Mauleverer was in his study, and Bunter found him there, reclining on the sofa. His lordship had forgotten all about the appointment for the afternoon.

"Ready, Mauly?" asked Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Time to start for Friardale? You haven't forgotten, I suppose?" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Yaas, begad!"

"Well, buck up, or we shall be late."

"Yaas!"

Lord Mauleverer reluctantly detached himself from the sofa, and allowed Bunter to help him on with his coat. The slim, elegant schoolboy earl came down with the Owl of the Remove, and all eyes were upon them at once.

"You're really going?" asked Bob Cherry, still a little doubtful.

"Of course we are," said Bunter. "Diniwayo will be waiting for us at the bun-shop if we don't buck up. Come on, Mauly."

"Yaas."

And the two juniors walked out of gates together.

"I'm jolly well going after them," said Skinner. "Mauly

is an ass. I'm going to see with my own eyes! Come on, Snoopey."

"What ho!" said Snoop.

And Skinner and Snoop walked out after Bunter and Lord Mauleverer.

The other fellows went down to footer practice, but they did not forget Bunter, and they were very keen to hear Mauleverer's report. Skinner and Snoop, both being something like adepts themselves in the Ananias line, did not believe Bunter in the least; but seeing was believing, as Bob Cherry had said, and they were prepared to believe Bunter if they saw Diniwayo.

They kept Bunter and Mauleverer in sight to the village, and followed them to the bunshop in the old High Street.

Billy Bunter and his noble companion entered the bunshop, and disappeared from sight. Skinner and Snoop halted outside.

"My hat! It begins to look genuine!" Snoop remarked.

Skinner shook his head.

"Bunter's got Mauly here, and he's going to try to squeeze a feed out of him," he said. "That's all. Bet you the darkey isn't there."

"We'll jolly soon see," said Snoop. "We can go in and have some lemonade."

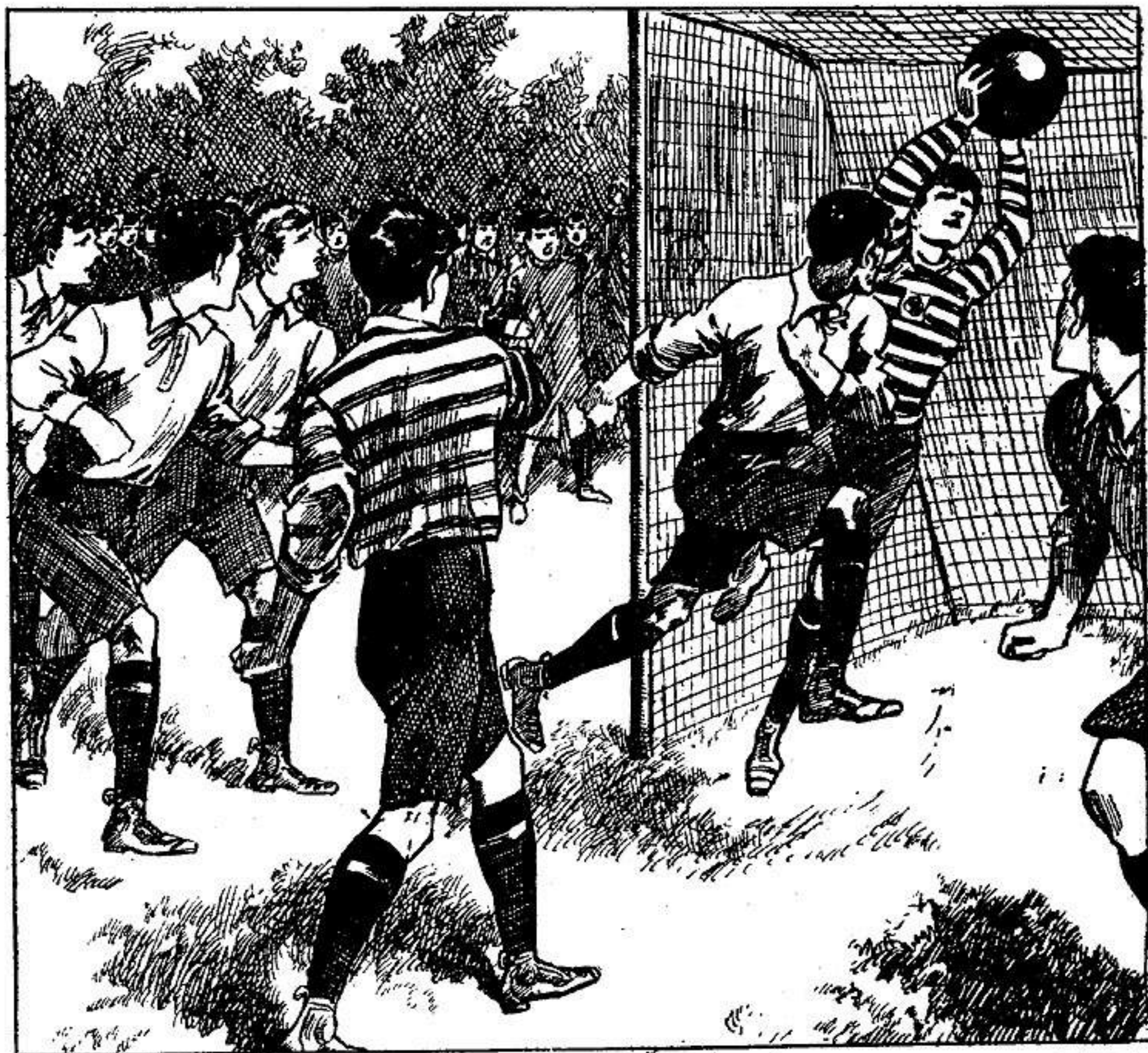
"Come on!" said Skinner.



GOOD TURNS.

No. 29.

A sturdy Magnetite gives a friendly tow to a tired girl cyclist who is struggling home against a storm of wind and rain—a good turn that is gratefully appreciated.



On the very stroke of time, Diniwayo charged the Redclyffe goalkeeper into the net with the ball in his hands. "Six goals to two!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Greyfriars wins! Hurrah! (See Chapter 16.)

They entered the bun-shop. They sat down at a table near the door, and then looked over the shop in search of Bunter. Skinner uttered a startled exclamation.

"My hat! There he is!"

"Great Scott!" murmured Snoop.

In the further corner of the bun-shop, round a little table, three persons were seated. They were Bunter, Lord Mauleverer, and a third person whose complexion bore a strong resemblance to that of the ace of spades.

"The nigger!" muttered Snoop.

"The giddy nigger!"

Skinner and Snoop felt their doubts vanish. True they were not very well acquainted with the features of the black footballer, having seen him only once, and that at a certain distance amidst the excitement of the football match with the Spurs. But the black face was enough. Even Skinner did not think of suspecting Bunter of having "dug up" some other black fellow to play the part of Diniwayo. "Niggers" were not at all common in that quiet part of the country; indeed, with the exception of an occasional black sailorman landing at the fishing village of Pegg, they were never seen there at all. If Bunter had thought of finding some negro to pass himself off as Diniwayo, he would certainly have set himself a very difficult task.

The two juniors could hear the voice of the black man as he talked in the corner.

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"You have seen dat match den?" he was saying to Lord Mauleverer.

"Yaas, begad," said his lordship, "and I thought you made a splendid show, my dear fellow. It was you beat the Spurs."

"No, dat is too much to say—dey were all good."

Skinner and Snoop waited for no more. They were anxious to get back to Greyfriars with the news. But as they rose from their table, two seniors of Greyfriars came in. They were Wingate and Courtney of the Sixth.

Wingate glanced at the juniors, and nodded.

"I say, Wingate!" exclaimed Skinner, in a voice full of excitement. "What do you think? Look over there!"

Wingate glanced towards the table in the corner.

"See that nigger?"

"Yes," said Wingate. "Don't call him a nigger. He might hear you, and he would be offended."

"It's the Crawley centre-forward," said Skinner.

"By Jove, is it?" said Wingate, glancing into the corner with renewed interest. "Yes, he's about the size of Diniwayo. Does Bunter know him?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Skinner. "We never believed a word of it; but here they are hobnobbing together."

"He's a splendid player," said Wingate.

And he turned back to the lemonade he had ordered, not wishing to offend the black man by staring at him.

Skinner and Snoop hurried out of the shop. Courtney and Wingate had finished their lemonade, when Lord Mauleverer caught sight of them.

"Begad, there's old Wingate," said the schoolboy earl. "He'd like to speak to Mr. Diniwayo. Call him over and introduce him, Bunter."

Bunter hesitated.

"Yes, I dink I have seen him at de match," said the black man. "Is dat a friend of yours, Billy?"

"Captain of our school," said Bunter, with a very dubious look at his black friend. "Would—would you care to speak to him?"

"Why not, den?"

"Oh, all right."

Bunter rolled over to the two seniors.

"Like to speak to my pal, Diniwayo, Wingate?" he asked. "You remember him—centre-forward of the Crawley team?"

"Certainly," said Wingate. "We don't want to bother him, but I'd like to be introduced."

"Come on, then," said Bunter importantly.

Wingate and Courtney followed Bunter to the table in the corner.

The black young man rose to his feet.

Bunter performed the introductions with great empressment, and Wingate and Courtney shook hands with the young man from Crawley.

"Jolly glad to meet you, Mr. Diniwayo!" said Wingate heartily. "We watched you the other day, in your match with the Spurs, you know. It was splendid."

"Simply ripping!" said Courtney.

The Crawley centre-forward shook his head deprecatingly. "I dank you, gentlemen," he said. "But de whole team is good; dey gave me good chances."

"And you made the most of them, by Jove!" said Wingate.

The two seniors remained chatting for some minutes with the Crawley man, and then took their leave. Wingate looked a little puzzled as they walked out of the bun-shop.

"He doesn't seem just like he looked the other day," he remarked. "His features are quite European, when you see him close; but in his footer things I thought he looked a pure negro. Of course, I didn't see him close, but I certainly thought his lips were thicker. He's a fine player, anyway. I wish we had him in our team next Wednesday."

Courtney chuckled at the idea.

"My hat! It would be a surprise-packet for the Red-clyffe chaps," he remarked.

"If I knew him well I'd jolly well ask him," said Wingate. "The United are not playing on Wednesday, you know, and he'll be free. But, of course, I couldn't ask him as it is. My hat! What wouldn't I give to have him in our team on Wednesday! It would rather go one better than Campbell's League man, don't you think?"

"Yes, rather!" said Courtney regretfully.

In the bunshop, the three fellows at the corner table were enjoying quite an expensive spread. Lord Mauleverer had handed the two sovereigns over to Bunter the moment he had been introduced to the black gentleman. Bunter was doing the honours, and he was doing them in great style. The black young man ordered cigars and wine, somewhat to the astonishment of Lord Mauleverer.

"Does your trainer let you take that stuff?" he could not forbear asking.

The Crawley man laughed.

"While the cat's away the mice will play," he remarked. "The Crawley trainer can't see me here, you know. I'll have another cigar, Billy. Dat one was good. Gib me anoder Corona."

And the black gentleman lighted a third cigar, for which Bunter had the pleasure of paying a third sum of two shillings. And when it was time to go, the black gentleman put a couple of those expensive cigars in his pocket, a proceeding that was watched by Billy Bunter with a far from happy expression. He had hoped to have something left out of the two sovereigns, but at the rate at which his coloured friend proceeded there did not seem likely to remain much margin.

The trio left the bunshop together.

"So long, Mauly!" said Bunter. "I'm going a little way with Diniwayo."

"Good-bye, then!" said Lord Mauleverer, shaking hands with the Crawley man. "Jolly glad to have met you! Hope you'll come and see us at Greyfriars some time!"

"I will do dat with pleasure."

And they parted.

Billy Bunter blinked curiously at his coloured friend when they were out of sight of Lord Mauleverer. The coloured gentleman burst into a laugh.

"What a lark!" he said, with no trace of broken English in his voice now.

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"Ripping!" said Bunter. "It was jolly good of you!"

"Not a bit of it! It was a lark!" said the cheerful coloured gentleman. "I'll come over to Greyfriars in the same style if you like."

Bunter shook his head.

"Too risky!" he said. "Besides, this is enough. It's all right now."

"Ha, ha, ha! Quite so! But, shall I give you a word of advice?"

Bunter grunted.

"Don't tell such whoppers any more. You mayn't get out of the next so easily," grinned the coloured gentleman.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Billy Bunter's fat face was expressive of great satisfaction as he toddled home to Greyfriars. His veracity had been vindicated—by what means Billy Bunter knew best.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bob's Idea!

LORD MAULEVERER found himself surrounded by curious questioners as soon as he returned to Greyfriars.

Skinner and Snoop had told what they had seen, but the Remove fellows wanted to hear Lord Mauleverer's confirmation of it.

"Did you meet Diniwayo?" Bulstrode demanded, the moment his lordship came in.

"Yaas."

"The real genuine nigger?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yaas."

"My hat! That settles it! Where's Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Went away with Diniwayo."

"Then you had to hand out the two quid?" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Yaas."

"Well, Bunter's done us this time!" said Tom Brown. "But who on earth would have fancied that he was beginning to tell the truth in his old age?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Didn't I tell you?" said Skinner. "Besides, Wingate and Courtney saw him."

"Yaas; and Bunter introduced them," said Lord Mauleverer. "The darkey seems a very decent chap. Speaks very good English, only a bit of a darkey accent."

"Darkey accent?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"Yaas. 'D' for 'th,' you know."

"I've read somewhere that he's been through a college," said the Bounder. "I suppose it was really Diniwayo you saw?"

"Yaas, I suppose so," laughed Lord Mauleverer. "I rather like him. Wingate seemed to like him, too. Very civil sort of a chap."

And Lord Mauleverer yawned and went away to rest after his exertions. Billy Bunter came in a little later, and there was a grin upon his face, and his manner was unusually important. There was a certain amount of distinction in knowing so celebrated a footballer as Diniwayo, especially as he was a sort of prince in his own country. And Billy Bunter had proved his acquaintance with him to the satisfaction of everybody, and he had convinced all the doubting Thomases in the Remove that he had been telling the truth about Diniwayo, and for once had not been swanking.

"Well, you fellows, what do you say now?" he demanded, as he came into the common-room.

"I say that wonders will never cease!" said Bob Cherry.

"You ought to see a doctor. How did you come to—"

"To know Diniwayo?"

"No. To tell the truth?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! All you fellows know what a truthful chap I am. I hope you won't doubt my word in the future," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Not till the next time," said Johnny Bull. "I can't quite understand it now; but I suppose it is the truth for once. I don't know how you did it, and I don't quite see how you came to know Diniwayo so jolly well, either."

"Might ask the chap over here one half-holiday," said Bob Cherry. "We'd show him round, and stand him tea in the study, you know, and make much of him, and get him to give us a show on the footer ground."

"Good idea!" said Wharton. "Could you ask him, Billy?"

Billy Bunter purred with pleasure. It was a new experience to him to find himself a person treated with respect and consideration by his Form-fellows. He liked to be regarded as a fellow with influence, a fellow who knew well-known people, and so forth, and just now he had his desire

granted to the full. The celebrity of the black footballer shed a sort of reflected lustre upon Bunter.

"Oh, I could ask him," he said. "But the United are playing every Saturday afternoon, you know, and Diniwayo never misses a match."

"But they don't play every Wednesday," said Vernon-Smith. "They're not playing next Wednesday, for instance."

"I—I think they are," said Bunter.

"They're not," said the Bouncer coolly. "I've been through their list of fixtures. They play Sheffield Wednesday in a Cup-tie next week, but they have no match for Wednesday."

"Well, they'll be at practice," said Bunter.

"Why don't you want to ask him here?" demanded the Bouncer bluntly and suspiciously.

"Oh, I might ask him. I don't know that he could come, that's all. First-class footballers haven't time to go round visiting schoolboys as a rule," said Bunter. "It would be a big honour for us if he came here."

There was a snort from Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess that's rot! And I guess I shall get out if you ask a blessed nigger here!"

"You can get out, then!" growled Johnny Bull. "Diniwayo's little finger is worth ten times as much as your whole blessed carcase!"

"I guess it's rotten, a nigger asked here!" said Fish indignantly. "Look here! If the black bouncer comes here, I'll tell him what I think of him."

"That settles it," said Bunter. "I sha'n't ask him here to be insulted by Fish."

"If Fishy said half a word to him, we'd smash Fishy into little pieces!" said Johnny Bull. "If the chap comes over, we'll kick Fishy out before he comes."

"I guess——"

"I'm not going to risk it," said Bunter loftily. "I'm sorry! I'd like to ask him here, but, under the circumstances, I refuse."

And Bunter rolled away, to end the discussion.

Fisher T. Fish was the recipient, upon the spot, of a variety of remarks from the Removites, more energetic than polite. And as the remarks left the Yankee schoolboy unruffled, Bolsover major suggested bumping him—a suggestion that was immediately acted upon, with hearty unanimity, and Fish was very dishevelled when he escaped from the hands of the Removites.

Harry Wharton & Co. would have been very glad to receive a visit from the celebrated black footballer, and Bunter was spoken to on the subject several times again that day and the next; but the fat junior was adamant.

He wouldn't risk his coloured friend being insulted by Fisher T. Fish—or, so he declared—and that settled it.

Bunter was even impervious to an offer which might have been expected to bring him round at once. Peter Todd suggested standing a big feed if the black footballer came, and letting Bunter have the arrangement of it, and the Owl of the Remove was expected to jump at the chance. But he didn't. For some reason, best known to himself, the fat junior didn't intend to have his coloured friend at Greyfriars.

Peter Todd, who shared Bunter's study, hammered at him on the subject; but Bunter was obstinate.

"I'm blessed if I quite understand you, Bunter," Peter Todd said darkly. "I suppose you haven't been spoofing us, have you?"

"Oh, really, Todd——"

"It was really Diniwayo you met the other day?"

"You can ask Wingate, if you like," said Bunter, with dignity. "I introduced Wingate and Courtney to him."

"I suppose that settles it," said Peter, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. But he still regarded the Owl of the Remove very doubtfully. He was puzzled.

On Saturday afternoon, the first eleven played a practice match with a scratch team of seniors. All Greyfriars gathered on the ground to watch the game, and to note what form the first team showed.

Harry Wharton & Co. shook their heads solemnly over it.

"Good enough, under the circumstances," said Nugent; "but hardly good enough for Redclyffe. The Redclyffe First will walk over them next Wednesday!"

"The walkfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a doleful shake of the head.

"Redclyffe are stronger than usual," Harry Wharton remarked. "They've got Standish, that County League man, and he will make rings round the First!"

"It's a bit thick, Redclyffe playing that chap!" said Bob Cherry. "He's twenty years old, if he's a day!"

"Well, Wingate's playing a fellow from the Courtfield Ramblers' Club!"

"By Jove!" said Bob. "If—if—if——"

"If what?"

"If Wingate could get the darkey——"

"Diniwayo?"

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EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"Yes. Look here," exclaimed Bob, "why shouldn't he?"

"Diniwayo! By Jove!" said Wharton.

"He's Bunter's friend—that seems to be proved now—and the United are not playing a match on Wednesday. It would be as good practice for Diniwayo as he will get on the Crawley ground, if you come to that. Why shouldn't he come over here and play for the First?"

"Redclyffe might object——"

"They can't object, when they're playing a County League man themselves!"

"That's true," said Wharton thoughtfully.

"Diniwayo seems to be a good-natured chap, and it wouldn't do him any harm to play for Greyfriars for once. He's not a professional, either, so that wouldn't stand in the way. He plays for Crawley as an amateur."

"By Jove!" said Wharton. "There's no reason why he shouldn't be asked, anyway. Look here, if Bunter won't ask him, we'll ask him. Suppose we suggest it to Wingate after he comes off?"

"Good egg!"

And the Removites, after discussing the matter, determined that they would; and they waited for the captain of Greyfriars to come off the ground after the practice match, full of their new idea.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Influence Is Required!

WINGATE was not looking so cheerful as usual as he came away from the footer-ground, in overcoat and muffler, after the match. The First Eleven had shaped as well as could be expected, but the changes that had been made in the team had affected its form in a way that was only too evident.

The Greyfriars First were nowhere near the form of Redclyffe, and Wingate, though he still hoped for the best, could not disguise that fact from himself.

He looked a little gruff as the Famous Five stopped him on his way back to the School House. He was busy with his thoughts, and considerably worried.

"Wingate——"

"Well, well, what is it?" said Wingate brusquely.

"We've got an idea," said Wharton. "How would you like Diniwayo—the black chap, you know, at Crawley—to play for the First next Wednesday?"

Wingate stared.

"Of course, I'd like it," he said. "I'd like a good many things that I can't have. I'd like you kids to talk sense, for instance, if you must talk!"

This was not very encouraging; but the juniors knew how old Wingate was bothered about the prospects of the First Eleven, and they forgave him.

"I mean, I think he might be got," Wharton explained.

"How? Why should a Crawley man come and play for us—a chap I don't even know?" said Wingate.

"You've been introduced to him."

"That's hardly enough to enable me to ask him to come over here and play in a school match, I suppose?"

"But he's Bunter's friend," said Bob Cherry eagerly.

"Bunter would ask him——"

"We'll make him!"

"Bunter says that Diniwayo would do anything to oblige him."

"Bunter is a wretched liar, though," said Wingate.

"Well, yes; we didn't believe it at first, but it seems to be proved," said Harry Wharton. "Anyway, would you like to have Diniwayo if you could get him?"

Wingate laughed shortly.

"I'd give two terms' pocket-money for the chance," he said. "But it's rather too good to come true. I don't suppose he'd come."

"Suppose we can fix it?" said Harry Wharton.

Wingate paused. The thought had crossed his mind when he met the black man from Crawley at the bunshop in Friardale. But he had only thought of it as a desirable thing that was quite unattainable, and he had not thought of it again.

Now he considered the matter. If the black footballer could be obtained, it would make all the difference. With a centre like Diniwayo, playing as he had played against the 'Spurs, the Greyfriars team would be a very different team.

Redclyffe had no player that was within miles of him. Their capture from a County League team faded into insignificance in comparison with the black centre-forward of Crawley. With Diniwayo in their ranks, Greyfriars had every prospect of beating Redclyffe hollow.

The Greyfriars captain's face lighted up at the thought.

"If it could be fixed——" he said.

"Let's try, then."

"Try by all means," said Wingate. "If you could work it, it would be a thing I'd never forget. Let me know. You'll find me in my study."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton joyfully.

Wingate nodded, and went to the School House. The juniors exchanged glances of satisfaction.

"Now we've got to see Bunter," said Harry Wharton.

"Bunter's got to get the darkey to come, that's all."

"He seems to be very obstinate about not wanting him to come here," Nugent remarked. "We'll give him something to stop all that. Either he's got to get Diniwayo for the eleven, or we'll scalp him. Anybody know where he is?"

"Let's look in the tuckshop."

That was the most likely place to find Bunter, and there they found him. Billy Bunter was engaged in an earnest discussion with Mrs. Mimble. Bunter was explaining with all the eloquence at his command that, as he was expecting a postal-order very shortly, it was clearly Mrs. Mimble's duty to supply him with tuck on "tick." Mrs. Mimble did not seem to see it in that light, however. She had heard of Bunter's expected postal-order before.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

Bunter blinked round dismally at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, I'm stony-broke! I've been disappointed about a postal-order——"

"Same old postal-order!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"I suppose you couldn't lend me——"

"Look here, Bunter," said Wharton. "You shall have as much tuck as you can swallow—and that's a big order—if you'll do one thing. We want Diniwayo to come and play for the First Eleven next Wednesday!"

Bunter's jaw dropped.

"Diniwayo!" he murmured.

"Yes. We've spoken to Wingate about it, and he'd jump with joy to have him. Crawley United are not playing next Wednesday, so the chap will be at liberty."

"He—he wouldn't play in a schoolboy match!"

"Rats! Greyfriars' First Eleven is a jolly good team, and nobody need be ashamed of playing for it," said Wharton. "You can ask him, anyway."

"I—I'm afraid I couldn't; he wouldn't do it——"

"You've said a dozen times that he'd do anything for you."

"Well, ye-es; but——"

"You've got to ask him. It's a question of saving the match for Greyfriars," said Harry. "Redclyffe have got a County League man to spring on us. We should go one better with the black centre-forward, and beat them hollow. He's worth half a dozen of the Redclyffe men, anyway. We must have him!"

"I—I——"

"Now, look here, Bunter! If you get that chap to play for Greyfriars, we'll club together, and stand you all you can eat on Wednesday. We'll make a regular subscription of it!"

Bunter's eyes glistened. The prospect of an unlimited feed dazzled him; but he seemed to be inwardly uneasy.

"If you could let me have something now——" he began.

Wharton shook his head.

"No fear! Nothing at all till Diniwayo arrives on Wednesday. We know what a spoofer you are!"

"If you can't trust me, Wharton——"

"You know we can't," said Wharton, without ceremony. "Don't be an ass. Now, what objection have you got to asking Diniwayo to play for the First? You've said a lot of times that he's a good-natured chap, and would do anything for you. If that's the truth, he'll come over here on Wednesday and play for the First!"

"But a—a member of a professional side——"

"He's an amateur."

"Ye-es; but I—I can't really do it!"

"You've got to!"

"Eh?"

"Do you think we're going to lose the only chance of beating Redclyffe because you are a silly, obstinate ass?" growled Johnny Bull. "You've got to work it!"

"I—I—I——"

"If you don't," said Harry Wharton grimly, "we shall take it that you've been lying, as we suspected at first, and that you spoofed Mauleverer the other day somehow. We

know you're as full of tricks as a monkey, when you're trying to bolster up your precious whoppers."

"Oh, really, you know——"

"And if you let us down like this, you'll be warmed for it. Do you want to have a Form ragging?" demanded Wharton angrily. "I tell you plainly, if you don't get Diniwayo to play for Greyfriars on Wednesday, we'll rag you till you wish you'd never been born. You'll be bumped, ducked, walloped, inked, treacled, and then sent to Coventry!"

Bunter blinked at the juniors in dismay. They were in deadly earnest, and he knew only too well that every item of that terrific programme would be faithfully carried out, if he failed the school at this critical moment. He had proved his case, and gained all the credit of being an intimate pal of the famous footballer—and now he had to take the consequences. At that moment, William George Bunter fervently wished that he had never departed from the straight line of strict veracity. He began to understand that there were certain advantages in telling the truth on all occasions. His "swank" had landed him in a scrape there was no escape from.

A confession trembled on his tongue—but he held it back. If he had told Harry Wharton & Co. then that he had been boasting—that he had "spoofed" them—that he did not know Diniwayo, the footballer, any more than he knew King George the Fifth—he realised what the result would be. The ragging he would be subjected to would be a record even in the Greyfriars Remove. After raising their hopes, after causing them to speak to Wingate and raise his hopes—to tell them that it was all "gas"—Bunter shuddered at the prospect of what would follow.

"Well?" exclaimed Wharton, as the Owl of the Remove did not speak. "Well, what are you going to do? We've got your word for it that Diniwayo would oblige you with pleasure if you asked him. Why can't you ask him?"

"Ahem! I——"

Bunter did not know what to say. He blinked at the juniors, and blinked at the doorway, but there was no escape for him. The expression on the faces of the Famous Five was growing grimmer and grimmer. They began to feel that they had been deceived, somehow—that Bunter could not really do what they wanted—that they must go to Wingate and tell him that there was nothing in it. And the thought of that made them so angry, that they were clenching their fists already. Bunter was within an ace of being handled as he had never been handled before, and he realised it.

"You can take your choice," said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "If you've been spoofing us, you'll suffer for it. Get Diniwayo to play on Wednesday, and you shall order your own feed, to any extent you like. But if you don't, you'll get such a ragging that you'll never get over it—and we'll begin now."

"Collar him!" said Johnny Bull. "He's been lying—he can't do it! Yank him along to the fountain for a start."

"Hold on!" gasped Bunter.

"Well?"

"I—I'll ask him!" said Bunter, with chattering teeth. "Of—of course, I can't answer for it—that he'll come."

"Can't you? Then we'll come with you when you ask him—we'll all go together, and explain to him!" said Wharton.

Bunter almost staggered.

"We can easily find out where he lives in Crawley," said Harry. "We'll go to him as your pals——"

"You—you can't!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I won't have it——"

"You can't stop it!"

"I—I'll ask him myself——"

"Very well; but if he doesn't come, we'll go to him," said Harry Wharton grimly. "And mind, if he agrees to come, he's to agree to come here an hour before the match on Wednesday, so as to make sure. If he isn't here at two o'clock on Wednesday, we'll send him a wire."

"A—a wire? You don't know where he—he lives!"

"We'll find out before Wednesday!"

"I—I say, you know—he's my friend, not yours——"

"We're going to know whether you've been spoofing or not. By George, if you've taken us in, and we have to tell Wingate it's no go, we'll make you sorry for it!"

Bunter drew a deep breath.

"I—I'll ask him!" he said. "I—I'll undertake that he shall come—only—he will want his expenses."

"Expenses! Rates!"

"I know him better than you do. I can get him to come but he will have to have his expenses!"

The juniors exchanged glances.

"Well, we don't know him," said Wharton slowly. "That

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may be the case. We should be quite willing to stand the exes, if he'd come!"

"It would be a couple of guineas!"

"That's all right!"

"And—and I should have to take it to him when I ask him."

Bob Cherry growled angrily.

"You won't get any money out of us in advance, you cad!"

"Then it's all off!" said Bunter.

"Wait a bit!" said Wharton reflectively. "We'll give him every chance, you fellows. If we hand you the two guineas, Bunter, will you undertake that the chap comes on Wednesday, an hour before the match, without fail?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Very well; and if he fails us, we shall know you were spoofing—and you understand that you'll be held responsible for swindling us. We shall explain to Wingate that you've had the money, and Wingate will jolly soon make you fork it out again. Mind, if necessary, your people will be written to about it."

Bunter moistened his dry lips.

"It will be all right," he said.

"Right-ho! We'll trust you so far. When will you go?"

"I'll cycle over to Crawley to-day."

"Good! We'll raise the tin, then!"

Harry Wharton & Co. left the tuckshop. Billy Bunter remained, with a thoughtful frown on his face. He was not thinking of Mrs. Mumble's jam-tarts now; he had something much more serious and troublesome to think of.

"I don't like trusting that fat rotter," said Johnny Bull, with a shake of the head, as they crossed the Close.

"Well, we must trust him, so far—we want to get the black chap if we can," said Harry. "It's worth risking the two quid, and Wingate would be jolly glad to stand it out of the funds of the footer club, if necessary. But I think we might raise it ourselves—a couple of bob each in the Remove would do it. I'd put five bob, anyway, and Mauly could be depended on for half-a-quid. It's worth it. Wingate didn't say much, but I could see that he was hoping, and I don't want to disappoint him if it can be helped. We can raise the two guineas easily enough, and we'll give Bunter a chance."

The two guineas offered no great difficulty. Lord Maul-everer, as soon as he heard of it, insisted upon standing a guinea—he would gladly have contributed the whole sum, but that the Co. would not allow. Seven or eight fellows made up another guinea among them, and an hour later, Billy Bunter, with the two guineas in his pocket, mounted Harry Wharton's bicycle, and pedalled away from the gates of Greyfriars.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Good News for Wingate!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. waited with keen anxiety for the return of the fat Remove.

Bunter was unreliable, so utter a "spoofer" in every way, that it was impossible to trust him an inch. If it had been any other fellow, they would have been quite easy in their minds. No other fellow could have been suspected of telling a tremendous "whopper," and bolstering it up with tricks and dodges to such an extent; but with William George Bunter it was quite possible, and indeed likely. And yet, surely this was too big a "spoofer" even for Bunter. They wondered, and they waited anxiously. When the fat junior returned at last, the Co. met him eagerly at the door.

Billy Bunter had recovered from the uneasiness that had been only too apparent in his manner before he started. There was no trace of disquietude about him now. He grinned at the juniors as he saw their anxious faces.

"It's all right!" he announced.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"He's coming?"

"Yes."

"An hour before the match, mind?" said Harry distrustfully.

"He'll be here at two sharp on Wednesday afternoon," said Bunter. "He's coming by the train from Crawley that gets into Friardale at half-past one!"

"And it's quite certain?" said Bob Cherry.

"Quite certain. You can tell Wingate."

"Mind," said Wharton, with a lingering, uneasy doubt, "this is serious, Bunter. If the man doesn't turn up at two o'clock on Wednesday, you'll have Wingate to deal with, as well as us!"

"I tell you it's a dead cert! I've arranged it all!" said Bunter.

"Then that's settled!"

And Harry Wharton & Co., their last doubts dissipated, proceeded to Wingate's study with the good news. They

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took Billy Bunter with them. He was quite willing to go—and his readiness to face the captain of Greyfriars was looked upon as a last proof that it was all right.

Wingate gave them a quick glance as they came in. He had been thinking about the matter ever since Wharton had mentioned it to him, and, although he was a fellow of few words, it was not difficult to see how he had built upon that chance.

"It's all serene, Wingate," said Harry Wharton at once. "Tell him, Bunter."

Billy Bunter gave an important cough.

"All right, Wingate. I've asked Diniwayo to come, and he's consented, as a favour to me. We're quite old pals, you know. He'd do anything for me!"

Wingate gave him a sharp look. He did not, of course, know the fat junior so well as his Form-fellows knew him, but he knew enough of him to regard him with feelings far from cordial or trustful.

"I suppose I can rely on that?" he asked.

"Oh, certainly! He will be here before two on Wednesday."

"And he's going to play for the First?"

"Yes."

"Of course, you understand what you'll get if this is one of your idiotic tricks," said Wingate. "You can't spoof the captain of the school as if he were a junior. You understand that, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter looked injured and indignant.

"Ready, Wingate, I don't think that's very grateful, considering that I've secured a first-class player for Greyfriars—"

"If you've done that, you'll find me grateful enough," said Wingate quietly. "It's a thing I shall never forget, whether we beat Redclyffe or not. I only want to be sure."

"Well, you can be sure. If the chap doesn't arrive at two o'clock on Wednesday, you can lick me!"

"I should certainly do that, and it would be a licking you wouldn't get over in a hurry!" said Wingate.

"To say nothing of the ragging he'd get from us!" said Wharton.

Bunter sniffed.

"Well, if that's the way you take it—"

"I believe you," said Wingate. "I can't think you'd dare to spoof me; and I don't see why you should play the school such a dirty trick, either. I'm sorry, Bunter, and I'm very much obliged to you."

"That's all right!" said Bunter loftily. "Only too glad to do you a good turn, Wingate!"

And Bunter seemed an inch taller as he quitted the captain's study with the juniors.

"I think you fellows might stand me something to eat, after that awful long ride," he said. "I'm simply fagged to death, and as hungry as a hunter."

"Come along!" said Harry Wharton cordially. "Now it's all right—why, it's all right! I'm sorry I was suspicious, but it was really your own fault—you were such an awful spoofer always. Come on, and order what you like!"

Billy Bunter was not likely to need bidding twice. He distinguished himself in the tuckshop that evening, and he could hardly walk when he left it. But the juniors would have fed him till he overflowed if he had liked.

The way matters were turning out made them rejoice, and for once they were as friendly as could be towards the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter, indeed, was the hero of the hour, and he enjoyed it exceedingly. The fact that the famous centre-forward was willing to play for Greyfriars, to oblige Bunter, was convincing; it seemed to show that, as this especial yarn had been so thoroughly substantiated, there might be something in Bunter's other yarns, that had always been scoffed at unmercifully.

And the fat junior, finding himself a person of credit, "spread" himself in great style. For once, his stories of his titled relations and his great acquaintances were listened to with patience, and even with a certain amount of credence.

If one tale had been proved to be true, the other might be true, or partly true; and Bunter had the novel and pleasant experience of seeing himself regarded as a person of unusual consequence.

The fat junior loved the limelight, all the more because he never got very much of it, and during the next day or two he had a really good time.

On Monday a letter arrived for Bunter with the Crawley postmark, and he announced that it was from Diniwayo. It was addressed in the same hand as the previous letter he had received.

Harry Wharton & Co. felt a momentary uneasiness, at the thought that the letter might contain some excuse from the

black footballer. But Bunter soon relieved their doubts by showing them the letter. It ran:

"Dear Billy,—Just a line to tell you that it's all right for Wednesday. I haven't been in top form lately, but I shall do my best for Greyfriars. We play Sheffield Wednesday next Saturday, and I hope I shall see you over here to see the match.—Your old pal,
DINIWAYO."

"All right—hey?" said Bunter.

"Topping!" said Harry Wharton.

"He says he's not in top form," said Peter Todd thoughtfully. "I hope that doesn't mean that he's not going to play a good game."

"Well, I can't answer for that," said Bunter. "I've got him to play, and that's all I could do."

"Oh, it will be all right!" said Wharton. "He's not going to play against Newcastle United or Manchester. In his worst form, he'd make rings round the Redclyffe chaps."

"Yes, rather!"

"Good old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, clapping the fat junior on the back. "I take back half the names I've called you at various times. You deserve the other half!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The last possible doubt had vanished. When Wednesday dawned, the hopes of Greyfriars were high. During morning lessons little was thought about by nearly all the Greyfriars fellows but the great match of the afternoon, and there was some little trouble with the masters in consequence.

After school the fellows poured out of the Form-rooms in great spirits. All thoughts were upon the greatest match of the season—for Greyfriars, that is.

And the fellows chuckled gleefully at the thought of the surprise packet that was waiting for the Redclyffians when they arrived full of anticipations of victory. With a centre-forward like Diniwayo, the Greyfriars First fully expected to sweep the Redclyffians before them like chaff—the best men of Redclyffe including their capture from the County League, would be, in comparison with Diniwayo, like dwarfs against a giant.

Wingate's face was bright and cheery, and every fellow, down to the smallest and inkiest fag, shared the satisfaction of the captain of Greyfriars.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Spoofer!

LONG before two o'clock that Wednesday afternoon a crowd of fellows were waiting outside the gates of Greyfriars to welcome the black footballer.

Harry Wharton & Co. were the first, and other fellows crowded out, till the road was quite black with expectant juniors.

The famous Crawley centre-forward had quite an ovation waiting for him.

Now that the time for his arrival was close at hand, Harry Wharton was feeling a slight doubt. It was still possible that Bunter had been "spoofering," and the mere possibility was enough to worry the captain of the Remove.

Wingate had no doubts, but he did not know Bunter as the juniors did. Wharton was very glad that he had insisted that the Crawley man should arrive an hour before the time of the kick-off. If anything went wrong, and he did not come, that would allow Wingate time to make some new arrangement to meet the case.

But Wharton's new uneasiness was soon set at rest.

It still wanted ten minutes to two when the station hack was seen on the long white road, and there was a shout from the Greyfriars fellows.

"Here he comes!"

"Hurrah!"

There was a rush to meet the hack, and it was surrounded. A black face looked out, between a cap pulled low down and a big coloured muffler.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Welcome to Greyfriars!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Yaas, begad, my dear fellow!"

"The welcomefulness is terrific!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Diniwayo!"

The black man in the hack grinned.

"Here I am!" he said. "Good time—eh?"

"Lots of time," said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "It was jolly good of you to come!"

"Not at all; dat is a pleasure to me!"

"Hurrah!"

"Wingate's waiting for you," said Wharton. "He'll be jolly glad to see you, too. I was afraid something might happen—"

"Come on, Dinny!" said Billy Bunter, linking arms with the black young man, as he descended from the hack.

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"Make room there, you fellows! Don't crowd round my old pal Diniwayo! Come on, old fellow!"

And Bunter, with tremendous importance, walked in at the gates of Greyfriars, with his fat arm linked in that of the coloured gentleman. The Greyfriars fellows crowded in after them. The driver of the hack gave a sort of yelp:

"I sye, young gents, I ain't been paid!"

"Diniwayo's forgotten," said Bob Cherry, laughing. "Never mind; we'll settle it. Don't remind him unless he thinks of it."

"Leave it to me," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Certainly!" grinned Bob, who had just felt in his pockets and found only threepence there. "Pile in, Mauly!"

And Lord Mauleverer paid the driver, who drove away in great satisfaction, the schoolboy millionaire having given him a half-sovereign and turned away without thinking of change.

An enthusiastic crowd followed Bunter and his friend into the Close.

All Greyfriars wanted to see the black footballer. Billy Bunter was one of the most important personages at Greyfriars at that moment. There he was, with the black man—living proof that Bunter had told the truth for once. There he was, and there was the great centre-forward who was to win victory for Greyfriars.

Loud cheers greeted the coloured gentleman on all sides.

Wingate came up to meet him, and shook hands with him warmly.

"I don't know how to thank you for this, Mr. Diniwayo," he said.

The black man grinned.

"Dat is quite a pleasure," he said. "I dink I ask you to lend me some dings to play in. I did not wish to play in de Crawley colours."

"Quite right," said Wingate. "I fancy my things will about fit you; and, of course, we want you in the Greyfriars colours. I'll get you a set of togs in the dressing-room."

"Dank you!"

"You've come a long way from Crawley," added Wingate. "Have you had your lunch?"

"I lunched early, dank you; but I could eat a sandwich."

"We'll offer you something better than a sandwich," said Wingate. "I thought of it, and I've got something rather decent in my study, if you'll come with me."

"Dank you!" said the coloured gentleman again.

And he walked in with Wingate, leaving an excited crowd in the Close. A dozen fellows clapped Billy Bunter on the back.

"Good old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. "This makes up for all your rotten tricks. We are going to beat Redclyffe to-day."

"I told you you could rely on me!" said Bunter loftily.

"So you did, and we were a set of giddy doubting Thomases!" said Johnny Bull, even he being convinced at last. "I'll say I'm sorry!"

"Sorry, too!" said Wharton.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Oh, don't mench!" said Bunter airily. "I say, you fellows, I didn't get much dinner, and if you like to come into the tuckshop—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Begad, come along, my dear fellow!" said Lord Mauleverer, taking Bunter by his fat arm, and the Owl of the Remove went along with alacrity.

"Oh, isn't it jolly ripping!" Bob Cherry exclaimed enthusiastically. "I could hug that fat boulder!"

"And the darkey, too," said Tom Brown.

"Rotten fuss to make about a nigger!" sniffed Fisher T. Fish.

There was a howl at once.

"Bump him!"

"Hyer, I say—I guess—Yarooop! Leggo! Oh, jumping Jehosaphat!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Fisher T. Fish tore himself away, and fled. Crowds of fellows waited for the black footballer to come out of the house with Wingate. He came out at last, and there was a ringing cheer.

"Chair him to the footer-field!" shouted Coker of the Fifth. The cry was taken up at once.

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!"

"Shoulder high!" shouted Bob Cherry.

A rush was made for the coloured gentleman.

He looked alarmed for a moment.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter? What—"

"It's all right," said Wingate, laughing. "You're a giddy idol here, you know. Most of the fellows have seen you play,

and they admire you no end. They want to chair you to the footer-ground. You don't mind?"

"N-no; but—"

The coloured gentleman had no time to say more. The enthusiastic crowd were round him, and he was hoisted up in the powerful arms of Coker of the Fifth and Hobson of the Shell, other fellows struggling round to lend a hand.

Shoulder-high, his black face gleaming over the swaying crowd, he was rushed off to the footer-ground in the midst of the shouting juniors.

Wingate and his team followed, equally delighted, though less demonstrative than the youngsters.

Right on the footer-ground the crowd bore their hero, and then they marched him round the ground shoulder-high amid ringing cheers. Anyone might have been pleased by such an enthusiastic ovation; but, somehow or other, the black footballer did not look happy. Once or twice his hand went up to his head as if to feel whether his cap was still there. In their enthusiasm the Greyfriars fellows were shaking him up a little; but such a hard nut as the Crawley centre-forward could not be supposed to mind that.

"Round again!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, let me down, will you?" gasped the coloured gentleman.

"Hold on!" shouted Coker, as several fellows bumped into him. "Don't shove me over."

Hobson stumbled, and all the black man's weight was, for a moment, thrown on Coker of the Fifth. Coker staggered, and the Crawley man rolled off his shoulder, and disappeared in the crowd.

"Clumsy ass!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Make room there!"

"Don't tumble over Diniwayo!"

A dozen fellows were pressing forward to help the black footballer to his feet. He had fallen to the ground, and in their eagerness to help him the Greyfriars fellows almost stumbled over him.

A dozen hands dragged him up, and he gained his feet gasping.

"Awfully sorry!" exclaimed Wharton. "That ass Coker—"

Then he stopped.

The words seemed frozen on his lips.

For the black man, now that he was on his feet, presented a strangely different aspect.

In that roll on the ground his cap had fallen off, and his woolly hair had become disarranged.

And it was disarranged in the most startling manner.

It was down over one ear, and on the other side of his head appeared an entirely different kind of hair, closely-cropped brown hair that could certainly never have grown on a negro's head.

The crowd gazed on him dumbfounded.

The shouting died away. The Greyfriars fellows seemed stricken dumb. It was too incredible to be believed for a moment, though they saw it with their own eyes.

But the fact was evident.

The black man before them was not a black man at all. He was a white man in disguise. The woolly covering on his head was a skilfully-arranged wig, and in his tumble it had been displaced, giving away the cheat.

It did not need much guessing to divine that his black complexion was a skilfully-applied dye. His European cast of features was accounted for now, accounted for with a vengeance.

He was not a black man at all!

He was not Diniwayo!

And the Greyfriars fellows gasped as the truth forced itself on their minds.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Stroke of Luck!

"WHO—who are you?"

Wharton gasped out the words.

The man stood transfixed. His hand had gone up to his head, and as he felt the wig out of place he realised that the cheat was discovered.

He did not reply to Wharton's question.

With a sudden rush, he broke through the crowd and fled. Whether he was a footballer or not, certainly he had a good turn of speed. Probably terror lent him wings. He could not doubt how the Greyfriars fellows would repay his trick, now that they knew it, and realised the extent of the disappointment he had brought upon them.

So astounded were the crowd that not a hand was raised to stop him as he ran. It took some moments to recover from the shock of surprise.

"Oh, that villain Bunter!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Bunter!"

"Yes. Don't you see, he's spoofed us, after all! It's not Diniwayo. He's got somebody to get himself up as a nigger—"

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"That was the chap in the bunshop the other day!" said Skinner.

"He was spoofing Mauly then."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He's some clever rotter! It was a clever disguise. Oh, fatheads that we are!" howled Bob Cherry, in despair. "Don't you remember? Bunter's cousin at Crawley. He's a chap who goes in for amateur theatricals."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The rotter!"

"The spoofer!"

"The swindler!"

Wingate came dashing up in excitement. He had seen the black footballer making a wild break for the school gates, with the wig dangling over one ear.

"What does this mean?" he shouted. "What——"

Wharton groaned.

"It's a swindle, Wingate! I'm awfully sorry we've let you in for this. Bunter's spoofed us! That chap's not a nigger at all."

"Wha-a-at!"

"I think he's Bunter's cousin from Crawley. Anyway, he's a swindler got up as a nigger to take us in. Goodness knows how he'd have played if you'd played him against the Redclyffe lot!"

"After him!" yelled Coker of the Fifth. "Don't let him get away! We'll smash him! We'll slaughter him, and Bunter afterwards."

"Yes, after him."

The whole crowd broke away in a yelling throng in pursuit of the pseudo negro. The black man had already reached the school gates, and he dashed out of them as the crowd started in pursuit. Wingate was left with a black, grim face. His high hopes had been suddenly dashed to the ground, and he was left too disappointed and miserable even to feel angry for the moment.

Harry Wharton & Co. ran their hardest for the gates. They wanted very much to get hold of Bunter's accomplice in that swindle. Bunter himself they could deal with afterwards.

But the rascal knew what would happen to him if the deceived juniors collared him at that moment. He was running as if for his life.

The Removites came dashing out of the gateway with a whoop, but the road was empty. The fugitive had disappeared. They glared round in search of him.

"He's taken to the wood!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

"Hold on!" roared Coker. "Look there!"

He pointed down the road.

A black man had come into sight, coming directly towards them. That the swindler would have the nerve to come back was amazing, and the excited juniors did not pause to think how curious it was. They made a wild rush for the black man, and were round him in a moment.

"Collar him!"

"Bring him in!"

"Take him back to Wingate!"

The black man struggled furiously in the grasp of the Greyfriars fellows. He hit out, too, fiercely enough; and as he was a powerful fellow, half a dozen of the juniors rolled in the road before he was secured. But they were too many for him. He was swept off his feet, and in the grasp of a dozen pairs of hands, he was rushed towards the gates.

"Let me go!" he shouted. "Are you mad? What does this mean? Let me go!"

"We've got you, you swindler!"

"Come on! You can tell Wingate who you are!"

"I am Diniwayo. I——"

"My hat, he's going to try to brazen it out!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "All right. We'll give him a chance. Bring him along."

Still struggling furiously in the grasp of the enraged Greyfriars fellows, but unable to release himself, the black man was rushed into the gateway, and across the Close towards the football-ground.

The word passed round at once that the swindler was caught, and all Greyfriars crowded round as he was whirled away towards the football-ground. One of the fellows had picked up the woolly wig, dropped by the impostor in his flight, and he followed the crowd with it.

"We've got him, Wingate!" shouted Nugent.

"And I've got his giddy wig!" howled Tubbs of the Third.

"Here he is, Wingate."

The black man was bumped down at the feet of the captain of Greyfriars. He scrambled up, his black face working with fury.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed in a choking voice. "How dare you? Do you dare to handle me like this because I am black? I—I—I——"

Wingate's brows contracted.

"You scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "Your black would soon wash off, I expect. How dare you play such a trick on us?"

The black man looked bewildered.

"Trick! What trick?"

"Don't play the fool with me!" said Wingate savagely.

"You came here passing yourself off as Diniwayo, the Crawley centre-forward!"

"I am Diniwayo!"

"What!"

"And I did not come here. I was dragged here by these young rascals, who all seem to be mad!" shouted the black man. "I ask you what it means?"

Wingate stared at him blankly.

"You—you say you are Diniwayo!"

"I am Diniwayo! I—"

"Liar!" roared Bob Cherry. "Why, you're as big a liar as Bunter. It was Bunter put you up to coming here and spoofing us."

"Bunter! Bunter! Who is Bunter?"

"You—you don't know Bunter? Why, you must be dotty! You can't take us in like that! You're found out, and now you're going to have the ragging of your life."

"You're a swindler!" said Wingate sternly. "You're not Diniwayo. You're not a negro at all!"

"What, I—I—I—"

"I've got his wig here!" howled Tubb of the Third, shoving his way forward through the crowd. "Look here!" And Tubb held up the wig for inspection.

Then there was a roar of surprise. The black man's hat had been knocked off, and his head was exposed to view, and his head was covered with thick woolly hair!

Wingate glanced from the detached woolly wig in Tubb's hand, to the woolly hair of the black man before him, and felt as if his head were turning round.

"He—he's got his hair on!" he stammered.

"Great Scott!"

"But here's his wig!" howled the amazed Tubb. "I picked it up where he dropped it when he bolted."

Wingate gasped.

"You've got the wrong man!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Great Scott!"

Coker of the Fifth took hold of the black man's woolly hair, and gave it a jerk. There was a yell of pain from the owner of the hair, but it did not come off. Evidently it was not a wig this time. He turned fiercely upon Coker, who stared at him open-mouthed.

"It—it—it's real!" stuttered Coker.

"He's a real nig!"

"But—but what—"

"You've made a mistake!" said Wingate severely. "The real man's got away. This chap happened to be coming along, and you collared him without stopping to think, I suppose."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Bob Cherry. "I—I suppose that's it! How were we to know? There ain't such a jolly crowd of nigs in these parts, you know. I didn't know there were any at all, and when we saw him—"

"We—we collared him!" said Coker. "I—I say, I'm sorry. This isn't the chap we were after at all."

"I say, sir, we're awfully sorry!"

"It was all a mistake."

"We took you for somebody else."

"We apologise!"

The anger faded out of the black man's face. He understood now that he had been seized in mistake for somebody else, and the Greyfriars fellows were evidently sincere in their apologies.

"I'm sorry this has happened, sir," said Wingate courteously. "Perhaps you'll excuse these young asses if I tell you what's happened. A fellow calling himself Diniwayo, and got up as a dark—as a coloured man, came here offering to play in a match for us to-day. It turned out that he was a white man, and playing a rotten jape on us. You can guess how disappointed we all were, after expecting a chap like Diniwayo, to find out that we had been taken in. The rascal has just bolted, and the fellows were after him when they came on you."

The black man grinned.

"It is all right," he said good-humouredly. "I was very angry. I thought they must all be mad. I was taking a walk in the country. I had no idea anything was going to happen, when they suddenly rushed on me."

"We were silly asses, and no mistake," said Wharton. "We're all sorry."

"It is all right. But do you tell me that this impostor you speak of came here in my name as Diniwayo?"

"You are Diniwayo himself!" exclaimed Wingate.

"Yes, certainly."

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OUR COMPANION PAPERS. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Wednesday. Every Friday. Every Saturday, 2

The Greyfriars fellows gazed at the famous centre-forward with wide-open eyes. This was the great man himself, the genuine article at last. And certainly the strongly-built, active, alert black man looked more like a footballer than the fellow who had been chased, wigless, from the school gates.

"It's the real Diniwayo," said Coker. "My hat, what a giddy coincidence! I hope you'll forgive us, sir; we didn't know."

Diniwayo nodded and smiled.

"It's all right," he said. "Now I understand. But will you tell me why did you want Diniwayo to play for you this afternoon?"

Wingate made an involuntary grimace.

"We're in a hole," he said. "We've got a big match on this afternoon—the most important match of the season to us—and our team's gone to pieces. I've got seven men crooked, and I had to fill their places the best I could. You can bet I was jolly glad when I thought I had a chance of playing a man like the Crawley centre-forward."

"Then you are disappointed?"

"I should say so. But it can't be helped."

"Perhaps it can," suggested Diniwayo, smiling. "I quite understand the position; and you wanted Diniwayo very much?"

"Very much indeed."

"Well, Diniwayo is here!"

Wingate started.

"You—you don't mean to say—" he gasped. Then he paused. The black gentleman's meaning was clear, but it seemed too good to be true.

Diniwayo nodded.

"I've nothing to do this afternoon," he said. "I was taking a walk, but I should not object to a little footer practice. I'll play for you with pleasure, if you like, if you can lend me some things."

"Oh, my hat, you're a brick!" exclaimed Wingate joyfully. "After the way those young idiots have handled you, too!"

Diniwayo laughed.

"Oh, that's nothing! It was all a mistake. And I'm pretty tough; they haven't hurt me. Would you like me to play?"



The Chinese Death Thorn

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"Would I?" grinned Wingate. "Well, just a little bit. I don't know how to thank you. It's too jolly good to be true!"

"It's settled, then. I'll play."

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry. "Hip-pip-hurray! Good old Diniwayo!"

"Bravo!"

There was a shout from the direction of the gates.

"Here come Redclyffe!"

The Redclyffe brake had arrived.

"Come on!" exclaimed Wingate. "I'll get you fitted out with some of my things in a jiffy. My only hat! But this is luck—real luck!"

And the black footballer disappeared into the dressing-room with Wingate, followed by a ringing cheer from all Greyfriars.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Win!

GREYFRIARS turned out as one man to watch that match.

With one exception—that of William George Bunter. Bunter, from the tuckshop, had seen the flight of the discovered impostor—and Bunter had made himself very scarce. But no one missed Bunter, or thought of him, just then.

They had Diniwayo after all—by wonderful luck they had secured the genuine Crawley centre-forward, and they gave no thought to Billy Bunter or his spoofing.

The crowd was thick round the ropes as the teams came on to the field.

Redclyffe were astonished. Their feelings were not exactly pleasant when they saw the black face gleaming in the centre of the Greyfriars front line.

But Campbell was a true sportsman, and he never thought of raising any objection—not that it would have been regarded, if he had. In Campbell's team there was a County League player, and that fully gave Wingate the right to play the Crawley centre-forward if he liked. And he liked!

But Campbell, who had come over to Greyfriars with an unusually strong team, and the intention of wiping Wingate and his men off the face of the earth, realised that the match was not going to be the walk-over he had anticipated.

Diniwayo, the black centre-forward, was a host in himself—and all the Redclyffians acknowledged that they would have all their work cut out if they were going to win that match.

It fell to Redclyffe to kick off. The ball rolled, and the match started. There was a shout all round the ground.

"Go it, Diniwayo!"

"On the ball!"

And Diniwayo "went it." He fully realised the great expectations of the Greyfriars crowd.

Even in the match with the 'Spurs, he had not shown better form.

Not that it was a "one-man" game by any means. Diniwayo backed up the team as much as they backed him up.

Wingate had given him the centre of the front line, and placed himself at centre-half. He would have been quite willing to let Diniwayo captain the side, but that the black footballer would not consent to. He was playing as one of Wingate's eleven, and that was all.

But what a player he was! His pace was terrific, his passing a miracle of sureness, his shooting deadly and unerring.

When he sent the leather in the Redclyffe goal, good as he was, had little chance of saving.

Redclyffe put up a good fight, and their general excellence counter-balanced, to a certain extent, the immense superiority of the Greyfriars centre-forward.

But from the start there was no doubt which team had the advantage.

In the first half, Redclyffe got through once; but there were three goals to the credit of Greyfriars, two of them from the foot of Diniwayo.

"Isn't it ripping?" chuckled Bob Cherry, as the players ceased for the interval. "Doesn't he kick like an—like an angel?"

"I've never seen an angel kick," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But, by Jove, he does kick rippingly! And his pace!"

"Greased lightning!" grinned Nugent.

"The greasefulness of the lightning is terrific!"

"What jolly good luck to get him after all!"

"Gorgeous!"

"Yaas, begad!"

"By Jove! After this, I think we won't slaughter Bunter, after all," said Bob Cherry. "He ought to be boiled in oil—but after all it was through Bunter's spoofing that we got Diniwayo!"

"Here they come! Go it, Greyfriars!"

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"THE FACTORY REBELS!"

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ONE
PENNY.

The teams lined up for the second half. The first half had been gruelling, and some of the players were showing signs of it. But the black centre-forward was as fresh as a daisy—a black daisy, as Bob Cherry remarked, with a chuckle.

Redclyffe did their best—but the tide was against them. Once more the visitors got through—but only once. And three more goals fell to Greyfriars; the last on the very stroke of time, when Diniwayo charged the goalkeeper in with the ball in his hands.

Then the whistle went.

"Six goals to two!" chorled Bob Cherry. "Hurrah!"

"Greyfriars wins! Hurrah!"

"Good old Diniwayo!"

"Bravo, bravo!"

And there were thunderous cheers for the black footballer as the players came off.

Greyfriars had won the great match.

Redclyffe went bootless home—and all Greyfriars rejoiced.

Needless to say, a tremendous ovation was given to Diniwayo, and when he left Greyfriars, half the school marched down to the station with him, and cheered his train as it went out.

When Billy Bunter came in—late—in a state of mortal terror, expecting to be hanged, drawn, and quartered—he met with the surprise of his life. His wretched spoofing had turned out so well that the Greyfriars fellows had decided to forgive him. But they made remarks to him that would have pierced the skin of a rhinoceros.

Bunter did not mind them—he was only too glad to get off without the tremendous ragging he had expected, and fully deserved. Indeed, before many days had passed, Billy Bunter might have been heard talking in his usual strain, and claiming the whole and entire credit of the victory Greyfriars had won by the aid of the Black Footballer!

THE END.

YARNS TO TELL.

A ROLLING STONE.

There is no knowing what a tramp has had in the way of education. Many a pitiable-looking object in rags and tatters, equipped with a splendid professional whining voice, and accomplished in the art of shivering, commenced with a good education. So it was with Dreary Daniel, who called one day at a prim old lady's house to beg a few coppers and a dry crust—the dryer the better. He did not look an imposing object. The rags he wore were sodden wet, and there was not much of his hat left except the brim.

"My good man," said the old lady, "why don't you get to work, and give up begging? Don't you know that a rolling stone gathers no moss?"

"Madam," replied Dreary Daniel in his old "free education" tone, "without evading your question, or wishing to presume, may I ask what practical utility moss would be to a man in my position?"

Waters (shaking his fountain-pen): "You have no idea how easily these pens run."

His neighbour (applying blotting-paper to his trousers): "Oh, I have an inkling!"

TO THE POINT.

The old man had saved many passengers from destruction. He had found a tunnel broken down, and had stopped the train in time.

So the grateful passengers collected for him, and arranged for a great gathering at which he was to receive a presentation.

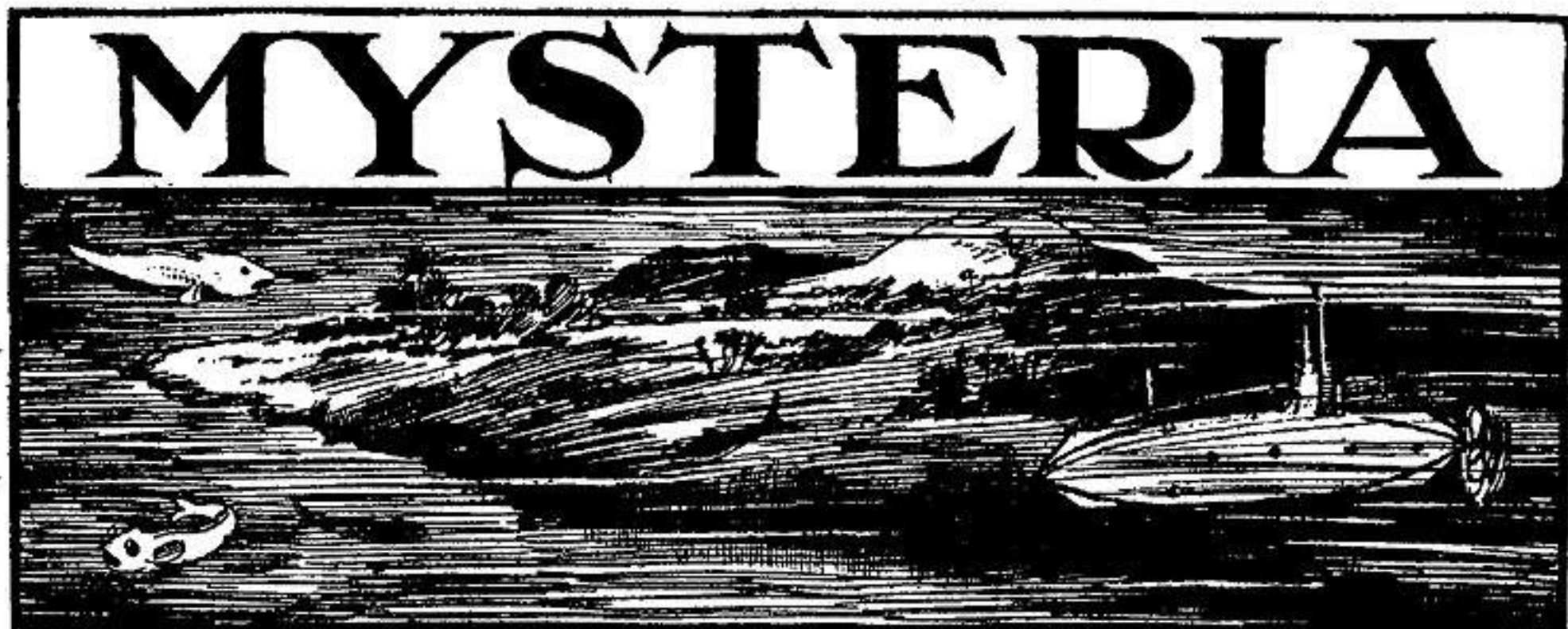
The evening came, and before his admiring fellow-villagers the hero ascended the platform.

"Mr. Mumpkins," said the chairman, in pompous tones, "it is the desire of those you so nobly saved from death that you should receive some small token of your promptness in averting the terrible disaster. So we have met here this evening to ask you to accept this gold watch, which we trust will serve to remind you of the undying gratitude of the donors."

Mr. Mumpkins spoke never a word. He took the gold watch from its velvet-lined case, and eyed it, first one side and then the other. Then he examined the case, while the committee and spectators watched him, awaiting an outburst of thanks and praise. At last he spoke, and every head bent forward.

"Where's the chain for it?" he asked.

Sidney Drew's Masterpiece!



By SIDNEY DREW, Prince of Adventure Story-tellers.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, and as they are steaming along one day a bank of fog ahead suddenly parts, and there, not a league away, appears Mysteria—the weird island. Before sunrise the next morning a move is made to explore Mysteria. The landing-party find the island to be an evil-smelling swamp, with little sign of life. They catch a glimpse of a terrifying monster which inhabits a black lake, and then Barry creates a diversion by falling down a deep tunnel, and injuring his head. Shortly after this adventure, Jimson, the parrot, is found croaking over a huge bush, and when Prout advances to catch his pet, he stumbles over the body of a man whom they have never seen before. The castaway is found to be alive, and is taken aboard the submarine. The adventurers then find a great hole has been blown in Mysteria. Ferrers Lord and his men explore the bottom of the pit, and find a miniature island has been formed inside Mysteria. While crossing to the island in canvas boats, they are attacked by one of the great monsters which inhabit Mysteria; but, although the party have narrow escapes, nobody is injured. An enormous bat next disturbs them, and they have hardly recovered, when Ching-Lung startles all by shouting at the top of his voice, "Look out! There's something in front!"

(Now continue this splendid story.)

Caved In!

They halted and huddled together. They could hear a rustling, scraping noise, as if some creature were dragging itself heavily over the ground. It was between them and the distant naphtha lights, for which they were making.

"Keep your guns ready," said the millionaire's steady, quiet voice, "and take your time before you shoot. The shadows are very deceptive. Stand still!"

An angry scream rang out behind them, mingled with the beat of wings. The scavenger was returning to its interrupted meal.

"By hokey," yelled Prout, "it's com——"

The steersman, who carried one of the lamps, was knocked down like a ninepin struck by a ball, and the lamp went spinning into the air. It grazed Ching-Lung's head as it descended. To clutch at it and catch it was a purely mechanical act on the prince's part; but it was a clumsy catch, and one that might have had a terrible result, for he trapped his thumb, and his cocked rifle exploded.

A frantic hissing and clattering answered the roar. Under their very feet something flapped and screamed. Cr-ack! cr-ack! barked Maddock's revolver, and Ferrers Lord shouted to them to stand still.

"Souise me, show me the glim!" growled Maddock, cool of head and steady of hand when there was any shooting to be done. "I've knocked the dust out o' summat. Here he are!"

It was an enormous owl, that certainly had not been born in the cavern, but had quickly discovered that it formed an excellent hiding-place and larder. Dazzled by the light, it had flown straight at the steersman with a force that had bowled Prout over, and knocked all the breath out of him. But what was the other creature? Was it as harmless as the bird killed by Maddock's bullets?

"Where's Gan?" asked Ching-Lung, in terror.

"I all rights, Chingy!" answered the Eskimo feebly.

"And Barry?"

"Here, sir," growled the brave boy from Ballybunion.

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With a sigh of thankfulness, Ching-Lung ejected the empty shell and pushed another cartridge into the breech of his rifle. He had done no damage. Prout got up and rubbed himself.

"It might have been worse," said Ferrers Lord. "How did you manage it, Ching?"

"Hanged if I know, old man! I grabbed at the lamp and banged it down on the gun. Anyhow, I saved the glim from smashing. What's become of that other scraping beast? It may have stopped my stray bullet."

"Steady and listen!"

The echoes had worn themselves out, and the cavern was steeped in silence.

"Advance, lads!" said Ferrers Lord.

The ground was fairly level and unimpeded.

"Musk!" said Ching-Lung. "I can smell it. It's queer that all these brutes should smell like sour musk. Why, here—— (Get back! Well, I'll be blessed! Talk about 'Alice in Wonderland'!"

Gan-Waga howled, and sprang back six feet. A tremendous claw jumped into the air, snapping, and dropped back.

The unknown creature had gone, shedding its wounded member; but the claw, still tenacious of life, jumped and snapped till Maddock, using his rifle like a cricket-bat, drove it clean to on with a magnificent lusty stroke.

"Six!" said Ching-Lung. "Slap out of the ground, Ben!"

His feeble sally did not cause a smile. There was another reverberating crash.

"Some of the roof," said Ferrers Lord.

A cloud of dust obscured the light, and Ching-Lung felt his arm clutched tightly.

"All right, Ganus!" he said, with a confidence he did not feel. "Keep up your pecker!"

Hal Honour Walks Into a Trap and is Captured—The Deluge.

Driven by a dozen paddles, a large canoe crept along the shore of Mysteria. The Lord of the Deep lay on the other

side of the island. There were fifteen men in the canoe—men with unkempt, overgrown beards, long, ragged hair, and clothes that bore every sign of wear and rough usage. All the same they looked well fed, and wind, salt, and sun had tanned their faces to a mahogany tint.

Julius Faber, without his familiar red tam-o'-shanter, sat in the prow, his arm round the towering figure-head that had been carved by some native craftsman to represent one of their idols. It was a huge, repulsive, uncanny idol, with huge teeth and bulging eyes, and the carver who designed it certainly had a marvellous imagination.

"That's the place," growled the wooden-legged man, "unless the brimstone island 'as altered."

Julius Faber stared keenly at the hills.

"Yes, that's where we saw the lights," he said. "If we can only find a bay or a creek, we shall do."

"And if we don't find one we shall be done," puffed the fat man. "That cursed submarine will come cruisin' round and blow us out of the water!"

"Oh, stop your brimstone snarling!" said the cripple nervously. "Say summat pleasant, if you wants to talk! I don't like to 'ear that boat mentioned. Shut up about it!"

"Here's the very spot!" cried Faber. "Take her in!"

The opening was very narrow. They poled her through, and then the channel widened and twisted to the left. A few strokes of the paddles brought the canoe into an ideal hiding-place. They were quite invisible from the sea, and the neck of the creek was so insignificant that it could hardly have been discovered except by pure accident. They landed, glad to stretch their limbs.

"Will it be safe to make a brimstone fire?" asked the cripple.

The breeze was blowing seawards.

"Yes, you may light one if you like," said Faber. "There's not much risk."

The dry weeds burned strongly. A tripod was erected, and a pot containing fish put on to boil. Three men were set to clean rifles, and neat rum was served out.

"Scatter about and see if you can find some brimstone water," said Stumpy, who appeared to be second in command. "I never thought I'd come to be dead sick of good spirit, but I 'ates the very smell on it."

Faber was walking up and down moodily, but he stopped.

"Save the trouble," he said. "You won't find a drain of fresh water down here. There may be a few pools of it up there left by the rain, but there's nothing below that isn't brine. I'll find water for you later on. You can get the kegs out."

It was lack of drinking-water, even more than bad weather, that had driven the cinnabar-hunters and blackbirders back to Mysteria. Without it they could not reach the other island, though they had made a bold effort against head-winds and rough weather. They had finished their last quart that morning, and their stomachs at last begun to revolt against rum. They had plenty of food, and a baited line in those prolific seas always took fish. Glad enough to rest, they lay round the fire and smoked their pipes.

"I'd like to know what their brimstone game is," snarled Stumpy. "What do they want foolin' round on this 'ere dirt-cap—eh? What are the brimstone curs arter? What 'ave they struck?"

"Maybe it's pearls, snuffled the fat man.

"I'd give 'em pearls—leaden 'uns, out o' a brimstone rifle!" hissed the cripple. "I'd rush 'em again if I could find six o' you wi' a bit more 'eart than a cockroach to foller me. We might catch 'em nappin' and collar the boat. But it ain't no use thinkin' on it. You ain't got the pluck o' mice—not one of you!"

"Ooh!" shuddered the fat man. "I'm not afraid of bullets, or any fair fighting, but nobody living can tackle an electric dynamo. You didn't feel like we did."

"I reckon you must ha' felt it a brimstone lot by the way you 'owled," sneered Stumpy. "I'm game for another slap at 'em, and it's worth it. That brimstone, thin-faced 'ound wouldn't do me twice. I'll do 'im afore it's all over. You can't play the same brimstone trick on me twice runnin'. No man alive can do it."

He cast an evil glance at Julius Faber, who was pacing moodily up and down. Faber had quick ears.

"I'm ready to make another attempt," he said, turning sharply. "Give me an idea, and I'll follow you."

"Right, I'll chew one over, cap," said Stumpy. "I ain't half beat yet."

The men were in good fettle, and they did ample justice to the dry biscuits, and fish boiled in salt water. Probably the dislike they had taken to rum had something to do with it. No collection of the lowest type of tramp ever found in a casual ward equalled them in looks. They were abominably dirty, abominably ragged, and amazingly strong and healthy. Above all, as they realised that their only hope lay in clinging together, Faber had them well in hand. The only doubtfuls were Stumpy and his bloated comrade, the fat man.

"If I do make a plan," muttered the cripple, "it won't

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be my brimstone fault if Faber don't get between a bullet and daylight. But plans don't grow on trees. The old idea is the best. Sneak up to 'em, board 'em, and smash the machinery. We were idiots not to do that before."

Faber walked down to the end of the creek and looked to the north. He dropped down. The Lord of the Deep, the sun gleaming on her conning-tower, was coming lazily round the point. He watched her nosing her way through the waves, her decks awash.

"Keeping her machinery warm," he thought. "She's a wonderful craft. Will she see our smoke?"

The submarine slid on, and turned the southern point of Mysteria. Faber walked back to the camp.

"I'll take eight men," he said.

"What's the brimstone good of tiring us out, Faber?" grunted Stumpy. "What's the use o' carting about a lot o' kegs on chance? Let's find the water fust, and then fetch it."

"I did not intend to take any kegs. Water-bottles will be enough."

"Well, clear off, then!" snarled the cripple. "My lovely feet are not made for mountain-climbin', so I'll stay where I am and look arter the brimstone canoe. Mind you don't break your necks."

The fat man also declined to stir, and went to sleep, to grunt and snore like an overfed pig.

"We'll go slowly," said Faber. "Get out what hatchets we have."

On this side of the island the concussion had wrought great havoc on the erstwhile submarine forest. The trees were less dense, and for that reason, having been more exposed to sun and air, they were more rotten. The ragged water-seekers set out. It was hard going over the fallen stems and heaps of rubbish, and they were badly shod. They advanced steadily, all the same, for hardship had trained them to perfection.

A few pools were met with, but their edges were white with crystallised salt, and the water was utterly unfit to drink, being three times as full of brine as the sea.

Faber had expected this, and was not dismayed. He felt sure that up in the hills he would find some pocket in which the rain-water had been caught. If that failed them, desperation would compel them to do one of two things—to make another attack on the submarine, or else to throw themselves on the mercy of its owner, Ferrers Lord. The canoe was stout and seaworthy, but water was essential. Without it they could not reach the fever-smitten island they had left, and there was little or no chance of being picked up by a passing vessel, for they were scores of leagues outside of any trade route, and the winter was close upon them.

He was a scoundrel and a pure adventurer, but he was a good leader, and full of energy and determination. The chances of the game had gone against him in every way, but he was still full of fight.

"Come, come," he said, as his ragged followers began to flag. "What's the matter with you?"

"I'm clean done, cap," groaned one of them. "I've only got one boot left."

"Then stay behind. We can only find water higher up. We can do without you."

The man gave a cry of terror at the thought of being abandoned in that terrible place, and limped after them. Every moment the path became more difficult and more steep. Still, there was no sign of the precious fluid they were in search of. Though his own boots were split and torn, Faber set a fast pace. The sun blazed down on their heads, and perspiration streamed out of them. They hung out their tongues like tired dogs, and panted.

"'Ere, cap, I'm done!" groaned a voice. "I'm beat for good!"

Two of them had given in, and had thrown themselves down, absolutely tired out.

"We'll come back for you," said Faber.

"No, no, cap! Don't leave us," they shrieked. "Don't leave us, cap."

Faber did not halt, but two other men went back. His force was reduced by half. Thirst was strangling him, and the heat was terrible.

"Courage!" he said. "We'll soon be at the top. What's that?"

"Water! I can hear it, cap. It's water!"

They could hear it tinkling as it fell—the most dulcet music they had ever listened to. Like thirsty bullocks trekking over a parched African plain, their nostrils dilated, as if they could scent it. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle! came the note. It was very close to them, but where? They gazed about them with greedy eyes. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle! One man dropped on his knees and began to dig feverishly at the ground.

"It's higher up—up there!" said Faber hoarsely.

He began to scramble up a steep ridge. Then he uttered a shout. A tiny stream of water trickled over the rock, and plashed into a little hollow. The water was slightly flavoured with salt, but that was nothing. They lay round the pool, and drank like cattle.

"Fill your bottles," said Faber. "I'll go a little higher."

He pulled himself over the last ridge, and the hill sloped up gently before him to its summit. He was too clever to show himself against the skyline, so he crawled for twenty yards. Then he rolled over and over in terror, for he had nearly gone headlong into a wide fissure of unknown depth. He soon recovered from his fright, and crept on, keeping well clear of the crack in the hill.

"Whow!"

He whistled, and ducked back his head. A big man was walking lazily towards him. Faber cocked his rifle. He could not retreat. The big man, obviously, felt quite secure and at ease, for he was smoking his pipe, and his rifle was on his back. Suddenly he knelt and began to crawl. Then he lay flat, and gazed down into the bowels of the earth, and uttered a shout.

Faber wormed away like a snake.

Hal Honour had taken his time—or, rather, his time had been taken from him—for he had had some trouble with one of the naphtha-lamps, which was burning badly. Peering into the hole, he saw lights glimmering below, but his shouts were not answered. That meant nothing, however, for the explorers might have gone further on. He walked along the edge of the fissure, and took the measurements. It had widened a good deal, but he saw that there was no danger of a sudden collapse. Then he lay down again, and peered into the chasm.

"Ahoy!" he bellowed.

The lights were still winking below, but once more he heard no response. He refilled his pipe. Perhaps they had pulled back, towing the rafts, to bring out two more of the big lamps. There was nothing to make him uneasy, for, in any case, the telegraphic apparatus would keep them in touch both with Rupert and the submarine.

The vessel had gone round the island. He saw her moving along, and opened the flag-box that had been left beside the windlass, intending to signal to the Lord of the Deep to learn if they had heard any news. Hal Honour was stooping over the box, when a shout made him turn.

"Stick your fists up, stranger," said a voice. "We want you."

It took a good deal to astonish the clear-headed, stolid engineer, but his handsome face was the picture of amaze. Five ragged rascals were levelling rifles at his head. Honour held up his hands, as there was nothing else to do.

"Pull that gun away from him," said the hatless figure in front, "and see if he's got a barker, Derrick."

The engineer submitted to being disarmed, for necessity owns no law. He raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"Oh, you're going with us!" said Faber. "By jingo, this is not a bad haul. Chief engineer by his uniform, and only a fitter by the grease on his hands."

The engineer walked down the incline, still smoking his pipe. Suddenly he swung round.

"No, you don't!"

A revolver was thrust into his face—his own weapon. Honour smiled, and went on.

"This is better even than water," said Faber. "They'll do something to get him back if we know how to play the cards right. Keep an eye on him, for he looks tough. I don't want to shoot you, shipmate," he added, "but you can tell by looking at us that we're not flourishing. What's your name?"

"Yours?" demanded the giant.

"Oh, I've got a lot of names: Julius Faber suits me at present."

"Honour."

"Not Harold Honour?" yelled Faber.

"Harold Honour."

The adventurer slapped his leg. He seldom displayed any emotion, but he could not restrain his joy. Everybody had heard of Harold Honour, the famous engineer.

"Look here!" said Faber, staring at the unflinching blue eyes. "Are you lying, shipmate?"

The great engineer shrugged his shoulders.

"I am waiting," he said.

"By Jove, we've got him!" muttered Faber exultantly. "It's Honour right enough, and he's worth anything we like to ask for if we can only hang on to him. The luck has turned at last. The— Don't shoot—don't shoot!"

Derrick rolled past him. The engineer had struck him down, almost breaking his jaw. Faber flung up his arms before the rifles, almost risking a bullet.

"What did you do that for?" he howled.

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"Came too close," said the engineer briefly. "Object to vermin."

The man scrambled up, groaning.

"Don't be a fool," said Faber. "We want this man. He's Honour, the big engineer. They'll make any terms with us to get him back. There'll be money enough to plaster up your toothache, Derrick. Shoot him in the leg if he tries to bolt, that's all. Treat him as if he's loaded with diamonds."

Derrick cursed and nursed his jaw. A horse might have kicked him, and hurt him less.

"Tie his 'ands then!" he snarled.

"Yes, tie his 'ands, cap," chimed in the others.

Faber looked at the engineer almost apologetically. He could gain nothing by treating such a valuable prisoner roughly.

"Do you mind, Mr. Honour?"

Hal pointed to the steep and dangerous path, and touched his neck. He did not want to break it by a fall—a thing that might easily happen were he deprived of the use of his hands. Faber whispered to the others.

"All right; I guess you knows best, cap," groaned Derrick, wincing with pain. "I'll wait till arterwards. I'll wait to pay 'im later. Oh, my jaw! I can 'ardly move it!"

"Now, sir," said Faber politely.

Quick as was the engineer both in thought and action, he saw no chance of escape. Nor had he ever been in stranger company. They joined the other scarecrows below, and they fought like tigers for the water-bottles. One of the men volunteered to refill them, and they waited for him to return.

A sudden rumbling noise and a quivering beneath their feet sent the blood from the engineer's cheeks. They sprang up. A screaming human body came bounding down the incline and dropped with a splintering crash into a mass of dried weed. Then came a rush of water that rolled them away like corks, and Mysteria seemed to totter and reel like a house in the midst of an earthquake.

In the Enemy's Camp—A Bold Bid for Liberty!

Hal Honour came to rest on the flat of his back with a thud that filled the air with spots and sparks. The engineer lay still for a time, rather hazy in his mind as to what had happened. He knew he was very wet and very shaken. He slowly lifted each arm in turn, and then each leg. No bones appeared to be broken, and, after a struggle, Honour managed to sit up and look about him.

His first glance encountered Mr. Julius Faber. The black-bird and mercury-hunter was ruefully rubbing his head, but his bruises did not prevent him from drawing a revolver the moment he noticed that the prisoner had revived. Faber was one mass of mud, and his face was bleeding.

"Knocked pretty hard, shipmate?" he inquired.

"Brutally!"

Faber was cunning, and not at all the man to believe half that was told him.

"So am I," he said: "but it's strange how quick you get over these things. I'm pretty sore myself, Mr. Honour, but I'd like to go and see after the others. Perhaps they're sorer."

The man of few words put the question with a gesture.

"Why don't you go, then?"

"Because, my friend," replied Faber, "you might take it into your head to go, too. I put a big value on you, and I wouldn't lose your company for a lot. I won't say how much, for you might think I was flattering you. My affection, if new, is a lasting one. In fact, Mr. Honour, it's a case of love at first sight. Some of my comrades may be shaking off this mortal coil for the sake of a little brief attention from me, and yet, rather than tear myself away from you, I leave them to die. Can affection go further?"

Although every bone in his big body was aching, the engineer laughed.

"You're no fool!" he said briefly.

"That is where you blunder, friend," said the ragged Faber. "I've been a fool for over sixty years. I'm a fool for wanting to look after those rascals. They would give me a great deal less trouble if they were dead. To be frank, Mr. Honour, I have a great personal admiration for you. I would willingly shake hands with you, and let you go on that account; but, owing to unfortunate circumstances, I am unluckily compelled to consider you a kind of cheque, signed and made payable to bearer, which I hope to cash as soon as possible."

The engineer was amused. He propped his back against the damp rock and cleared his eyes.

"I'll wait."

"That's kind of you, Mr. Honour. I don't feel much like perpetual motion, but I'd better go and look about."

Both men had had an ugly fall, but Faber had come out best. Honour's head was still ringing and buzzing, and his

brain was rather foggy. What had happened? Had a heavy portion of the roof fallen into the cave, a mass so weighty that it had shaken Mysteria to its foundations? The island was not volcanic, so there could be no other explanation. And what was the fate of the explorers? What was the extent of the catastrophe?

Anxiety made the engineer forget his pains, aches, and dizziness. He bounded to his feet. Faber was climbing painfully over the rubbish left at the heels of the landslide.

"I'll come with you; I won't bolt!" cried Honour.

"Don't break your neck, that's all," growled Faber. "I guess I can trust you."

The convulsion had emptied the pool and laid bare a powerful spring, evidently the outlet of some reservoir of rain-water higher up. The spring was still running strongly. They found one man, dead and terribly mangled. Then they heard shouts. The others were huddled in a hollow, most of them cut and bruised, but not seriously injured. They were terribly scared, however, and their teeth chattered.

"Here, none of that!" yelled Faber, cocking the revolver. "Come back, or I'll plug you, by Jingo!"

Hal Honour, remembering his promise, stopped. The windlass had disappeared, and the crack was a dozen yards longer. Scores of tons of rock must have crashed into the cavern. His heart beat quicker. If the explorers needed aid, he could not have given it, in any case. In all probability his capture had saved him from being hurled into the dark pit with the windlass.

"Now what's the trouble?" growled Faber.

"My friends," answered Honour, pointing at the gaping fissure.

"What! Are some of 'em down there?" chuckled Faber. "Have they found Aladdin's cave? Is it deep? Well, they've funny tastes, Mr. Honour. I wondered what the game was when I saw you looking down. They didn't go down there on that spider's-web of a rope—eh? It strikes me I arrived at a healthy time for you. If you'd been squatting where you were when I found you, shipmate, you wouldn't have been worth burying!"

Hal Honour shrugged his shoulders. It was never his habit to anticipate unpleasant things. Until it was proved to him that his comrades were dead or injured, he elected to consider them alive and well. He was relieved to see that the shock had not been so violent as he had feared. It was the rush of water that had caused so much havoc, but its area was restricted. Finding his tobacco undamaged, the engineer filled his pipe, focussed the sun's rays upon it through a magnifying-glass, and followed his captor.

Faber's return to the camp created no little excitement.

"So that's 'Onour, the brimstone engineer," croaked Stumpy. "He, he, he! He looks more like a brimstone rag-picker! 'Ow d'ye do, 'Arold, old buck? I'm proud to meet you. 'Ave a can o' rum, 'Arold?"

Honour shook his head.

"Sorry we ain't got no champagne and five-bob cigars for you," grinned the cripple. "Why didn't you send a postcard to say you was comin', and we'd have laid in a brimstone stock? What's become of Pegwith?"

"The fool let a rock drop on him," said Derrick. "Pegwith's outed!"

Derrick, armed with a rifle, was told off to guard the prisoner, and Faber, Stumpy, and the fat man, whose tall hat was brimless, and whose coat was in rags, drew together.

"It's a haul—it's a wonderful haul!" puffed the fat man, his voice only a hoarse whisper. "Are you sure it's the right man? Are you sure it ain't a bluff?"

"If it ain't 'Onour it's his brimstone twin!" cackled Stumpy. "I've seed his photo scores o' times."

"So have I," added Faber. "The thing is, how are we going to act?"

"Go to 'em and tell 'em the brimstone truth!" snarled the cripple. "We'll ax the same terms. If not agreed to, we shoots the 'ound!"

"Will you go, then?"

"No, I won't; not me, cap!" said the cripple, spitting into the fire. Faber turned away disgustedly.

Hal Honour sat and smoked and pondered. He was beginning to feel very stiff, and stiffness would hamper him in an attempt to escape. In any case, he would be too stiff to climb the hill for days to come; he knew that. It was equally foolish to worry himself with worthless conjectures about the fate of his comrades. And so the philosopher knocked the ashes out of his pipe, lay down, and, in spite of the discomfort attendant on wet clothes, a bruised body, and an anxiety of mind that he could not wholly subdue, went to sleep.

Stars were burning brightly in a colourless sky overhead when the engineer opened his eyes. He must have slept pretty soundly, for his hands and feet were tied, and he had not even a dreamy recollection of this having been done. The fire was red and low, but it occasionally sent out a flicker that revealed the shadowy figures of the slumberers lying

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 312

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE FACTORY REBELS!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

round it. There was a murmur of surf, and the usual crackle of bursting leaves.

"Is there no guard?" thought Honour.

He peered about him, and made out the head and shoulders of a man.

"Faber himself—all the worse," he muttered. "He's the toughest of them all!"

Faber was standing quite motionless. He had kept awake solely to watch the prisoner, for there was nothing else to fear. Honour swiftly weighed up the chances for and against. His strength was so enormous that he was sure the cords would not keep him long. He imagined himself free of them. He might creep away, hide, and wait till dawn before attempting to cross the island.

He dismissed that scheme from his mind in a trice. It was impossible.

And the other? He had to overcome Faber—swiftly, noiselessly. He might succeed in doing so, but could he secure the heavy canoe and escape to the open sea without rousing the others? It was worth trying, at any rate, though the chances for and the chances against did not balance. It was ten to one against.

Faber turned and struck a match.

"So you're awake, shipmate?" he said, holding the light close to the engineer's face.

"Yes."

"So am I—wide!" said the blackbirder. "I've got mighty sharp ears, and I heard your breathing change. You've got a pair of wonderful lungs. Stick your wrists out, if you want a smoke, and I'll untie them."

"Thanks!"

Faber sat down beside the prisoner, and the glow from the pipe occasionally lighted up his gaunt, bearded face and brilliant eyes.

"It's a strange thing, shipmate," he said, speaking softly, "how it is that the luck will run dead against some people. I've had the tide dead in my teeth, and the wind, too, for fifty years. Curse the luck! If you and your vessel hadn't turned up, I'd have been a made man!"

"Should have let us alone!"

"I know that now, Honour. That was the mistake. I'd struck cinnabar rich, and I wasn't likely to stand a lot of outsiders nosing about. Well, the cinnabar's still there. You're a man of the world, and I talk to you as a man of the world. There's fifty fortunes on that island. We've lost our ship, and everything else. White men can't work cinnabar, and my idea was to raid islands for niggers till I'd got enough stuff together to claim my rights, form a company, and get Chinese to work the lode.

"Then you come along and blow up my ship. The luck again—dog's luck. But I'm a tough customer, Mr. Honour. I can take a knock-down blow, but I'll get up and fight till I can't get up. You may be sure we were in a tight fix before we ventured to board your vessel. You beat us, and now our plight is worse than ever. Do you think there's any chance of coming to terms?"

"None!"

"Then we shall have to shoot you and take what comes," said Faber grimly.

The engineer took a long pull at his pipe.

"Cheerful," he said.

"By thunder, I don't want it, sir. We want to reach a port and get a little money in hand. We can get the insurance of our ship, and come back. I'd give you a big share in the mine for it. You're the only card we've got to play. When men are desperate, they're desperate. We shall all rot with fever if we go back, and if we shoot you we shall have a run for our money. The island seems to be a pretty spot for a bit of guerilla-fighting. Before your people manage to hunt us down, we shall send a good many to kingdom come. You see how it is? You see our fix? What else can we do?"

All the time Faber had spoken in an undertone, the rifle resting across his knees. For several minutes the engineer had been battling with himself, hating to take a mean advantage. He was an unscrupulous rascal, and Honour remembered the mines he had set to blow the crew of the Lord of the Deep to eternity. Besides, when a man coolly informs you that, unless something happens to his advantage, you are to be shot in cold blood is no time for hesitation or chivalry.

Honour's clenched fist came down like a sledgehammer, and Faber dropped without a moan—senseless.

(This grand serial will be continued next Monday.
Order early.)

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My Readers' Page

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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE FACTORY REBELS!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In our next splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, the juniors of the Remove have a chance of justifying their reputation as a "fighting form"; and, needless to say, they do not neglect the chance. Mr. Harding, the owner of the factory in the near neighbourhood of the school, has trouble with his factory-hands, and a strike is declared. A dangerous situation arises, but, luckily, the prompt decision of the Head of Greyfriars to allow the school to take a hand in the game, keeps the danger within bounds. As it is, the factory-owner has good cause to be grateful to Harry Wharton and the cadets of the Greyfriars Remove for the yeoman service they render in dealing with

"THE FACTORY REBELS!"

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

A Loyal Reader (Willesden).—The colours you inquire about are red and white.

A True Magnetite (Highgate).—Don't take drugs to increase your height. Take plenty of nourishing food, and go to bed at 10 o'clock at the latest. The hours before midnight are the ones that do you the most good.

E. F. N. AND OTHERS.—I am sorry I cannot depart from my rule. I cannot spare the space to insert advertisements of football club matches, wanted, etc., in this page.

L. Truter (Natal).—There is no official binding published for "The Magnet" Library. As regards your invention, I should advise you to apply at your G.P.O. for a form for a Provisional Protection, which, when filled up, must be sent to the Patent Office. That will cost you £1. Then the next thing to do is to place the whole thing in the hands of a patent agent. I should certainly advise you to take advantage of "The Gem" Library Free Correspondence Exchange.

Stuart Monk.—If you care to submit your article in the usual way, I shall be pleased to consider it, and will return it if unsuitable.

FROM THE READER WHO REALLY STARTED "CHUCKLES."

A letter of exceptional interest on the subject of our latest new companion paper, "Chuckles!" comes from the reader who signs himself "Londoner." My chums will remember that it was this reader who really originated the idea of "Chuckles!"—that is, the first suggestion of a new companion paper on the lines of "Chuckles!" was put forward by him in the letter which was published on the Chat Page of "Magnet," No. 299, last October. This is what "Londoner" says of the "finished article," now that he has seen the first few numbers.

"Dear Editor,—The moment when I opened No. 1 of 'Chuckles!' was without doubt the proudest one of my whole life. To think that the letter I wrote you last autumn should have the credit of giving you the first idea of such a really magnificent paper! There is only one word to describe 'Chuckles!'—it's simply topping! How on earth you can manage to give such value for one halfpenny beats me. I should think 'Chuckles!' cheap at one penny, personally. The paper far surpasses my anticipations. My idea was something quite small, and printed in the ordinary way. But, of course, all the colours make the paper ever so much

brighter and nicer altogether. Frank Richards' stories about the Courtfield and Greyfriars boys are simply ripping. I am quite sure every Magnetite will read them eagerly. I am going to do all I can for 'Chuckles!' of course, by telling everyone about it, giving a whole lot of copies away, etc. I think it's the least we readers can do for you, Mr. Editor, considering all the trouble you have taken to give us what we ask for. In conclusion, I must offer you my very heartiest congratulations on 'Chuckles!' which, I am sure, we all consider a very marvellous achievement.—Your grateful reader,

"LONDONER (P. J.)."

"P.S.—The toffee in No. 1 was simply delicious. I took twelve packets of it home, as I bought twelve copies, and we all enjoyed it awfully."

Many thanks, "Londoner"! I make no apology for devoting so much space to your letter, as I am sure all readers of the famous companion papers will be interested to hear your judgment on the paper that owes its origin to your happy inspiration. I am delighted to hear you are so pleased with "Chuckles!" and can only say that if all my chums are as enthusiastic as you, we shall make "Chuckles!" the success of 1914!

THE HOME WIZARD.

Time was, when wizards were a very close corporation, and when an enlightened public did its best to make it even more select by occasionally burning a member. Nowadays, popular opinion has veered round in an opposite direction, and to say of a man that he is "no conjurer" is a delicate way of suggesting that he is—well, not so sharp as he might be. To enable my readers to prove that against them, at any rate, no such reproach can be brought, is the object of the present paper.

I cannot better begin than by instructing them—

How to Make One Coin Into Two.

It has been well said that the man who makes two ears of corn grow where only one grew before does an essential service to his country. What then shall be said of him who, by the simple expedient of rubbing it against a paper-knife, causes a sixpence to multiply in like manner? Even a millionaire might be glad to double his capital so quickly and so easily.

All that is needed is to attach beforehand to one side of the paper-knife, by means of a little soap, a sixpence of your own. To show the trick, take the knife in the left hand, with the prepared side undermost; then, taking a borrowed coin of like value, lay it on the upper side, and placing the ball of the right thumb upon it, move it backwards and forwards along the blade.

With the thumb in this position, the fingers are naturally brought below the knife, and can, at any desired moment, bring the two sixpences together, the one being apparently transformed into two.

By an expedient familiar to the merest novice in conjuring, the paper-knife may, notwithstanding the adhesion of the sixpence, be shown, to all appearance, free from preparation. To do this it is first shown upright in the hand, with the unprepared side towards the spectators. It is then rapidly lowered, with a vertical sweep, showing apparently the opposite side of the knife. As a matter of fact, however, the thumb, under cover of the downward movement, causes it to make a half turn in the hand, and it is therefore in reality the same surface which is throughout exhibited.

If the conjurer is fairly expert, he may prepare the paper-knife with two, or even three coins, and produce them in turn, apparently showing both sides of the knife before each production.

(Another interesting article of this grand new series next Monday.)

The Editor

A THRILLING STORY YOU MUST NOT MISS!

The Cigarette Clue!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale, dealing
with the Further Amazing Adventures of

SEXTON BLAKE, DETECTIVE.



As the detective's electric lamp flashed out, away darted the rats—big and little, brown and grey, fat and lean, splashing through the water and slime.

(See page 10.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Lost—Twenty Thousand Pounds.

THREE-QUARTERS after one o'clock were being chimed from the Royal Exchange one Saturday afternoon late in autumn as Herbert Fillingdon, "walk-clerk" to the Metropolitan Consolidated Bank, passed on his way to the Bank of England to make his afternoon lodgment.

A youth yet under one-and-twenty, Herbert was no millionaire—his salary, indeed, being only thirty shillings per week, while he could rarely call a five-pound note his own, save, perhaps, just prior to his annual holiday—yet in his daily work he regularly carried the wallet of a millionaire.

In that very wallet, at the present time lay notes and securities to the tune of twenty thousand pounds; but that was nothing unusual. The scrip belonged to his employers, not to himself, and, so far from being weighed down by anxiety for his charge, Herbert, through long familiarity, regarded his satchel pretty much as a baker's boy considers his basket, its contents, however valuable, like so many loaves of bread.

He threaded his way through the bustling, whirling throng quietly enough; through men rushing round to finish their week's work, past young fellows dashing off to commence their week-end play; he had ample time for his business, though the next clock-chime would give the signal for the closing of the Bank doors.

In the Bank itself haste and bustle were intensified, those final fifteen minutes of the week are the busiest of all that period. But order and method ever reign within the well-regulated precincts of "the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street," and, despite the hurrying crowds, Herbert had no difficulty in gaining his accustomed place at the paying-in desk.

Unfastening the steel chain that attached the wallet to his person, Herbert unlocked the big purse and placed it on the

counter before him, waiting the consideration of the cashier.

At that moment the attention of the youth was temporarily distracted from his front. Feeling a smart shoulder-tap, Herbert looked round, and found a man standing close behind—a well-dressed young fellow, with something of a foreign look, his black beard and whiskers closely cropped and trimmed "imperial" fashion, his waxed moustache stiffly twirled and pointed.

"Pardon, sir," said the man politely, "but can you say to me if I am right in the apartment where one draws the moneys?"

"Oh, the Issue Department, you mean!" replied Herbert. "No. It is that building across the courtyard." Then, turning more fully, he pointed through the doorway, saying: "Cross the court. You will see the name marked over the entrance. Look sharp. They will close the door directly."

"Merci! M——" began the other, with a bow. Then he interrupted himself hurriedly. "Sacre! Peste en soit! Malheureux! But I have scorched my fingaire! I am so maladroit!"

In defiance, probably in ignorance, of the regulations, the Frenchman carried a smouldering cigarette in his hand; the fire had reached his flesh and burned his fingers.

"Ah! Ouh! Ugg!" ejaculated the man, tossing away the stump, shaking his singed fingers, and shoving them into his mouth; then, grimacing, he withdrew, vanishing in the quickly closing crowd.

"Serve you right, mossoo! No business to smoke here!" muttered Herbert, with a chuckle, as he turned to attend to his own affairs.

The incident had occupied only a few seconds; the youth had not moved from the spot, but on turning again to the counter the board was bare, the wallet was no longer where he had placed it.

With an anxious thrill, Herbert glanced right and left. The case might have been pushed aside, but he saw no trace of it.

Poof! The cashier, anxious to get through his work, must have reached across the counter for it.

"Hi! Got my wallet? That of the Metropolitan Consolidated? I put it down here just now. It's all right, I suppose?" called Herbert to the Bank teller.

"Metro. Con. wallet? No. Haven't seen it. Waiting for it. Fork it out sharp!" snapped the cashier, pausing in his work to look up.

In a flash the youth realised that he had been robbed. He saw, as clearly as though he had witnessed the occurrence, that while his attention was momentarily distracted by the Frenchman behind, someone had slipped away the bag in front.

He glanced up and down the counter. The precious wallet was not on the board. His eyes roved over the crowd of customers equally fruitlessly. Even the Frenchman had disappeared.

"I've been robbed!" gasped the young clerk, in affrighted amazement to the expectant cashier. "My wallet has been stolen! It contained twenty thousand pounds!"

Then the very stupendousness of the catastrophe exercised a sobering effect, like a heavy douche of cold water, and, more coolly, fairly collectedly and concisely, Fillingdon told his story.

Prompt was the action of the cashier. Such robberies are infrequent at the Bank of England, but, of course, they offer constant temptations, and every precaution is taken to prevent fraud, every measure ready to detect it should it prove at first successful.

The cashier touched an electric knob, and in an instant tell-tale bells were ringing in all parts of the building, conveying the alarm throughout the entire establishment.

Like magic a couple of stalwart attendants stopped the door, all outer exits were blocked and guarded. Everyone

(Continued on cover, page iv.)

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(Continued from cover, page iii.)

within the building was submitted to a careful scrutiny and searching investigation. No matter how pressing his business, no one left the Bank without first giving a satisfactory account of himself and his belongings.

Yet, prompt as was the action, its application was too late. No trace of the wallet or its contents could be discovered. It had simply disappeared. No suspicious person had been remarked previously about the building, nor was the cigarette-smoking Frenchman brought to light. The impecunious walk-clerk had been defrauded of a fortune. Penniless Herbert Fillingdon had been robbed of twenty thousand pounds.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

On the Trail.

THAT same afternoon an official from the Metropolitan Bank sat closeted with Sexton Blake in the chambers of the latter in Norfolk Street.

"Now, Mr. Blake," concluded the banker, after a lengthy narration, "you have all the particulars of what has transpired, so far as we know them. The Threadneedle folks have placed the matter in the hands of the regular police, but our people prefer to trust to you entirely. You will please act for us, and we hope you will bring the criminal to light, and also recover the stolen property."

"What is the latter, exactly? Of course you have a list of the contents of the wallet?"

"Bless me, yes, Mr. Blake! Dear me! I should have given you that at first. There you are. On that slip you have an exact inventory of the contents of the wallet when it left our premises."

"H'm!" mused Blake, glancing keenly over the list. "No specie, I see. That's fortunate, as coin is always difficult to trace. Still more lucky, twelve banknotes are for one thousand pounds apiece. The thieves won't change those readily on this side of the water. Twenty hundreds, fifty twenties, twenty tens, and twenty fives, the balance in cheques, etc., making a gross total of twenty thousand. The cheques, I suppose, are valueless to the thieves? The notes, by their numbers, have been stopped?"

"Quite so, Mr. Blake. As you point out, the cheques are of no value to anyone but their owners, being all crossed. The notes have all been stopped. None of the larger notes could possibly be changed in this country. The tens and fives might perhaps be passed privately, but they would at once be challenged on presentation to any banker or money-changer. We have struck while the iron is hot; the rogues have had no time to dispose of their plunder, and will hardly find an opportunity now, unless by the aid of Continental knaves and 'smashing shops.'"

"But you have something more to tell, perhaps some other document to show?" said Blake, looking keenly at the other as the bank official paused.

"Well, yes," laughed the manager, "though I don't know how you guessed it. I have another document—a human document—for your inspection. I brought along with me that wretched lad, Herbert Fillingdon, the cause of all the trouble. Thought you might want to examine him for yourself. I left him in your outer office in charge of your boy."

"Do you suspect the lad of complicity in the fraud, sir?"

"Um! Well, no! We don't, but the Bank of England folks do. Fillingdon has been with us for some years, and we have always found him steady and straightforward; a little careless, perhaps; but one can't expect old heads on young shoulders. I think the lad is straight enough, but that is rather for you to find out, Mr. Blake."

"Who will lose the money, should it not be recovered, sir?"

"Why, in a way, Fillingdon himself. You see, Mr. Blake, Herbert's uncle, Mr. Tromper, is one of our shareholders. He is a very wealthy man, holding a large amount of our stock, and he became security for young Fillingdon. Should the money be lost, Mr. Tromper will be required to stump up, and in that case the lad may say good-bye to any chance of ultimately succeeding to his uncle's fortune, or any part of it."

"More, our bank directors had resolved to transfer young Fillingdon to our West End branch at the beginning of the year, giving him a very good billet there; but, of course, unless he is entirely cleared of all complicity in the present unpleasant affair, that will fall to the ground. Still further, he will undoubtedly be dismissed from our service altogether, as we cannot afford to retain an official on whom rests the slightest breath of suspicion."

"Ah, we must try to avoid that, if things are as I hope!" replied Blake. "Hard lines that, for a bit of carelessness at the worst. We'll have the young fellow in, and I'll look him over for myself."

In obedience to his master's call, Tinker ushered in the suspect.

Fillingdon was a tall, neatly-dressed, frank-faced youth, in no way differing from hundreds of other City clerks. Naturally terribly shaken and distressed, his manner was very nervous, but he recounted the whole matter exactly as he had done at first, answering all questions without hesitation and with the utmost candour, his wistful, eager eyes meeting those of his interrogator with a fixed, frank gaze.

The lad was able to give a very full description of the supposed Frenchman who had distracted his attention. Fairly clever with his pencil, Herbert even produced a little sketch of the man's face, declaring it sufficiently accurate for identification should anyone come across the original.

"I am quite of your opinion," remarked Blake privately to the bank-manager after a full investigation of the youth. "That lad is no thief, but an honest boy. He may have been guilty of carelessness, but nothing more. Perhaps not much of that. Remember, he, all unconscious, was doubtless pitted against a gang of clever rogues."

"I will do my best in the case, if only for the sake of this poor lad, menaced with undeserved ruin."

(How the stump of a cigarette gives the first clue which puts the famous detective on the track of a gang of expert criminals; and how the gang, after many exciting incidents, are run to earth at last, makes an enthralling tale which will appeal alike to new readers and to regular followers of the amazing career of Sexton Blake, Detective. There are also two other grand complete stories in this splendid number of THE PENNY POPULAR—now on sale everywhere. Price 1d.)