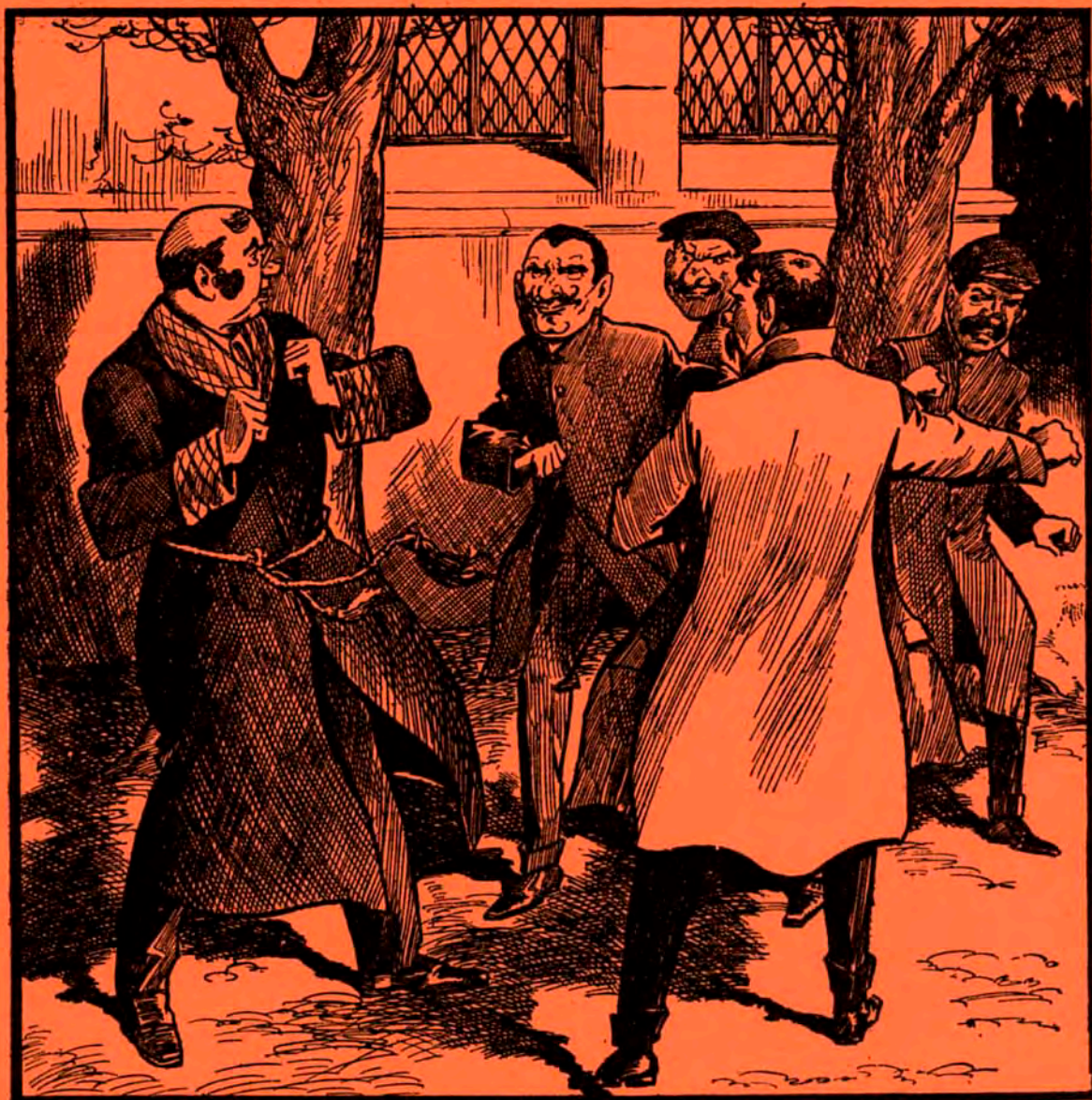
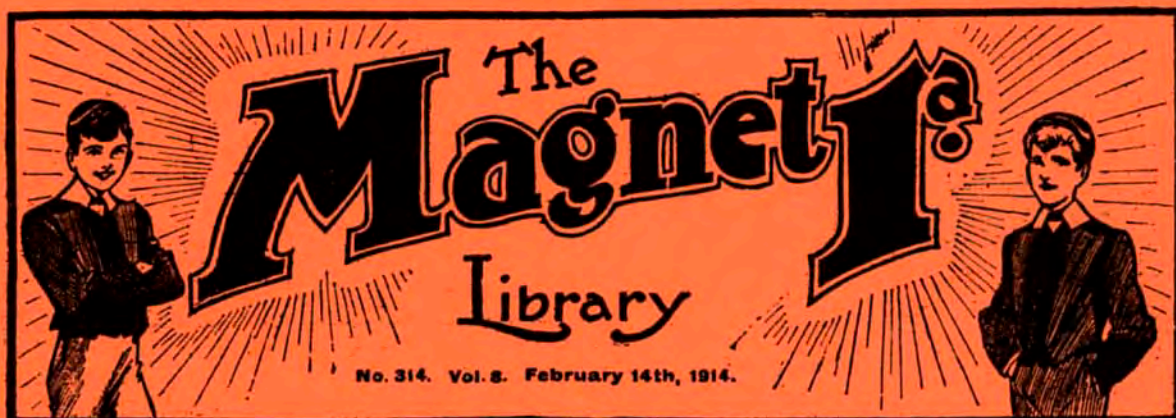


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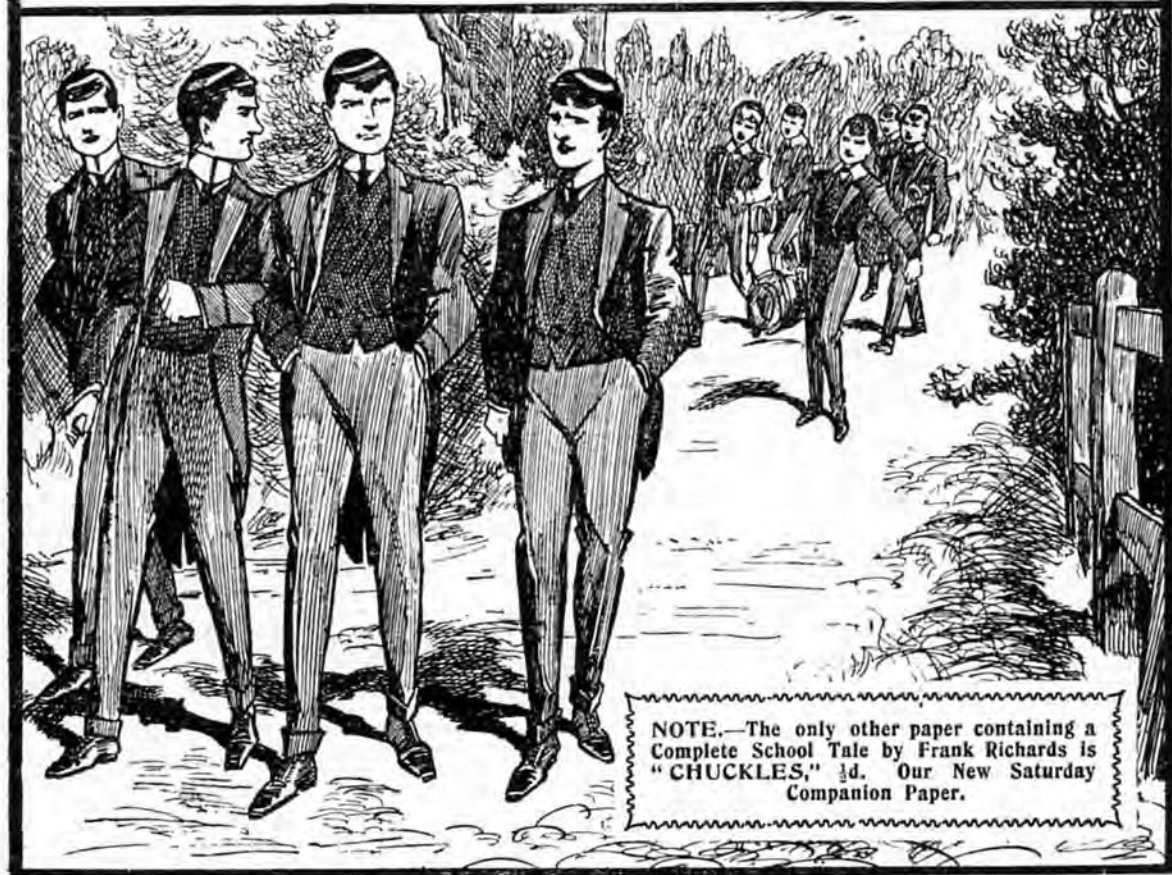
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rank Injustice!

"YOU'RE wanted!"

Loder of the Sixth did not speak politely. Loder never wasted much politeness on the Lower Fourth.

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped. They had to stop, as Loder had planted himself directly in their path in the Close of Greyfriars.

But they did not look pleased. They were just starting out on a little excursion. It was a half-holiday, and nearly everybody at Greyfriars was on the playing-fields, or out of gates. Johnny Bull had a big telescope under his arm. It was a present newly received from an uncle of Johnny's, who followed the sea, and the chums of the Remove were anxious to

test that new telescope on the shore. To be stopped by Loder, the bully of the Sixth, just as they were starting, was very disagreeable, and the juniors looked hostile at once.

"What's wanted?" asked Harry Wharton.

"You are!" said Loder. "We're going up the river, and we want somebody to carry our bags. You'll do as well as anybody else."

Five heads were shaken at once. It had been established that the Remove did not fag for the seniors, like mere fags of the Third and Second, and the Remove were very particular indeed about it. And besides, Harry Wharton & Co. did not want to give up their own excursion in order to carry bags for Loder and his friends.

"Sorry!" said Harry Wharton, very politely. "It can't be did!"

"Quite impossible!" said Bob Cherry. "You see, we're going out."

"And we don't fag for the Sixth, anyway," added Frank Nugent.

"Only for old Wingate," said Bob. "We'll fag for Wingate because we like him, but we—ahem!—don't like you, Loder."

"The don't likefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We do not esteem the august and ludicrous Loder."

"You'll fag for me," said Loder. "We've got the bags ready. Go to my study, and fetch them, and get a move on you."

The juniors did not stir.

"Do you hear me?" thundered Loder.

"Yes, we hear you," said Wharton calmly. "We're not deaf; but we're not going to fag."

"We're going out, you know," said Nugent, in a tone of patient explanation. "We're going to try Johnny Bull's new telescope."

"And we're going now," growled Johnny Bull. "Would you mind getting out of the way, Loder?"

The prefect snapped his teeth.

"Now, look here," he said. "I don't want any of your cheek."

"We don't want any of yours, if you come to that."

"If you don't go and fetch those bags at once I'll lick you."

The Famous Five drew together. They did not mean to be fagged by Loder, and they did not mean to be licked, either. Johnny Bull set down his telescope on the bench under the elms, and pushed back his cuffs in a business-like way.

Loder took a tighter grip on his walking-cane.

"Are you going to fetch those bags?"

"No."

"Rats!"

"No fear!"

Loder did not waste any more time in words. He waded in with the cane. The cane sang in the air, and came down with a lash across Harry Wharton's shoulders. The captain of the Remove uttered a yell of pain, and in one moment more the five juniors were clambering over Loder. Loder went to the ground with a bump, and the juniors sprawled over him. The prefect struggled furiously in their grasp.

"Sit on his head!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Roll on him!"

"Jump on his legs—the beast is kicking!"

"Ow-ow-ow!" roared Loder. "Get off! I—I'll have you flogged! I'll have you sacked! I'll pulverise you! I'll—groogh!"

Loder's voice died away as Johnny Bull sat on his head.

"Got him!" said Bob Cherry. "Sit tight, Johnny—"

"Yaroo!" roared Johnny Bull, and he leaped into the air as if Loder's head had become suddenly red-hot.

"What's the matter?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"What on earth—"

"Yow-ow! I'm bitten! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sit on his head, Nugent!"

"No fear!" said Frank Nugent promptly. "A dog's allowed only one free bite, and Loder's had his. I'll stand on his head if you like."

"Gerroff!" roared Loder. "Lemme get up, you young scoundrels! Help! Wingate!"

"Oh, my hat, here's Wingate!" growled Johnny Bull, as the sturdy form of the captain of Greyfriars came through the elms. "Now look out for fireworks. Now I come to think of it, it's against the rules to handle a prefect."

"Wingate! Call these young scoundrels off!" shrieked Loder.

Wingate was striding towards the gates, apparently in a hurry. He stopped, and looked round with a frown, as Loder shouted to him.

Then he came striding on the scene with an angry look.

"You young rascals! How dare you! Get off Loder at once!"

The juniors obeyed immediately. Wingate was head prefect and captain of the school, and, besides that, he was very popular with the juniors. There were few things that the Removes would not have done for old Wingate.

Loder staggered to his feet, looking very much rumped, and very furious. He was panting for breath.

"How dare you touch a prefect?" exclaimed Wingate angrily.

"He lapped me with his cane," growled Wharton. "He wants to fag us. The Remove don't fag, and Loder knows that well enough."

"You've no right to fag them, Loder."

Loder scowled furiously.

"If you're going to back up these cheeky kids in assaulting a prefect, Wingate—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Wingate, who did not appear to be in his usual good temper. "What is it you want the kids to do?"

"Carry some bags up the river."

"And we're going down to Pegg," said Bob Cherry.

"We're going to test Johnny Bull's new telescope."

"And we're not going to fag for Loder, anyway!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You're going—where?" asked Wingate, sharply.

"Down to Pegg—"

Wingate compressed his lips.

"I don't see why you can't fag for Loder for once," he said, "just do as he tells you. No reason why you shouldn't make yourselves useful."

The juniors stared blankly at Wingate. They were astounded. The captain of Greyfriars could always be depended upon to hold the scales of justice with an even hand. That he should decide against them, on an occasion when they were clearly in the right, was amazing, as well as extremely disconcerting. Loder grinned; he had not expected Wingate to back him up in that way, and he was surprised as well as pleased.

"Oh, I say—" began Bob Cherry hotly.

"Look here, Wingate—"

"We're not going to fag—"

Wingate interrupted them angrily.

"Will you do as I tell you or not? You're to fag for Loder this afternoon. If you don't do as I tell you, I'll make it jolly warm for you."

And Wingate, with a warning gesture, strode away towards the gates. The juniors were left in a state of great dismay. To disobey Wingate was hardly possible, even when his orders were unjust, as they certainly were in the present instance.

"What's the matter with old Wingate!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Why, it's rotten. He knows jolly well that Loder's got no right to fag us."

"Are you going to do as Wingate tells you, or not?" demanded Loder. As a rule, Harry Wharton & Co. found much favour with the captain of the school, and Loder would not have been sorry to sow trouble between them.

"We'll do it because Wingate says so, not because you say so," said Harry Wharton, anxious to make that point clear.

Loder grinned.

"I don't care why you do it, so long as you do it," he said.

"Go to my study, and get the bags—there are four of them—and then come down to the gates."

And the juniors, with gloomy faces, went back to the School House, and fetched the bags out of Loder's study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Loder is Left!

L ODER and his friends were waiting at the school gates when the juniors arrived there. Loder and Walker and Carne and Valence of the Sixth were going upon a little excursion, and they had a good deal to carry, and did not care about carrying it themselves. There was a very heavy bag containing provisions for a picnic, a bundle of rugs, four overcoats fastened up with straps for carrying, and other things. It was much easier to have their paraphernalia carried by fags, willing or unwilling, and it was an especial gratification to Loder & Co. to force their old enemies of the Remove into the service.

They grinned at the sight of the gloomy faces of the juniors as the latter came down to the gates.

"Follow us!" said Loder.

And the four seniors started off, with the laden fags behind them. Johnny Bull had his telescope under his arm, and the other four juniors had a bag or a bundle each. And their tempers were very bad.

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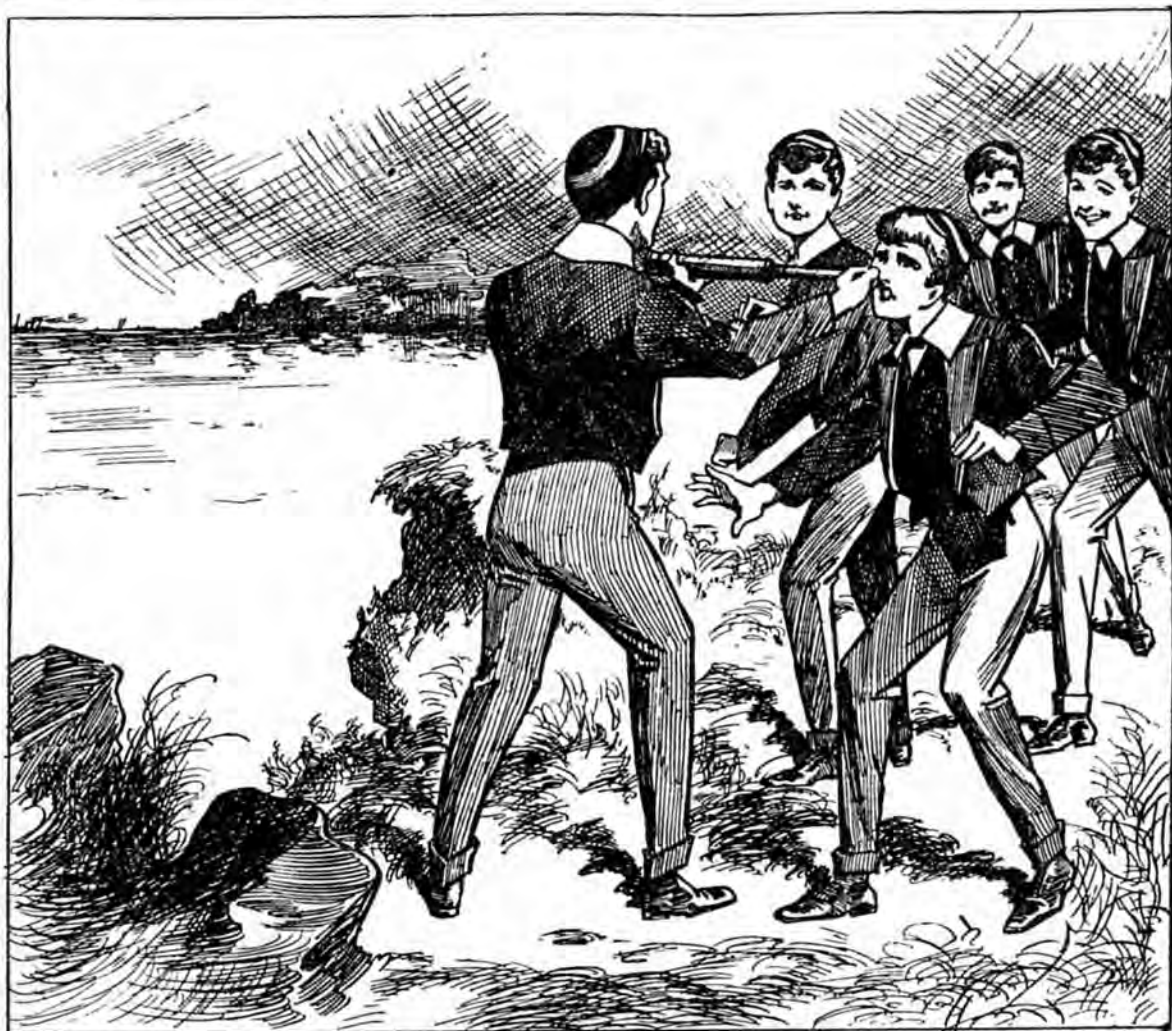
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Johnny Bull pulled open the telescope with a flourish. It came open more easily than he expected, and the back of his hand caught Bob Cherry full on the nose. Crack! "Ow!" roared Bob Cherry. "You silly ass!" (See Chapter 3.)

A sense of injustice rankled in their breasts. They were loyal to old Wingate, but just now their loyalty was strained to breaking point. The Greyfriars captain might have punished them for handling a prefect; that would have been all right. But he had no right to order them to fag for Loder. And the chums of the Remove were feeling very rebellious. For once they were considering whether they should disregard Wingate, whose word had always been law to them.

"I'm blessed if I'm going to have my afternoon mucked up in this way," Bob Cherry growled at last.

"Just what I was thinking," said Nugent. "Wingate or no Wingate."

Harry Wharton nodded gloomily.

"Wingate's a good sort," he said. "But I've noticed that he's been very snappy in his temper the last few days. We can stand a lot from old Wingate—but I really think this is the limit. We'll fag for him, himself—"

"But not for Loder!"

"Exactly!"

"What price bolting?" murmured Bob Cherry.

They exchanged glances.

They were half a mile from Greyfriars by this time, following the towing-path beside the gleaming Sark. If they chose to fling down their burdens and bolt, the seniors would have little chance of catching them. Five heads nodded at once. The juniors were ready to risk anything, rather than sacrifice their afternoon's holiday for the benefit of the bully of the Sixth. And, besides that, they knew the other

Removites would be down on them for fagging. It was a point of honour with the Lower Fourth not to fag, and Harry Wharton, as captain of the Remove, was expected to be specially keen in looking after the rights of the Form.

"Wingate will be ratty," said Nugent slowly. "Loder's sure to tell him."

"Well, he can't be much rattier than he's been the last few days," said Wharton; "and he's in the wrong this time."

"I'm going to chuck it," said Bob.

"Hold on," said Harry, as Bob Cherry was about to drop his bundle of rugs. "Drop behind a bit first—we want to get a start when we run."

"Good egg!" said Bob, with a chuckle.

The juniors slowed down. They were already a dozen yards behind the seniors, who were walking ahead and chatting. The distance between the two parties increased. Loder turned his head suddenly, and waved his hand to the juniors.

"Back up there! Don't lag behind, you lazy young rotters."

"Go and eat coke!" replied Bob Cherry.

And he tossed his bundle of rugs into the rushes beside the river.

The bag, and the coats and the other articles followed, bundling into the rushes. Loder came striding back furiously, gripping his stick, with the other seniors after him.

"Skip!" said Wharton concisely.

And the juniors promptly skipped. They went down the

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towing-path as if they were on the cinder-track. Loder stared after them furiously, and yelled:

"Come back! Do you hear! Come back at once! You'll get licked for this! Come back!"

"We'll come after you!" roared Carne,

Bob Cherry chuckled as he ran.

"You're welcome!" he murmured. "We'll give you a run, old chap."

"After them!" said Loder, between his teeth. "Run the young beggars down! We'll give them the licking of their lives for this! There's nobody to interfere here!"

And the four seniors dashed in pursuit of the Removites.

"Put it on!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully.

The juniors ran their hardest down the towing-path. After them came the four Sixth-Formers, breathing vengeance. Harry Wharton & Co. were in good form, and they were always good runners. Loder gained upon them—but Carne and Walker and Valance gradually dropped behind. Loder, in his eagerness to get hold of the recalcitrant fags, hardly noticed that his comrades were dropping behind him. He was gaining on the juniors, and that was all he thought about.

Harry Wharton cast a glance over his shoulders. Three of the pursuers were out of sight, behind a bend in the path, and there was evidently nothing to be feared from them. But Loder was close—within six yards now—his face set and savage, and his stick grasped in his hand.

"The rotter's gaining!" gasped Wharton.

"But it's only Loder!" grinned Bob breathlessly. "When he comes up he may discover that he's caught a Tartar—a whole giddy family of Tartars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors dashed on. Closer and closer came the pursuing prefect, till they could hear his hurried breathing behind them. Bob Cherry, who was hindmost, heard the sing of the cane as it lashed through the air and missed him by less than a foot. Loder was at very close quarters now.

Bob suddenly halted, and threw himself on his hands and knees. The action was so unlooked-for that Loder could not stop himself in time, or avoid the junior. Before he even knew that Bob had stopped, he was stumbling over him. He shot across the junior, and plunged down on the towing-path, the cane flying from his hand.

"Back up!" roared Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped instantly, and came tearing back. As Loder struggled to his feet, they collared him, and he went down again with a crash.

"Hands off, you young villains!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jump on him!"

"Pitch him into the river!" shouted Johnny Bull excitedly.

Loder struggled desperately. But the excited juniors, without thinking just then of consequences, rolled him down the bank, and he disappeared into a bed of rushes. His legs disappeared into muddy, shallow water, and his head, hatless and ruffled, rose above the rushes. He shook his fist furiously at the Removites as he strove to scramble out. But the clinging mud held his feet, and it was not so easy to scramble out. The juniors grinned down at him from the bank.

"Go it, Loder—one leg at a time!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good-bye, Bluebell!"

And the Famous Five walked away cheerfully along the river, leaving the prefect to struggle out of the mud and the rushes as best he could. It was several minutes before Loder, muddy and wet and panting, struggled up the bank—and by that time Harry Wharton & Co. were out of sight. And Loder did not feel equal to further pursuit—he knew that it would be in vain. Vengeance had to be postponed. With feelings too deep for words—though he tried to express them in words which are not found in any respectable dictionary—Loder stamped away back the way he had come, to rejoin his friends and recover the bags from the rushes, a mile up the river. Harry Wharton & Co., in the best of spirits, sauntered down to the seashore.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

An Astounding Discovery!

"YOU open it like this!" said Johnny Bull.

The chums of the Removite were on the cliffs overlooking the shore of Pegg Bay. Below them, on one side, lay the fishing village of Pegg, the little cottages clustered against the cliffs; on the other side the great mass of the Shoulder rose against the blue sky. Wide and blue the sea lay before them, gleaming in the sunlight.

Johnny Bull pulled open the telescope with a flourish. It came open a little more easily than he had expected, and

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the back of his hand caught Bob Cherry full upon the nose, as he looked on.

Crack!

"You silly ass!" roared Bob, jumping back and clapping his hand to his nose. "What's the good of opening it like that? Ow!"

"Sorry—it came open so quick—"

"Ow! You fathead! Ow!" said Nugent!

"Never mind your nose," said Nugent comfortingly; "let's look through the giddy telescope. There's a ship out there, just on the horizon. We may be able to see the sailors through the glass."

"My nose—"

"Oh, blow your nose!" said Johnny Bull. "This telescope is jolly heavy. Stand here so that I can rest it on your shoulder."

"Blow your telescope!" growled Bob Cherry, rubbing his nose. He seemed to take the damage to his nose more seriously than Johnny Bull did.

Nugent obliged with his shoulder, and Johnny Bull rested the telescope upon it, and turned it on the sea. The juniors looked through it in turn. The ship, dimly visible out on the horizon, rushed suddenly into view when seen through the glass, and the juniors could make out the forms of the sailors on her deck.

"It's a jolly good glass," said Harry Wharton. "Your uncle's a brick, Johnny. Turn it along the shore; we may be able to see Cliff House school-room."

Johnny Bull turned the glass so as to sweep the shore in the direction of Pegg. Cliff House School was hidden from view by the cliffs; but the cottages in the village, and the Anchor Inn, with its long garden, seemed to rush to meet Johnny Bull as he applied his eye to the glass.

The telescope was resting on Bob Cherry's shoulder now, and Johnny Bull was stooping his head to get his eye to the small end. Suddenly Johnny gave a jump—so suddenly that he knocked his nose against the telescope and roared:

"Oh!"

"What's the matter?"

"My hat!"

Johnny Bull's eyes were wide open with amazement. He had evidently seen something through the telescope that astounded him. The other fellows gazed at him in astonishment.

"What is it?" exclaimed Wharton. "What did you see?"

"It's—it's impossible!" exclaimed Bull.

"What's impossible, ass?"

"What—what I saw!" stammered Johnny Bull. "I—I must have been dreaming! It can't be true! It simply can't!"

"What was it?"

"It—it's amazing! It can't be!"

The curiosity of the Removites was at burning point now. Harry Wharton shoved Johnny Bull away from the telescope, and applied his eye to it. He saw the cottages of Pegg, but there was nothing remarkable in the view.

"Can you see him?" gasped Johnny Bull.

"I can see old Trumper, smoking his pipe," said Harry.

"I don't mean old Trumper."

"I can see the sign of the Anchor—by Jove—I can read it through the glass, too!"

"Blow the sign! You've moved the glass!" said Johnny Bull. "Turn it on the inn garden."

"What for?"

"Then you can tell me whether I'm dreaming."

"What did you see?" howled Nugent.

"Wharton can look—and tell you!" said Johnny Bull. "I can't believe my blessed eyes!"

Wharton swayed the glass till it bore upon the long, tree-shaded garden of the Anchor Inn. He moved it to sweep every recess of the old garden. Then suddenly he gave a jump, as Johnny Bull had done, and uttered an exclamation.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Can you see him?" demanded Johnny Bull excitedly.

"Great Scott, yes!"

"Who is it?" roared Bob Cherry. "You silly chumps—if you don't tell me what's the matter, I'll punch your silly heads!"

"Wingate!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Wingate! Rats! At the Anchor Inn?"

"Gammon!"

"The gammonfulness is terrific!"

The juniors understood Johnny Bull's astonishment now. The Anchor Inn at Pegg was frequented chiefly by long-shoremen, and it did not bear a very good reputation. Like all places where intoxicants were sold, it was out of bounds for the Greyfriars fellows, seniors and juniors alike. The accidental discovery of Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, in the garden of the Anchor Inn, was astonishing enough.

And it was not only his presence there that was astounding—it was his occupation.

Harry Wharton held the glass steady and looked. In a corner of the inn garden, shaded from the village street by a wall covered with creepers, was a little table, at which two persons sat. They were overlooked from nowhere but the cliffs—and the cliffs were too far away for them to be seen with the naked eye, or at all events to be recognised. Without the glass, the corner of the garden was a mere blur. With the glass, the table and the two figures sitting at it rushed into distinct view.

Wingate—if it was Wingate—was sitting at the table, with a glass beside him, and cards in his hand. The man opposite him was a longshoreman of Pegg, a loafer of the place named Scrowe. The two were playing cards, and there was a glimmer of money on the table. There was a whisky-bottle and glasses.

Wharton scanned the face of Scrowe's companion. Almost line for line he made out the features of George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars.

His face was quite pale as he stepped back from the telescope.

"You fellows look, and tell me whether this is a night-mare," he said quietly.

The juniors looked in turn. Then Johnny Bull closed the telescope with a snap. They had seen enough that afternoon through the telescope—rather too much, in fact. The Famous Five looked at one another with serious and troubled faces.

"It was Wingate!" said Harry Wharton.

"No doubt about that!"

"Wingate, right enough!"

"The rightfulness is terrific!"

"Gambling and drinking at the Anchor!" said Wharton, in a hushed voice. "Old Wingate—it seems too horrible to be true! If it had been Loder, or Carne—but Wingate! He must be out of his senses!"

"It would mean the sack for him, if he were bowled out, if he were ten times captain of the school!" said Nugent.

"And that explains!" said Harry quietly.

"Explains what?"

"Why he made us lag for Loder this afternoon. You remember we told him we were coming to Pegg? He didn't want us to come to Pegg, in case we might spot him about the Anchor. Of course, he doesn't want to be seen there."

The juniors nodded. It seemed clear enough now. Wingate's act in making them lag for Loder had been unjust—and it had been inexplicable. Now there was a reason to be found for it—and a good reason. If the captain of Greyfriars intended to spend the half-holiday playing cards at the Anchor, naturally he would not want any Greyfriars fellows near the place, if it could be avoided.

"Oh, this is rotten!" said Bob Cherry. "I'd never have believed it of old Wingate. He is always down on any kind of rottenness—and then to do this—"

"He must be potty!"

"The reckless ass!" said Wharton. "To go to that place in broad daylight—why, anybody might see him going in, or leaving. It's not only rotten—it's idiotic!"

"I wish we hadn't seen him," said Nugent uneasily. "If he knew, he might—might think we'd been spying on him."

"Well, we couldn't help seeing him. It was an accident!"

"Yes, I know; but—"

"Perhaps it's a good thing, too!" said Harry thoughtfully.

"Of course, we're going to keep this dark—it's no business of ours to give old Wingate away, whatever he's up to. But other people might have seen him—suppose Bunter had spotted him, for instance—it would be all over Greyfriars in half an hour."

"Lucky for him it was only us," said Bob. "But Bunter's in Pegg this afternoon—I heard him saying he was going there."

"I think some of us ought to speak to Wingate, later," said Harry. "Of course, it's rather cheek for a junior to read lectures to the captain of the school—but when a splendid chap like Wingate is going to the dogs, it's time for somebody to speak to him. At any rate, it may make him a bit more careful!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Talk of angels!" growled Bob Cherry. "Shut up. Here's Bunter!"

And Billy Bunter rolled up, panting for breath.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. No Luck for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER regarded the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles curiously. Their looks, and the sudden silence that followed his arrival, showed him plainly enough that something was "on." And Bunter was afflicted with a constitutional curiosity, which made him painfully anxious to know everything that was

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going on. He was the Peeping Tom of the school, and it was his special pride that he was never "out" of anything.

"I saw you fellows coming up," he explained, pumping in breath. "I called to you, but you didn't hear me. Got anything to eat?"

"No!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You haven't come up here to picnic?" asked Bunter suspiciously.

"No, you fat duffer!"

"Then what are you doing here?"

"We came to try Johnny's new telescope."

Bunter grunted.

"Is that all? Blessed if I'd have fagged up this blessed cliff if I'd known that that was all! You must be a precious set of duffers. But, I say, you fellows, what's the matter?"

"Nothing!"

"You were all looking as solemn as boiled owls," said Bunter. "Wharton was saying something about Wingate. What's the matter with Wingate?"

"Oh, rats!"

"I saw Wingate this afternoon," said Bunter. "I met him near the Anchor." The juniors could not help exchanging glances, and Bunter noticed it at once. "Hallo, what are you blinking at one another for? What's odd in meeting Wingate near the Anchor? You have to pass the Anchor to get into Pegg, don't you?"

"Yes, ass!"

"He was awfully crusty," said Bunter. "I asked him if he could lend me a tanner till my postal-order comes, and what do you think he did?"

"Kicked you, I hope!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The beast cuffed me," said Bunter indignantly. "Actually whopped me on the napper. If he hadn't been captain of the school, and if he hadn't been bigger than I am, and if he hadn't walked away, I'd have punched his head. What were you saying about Wingate just now, Wharton?"

"Find out!"

"Oh, really, you know! Have you got any toffee about you, Bob Cherry?"

"No; I haven't!"

"Do you happen to have any milk chocolate in your pocket, Nugent?"

"No; I don't!"

The Owl of the Remove snorted. It seemed that he was to have nothing but the trouble of climbing the cliff-path for his pains.

"Well, let's have a look through the telescope, as I'm up here," he said ungraciously. "Open it, will you?"

"No, I won't!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, don't be a mean beast. Why shouldn't I have a squint through the telescope, if I want to?" demanded Bunter warmly.

Johnny Bull did not reply. But he did not intend to let Bunter look through the telescope.

If the Owl of the Remove spotted Wingate in the inn garden, all Greyfriars would know it within the hour.

"About time we got back to Greyfriars, I think," said Nugent.

"Yes; come on."

"Look here, I'm going to look through the telescope!" exclaimed Bunter. "What is it you don't want me to see, you rotters?"

"Good-bye!" said Bob Cherry sweetly.

And the five juniors walked down the cliff-path, leaving Billy Bunter red with indignation.

Bunter shook a fat fist after them.

The Owl of the Remove had never felt so ill-used in his life.

He generally succeeded in fastening himself upon somebody for a half-holiday, but this time he had failed all round. He had started out from Greyfriars with Lord Mauleverer, but his lordship had dodged him in the lane. He had fallen in with Mark Linley and Penfold, and they had walked so fast that he had had to drop out. Then he had made his attempt to extract sixpence from Wingate, and received a cuff for his pains. And now the Famous Five had left him stranded. Billy Bunter felt that his half-holiday had been wasted, and he might as well have remained in the school writing out certain lines for Mr. Queleh that were long overdue.

"Simply rotten!" growled Bunter. "Beasts! I suppose I'd better amble down to Pegg again. I may meet some of the Cliff House girls. If Marjorie asks me to tea, I'll go, and tell those rotters afterwards—yah!"

And Bunter rolled away down the cliff path at a much slower pace than the juniors ahead of him. Harry Wharton & Co. had disappeared by the time Bunter reached the beach. The fat junior toddled on towards Pegg, and suddenly his fat face cleared up, and he grinned with satisfaction. Two girls came into view from a bulging cliff, round which the

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NEXT MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

path ran; and the Owl of the Remove recognised Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn, of Cliff House School.

They were coming directly towards him, evidently on their way back to Cliff House to tea, after a ramble on the cliffs.

Billy Bunter halted directly in their path, and raised his cap in what he considered a very killing style, bowing his fat person more or less gracefully in greeting.

Marjorie and Clara had to stop.

"Good-afternoon!" said Bunter, with an agreeable squirm.

"Good-afternoon!" said Marjorie politely, and Clara nodded. Neither of the girls liked the fat, conceited junior, but Marjorie was very gentle to everybody.

"How jolly lucky to meet you, wasn't it?" said Bunter.

"Was it?" said Miss Clara.

"Yes. I was just wondering if I should," remarked Bunter, falling into pace beside Marjorie. He wanted to walk between the two girls, but Marjorie slipped her arm through Clara's, so he couldn't. "You know, there are all sorts of rough longshoremen about, and you ought to have an escort—a fellow who could protect you if necessary."

Marjorie smiled at the idea of the fat junior tackling a rough longshoreman.

"I'll see you to Cliff House," said Bunter. "Have you had tea?"

"Not yet," said Marjorie.

"I haven't either," said Bunter.

"Then you won't have time to walk to Cliff House, if you're to get back to Greyfriars in time for tea," said Miss Clara sweetly.

Bunter blinked. He thought Miss Clara very obtuse.

"Oh, that's all right!" he said. "I'll see you safe home."

"Then we'll hurry," said Clara. "Of course, we can't walk so fast as you, but we'll walk as fast as we can. Come on, Marjorie; we mustn't make our escort too late for his tea."

And Miss Clara began walking very fast indeed. Marjorie smiled, and kept pace with her. Billy Bunter put on speed, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

"I—I say, hold on," he said breathlessly. "You mustn't tire yourselves out, you know."

"Oh, we're not tired!" said Clara.

"You—you will be, you know. I—I say, I'd rather walk a bit slower, if you don't mind," stammered Bunter. "I'm rather fagged."

Miss Clara did not seem to hear. She was walking very fast indeed, and Bunter was already several paces behind. Marjorie hesitated a moment, but Miss Clara had a firm hold upon her arm, and she had no choice. Bunter gasped for breath.

"I—I say—go easy, you know—look here——"

He broke into a run.

"Oh, good—we'll race you, Bunter!" exclaimed Miss Clara, her eyes dancing.

"I—I didn't mean to race. I——"

"Yes, we'll race you," said Clara, determinedly misunderstanding. "Come on, Marjorie. Of course, we can't beat an athlete like Bunter, but we'll do our best."

"Oh, Clara——"

"Run!" exclaimed Miss Clara.

Marjorie laughed, and they ran. In a minute or less they disappeared round a cliff, and the Owl of the Remove fagged after them in vain. Bunter pegged on breathlessly, but the girls had disappeared, and the fat junior did not catch sight of them again.

Bunter halted, grunting discontentedly.

"Oh, rotten! Now, I sha'n't be able to have tea at Cliff House!" he growled. "What blessed duffers girls are! If I didn't know they were both sweet on me, I should suspect that they'd done that on purpose—I should really. Well, now they won't have me to tea, and it serves them right!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away disconsolately towards Greyfriars.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Having It Out!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were chatting in the porch of the School House when Wingate of the Sixth came in.

There was a frown upon the brow of the Sixth-Former, and he walked directly into the House, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

He did not even see the juniors.

The Co. exchanged glances when he had gone in. Wingate's look was enough to show the most casual observer that he was worried in his mind. Certainly, if the captain of Greyfriars had a secret, he was a very bad hand at keeping it.

"Looks as if he wants all Greyfriars to know that he's

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been playing the giddy goat," growled Bob Cherry. "I suppose he's lost money to that fellow Serewe. Looks like it."

"Well, he hasn't the look of a winner, certainly!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I wonder——" began Wharton, and he paused.

His chums looked at him inquiringly.

"Whether we ought to speak to him about what we've seen?" said Harry slowly. "I don't like keeping it secret. It seems mean, somehow."

"It would make him awfully ratty if he knew we knew."

"I suppose it would; but it might make him a bit more careful, too. Whatever kind of an ass he makes of himself, it would be a rotten thing for old Wingate to get the sack."

The juniors almost held their breath at the idea. Wingate was a "big gun" of tremendous importance at Greyfriars—captain of the school, head prefect, head of the games, cock of the walk in the Sixth Form—no end of a great gun. But the Head had seen what the Remove chums had seen, there was no doubt whatever that George Wingate, great gun as he was, would get the "sack," and get it at once. Dr. Locke, in fact, would be all the harder upon a prefect who abused his position, and the confidence that was placed in him.

"It would be awful, by Jove!" said Frank Nugent. "But it seems a frightful cheek for a junior to start sermonising the captain of the school."

"Rather thick," agreed Bob Cherry.

"I don't know about sermonising," said Harry, colouring a little. "I don't think I'd set up to sermonise anybody, especially a chap older than myself. But he seems to have forgotten the danger he's in, and there'd be no harm in pointing that out. Why, the very way he acts gives him away to anyone who sees him."

"That's true."

"I think I'll tell him we saw him," said Harry. "It's rotten having secret knowledge about a fellow, anyway. It makes me feel as if I'd been spying. When he knows that five juniors saw him playing the fool, he may realise that if he doesn't chuck it, he's bound to be found out and sacked."

"Well, it won't do any harm to speak to him, I suppose," Bob said, a little doubtfully.

Wharton did not waste time. Wingate had gone to his study, and ten minutes after he was there Wharton knocked at the door. A sharp and irritable voice—quite unlike George Wingate's usual way of speaking—bade him enter.

Wharton entered.

Wingate was seated on the edge of the table, facing the fire, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, his brow gloomy and frowning. He jerked his head round as the junior came in, and looked at him with unamiable inquiry.

"What do you want?"

"Only a word or two, Wingate, if you'll let me."

Wingate grunted.

"I don't want to hear any complaints about Loder. Loder's a prefect, and you should treat him with respect. If you don't, it serves you right to be licked. So there's an end."

"It isn't about Loder."

"Well, what is it about, then?" exclaimed Wingate irritably.

"Yourself."

"Eh! What do you mean? Get it out."

"We saw you this afternoon, by accident," said Harry, plunging into the subject at once, after closing the door.

Wingate stared at him.

"I know you did—when you were with Loder."

"After that, I mean."

"After that! How could you see me after that? I've been in Pegg, and you were gone up the river with Loder."

"We cleared off and left Loder," said Harry quietly.

"We're not bound to lag for Loder, and we were standing up for our rights."

"Oh!" said Wingate grimly.

"We went down to Pegg to try Bull's new telescope. We were on the cliffs, and we happened to turn the glass on the garden of the Anchor," explained Wharton. "We hadn't any idea of spying. Bull was the first who looked, and he thought he must be dreaming."

Wingate stared at him. Wharton had expected the Sixth-Former to colour, or, at least, to show some signs of confusion. But Wingate only looked surprised and impatient and decidedly irritable.

"Well, and what did Bull see in the inn garden that you make so much fuss about?" he asked. "Two drunken longshoremen fighting, perhaps."

"No."

"Well, I don't care what he saw—what in the name of the dickens does it matter to me?" the senior exclaimed.

Wharton looked at him steadily. He had never suspected Wingate of duplicity before; such a thing seemed quite



"I—I—say—what——" stammered Wharton, staring at the prefect. He did not even recognise him in his coating of ink and soot and treacle and glue. "It is Loder!" said Mr. Quelch quietly. "He knows jolly well I'm Loder!" hooted the prefect. (See Chapter 10.)

foreign to Wingate's frank and manly nature. But there could be no doubt in Wharton's mind now that Wingate was acting. How could he fail to be aware of what Johnny Bull had seen in the inn garden?

"I should think it does matter to you, Wingate!" said Harry quietly.

"Why?"

"It was you we saw!"

"What!"

"We saw you in the garden of the Anchor Inn," said Harry steadily. "You were playing cards with Scrawe, the longshore loafer. You couldn't be seen from the road, and the cliffs were too far off. I suppose you thought—but the telescope made all the difference. I saw you almost as clearly as I see you now."

Wingate's frown had been growing darker and darker while the junior was speaking. As Wharton finished, he made a stride to the table, and grasped a cane.

"I don't know why you've come here with this foolery, Wharton," he said harshly. "But I know I'm going to lick you for your cheek."

"You can lick me if you like," said Harry. "But you know it's true. We all looked at you in turn—five of us. I've come to tell you to put you on your guard. If you must do rotten things like that, you ought to keep them dark—not play the goat where anybody might see you!"

"Wharton!"

"You've always been decent to us—until to-day," said THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 314.

NEXT
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Harry. "If it had been Loder or Carne we'd seen, I shouldn't think anything more about the matter. But it's rotten to see a chap like you throwing his chances away. Suppose Bunter had seen you there—all Greyfriars would know it by this time."

Wingate looked at him very curiously, and laid down the cane.

"You seem to be in earnest," he said, and all signs of anger had vanished from his face now.

"I am in earnest," said Harry.

"And you believe that I was in the inn garden this afternoon playing cards with a loafer and blackguard like that man Scrawe? And you expect to tell me so to my face without getting a licking? Are you mad?"

"I didn't come here to throw the thing at you," said Harry. "I came to tell you because I thought you ought to know that we knew."

"I suppose you're not subject to hallucinations?" asked Wingate, laughing a little.

"If I were, five of us couldn't have the same delusion at the same moment," said Harry.

"And all five of you think that you saw me in the garden of the Anchor Inn, playing cards with Dick Scrawe?"

"We know we did."

"No use my denying it, then?"

"You can deny it if you like, of course," said Harry, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't see the use."

"You wouldn't believe me?"

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"How could I? We saw you quite plainly—or else another chap who was so like you he might have been your brother. And you haven't any brothers, excepting your minor here in the Third Form."

Wingate turned away, and stood staring at the fire for several minutes without speaking. Harry Wharton waited in silence some minutes, and as Wingate did not speak or turn his head, he moved towards the door. But Wingate turned round then.

"Don't go for a moment, Wharton."

The junior stopped.

"You saw me, you say, in the inn garden—gambling?"

said Wingate, in a low voice.

"Yes—at a table in the corner—with whisky on the table, too," said Harry.

"Rather a shock to you—what?"

"Yes, a very great shock!" said Harry. "If any chap had said to me that you did such things, I'd have hit him. But when I saw it with my own eyes—"

Wingate bit his lip.

"I suppose, then, that I have sunk very much in the estimation of the Remove?" he said, in a curious tone of irony.

Wharton flushed.

"If you're going to take it like that, Wingate, I may as well get out," he said. "I told you because I thought it only fair to tell you what we knew."

"Have you told anybody else?"

"We're not tattlers and tale-bearers."

"Then only you five fellows know about it?" asked Wingate, looking much relieved.

"That's all!"

"And you intend to keep it dark?"

"Of course!"

"Do!" said Wingate.

"You can rely on that!" said Harry. "But—but—Wingate—"

"Well?" said the Greyfriars captain, looking at him.

Wharton advanced a step, his handsome face very earnest.

"What's the good of this kind of thing, Wingate? It's good enough for a fellow like Loder, but it's not good enough for you. Don't you see what you're risking? Suppose the Head had seen you? And if you were disgraced and sacked, think of the other fellows."

"The other fellows?" said Wingate.

"Yes—think of them. You don't know how much you're thought of in the school—especially in the Lower Forms. If the fellows found out that you were a humbug and a rotter—that's what you'd look like if this came out—think of the difference it would make to them. It would be enough to spoil the whole tone of the school. Lots of fellows do their best simply to get your good opinion. And if it turned out that you were spoofing—that you weren't to be respected after all—it would make a difference to a lot of fellows—all the difference between going straight and going wrong. You've got a lot of responsibility, Wingate!"

"By Jove! You ought to be a missionary, Wharton!"

Wharton turned crimson.

"Well, I've said all I've got to say," he said. "I know it's not my place to talk to you about what you ought to do. But I shouldn't like to see you sacked. You know now the danger you've run!"

"I'm glad you came here and told me," said Wingate quietly, "and I'm quite able to understand all you've said. And I'll say, too, that I'm sorry I've sunk in your opinion, Wharton. I can't exactly explain to you, without going into private affairs that don't concern you in the least—but you can take my word for it that I'm just the same as I've always been—and that I haven't the slightest intention of going to the dogs!"

"But—the cards—the whisky—" faltered Wharton.

"I suppose that requires some explaining," said the senior, "and it happens that I can't tell you the facts. But do your best to believe in me, Wharton—even if appearances are against me. It was very decent of you to come here and tell me what you saw—it may save me a lot of trouble. I'll take care that nothing of the kind is seen again."

Wharton would have been glad if Wingate had said that nothing of the kind should happen again; but he did not say any more. The junior quitted the study, and Wingate, left alone, stood with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, staring gloomily into the fire, his frowning brows growing darker and darker.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Peter Makes Plans.

PETER TODD of the Remove came into his study, No. 7 in the Remove passage. There was a frown upon Peter's brow, and a somewhat worried look. This was very unusual with Peter Todd, who was generally quite happy and careless and reckless, and seldom bothered about his own troubles or other people's. But for once the redoubtable Peter was in a very thoughtful mood.

Two juniors were in the study, one making toast, and the other buttering it. It was tea-time.

Alonzo Todd, Peter's cousin, gave him a nod of welcome, pausing with a buttery knife over the toast.

"You are in good time for tea, my dear Peter," said Alonzo, in his gentle voice. "Dutton has made plenty of toast, and we have a tin of sardines."

"Bunter's not here?"

"No; I think Bunter went to Pegg," said Alonzo. "I offered to read to him this afternoon, as he seemed to have nothing to do. I should have been pleased to read him a work on natural history which Uncle Benjamin gave me last vacation, but Bunter refused my offer quite rudely. I am sure I meant it kindly enough. Bunter could have obtained a great deal of valuable information respecting potatoes and other edible vegetables—"

"Grooh!" said Peter. "I'm glad he's not here. I've got something to say to you chaps."

He closed the study door.

Tom Dutton rose with a crimson face from before the fire, and laid the last round of toast on the table.

"That's the lot!" he said.

"Has anything happened, my dear Peter?" asked Alonzo, looking with affectionate inquiry at his cousin's worried face.

Peter Todd nodded.

"Yes. Something that bothers me. I want to tell you fellows about it—but I'm blessed if I know how to tell Dutton without telling all Greyfriars at the same time!" growled Peter.

"Dutton's deafness is a great affliction, my dear Peter, but—"

"What's that about mutton?" asked the deaf junior. "If you mean mutton-chops, all right; I'm jolly hungry, and I could scoff all that toast for a start."

"I've got something to tell you, Dutton," said Peter.

"Pooh!" said Dutton. "It wouldn't swell me—I've got a good appetite. Where is the mutton you were speaking of?"

"I want to talk to you!" shouted Peter.

Dutton looked puzzled.

"You said mutton just now, and now you say pork. What do you mean?"

"Oh, great Scott!" groaned Peter. "I shall have to learn the deaf-and-dumb alphabet to speak to him! My lungs ain't strong enough. You try him, Lonzy!"

"Peter wishes to converse with you, Dutton," said Alonzo loudly.

"Oh, rot!" said Dutton. "What's the good of asking me which is the worse for me? Both of them are jolly good when you're hungry, though I prefer mutton. But where are you going to get it from?"

"I give it up," said Peter. "I can't tell Dutton about it, unless I take him out into the middle of the bay in a boat and roar. Nobody outside this study must know, and not Bunter. It would mean trouble!"

"Are you going to get any pork or mutton, or shall I start on the toast?" asked Tom Dutton.

"Start on the toast, fathead!"

"Eh?"

"Bow-wow!" said Peter; and Dutton grunted and started on the toast and sardines.

Peter Todd started, too. His worry, whatever it was, had not interfered with his appetite, which was always good.

"What has happened, my dear Peter?" asked Alonzo anxiously.

"It's about Wingate."

"Wingate! I trust he is well?"

"Oh, he's well enough!" growled Peter. "What would you do, Alonzo, if you saw a fellow you liked and respected going to the dogs—the blessed bow-wows? What?"

Alonzo looked distressed.

"I should take him aside, my dear Peter, and reason with him. I should lend him some of the nice books my Uncle Benjamin has sent me—especially 'Bad Bob: The Story of the Boy who Stole the Tarts, and was Tossed by a Mad Bull.' I trust—"

"Yes; I think I can see old Wingate sitting down to read 'Bad Bob: The Story of a Giddy Kipper who Pinched Tarts, and was Tossed by a Walrus!'" growled Peter crossly.

"Not a walrus, Peter, a bull. Walruses cannot—"

"Shurrup! I suppose it's no good talking to you," said

ANSWERS

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Peter. "But I must tell somebody; and Bunter would spread it over the school, and Dutton's too jolly deaf to hear me, unless I tell all the county too. Look here, Alonzo! I saw Wingate to-day!"

"So did I, Peter," said Alonzo, in surprise. "Surely there is nothing surprising in seeing Wingate, since he inhabits the same building—"

"Idiot! I saw him in Pegg!"

"Then he must have gone to Pegg," said Alonzo thoughtfully.

"Did you work that out in your head?" asked Peter sarcastically. "You'll be a Senior Wrangler some day if you go on like this, Lonzo. I saw Wingate coming out of the Anchor with an awful blighter named Screwe—Dick Screwe!"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Alonzo. "The Anchor is out of bounds. They sell spirituous liquors there, which are consumed by reckless sailormen. And that person Screwe is a most disreputable person. I have heard that he makes a book—I think that is some betting transaction—among the fishermen, and contrives to live without doing any work. A very, very objectionable person!"

"Well, I fancy Wingate is helping him to live without doing any work now," said Peter, with a grunt. "They came out of the Anchor together, like old pals. They passed six feet from me, and Wingate didn't even see me. I'm pretty certain he'd been putting down drink!"

"It is a most meritorious action to put down drink, Peter. My Uncle Benjamin belongs to seventeen societies for putting down drink."

"Wingate has been putting it down his neck, ass!"

"Dear me! He must have made his collar very wet!" exclaimed Alonzo, in astonishment.

"The inside of his neck, ass!" roared Peter.

"Oh! Goodness gracious, do you mean that he had been drinking?" exclaimed Alonzo, greatly shocked.

"Got it at last?" snorted Peter. "Or shall I say it in words of one syllable for you?"

"I quite comprehend, my dear Peter. I am shocked—nay, disgusted! I would never have believed it of Wingate. It is terrible. I will go to him—"

"What?"

"I will remonstrate with him—I will point out the error of his ways—I will plead with him, and exhort him—"

Alonzo was already making for the door. His cousin caught him by the collar and swung him back, and Alonzo collapsed into his chair again, gasping.

"Ow! My dear Peter—"

"Wingate kicking you out of his study wouldn't do any good!" snorted Peter. "Shut up! I want to talk. As the two idiots passed me, they were making an appointment for to-night. Wingate is to meet that rotter Screwe at the Anchor at half-past ten!"

"Goodness gracious!"

"Now, Wingate's a good sort, and he must be potty to go in for this sort of thing," said Peter Todd, "and to talk like that in the public street, with a Greyfriars chap within hearing—what do you think of that?"

"He must have been intoxicated to be so reckless."

"I fancy he was a bit squiffy."

"My dear Peter, what a dreadful expression!"

"Shurrup! The question is, what ought to be done? Do you think it's any bizny of ours?" asked Peter.

"Certainly," said Alonzo firmly. "It is everybody's business to save a good person from going to the bad. I am sure Uncle Benjamin—"

"It's rotten to see Wingate going this way," said Peter Todd thoughtfully. "I'd never have thought it of him. I couldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it and heard it. Of course, if juniors like us started talking to him, he'd kick us out!"

"I should be willing to suffer in the cause of morality—"

"You may be, but I ain't," said Peter rudely. "Shurrup! The question is, shall we chip in and save him from himself—what?—or let him go to the giddy bow-wows just as he likes?"

"Are you going to pass the sardines?" demanded Tom Dutton. "I've asked you three times."

"Blow the sardines!"

"No sardines! Rubbish! There's half a dozen!" exclaimed Dutton. "Just hand them over!"

Peter Todd snorted, and passed the sardines.

"What are we going to do, then?" he asked. "Suppose we prevent Wingate from keeping his appointment—eh?"

"That is an excellent idea, Peter!"

"We could lay for him, and collar him when he goes out, and wallop him so that he wouldn't feel much inclined to go on the razzle," said Peter, his eyes beginning to sparkle at the thought.

"But—but surely juniors must not wallop the captain of the school, Peter?" faltered Alonzo.

"He wouldn't know it was us if we collared him in the dark. Three of us could handle him all right, especially if we took him by surprise. Then we'd smother him with whitewash or something, and he couldn't possibly go!"

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"It seems a little drastic—"

"Desperate diseases need desperate remedies," as Tennyson says—

"I think it was Shakespeare," said Alonzo mildly.

"Blow Shakespeare! Are you game to help me?" demanded Peter.

"Certainly. I would do anything to save a misguided youth from the downward path—"

"Good enough. I'll take Dutton into the Cloisters, and explain it to him. I can shout at him there without the whole school hearing—"

Peter suddenly stopped. The study door had opened, and Bunter, looking very tired and dusty, rolled in. The sudden silence in the study, after the murmur of voices he had heard as he came to the study, warned Bunter that there was something "on."

"Hallo! You fellows talking about me?" he demanded suspiciously.

"No, ass!"

"What was it, then?"

"Oh, the weather—or something else!"

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you're not going to start keeping secrets from a chap in your own study!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Just tell me—"

"Rats!"

"You might have waited tea for me!" growled Bunter, dragging a chair up to the table.

"We might—but we didn't, you see!" snapped Peter.

"I say, isn't there anything better than this?" asked Billy Bunter, surveying the toast and the few remaining sardines with a disparaging blink.

"Lots!" said Peter cheerfully.

"Where is it?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"In the tuckshop. You can go and fetch it if you want it—and if you can pay for it," explained Peter. "Dutton, come out; I want you!"

"Eh?" said Dutton.

Peter took his deaf chum by the arm, jerked him away from the tea-table, and marched him to the door. Dutton resisted.

"I say, I haven't finished my tea!"

"Never mind; Billy will finish it for you," said Peter. "Come on!"

And he marched Dutton out of the study, and in the solitude of the old Cloisters explained the matter to him. Tom Dutton objected very strongly to the reckless scheme his chum had formed; but he was accustomed to following Peter Todd's lead, and he gave in and declared that he was "game." And then Peter laid his plans.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Great Preparations!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had expected to "hear from" Loder of the Sixth concerning the happenings of the afternoon. But they did not. Loder scowled at them when he saw them, but did not speak. Evidently Wingate had spoken to the bully of the Sixth on the subject, and made Loder see that he had better let the matter drop—for which the chums of the Remove were duly grateful.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had been to Bob Cherry's study to tea, and when they came into No. 1 Study afterwards they found Peter Todd sitting on the table, apparently waiting for them.

"Hallo! Here you are!" said Todd. "I want to see you chaps!"

"See away—no charge!" said Nugent.

"I want you to lend me something."

"Just in time," said Wharton cheerfully. "I had a remittance from my uncle this afternoon. How much?"

Todd laughed.

"It isn't money. I want your bottle of marking-ink."

"Right-ho! It's in the table-drawer."

"Can I have all of it?"

"You can if you want it," said Wharton, with a look of surprise. "But what on earth do you want a whole bottle of marking-ink for? Got a new outfit?"

"No. I want it for something else."

"Some jape!" demanded Nugent severely.

"Not a jape this time. It's in the cause of morality, goodness, uprightness and things like that," Todd explained.

"Wha-a-t!"

"I'm going to save a sheep from wandering from the fold, and pluck a brand from the burning, and bring up a silly ass in the way he should go."

"With marking-ink?" shouted Nugent.

"Yes."

And Peter Todd walked out of the study with the bottle of

ink, leaving Wharton and Nugent in a state of great surprise.

"The ass is up to some of his blessed tricks!" said Nugent. "If he swamps that stuff over anybody it won't come off easily, and there will be a row."

"I should say so!" grinned Wharton. "There would be a row if he swamped it over me, I know that! Perhaps it's Loder. Loder's welcome to it. I'd spend a small fortune on marking-ink if somebody would chuck it over Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd, with the bottle in his pocket, went along the passage, and dropped in at Bulstrode's study. Bulstrode was not there, but Tom Brown and Hazeldene were beginning their preparation.

"You chaps keep red ink in this study, I think?" said Peter.

"We've got some," said Hazeldene. "Do you want it?"

"Please."

"Here you are! How much do you want?"

"All of it, if you don't mind," said Todd. "You can contribute this bottle in the cause of morality. To-day you behold me in a new character—as a censor of morals. Thanks for the ink!"

"Oh, it's not mine; it's Bulstrode's," said Hazel. "Take the lot. But what are you talking about? Are you off your dot?"

"What's the little game?" asked Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "If it's a jape, do you want any help?"

"It isn't a jape, but I could do with some help," said Peter Todd. "If you like to come along I'll explain it to you."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Brown, leaving his preparation at once.

"Can't you tell me?" asked Hazeldene.

"Well, I could," said Peter. "But it may get you into a row with Wingate."

"Oh, may it! You can leave me out, then," said Hazel promptly.

Peter Todd and the New Zealand junior left the study. Tom Brown had begun to look rather serious at Todd's last words.

"I say, a jape on Wingate is rather too thick!" he remarked. "Kids can't jape the captain of the school, you know. Must draw a line somewhere."

"Haven't I told you it isn't a jape? We're going to do Wingate a favour—a big favour—that he'll thank us for afterwards, later on, when he's an old, old man with white whiskers and a bald head. He will never forget the service we've done him if he lives to be as old as some of Mrs. Mimble's jam-tarts."

"But what are you going to do?" asked Tom Brown doubtfully.

"I'll explain that afterwards when I've made my collection," said Todd. "Come on! We've got to see Ogilvy."

"What for?"

"Because he's an amateur carpenter."

"What's that got to do with it?" demanded Tom Brown, more and more surprised.

"Amateur carpenters generally have a stock of glue," Peter explained.

"Glue!" howled Tom Brown. "What do you want glue for?"

"To mix with the red ink and the marking-ink."

"And you're going to do Wingate a favour with a mixture of red ink and glue and marking-ink?" gasped Brown.

"Exactly."

"Does he know?"

"Certainly not! I'm not a chap to shout out my generosity from the house-tops. Don't you know that when you're doing good you should hide your light under a bushel, and not let your right hand know what your left hand doeth?" demanded Todd.

"But—but does he want—"

"I haven't asked him. It's rather a delicate matter. Here we are!" Peter entered Ogilvy's study, with the dubious New Zealander after him.

"Can I borrow your glue, Ogilvy?" asked Peter. "You've got a bottle of liquid glue, I think, haven't you?"

"Yes; I have," said Ogilvy. "How much do you want?"

"The lot."

"Then I'll sell it to you," said the amateur carpenter. "I don't give away shilling bottles of glue."

Peter Todd tossed a shilling on the table in an airy way.

"There you are! Where's the glue? Thanks!" Peter left the study with the bottle under his arm. "Wingate really owes me a shilling over this," he remarked. "But I sha'n't charge it to him. I'm willing to spend a shilling to help old Wingate."

"Well, so would I be," said Tom Brown—"five shillings,

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for that matter. But I don't see how you're going to help him with that stuff."

"Come into my study."

Alonzo and Dutton and Billy Bunter were in the study. Peter pointed to the door.

"You can travel, Bunter."

"I'm just going to do my prep—"

"Go and do it somewhere else, then."

"Look here, Todd! This is my study—"

"Who's head of this study?" roared Peter, picking up the poker. "If you're not outside that door in two ticks—"

Billy Bunter was outside the door in one tick. Todd slammed it after him, and then placed his collection on the table. Tom Dutton had an empty jam-jar ready, and a ruler for stirring. Peter Todd poured the marking-ink, the red ink, and the liquid glue into the jar, and added the black ink from the inkstand.

"Any treacle left?" he asked.

"There is some in the cupboard, my dear Peter."

"Shove it into that jar. It will improve it."

"I fear that Uncle Benjamin would not approve of wasting treacle—"

"Shove it in!" roared Peter.

Alonzo shoved it in. Peter regarded the horrible mixture as Dutton industriously stirred it, and seemed to reflect. Tom Brown was regarding him with open-eyed astonishment, wondering what was coming next.

"I think a little soot would improve it," said Peter at last. "What do you think, Browney? If you were going to shove that stuff over a chap's napper, to prevent him from going to keep an appointment, would you put some soot in?"

"Over a chap's napper!" shrieked Tom Brown.

"Yes."

"Whose—whose napper?" gasped Brown.

"Wingate's, of course! Didn't I tell you it was Wingate we are going to benefit?"

"You—you dangerous lunatic!" said Tom Brown, in measured tones. "Do you want to get the boot? Shove that stuff over Wingate's napper—the captain of the school's napper—the head prefect's napper! You'll be sacked!"

"I'm not going to leave my card on Wingate when I do it," said Peter sarcastically. "It will come from an 'Unknown Friend,' like the anonymous letters you read about."

"But what's Wingate done?"

"It isn't what he's done, it's what he's going to do. Mind, this is a dead secret. That's why I've kicked Bunter out. He can't keep a secret. Wingate has been playing the giddy ox, and he's going out at half-past ten to-night to meet a rotter in Pegg—an awful blighter named Dick Screwe."

"Rot!" said Tom Brown incredulously. "Wingate isn't that sort!"

"I heard him make the appointment with my own eyes—I mean, ears!" said Peter Todd. "I shouldn't have believed it otherwise. As head of the top study in the Remove, I look upon it as my duty to take this matter up. With that mixture swamped on his napper, Wingate won't feel like keeping an appointment. Would you?"

"I—I don't think so. But—"

"You can help to hold him," said Peter. "We're going to lay for him to-night, and we shall have masks on."

"Masks!" gasped the New Zealand junior.

"Yes. I've got some old masks left from last Guy Fawkes' Day. I've got half a dozen of them. Wingate won't know us. Besides, he couldn't make a fuss about it, anyway. He wouldn't want to explain to the Head that he was going out at night to meet a fellow like Dicky Screwe, would he?"

"But it's not possible! You're mistaken!"

"Not a bit of it! Do you think I'm a silly ass?"

"Well, I do, if you're thinking of shoving that stuff over Wingate."

"I am thinking of it, and you're going to help me, with Lonzy and Dutton. The four of us will be able to handle him."

"But—but—"

"You don't want to funk, I suppose, when it's a question of doing good and saving a chap we all like from the downward path, and the road to ruin, and things like that?" Peter Todd exclaimed indignantly. "Think of old Wingate, following the primrose path of dalliance, as Pope says—"

"Ha, ha! Shakespeare!"

"Well, whoever it was, think of Wingate following the giddy primrose path to red ruin and the sack, when we can save him by so simple a means as swamping a mixture over his napper?"

"I think you're the maddest duffer that ever—ever—ever duffed!" said Tom Brown. "If you could make me believe you're right about Wingate—"

Peter Todd explained at length what he had discovered in Pegg. The New Zealand junior listened in astonishment.



"Think!" said Alonzo, wagging a bony forefinger at the astounded Sixth-former. "Think—oh, think—my dear friend, before it is too late! I wish to save you from yourself!" "You are very kind!" said Wingate. (See Chapter 11.)

"Well, that beats me!" he said. "I always thought Wingate was as straight as a die. All the fellows think so." "I'd go to him and talk to him like a Dutch uncle, only he'd boot me out of his study before I got fairly started," said Peter. "Lonzy wants to give him tracts to read—but what good do you think that would do?"

"Ha, ha! Not very much."

"So you see this is the only way. It may save him from the sack. Suppose he's missed to-night, and it turns out that he was playing the giddy ox at the Anchor with Dicky Scrowe. The Head would expel him as soon as look at him. But he's under the wing of No. 7 Study—we're going to look after him," said Peter generously.

And he added the soot to the compound in the jar, and Tom Dutton mixed it up with great care. Brown shuddered as he looked at it. Certainly a fellow who had that horrible mixture swamped on his head would not be likely to feel inclined to go out and keep appointments afterwards—what-ever might be the attraction.

"I'll wake you at ten to-night," said Peter Todd. "We four will do it—Bunter must be left out as he's such a gas-work. When you come to think of it, you'll be glad you've had a chance of helping to do some real good."

Tom Brown had his doubts about that—but he did not dissent. He felt that he was in for it. But for the rest of that evening, extremely thoughtful expressions might have been observed upon the faces of Tom Brown and Alonzo and

Dutton. Peter Todd, however, seemed to be in the best of spirits, and was evidently looking forward with keen relish to that unique opportunity of doing good.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Quite a Success!

L ODER, of the Sixth, saw lights-out for the Remove that night.

Loder bestowed dark looks upon Harry Wharton & Co., but did not address them. The Famous Five avoided the prefect's eye. Had Loder not been thinking of the Co., and the grudge he owed them, he might have noticed that there was suppressed excitement in the manner of some of the other Removites. But he had no eyes for Peter Todd and his comrades.

Lights out, the prefect left the dormitory.

The Remove fellows chatted as usual for a time, and dropped off to sleep one by one.

By ten o'clock there was complete silence in the dormitory; and the fellows were all asleep with two exceptions. Peter Todd was remaining awake because he had work on hand, and Tom Brown could not sleep. The closer came the moment for the execution of Todd's wild scheme, the more risky and harebrained it appeared to the New Zealand junior; and so, under the circumstances, he did not feel at all inclined for sleep.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

When ten o'clock had rung out, Peter Todd stepped out of bed. The appointment made with Dicky Serewe was for half-past ten at the Anchor, and if Wingate was going to keep it, he would probably leave the school by a quarter-past ten at the latest, probably earlier. Todd had no time to waste.

"You awake, Browney?" he murmured.

"Not likely to sleep," growled the New Zealand junior.

"Get up, Lonzy."

Alonzo Todd was fast asleep, but he woke up when Peter shook him, and obediently turned out of bed. Todd did not speak to Dutton—he could not have done so without waking the dormitory from end to end. He shook him, and Dutton's eyes opened, and he rose.

The four juniors dressed themselves quickly.

Then Peter Todd stepped cautiously to the door and opened it.

The light was out in the passage; all was dark. From the direction of the stairs came a faint glimmer of light, and that was all.

But it was in the opposite direction that the four juniors proceeded, feeling their way to the box-room door.

They passed through the box-room, and dropped one by one from the window to the lower roof below, and thence to the ground.

"Here we are again!" murmured Peter Todd.

"Where's the mixture?" asked Tom Brown. "Have you forgotten it?"

Peter snorted.

"No. 7 Study never forgets things, fathead. I've hidden it in the ivy outside, ready. I couldn't bring it down from the window with me, could I?"

"My dear Peter," murmured Alonzo, "I have been thinking—"

"Don't!" said Peter. "Your brain won't stand it, Lonzy. Follow me!"

"But, my dear Peter—"

"Shurrup, and come on!"

Alonzo sighed and obeyed.

Peter Todd led the way round the house, and paused where the ivy was thickest, to take out the jar containing the horrid compound which was to help him to do good.

"Here it is!" he muttered. "Groo! I've got my fingers in it! Now come on!"

"Where are you going to lay for Wingate?" asked Tom Brown, shivering as the keen wind from the sea swept through the old Close of Greyfriars, and made the branches of the elms creak and rustle.

Todd considered a moment.

"The prefects have a key each to the private gate," he said. "They're not supposed to use 'em at this time of night—but they do sometimes. We all know that Loder goes down to the Cross Keys sometimes, though he doesn't know we know—and he lets himself out with his key. Wingate will do the same. He won't climb over the wall like a fag breaking bounds."

"Then we'll lay for him at the gate?"

"That's it. It's quite dark there, he—he won't spot us—and if he does, we shall have the masks on, like Deadwood Dick & Co. in the tales, you know."

"Blow Deadwood Dick!" growled Tom Brown. "I wish I was back in the dorm. It's cold here."

"Look here, if you're funky—"

"Do you want a thick ear—"

"Yes," said Peter Todd promptly; "if you can give me one."

"I'll jolly well—"

"My dear friends," said Alonzo, "if you raise your voices you will be overheard, and then you will be found out, and then—"

"Yes; don't play the giddy ox, Browney," said Todd, more pacifically. "We didn't come out here to rag one another. We could have done that in the dorm. Let's get down to the gate and wait for Wingate. Don't bump into me, or you'll get some of this blessed mixture over your bags."

Carrying the jar very carefully, Peter Todd led the way through the elms towards the wicket-gate. That gate was used only by masters and prefects, who had keys to it.

Prefects, of course, were allowed out of gates after locking-up, if they saw fit—but they were trusted not to abuse the confidence of the Head. Wingate, if he left the school at all that night, was certain to let himself out by the gate to which he had a key. By lying in wait near the wicket-gate, the juniors could not miss him—he would have to pass close to them, and they would hear him if not see him. The darkness was an advantage for them, in laying the ambush.

But Peter Todd left nothing to chance. He had the Guy Fawkes masks concealed under his jacket. If the captain of Greyfriars struggled—if he should get a light somehow—the juniors did not want to be recognised. For although they were acting with the best intentions in the world, for

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George Wingate's benefit, they knew that they could expect no gratitude from the Greyfriars captain for their kindness. When he had been anointed with Todd's mixture, Wingate was likely to feel anything but grateful.

Todd looked back at the School House from under the elms. There were lights burning in many windows—the Head's, Mr. Prout's, and Wingate's, and several others.

Todd pointed out the light in Wingate's window.

"He's not gone yet," he said. "He wouldn't have left the light burning behind him."

"He might—to keep up appearances," said Tom Brown.

Todd shook his head.

"No fear—anybody might drop into his study while there's a light. When he goes out, he'll make believe to have gone to bed."

The juniors crept on. There was hardly a glimmer of star-light in the sky, and the Close was very dark. They had to feel their way cautiously. But they reached the little gate without mishap to the famous jar of mixture.

The wicket was some little way from the great gates, and the lodge of Gosling, the porter, interposed between them. The lodge, and the big elms, cast a deep shadow over the spot. Up to ten o'clock a light was kept burning over the gate, but it was out now. All was deep darkness.

"Couldn't be better, could it?" said Peter Todd, with a chuckle.

There was a low, fierce mutter from Tom Brown.

"Ow! Oh! Yah! Bah!"

"What are you grumbling about?"

"I've biffed my nose on a rotten tree," said Tom Brown, in a sulphurous voice.

Todd chuckled again.

"Sorry! You should be more careful! No good being a clumsy ass—yow—ow—ow!" Peter Todd broke off, with a howl. "Yah—oh! My nose! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Serve you right—you should be more careful—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Todd, rubbing his nose. "I jolly nearly upset the mixture. I believe I've knocked the end of my nose—ow!"

"Shall I strike a match, my dear Peter?" asked Alonzo.

"If you do, I'll jolly well strike you, you chump," growled Peter. "Do you want to give us away, you burbling jabber-wock?"

Peter Todd felt his way cautiously to the wall, and set down the jar of mixture at the foot of it. Then he took out the four masks and distributed them. The four juniors fastened them on their faces. Had they been able to see one another in the dark, they would probably have had a shock. The masks were particularly hideous, and in the light Peter Todd & Co would certainly have had a most horrible and fearsome aspect.

"Tie 'em on tight!" said Todd. "We may have a tussle with Wingate, and we don't want 'em to come off. Now lie low, and don't make a row. When I hear him coming I'll give the signal, and we all pile on him at once."

"Right-ho!" grunted Tom Brown.

"Then you three chaps hold him while I anoint him, and then he'll go home and wash, instead of going out on the razzle!" chuckled Peter. "Oh, it's a ripping wheeze! The marking ink part of the mixture will take quite a long time to wash off, and I'll bet you our respected skipper will be looking rather mottled in the morning."

"And we shall be looking rather blue if he finds out," said Tom Brown. "Of all the dotty wheezes—"

"Shush!"

"Oh, rats! I—"

"Shush!" whispered Peter. "I heard a footprint—I mean a footprint."

Tom Brown was silent. The juniors listened intently, excepting Dutton, who had heard nothing, and was not likely to hear anything if he listened ever so hard. There was certainly the sound of a footstep in the Close, and the juniors were very quiet.

A muttering voice came to their ears.

"Black as the inside of a 'at! Wot I says is this 'ere. It's 'ard to get about without barking yer shins on somethin' or huther. Black as a 'at, by gum!"

The juniors grinned. They recognised the voice of Gosling, the porter, who had a habit of grumbling to himself. The footsteps passed on in the direction of the lodge, and they heard a door close faintly and far in the silence.

"Only Gosling!" murmured Peter Todd. "But Wingate can't be long now. It must be close on half-past ten, and his appointment in Pegg is for half-past."

"Perhaps he's changed his mind!" growled Tom Brown.

"Not likely; only he's rather late."

Half-past chimed out from the clock-tower as Todd was speaking. From where they were posted at the wicket-gate the intervening trees prevented them from seeing the windows

of the School House, and so they could not tell whether Wingate's light was out yet or not. They could only wait and watch, or rather listen! Watching was not of much use in the gloom.

Todd's ears were very keen, and a few minutes later he muttered a warning.

"Quiet! Here he comes!"

He pressed Dutton's arm as a signal to be silent.

The juniors' hearts beat with excitement. Peter Todd picked up the jar of mixture.

"You fellows collar him and yank him over, and I swamp the stuff on him," he muttered. "It will be over in a second, and then we bunk!"

"Yes, we bunk; you can bet on that!" muttered Tom Brown. "It wouldn't be healthy to stay."

"Now, shush!"

They waited breathlessly.

There was a faint crunching of feet on the gravel path that led down to the gate, a sound that there was no mistaking. The victim was approaching like a lamb to the slaughter.

But Peter Todd was in no hurry. He intended to wait till the breaker of bounds fairly had his key in the gate, in order that there should be no possibility of a mistake. And with his back to the juniors, as he unlocked the gate, the unfortunate senior would be a powerless victim.

Dimly and faintly a form loomed up in the darkness, a black shadow amid black shadows.

Straight on to the gate it went, and stopped. Then there was a slight grating sound as a key was pushed over the lock, groping for the keyhole.

"Now!" whispered Peter Todd. "Collar him!"

Four juniors sprang forward, swift as arrows from the bow, right at the dark figure close to the gate. In a fraction of a second three pairs of hands fastened upon the dark figure, and it was dragged over backwards with a crash to the ground. There was a startled cry in the darkness and the sound of a falling key clinking to the ground.

Peter Todd was ready with the jar.

As the senior sprawled on his back, the juniors gripping his shoulders and arms, Peter caught at his hair with his left hand—the senior's cap had fallen off—and with his right tilted over the jar of mixture.

There was a horrid yell from the victim as the awful compound swamped over his face and hair and ears and neck.

"Gerrroooooogggg!"

"Cut it!" muttered Peter.

And with subdued, breathless chuckles the juniors fled, leaving the individual to whom they had been doing good sprawling on the ground, choking and gasping and raging.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout Sees a Horrid Sight!

"GROOOH! Hoooh! Help! Yah! Oh! Groo! Yah! Help!"

Wild and inarticulate cries came from the sprawling figure on the ground as it sat up blindly in the darkness.

And three of the running juniors suddenly halted.

Dutton, who heard nothing, ran on. But Tom Brown and Todd and Alonzo halted in sudden alarm and horror.

"Great pip!" gasped Peter Todd. "That's not Wingate's voice."

"It's Loder!" gurgled Tom Brown.

"Goodness gracious!" murmured Alonzo. "You have made a mistake, my dear Peter. That is certainly the voice of Loder."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Well, it can't be helped now," panted Peter. "It was his own fault. The beast must have been going to break bounds, and it serves him right, shoving himself in when we were waiting for Wingate. We sha'n't be able to wait for Wingate any more. Loder has spoiled the whole game."

"Come on, you chump!" muttered Tom Brown fiercely. "Loder will rouse the whole house. Can't you hear him yelling?"

"I suppose it's no good thinking of going for Wingate now," Peter muttered regretfully.

"You—you silly ass!"

Tom Brown grasped him by the collar and rushed him on. Loder's startled yells and furious exclamations had already attracted attention. The big door of the School House had opened, and a blaze of light streamed out into the dark Close. Gosling, too, had come out of his lodge with a lantern.

In the lighted door of the School House appeared the form of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form.

He had heard the wild yells from the Close, and he was astonished and alarmed. Whether it was burglars or an accident, or whatever it was, Mr. Prout felt that it had to be seen to, and he dashed out with great courage to see what was the matter.

And he almost dashed into four fleeing forms that were tearing out from under the elms towards the School House.

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Mr. Prout halted terror-stricken.

Four awful faces appeared before his terrified eyes, hideous faces with distended nostrils, glaring eyes, wide grinning mouths.

The light from the house shone full upon them as they burst upon the view of the astonished Form-master like the horrible visions of a nightmare.

Mr. Prout staggered back.

"G-g-g-good heavens!" he gasped. "I am dreaming! I—Oh! Help! Help!"

The four hideous apparitions rushed past the Form-master, and disappeared in the darkness round the School House.

Mr. Prout did not think of pursuing them. He would rather, at that moment, have pursued a wild tiger to its lair. He was only too glad that they had passed him without doing him any fearful injury.

Peter Todd, as he rushed on, blessed his thoughtfulness in having provided the Guy Fawkes masks. But for that the Fifth Form-master would infallibly have recognised all four of the juniors, as the light fell on their faces.

Peter gave a hurried glance towards the house as he ran on, and he saw Mr. Quelch and Wingate of the Sixth and Coker of the Fifth appear in the doorway.

Then he vanished round the house with his comrades.

"Buck up!" he muttered. "There's going to be an awful row. We shall have to prove a strong alibi for this."

He paused a moment to hide the empty jar in the ivy, and then ran after the others. They reached the outhouse, and clambered up in wild haste.

The box-room window had been left unfastened, of course, and Todd threw up the sash, and bundled in head-first.

His companions followed him fast, a gasp coming from Alonzo as he rolled on the floor of the box-room.

"Buck up and get to the dorm!" muttered Tom Brown.

"The whole blessed house will be alarmed in a minute or two."

"Masks off first!" muttered Peter.

"In the dorm—"

"No, no; they might search the dorm!"

"Right!"

The masks were dragged off, and bestowed in an empty trunk, and then the four juniors hurriedly quitted the box-room, and ran along to the Remove dormitory.

Downstairs they could hear excited voices, but apparently the alarm had not yet reached the dormitories.

Todd opened the door of the Remove dormitory, and they ran in, and he closed it quietly after them.

"Sharp's the word!" he said.

But they did not need telling. They stripped off their clothes in a twinkling, and bundled into bed.

"Who's that?" came Vernon-Smith's voice sleepily from the darkness, as Peter bumped into bed. "Somebody up?"

There was no reply, and Vernon-Smith sat up in bed.

"Who's that?" he repeated. And Peter Todd heard him fumbling with a matchbox.

"Shut up, Smithy!" he whispered hastily. "Don't strike a light, you ass!"

"Is that you, Todd?"

"Yes, yes! Shut up!"

"What have you been doing?"

"Loder!"

"What?"

"Don't I tell you—Loder?" growled Peter. "I've done him—done him brown—I mean red and black and purple, by mistake; but he will be annoyed. He sounded as if he was annoyed, didn't he, Brown?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Just a little!"

"But what?" came Skinner's voice.

Several of the Remove fellows were awake now.

"Don't jaw, for goodness' sake!" implored Peter. "We've got to prove an alibi. We're fast asleep. We haven't woke up since lights out. Snore—snore, for goodness' sake!"

And Peter Todd set the example of snoring, and not another word could be extracted from him. Meanwhile, there was excitement in the Close. Mr. Prout had shouted for help, and Mr. Quelch and Wingate and Coker had rushed out to him. The Fifth Form master was labouring under great excitement.

"What has happened?" cried Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, catching his colleague by the arm. "Mr. Prout, what?"

"I—I have been attacked—at least, I was almost attacked—by four horrible-looking ruffians!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Never, never shall I forget those awful faces, as long as I live. Four of the most desperate characters possible—faces of such ferocious aspect."

"But where—what—"

"Grooh—hoooh—grah—hay—yah!" came wild and indistinct sounds from the direction of the gate.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

"Something's going on there, sir," said Wingate. "We'd better see—"

"Here is Gosling with a lantern, thank goodness," said Mr. Quelch. "Gosling, pray show the way. I fear there has been some accident or violence."

"Wot I says, sir, is this 'ere—"

"Kindly show the way with the light."

Gosling grunted, and led the way in the direction of the wicket-gate. As the party passed through the trees, they came in sight of a weird figure. It was a figure in an overcoat, bareheaded, with a face of a purplish black in colour. They stared at it in astonishment and alarm.

"What—what is it?" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Who are you?" demanded Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Groo-hooh! I'm Loder!"

"What?"

"I'm Loder of the Sixth!" groaned the unhappy object. "I've been—grooh!—I've been—yow!—swamped with some filthy stuff. It feels like—grooh!—treacle or glue—yow! It feels awful! Gerroooh!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, greatly incensed. "This is some absurd practical joke. You are in a most disgusting state, Loder."

"Grooh! I know I am! Yow!"

"Dear me! Bless my soul! It appears to be a horrible mixture of ink and treacle and soot, I think," said Mr.

Quelch, inspecting the prefect without coming too close. "This is simply outrageous! Who has done this, Loder?"

"The four ruffians I saw of course!" exclaimed Mr. Prout excitedly. "They are still within the precincts of the school."

"More likely some of the juniors," said Mr. Quelch crossly. "I do not see why four strangers should come here to play a joke on Loder."

"But I saw them—"

"Are you sure they were not Greyfriars boys?"

"Greyfriars boys!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, with a sniff. "I tell you they were four horrible-looking ruffians. Such ferocious, I may say bestial faces, I have never seen before, and I trust I may never see again."

"Did you see who attacked you, Loder?"

"It was so sudden, in the dark, sir—groo!—I couldn't see an inch, of course—yow!—and then they swamped this filthy stuff over me—grooh!—but I know who they were. I'm quite sure it was some of the Remove."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, his manner growing very stiff at once. "And why should you suppose that they are members of my Form, Loder, if as you say you did not see them?"

"I know they were!" howled Loder savagely. "I had trouble with them this afternoon, and they've played this trick on me in revenge. I'm sure of that."

"Whom do you allude to?"

"Wharton and his friends."



GOOD TURNS.

No. 31.

A musical Magnetite gives up a half-holiday in order to call, with his banjo, at a sick chum's house, and cheer him up with some jolly tunes.



Mr. Screwe rose from the water drenched in the soft and clinging mud. He gasped for breath and glared furiously at the grinning juniors lined up on the bank. "You young 'ounds!" he roared. (See Chapter 14.)

"I will question Wharton, certainly. But—by the way, Loder, how is it that you are here at this time of night?" asked the Remove master drily.

Loder stammered for a moment, but his brain worked quickly. His peculiar way of life made it necessary for him to be quick with excuses, and never to be at a loss for a falsehood. He could not very well explain to a master that he had been about to unlock the wicket to go out and join a crew of choice companions at the Cross Keys in Friardale. An explanation of that kind would have led to results worse than Peter Todd's mixture; but Loder had a ready tongue.

"I was just going to bed, sir, when I heard someone moving about in the Close," he said. "I thought it might be some of the juniors going to break bounds, so I—slipped my coat on, and came out to look. Then I—I heard 'em moving in this direction, and came along here, and then I was suddenly attacked in the dark."

Wingate looked at Loder very hard while he was speaking. He had his doubts about the truth of that explanation, plausible as it was; but it was not his business to give away his fellow-prefect. He remained silent.

"It is very odd," said Mr. Quelch. "That horrible mixture with which you are smothered must have been prepared beforehand; and yet, according to what you say, the persons who threw it over you could not possibly have expected you in the Close. If it was, as you suspect, Wharton, how could Wharton have known you would come out to investigate a slight noise in the Close."

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Loder gritted his teeth.

"I'm sure it was Wharton, sir—he and his friends. They may have—have let me hear them specially to draw me out."

"They could not have known you would come out. Wingate or Courtney or Walker might have heard them, and come out instead."

"Then they'd have served them the same," said Loder.

"But you have said that they did this specially in revenge for something that occurred this afternoon," said the Remove master coldly.

"I tell you it was that lot!" exclaimed Loder passionately. "And if you don't look into it, Mr. Quelch, I shall appeal to the Head!"

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted.

"Don't be impertinent, Loder. I shall look into it, with the result, I think, of proving that your suspicions are groundless." And Mr. Quelch turned towards the house.

"But those four ruffians!" exclaimed Mr. Prout excitedly. "They are still within the walls."

Mr. Quelch shook his head impatiently.

"I am sure there are no outsiders here, Mr. Prout. However, Gosling will go with you with his lantern to look for them, if you wish."

Gosling did not look joyful at the prospect. Perhaps he was not anxious to encounter four ruffians, especially of ferocious and truculent aspect, according to the description given by Mr. Prout.

"I will call some of the Sixth," said Mr. Prout hastily.

"It may require a strong force to deal with such desperate characters."

"Very well. You may come with me to the Remove dormitory at once, Loder."

And while Mr. Prout and a party of unbelieving Sixth Formers searched the school precincts for four dangerous-looking ruffians who were not likely to be found, Mr. Quelch and Gerald Loder proceeded to the Remove dormitory, where Loder was quite convinced that the assailants would be discovered.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Not Guilty!

NOTHING could have been more quiet and peaceful than the aspect of the Remove dormitory when Mr. Quelch entered, and turned on the electric light.

The long row of white beds were occupied by juniors who were sleeping, or appeared to be sleeping, the sleep of the just.

Not a head was raised—not an eye was opened, as the electric light flooded the long and lofty room with illumination.

There was a sound of steady breathing, deepened by a snore from Billy Bunter, and another from Peter Todd, and that was all.

"You can see that everything here is quite in order, Loder," said Mr. Quelch coldly.

"I can see that the young rotters are trying to take us in," said Loder.

"Very well; I will question them. Wharton!"

There was no reply from Wharton. He was fast asleep. The long ramble on the cliffs in the afternoon had tired him, and he was sleeping like a top, and he had not awakened at the sound of voices when Todd came in with his friends. And he did not awaken now. Mr. Quelch bent over him, and looked at the handsome, peaceful face, and even Loder had to admit that the captain of the Remove did not look as if he were shamming.

"Wharton!" repeated Mr. Quelch more loudly.

Then Harry's eyes opened. He blinked in the light, and looked at the Remove master, and then gave a sudden jump at the sight of Loder's black face, and sat up in bed, staring at the prefect. His amazement was evidently genuine, to the Remove master's view, at least.

"I—I say—what!" stammered Wharton.

He was still staring at the prefect. He did not even recognise him, in his coating of ink and soot and treacle and glue.

"It is Loder," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

"He knows jolly well I'm Loder!" growled the prefect.

"And he knows that he swamped this stuff over me."

"I?" exclaimed Harry, in astonishment.

"Yes, you, young rotter."

"Better language, please, Loder," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Wharton, Loder has been assaulted in the Close, and it appears certain that it was done by some mischievous juniors. Do you know anything about it?"

"Nothing at all, sir," Wharton was grinning now.

Loder's aspect struck him as funny, now that he was fairly awake.

"Have you been outside the dormitory since lights out?"

"Certainly not, sir."

Bob Cherry and Nugent were sitting up now, equally amazed. Most of the Remove fellows were awakened, but Peter Todd was still snoring away industriously. There was a chuckle in the dormitory at sight of Loder of the Sixth.

"I don't believe him!" snarled Loder. "He must have been out of the dormitory if he swamped this stuff over me in the Close!"

"I am convinced that he did not!" said Mr. Quelch. "Cherry—Nugent—Bull—have you been out of the dormitory to-night?"

"No, sir!"

"Lies!" said Loder. "Look here, if Wharton handled this stuff, most likely he's got some of it on his fingers. Let him show his hands."

For a moment Peter Todd's snore ceased, and then it went on more vigorously than ever. Wharton's hands were all right; but Peter was only too painfully conscious of the stains on his own fingers.

"Hold out your hands, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir!"

Wharton displayed his hands for inspection. There cer-

tainly wasn't a trace of the mixture upon them. Loder looked baffled and furious.

"Of course, he might have been very careful," he said. "Naturally he would be very careful. Or he might have worn gloves to handle the stuff!"

"My hat!" murmured Peter Todd, as he snored. "That's a tip for next time, Loder!" Needless to say, Peter's remark was entirely to himself.

"Nonsense, Loder!" said the Remove-master sharply. "There is not a jot or tittle of evidence against Wharton. I rely upon his word completely."

Loder looked savagely at the Form-master.

"Am I to be swamped with this filthy stuff, without anybody being punished?" he hooted.

"Yes, decidedly; unless the guilty party can be discovered. No purpose could be effected by punishing the innocent," said Mr. Quelch tartly.

"They did it!" howled Loder. "Let the other young rotters show their hands—Cherry, and Nugent, and Bull, and Hurree Singh!"

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch impatiently. "I think you are quite in the wrong, Loder; but you shall be satisfied!"

"There are my hands," said Nugent, holding them out.

"If Loder can find any ink or soot or glue on them, he's welcome to eat it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, though his own severe face had broken into a smile. "Your hands are stainless, Nugent. Now yours, Bull! Not a stain, as you can see for yourself, Loder. And the same with Hurree Singh's."

"The stainlessness of my esteemed hands is terrific, sir!" said the nabob of Bhanipur. "May I request the esteemed Loder not to put his honourable head too close to me?"

"You cheeky black whelp!"

"Silence, Loder! If you make use of such expressions again in my presence, I will report you to the Head!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly.

Loder ground his teeth.

"We haven't seen Cherry's hands yet," he said sulkily.

Bob Cherry was keeping his hands under the bedclothes. Loder's eyes gleamed when he looked at him. That the Famous Five, or some of them, had played that trick on him, he was obstinately convinced. It was quite as likely as not that Bob had been the fellow to handle the jar of mixture.

"Show your hands, Cherry!" he rapped out.

Bob did not stir.

"I don't see why I should," he answered coolly. "You've no right to suspect me. I haven't been out of the dormitory. Mr. Quelch takes my word—he knows I wouldn't tell him a lie!"

"I am sure of that, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch soothingly. "But you should show your hands in order to satisfy Loder."

"I don't see that Loder ought to be satisfied, sir. He ought to take my word," said Bob. "What right has he to wake us up in the middle of the night and make accusations without a bit of evidence? We have a right to appeal to you, sir. Unless Loder can give some reason for suspecting me, he's no right to question me at all."

Mr. Quelch looked somewhat uncomfortable. He was annoyed with Loder himself, and he felt that the junior was right.

"He's got stains on his fingers," said Loder fiercely "that's why he won't show them! He dare not!"

"Under the circumstances, Cherry, I ask you to do as Loder desires," said Mr. Quelch. "It is better to have this matter cleared up. Come, it is my wish, my boy!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Bob cheerfully. "Here you are, Loder!"

He held out his hands. There was not, of course, a stain upon them. Loder stared at them as if he would have stared holes in them, and almost choked with fury. He realised that Bob Cherry's unwillingness was simply a little joke, intended to raise his hopes that the culprit had been found, only to dash them to the ground again. Loder clenched his own hands hard, only restrained by the presence of the Form-master from committing assault and battery upon the spot.

"You—you—you young hound!" he stuttered.

The Remove were all grinning joyously—all excepting Peter Todd, who was snoring—but he smiled in his "sleep." It was very pleasant to the juniors to see the furious prefect's leg pulled that way.

"That will do, Loder," said Mr. Quelch. "The investigation is now at an end. It was evidently someone else who played that trick upon you, and my Form is entirely exonerated. You must carry your complaints elsewhere."

Loder's eyes wandered up and down the dormitory restlessly.

"It may have been some of the others," he began.

"Do you want to examine every boy in the Lower Fourth,

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because some persons unknown have played a trick upon you?" Mr. Quelch exclaimed sharply.

"Yes," said Loder obstinately. "I think—"

"Then I shall not allow any such nonsense. You positively declared that it was one of these five juniors, and their innocence is proved. Now you would start absurd and groundless suspicions of the other boys in my Form. I shall allow nothing of the kind. I request you to leave the dormitory at once, Loder!"

"But—"

"You will kindly do as I have requested, Loder," said Mr. Quelch, with a glint in his grey eyes. "My boys, I am sorry you have been disturbed in your slumbers. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!" said all the Remove—Peter Todd waking up in time to join in.

And Mr. Quelch walked out of the dormitory after Loder.

The door closed.

"My word!" murmured Peter Todd. "Quelch is a brick, isn't he?"

"First-chop, gilt-edged brick!" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically. "But who on earth did swamp that stuff over Loder? It wasn't us, anyway! I wonder if it was somebody in the Remove at all?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"I think it was somebody in the Remove," murmured Todd.

"Do you know who it was?" asked a dozen voices at once eagerly.

"I've a slight suspicion. And—and I'm jolly glad Quelch didn't let Loder look at my hands!" said Peter Todd. "That marking-ink sticks!"

"You!" howled Bob Cherry.

"My little self!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Loder got it by mistake," said Peter. "Still, it was such a pleasure to see him with that complexion, that I don't think I'm really sorry, after all!"

"And whom did you intend it for?" asked Harry Wharton.

"For another person."

"But who was the other person?"

"But Peter Todd began to snore again just then, and to all further questions as to whom the unknown person was he replied only with snores.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Tries It On!

PETER TODD was always careful with his toilet, however careless he might be in other matters; but on the morning following that nocturnal adventure, he was especially diligent in scrubbing his hands. The traces of the marking-ink were not easily got rid of—but Peter succeeded at last. It was a great deal of trouble—but the anticipation of seeing what Loder looked like comforted him.

Upon the whole, he was really not sorry for the mischance. He felt pretty certain that Wingate would not have ventured to leave the school to keep his appointment, after the disturbance—he would certainly have been very late at the Anchor if he had. So his purpose had been effected after all, in that case—and the drenching of Loder with the mixture was clear gain—that was how Peter looked at it.

There were many grins and chuckles that morning from the fellows who saw Loder. The prefect had rubbed and scrubbed, and scrubbed and rubbed, with great energy, but traces of the marking-ink clung about his ears and the roots of his hair, and were likely to wear off only with time.

Loder's temper that day was something dreadful, as a good many fags learnt to their cost, when they came in his way. Not only the handling he had received, but the fact that he had missed his little meeting at the Cross Keys, exasperated the black sheep of the Sixth.

Loder was still convinced that Harry Wharton & Co. were at the bottom of the affair; while Mr. Prout retained his belief in the four ferocious-looking ruffians, who had disappeared without leaving a trace behind them. But whoever the culprits were, it was pretty certain now that they would not be discovered.

Although his first attempt at doing Wingate good had gone a little wrong, Peter Todd by no means gave up the idea. Peter Todd seldom gave up anything he had once set his mind on. As he explained to Dutton and Alonzo and Tom Brown, he had taken Wingate under his protection, and was going to look after him.

"You'd jolly well better let him alone, you ass!" growled Tom Brown. "You'd have swamped that stuff over the Head himself if I'd happened to be going out last night. You're dangerous! I'm off!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

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ONE
PENNY.

And Tom Brown steadily declined to have a hand in any of Peter Todd's further schemes. Todd's methods of doing good were a little too exciting for him.

"Blessed if a chap ever was so handicapped when he's trying to do good!" Peter Todd grumbled. "I've got to be leader and rank and file as well. Tom Brown's chucked it, and Dutton can't hear a word I say, and you're a silly ass, Alonzo, and Bunter can't be trusted."

"My dear Peter—"

"But I'm going to look after Wingate, and save him from himself," said Peter firmly. "He is a good chap, and worth taking some trouble about."

"That is what I have been thinking, my dear Peter," said Alonzo. "I really wish you would let me try what I can do."

"What can you do, duffer?"

"I could point out to him the error of his ways—"

"And get booted out of his study!" snorted Peter.

"I should not object to suffering in the cause of morality. I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin would approve of it. I really think—"

"No, you don't—you can't," said Peter. "You haven't got the apparatus."

"Ahem! I do really consider—"

"And if you said a word to Wingate, he'd know we knew his little games, and that would get his rag out at once, you ass!" shouted Peter.

"I should speak in a general way."

"Oh, rats!" said his cousin rudely. And he walked out of the study, leaving Alonzo looking quite grieved.

But Alonzo could be firm sometimes. Generally he was meek and mild, and yielding, but in a worthy cause he could be quite obstinate. For once he was resolved that he would go on his own way in spite of his Cousin Peter's disapproval. He thought it over very carefully, and after school that day he made his way to Wingate's study, with a bundle of selected and very choice tracts under his arm.

He knocked gently at the door, and Wingate's voice was very gruff as he bade him come in. The captain of Greyfriars had a troubled and irritated expression upon his rugged face. Alonzo saw in his looks the signs of a guilty conscience, or thought that he did; and became all the more determined to bring George Wingate back to the right path.

"I trust you will excuse me, Wingate," he said gently. "I have something very important to speak to you about."

"Oh, buck up!" said Wingate.

"I have here," said Alonzo, laying his bundle on the table and opening it, "some very interesting and readable tracts."

"Some what?" gasped Wingate. If Alonzo had said that he had a bombshell there, the captain of Greyfriars could hardly have been more surprised.

"Tracts," said Alonzo. "When a fellow is in doubt, and hesitating at the cross-roads, so to speak, nothing is so likely to set him on the right path as a really good tract. This one is called 'Bad Bob.'"

"Bad Bob!" said Wingate faintly.

"Yes, and this one is 'Good Georgie, the Boy who Took the Right Turning.' Wingate, my dear Wingate," said Alonzo earnestly, in the best manner of his Uncle Benjamin, "will you not take the right turning?"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Think!" said Alonzo, wagging a bony forefinger at the astounded Sixth-Former. "Think—oh, reflect, my dear friend, before it is too late!"

Wingate stared at him speechlessly. Only a suspicion that Alonzo had gone mad prevented him from hurling the earnest youth headfirst out of the study.

"What is lawless pleasure in comparison with goodness?" went on Alonzo, growing very animated. "Would you put an enemy in your mouth to steal away your brains, Wingate? Will you waste precious hours, that might be spent in studying natural history, or something useful like that, in playing a foolish game of nap or banker?"

Wingate began to see light.

"Has Wharton been jawing to you, you silly young ass?" he asked.

"Wharton? No."

"Somebody has been telling you some silly rot about me!" said Wingate, a glitter coming into his eyes. "Was it Wharton, or one of his friends?"

"Certainly not, Wingate. It was quite a different person who happened to see you in company with a very disreputable

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
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able character. I was very much distressed. I wish to save you from yourself."

"You are very kind," said Wingate in a dangerous tone. "I desire to be kind, my dear friend," said Alonzo, blissfully unconscious of the storm-signals in Wingate's face. "Oh, my dear friend, if I could but make you see your folly as I see it—if I could but make you realize how crass an ass you are!"

"Are you aware that you are talking to a prefect, Todd?" "I am talking to a sinner, whom I desire to save from his own follies," said Alonzo. "I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would approve."

"He might!" assented Wingate. "But I don't! Now, I'll tell you this, Todd, as you are a blithering young idiot, and I don't want you spreading nonsense about me! The silly young fool who told you that was mistaken. I am not at all in need of either sermons or tracts, and if I were I should not come to the Lower Fourth for them. I am going to lick you for your confounded cheek!"

"My dear Wingate—" Alonzo got no further. Wingate's grasp was upon his collar. The angry senior crumpled up the tracts in his hand, and stuffed them violently down the back of Alonzo Todd's neck, much to the discomfort of the unfortunate reformer. Then he opened the study door, and with one swing of his powerful arm, hurled Alonzo through the doorway.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Alonzo, as he staggered in the passage. "Dear me! Oh! I—yaroooh!"

Biff! Wingate's heavy boot came behind him, as if he were kicking for goal.

Alonzo fairly shot along the passage.

Slam!

Alonzo Todd sat up in the passage, and blinked dazedly round him. Wingate's door was shut, and two or three fags in the passage were staring curiously at the unhappy reformer. Alonzo groaned dismally.

"Ow! Ow! Oh, dear! Oh, my! Oh, crumbs! I am aching. I am really hurt. I shall not try again to do Wingate good—ow—ow—ooowww! I shall leave him to his fate. Ow!"

And Alonzo Todd staggered away gasping, and left the captain of Greyfriars to his fate!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. Doubting Thomases!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes were gleaming with excitement behind his spectacles, as he burst into the common-room.

Most of the Remove were there, and a good many of the Upper Fourth and the Shell. And most of them looked round at Bunter as he rushed in ablaze with excitement. The fat junior had been out, and he had evidently returned with news.

"Well, what is it now?" sniffed Johnny Bull. "Your postal-order come at last?"

"It's—it's extraordinary!" gasped Bunter.

"Yes, it would be, if your postal-order came!" Bob Cherry agreed.

"Oh, really, Cherry! It isn't that! I tell you it's a fair coker."

"What's happened, fathead?"

"I saw him!" panted Bunter.

"Saw whom—what—which, ass?"

"Wingate!"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged quick glances, and Peter Todd looked up from the game of chess he was playing with Tom Dutton. They guessed at once that Billy Bunter had seen something, of which they as yet only knew the secret. But now that Bunter knew it, it was fairly on the way to becoming common knowledge. The other fellows, however, who knew nothing of what the Famous Five knew, stared at Bunter blankly.

"You fabulous ass!" said Mark Linley. "What is there extraordinary in seeing Wingate of the Sixth? Don't we all see him every day, and all day?"

"Not where I saw him!" chuckled Bunter.

"And where did you see him?" inquired Skinner.

"Guess!"

"Oh, rats!"

"What price the Anchor at Pegg?" chortled Bunter.

"Wingate—at the Anchor in Pegg!" said Penfold. "Rubbish!"

"Rot!" said Temple of the Fourth.

"Shut up, you fat duffer!" advised Fry of the Fourth. "If you were heard telling a yarn like that about a prefect, you'd get it in the neck."

"But it's true!" howled Bunter.

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"Rats!"

"I tell you I saw him!" shrieked Bunter. Like many followers of Ananias, Bunter was greatly indignant at having his word doubted when, by chance, he was telling the truth for once. "I saw him with my own eyes."

"I suppose you couldn't see him with anybody else's!" snorted Hobson of the Shell. "But your eyes ain't much good. No good at all if they see things like that. Shut up!"

"Yes, cheese it!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ring off," said Peter Todd. "You ought to be ashamed of coming here with a yarn like that, Bunter."

Alonzo Todd looked at his cousin in surprise.

"But, my dear Peter," he began. "You yourself—yaroooh! What are you stamping on my foot for, Peter?" gasped Alonzo in tones of anguish. "You have hurt me—you have really hurt me very considerably."

"I'll stamp on your head if you don't keep it shut!" growled Peter in a fierce whisper.

Harry Wharton, who was near him, could not help hearing what he said, and he cast a curious look at Todd. It occurred to him at once that someone outside the ranks of the "Co," knew about Wingate's peculiar outbreak.

"So you know, Todd?" he murmured.

Peter gave him a quick look.

"Do you?" he asked in the same tone.

"Yes. Keep Bunter shut up if you can."

"Lot of good trying that!" muttered Peter. "Wild horses couldn't do it. Listen to him now, the fat jesser!"

Billy Bunter's voice was rising with excitement. The general disbelief that greeted a statement of exact fact exasperated him.

"I tell you I saw him!" shrieked Bunter. "I've been over to Cliff House to tea, and so I happened to be passing the Anchor—"

"You don't pass the Anchor to go to Cliff House!" said Bulstrode.

"Well, you see, I—I didn't have tea at Cliff House after all!" Bunter admitted. "I called there, but owing to some misunderstanding the porter didn't let me in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mean you shoved yourself there without being asked, and got the order of the boot?" said Hazeldene. "Serve you right."

"So I went into Pegg," said Bunter hastily. "I was going to the grocer's for some cake, you see, as I didn't get any tea owing to that misunderstanding. And as I passed the Anchor, there was Wingate sitting in the garden—"

"Rats!"

"Smoking a cigarette—"

"Rot!"

"He didn't take the slightest notice of me," went on Bunter. "Didn't turn a hair! Didn't seem to care a rap if he was seen!"

"Rubbish!"

"I tell you he was smoking in the inn garden—" howled Bunter.

"Boah!"

"Shut up!"

"Ring off!"

"Cheese it!"

Billy Bunter blinked furiously at the crowd of doubting Thomases. Some of the juniors were looking angry, too, and they were gathering about Bunter in a threatening manner. George Wingate was the idol of the Lower School. Bunter was always starting some yarn or other—but that he should venture to begin a yarn like this about the popular captain of Greyfriars was the limit.

"If you say another word," said Hobson of the Shell, shaking a warning finger at Billy Bunter, "we'll give you a lesson in scandal-mongering, you fat rotter!"

"I saw him!" yelled Bunter.

"That does it!" said Hobson. "He won't shut up! Collar him!"

"Here, I say, you fellows—hands off, you know!" howled Bunter. "I'm telling the exact truth—honour bright, you know—I am—honest Injun! Yow—ow—leggo!"

But the juniors did not let go. They collared Bunter, and dragged him into the middle of the room. Temple of the Fourth closed the door, in case any prefect should come along the passage and interrupt the proceedings. Hobson and Dabney whirled Bunter off his feet, and slammed him face downwards on the table.

Bunter wriggled wildly in the grasp of the juniors.

"Leggo!" he gurgled. "You beasts—it's true! Ow, ow! Peter Todd, you beast, help me! You ain't going to see your own study ragged, are you, you funk?"

"Yes, rather!" said Peter Todd calmly. "I'm going to lend a hand, too, if you tell yarns like that about old Wingate!"

"Same here!" said Bob Cherry. "A still tongue shows

a wise head, Bunty dear. If you see things you're not supposed to see, you should keep your silly head shut."

"Not that he really saw anything of the kind," said Penfold. "We all know that Wingate is straight as a die. Rag the fat rotter!"

"Anybody got a cricket-stump?" asked Hobson, looking round. "No? Never mind—an exercise-book will do. Hold the fat rotter tight."

"Ow, ow! Help!"

Hobson of the Shell folded the exercise-book in two, and took a firm grip upon it. Billy Bunter, held at length on the table, helpless in the grasp of the juniors, turned a red and furious face round towards the Shell fellow.

"Ow! Keep him off!" he howled. "Don't you hit me, Hobson, or—yaroocoooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Hobson made quick play with the exercise-book, and the whacks sounded almost like pistol-shots upon Bunter's tight trousers. The Owl of the Remove roared and struggled and wriggled and yelled.

"Ow, ow! Leggo! Help! Rescue! Fire! Murder! Yarooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Go it!" said Peter Todd cheerfully. "Bunter, old man, you've asked for this, and now you're getting it. Put your beef into it, Hobson!"

"I'm doing that!" panted Hobson. "I'll teach him to tell lies about old Wingate. It might be true about Loder or Carne—but Wingate, my hat! Take that, and that, and that!"

Whack, whack, whack! Bunter took them—he could not help it! He roared like a bull.

"Ow, ow, ow! I tell you it's true—quite true! I saw him—yow—ow!"

"Obstinate pig!" said Russell. "Give him some more. Lick him till he owns up that he's telling lies!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Pile on, Hobson! You ain't half whacking him!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow, ow! Help! Fire! Murder!" roared Bunter.

"Will you own up that you were telling lies about Wingate?" demanded Hobson of the Shell, pausing breathlessly, with the exercise-book upraised.

"Yow—ow—ow! Beast!" howled Bunter. "It's true!"

"The rotter! Give him some more!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ow! Steppit!" howled Bunter. "I—I—I'll own up! I'll say anything—yow—ow! I'll say—yaroocoo—I'll say anything you like!"

"Repeat it after me, then," said Hobson. "I admit that I'm a beastly liar—"

"Grooh! I admit that you're a beastly liar—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Oh, help! Yah! Crumbs! Grooogoooh!"

"Don't you be funny!" said Hobson severely. "Repeat exactly what I say. I admit that I'm a beastly liar—"

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "I admit that I'm a beastly—liar—ow—"

"And I've lied about Wingate—"

"Ow! I've lied about Wingate—" groaned Bunter.

"I never saw him at the Anchor at all!" said Hobson.

"I never saw him at the Anchor at all! Yow—ow!"

"And I'm sorry I told whoppers!"

"Grooh! I'm sorry I told whoppers! Oh, dear!"

"Now chuck him out!" said Hobson.

And the juniors, laughing loudly, swung Bunter off the table, and rushed him to the door. Dabney opened the door, and Bunter went whirling forth, sliding a dozen yards along the passage before he came to a standstill.

"There! I don't think he'll tell any more lies about old Wingate!" gasped Hobson. "I think we've nipped that rot in the bud!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Half an hour later, when Peter Todd went up to No. 7 Study to do his preparation, he found Billy Bunter still groaning in the armchair. Bunter blinked at him pathetically, and Peter grinned in the most heartless and unsympathetic manner.

"I say, Toddy—" groaned Bunter.

Peter wagged a warning finger at him.

"No more of your rotten yarns!" he said.

"But it was true!"

"Shut up!"

Peter sat down to his work. Billy Bunter glowered at him through his spectacles. Even in his own study there was no support for him.

"I—I say, Toddy, you know—I really saw him!"

Peter Todd drew a big ebony ruler towards him.

"You see that ruler?" he asked.

"Ye-es!"

"Well, if you say another word about Wingate, I'll lay it about you till you think what you've already had was only a gentle joke!" said Peter impressively.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

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SIX
PENNY.

"But—but I say—"

"Shut up!" roared Peter.

And Bunter shut up at last.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Painful Duty!

HARRY WHARTON tapped Peter Todd on the arm when the cheerful Peter came downstairs later.

"So you know about it?" he said.

Peter nodded.

"Yes; but I didn't know you knew," he said. "How did you know?"

"We promised Wingate not to say anything," said Harry, "and we haven't said a word. I suppose you saw him at that place?"

"Yes—and now Bunter's seen him!"

"He must be off his rocker," said Harry. "I never dreamed that old Wingate would break out like that—and that he'd do it in such an asinine way, that's the queerest part of it. He doesn't seem to care whether he gets the sack or not. If the Head knew, he'd sack him right off—and he must know soon, if this goes on!"

"Wingate seems to be asking to be found out," Peter remarked. "But he's a good sort, in spite of this, and I'm going to keep on looking after him."

"Keep on?" repeated Harry, in surprise. "Have you been looking after him already, then?"

"You bet! I stopped his going out on Wednesday evening to meet that rotter Screwe—I gave Loder the medicine by mistake, but Wingate wasn't able to get out, I think."

Wharton simply gasped.

"Was Wingate the chap you intended it for?" he shouted.

"Certainly. I've taken him under my protection," said Peter Todd coolly. "I'm not going to let him get himself sacked if I can help it."

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll make him pretty wild if you go that way to work to save him."

"I've thought it out, and it's the only way. You can help me if you like!" said Peter Todd eagerly. "Brown doesn't want any hand in it now—he thinks it's too strong—"

"Ha, ha! So do I!"

"You chaps could help me a lot," said Peter. "I'm not giving in. I'm thinking of collaring him at the Anchor when he goes there, and making him sit up. That will bring him to his senses, if anything will!"

"You—you ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "Collaring Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of the school! Are you off your rocker too?"

"Not a bit of it. It's the only way; and I'm not going to let him go to the dogs if I can protect him," said Todd.

"It's up to us, I think."

"I don't suppose Wingate thinks so!" grinned Wharton.

"Oh, never mind what Wingate thinks! He's not the fellow to judge, under the circumstances. Now, if you're willing to follow my lead—"

"Catch me! No. 1 Study leads in the Remove!"

"No. 7 Study!" said Peter firmly.

"Look here—"

"Well, if you can suggest a better scheme, I'll follow your lead," said Peter. "I can't say fairer than that. What do you propose?"

"Why not mind our own business?" suggested Wharton.

Todd shook his head.

"I've made this my business," he said. "I'm not going to let Wingate go to the giddy bow-wows! He seems to be bent on going the whole unicorn now. I'm not going to let him. I like him too much!"

"But if you chip in, he'll think it a cheek of a junior. He'll whop you, and get all the more obstinate!"

"Well, that's possible," Todd admitted. "Still, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I've done my best. I think you fellows might lend a hand."

"Oh, rats!" was Wharton's reply to that.

Peter shrugged his shoulders, and went his way. Other fellows might be unwilling to join in his harebrained schemes, but that did not make Peter himself think any the less of them. And his determination to save George Wingate from his follies was stronger than ever. Peter Todd meant business.

Peter Todd thought it out very carefully; and the next day, after morning school, he joined Harry Wharton & Co. in the passage.

"You chaps care for a lark?" he asked.

"What kind of a lark?" asked Bob Cherry, somewhat suspiciously. "Some of your larks are rather too lurid!"

"A regular scorcher!" said Peter cheerfully. "I'm going down to Pegg to slaughter a man!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

"To what?" howled the Famous Five together.
 "Slaughter a man," said Peter calmly. "Will you help?"
 "You frabjous fathead—" said Johnny Bull.
 "He's a bad man," explained Peter. "He's teaching the young idea how to shoot—the wrong way. He's leading a gentle and innocent youth into wicked ways. I have thought it out, and come to the conclusion that a slaughtering would be the best way to stop him. His name is Dicky Screwe, and he's a longshoreman, a drunkard, and a gambling rotter—the worst character in Pegg's!"

"Oh!" said the juniors, understanding at once.
 "I was thinking of ducking him, and explaining to him gently but firmly that he's got to drop his acquaintance with Greyfriars chaps," said Peter. "A ducking, a whopping, and a bumping will constitute the slaughtering. We can't boil him in oil; the law would step in. We've got too many laws in this country!"

Harry Wharton laughed.
 "Well, we don't mind," he said. "When are you going? That rotter wants a licking, if anybody does! I know he was talking to Hazeldene the other day, trying to get him to put money on a horse. I jawed Hazel for it; but it's Screwe who ought to be jawed—or something stronger!"
 "Good egg!" said Peter Todd. "After lessons to-day, then. I know just where to find the rotter. He generally loafs in the same place!"

And, when lessons were over for the day, eight juniors left Greyfriars in a little party—the Famous Five, and Peter Todd, Alonzo, and Tom Dutton. They walked down the lane to the fishing village, and there Peter Todd left his companions, and sauntered on to the Anchor alone.

Dicky Screwe could be seen leaning up against a wall near the Anchor, smoking a pipe and contemplating the sea. He was generally to be found there at that time; he was never known to work. Mr. Screwe did not see the fun of working hard to catch fish at sea, when it was so much easier to catch duffers ashore.

Peter Todd paused, and nodded to Mr. Screwe. The longshore loafer looked at him inquiringly. Longshoreman and loafer as he was, Dicky Screwe had a very extensive acquaintance among all sorts of people. Many of the fellows of Highcliffe School made bets with him, and Screwe had long been anxious to extend his profitable connection to Greyfriars also, so he was very civil to Peter.

"Afternoon, sir!" he said.
 "Anything going for the Mugford Handicap?" said Peter, with a wink.

Mr. Screwe looked very keen at once.
 Here was a young gentleman who looked prosperous, simply asking for trouble, as it were. Screwe guessed that the schoolboy had heard that he ran a betting business, and was anxious to "come in."

"If so be as you're lookin' for a safe thing, I could put you on to something for that werry race, sir," said Mr. Screwe.

"Come along, then!" said Peter. "I've some fellows with me who want to talk to you, and they don't want to do it here in the street. You savvy?"

Mr. Screwe grinned. He "savvied" well enough. Schoolboys who had dealings with men of his sort had to be very careful to keep it "under the rose."

"I'm on," said Dicky Screwe.
 "This way, then!" said Peter.

He sauntered away, and the rascal followed him only too willingly. Peter walked out of Pegg, and down the lane to the point where it ran along the bank of the Sark. By the river there, under the trees, Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting. Mr. Screwe looked somewhat surprised at seeing such a crowd of them. If it was business, it was a good stroke of business; there was no doubt about that.

"Afternoon, young gentlemen!"
 Peter Todd made a sign, and the juniors surrounded Mr. Screwe. The longshoreman looked somewhat uneasy. He began to suspect that it was not business—or, at all events, not the business he had anticipated.

"I say, wot's this 'ere?" he began.
 Peter Todd raised an accusing finger, and pointed it at Dicky Screwe.

"The time has come, as the walrus remarked, to talk of many things," said Peter severely. "What sort of a blighter do you call yourself, Mr. Screwe?"

"Wot!"
 "You came here, thinking you were going to lead a nice, well-behaved, innocent kid like me into your sinful ways!" said Peter. "Look at my cousin Alonzo, how shocked he looks!"

"My dear Peter—" "Look 'ere!" shouted Mr. Screwe. "If this 'ere is a lark, I don't like it! I'm off!"
 "Not yet," said Peter. "Collar him!"

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FRANK RICHARDS Contributes a Splendid, Complete School Tale in our New Saturday Companion Paper—

"Ands orf!" roared Mr. Screwe. "'Ow dare you lay 'ands on me, you young warmints? I'll 'ave you locked up!"
 "Chuck him in!"
 "Why, this 'ere—ow—yah—'elp!" shrieked Mr. Screwe, Splash!
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Well Run!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. roared as the rascal descended with a mighty splash into the shallow water of the river's margin. There was no danger of Mr. Screwe's being drowned; the water was less than a couple of feet deep there for some yards out; but he was very wet. He rose from the water, drenched, and it surged round his legs as he stood planted in soft and clinging mud.

He gasped for breath, with the water running down his face, and glared furiously at the grinning juniors on the bank.

"You young 'ounds!" he roared.
 Mr. Screwe came tramping towards the shore, through the squelching mud that clung around his boots. But Harry Wharton & Co. lined up to receive him.

"Stand where you are!" said Peter Todd. "If you try to get out, we'll shove you in again—and quick, too!"

"The quickfulness will be terrific, my esteemed rotter!"
 "Look 'ere!" yelled Mr. Screwe. "I shall ketch cold—" "We've got to talk to you before you get out," explained Peter Todd affably. "Now, what sort of a scoundrel do you call yourself?"

"Look 'ere—" "Are you a lazy, loafing, swilling, gambling rascal, or are you not?" asked Peter calmly. "You'll be kept in the water till you've owned up to the truth! Now, then!"

Mr. Screwe glared savagely at the juniors; but he knew he had no chance of getting out of the water so long as they chose to keep him there, and they were out of sight of the village, and far from help. The loafer realised that he was in a very tight corner indeed, and he weakened at once.

"I'll say anythin' you like, young gents!" he mumbled.
 "Are you a loafing rotter?"

"Groo! Yes. Lemme out!"

"Good! Are you a gambling blackguard?"

"Ow! Yes. I say—" "Now, that's clear," said Peter, with a nod of satisfaction.

"I trust, Mr. Screwe, that you now see your rascally conduct in its true light?"

"Will you lemme out of this 'ere water?" said Mr. Screwe savagely, between his teeth.

"Not until you see your conduct in its true light," said Peter calmly.

"Yes, I do—I do! Lemme out!"

"Not quite. You know that we belong to Greyfriars, I suppose?"

"Yes, 'ang, you!"

"We are a Committee of Morality and Upright Conduct, appointed by ourselves," Peter Todd explained. "Do you catch on?"

Mr. Screwe snorted and shivered. The water was very cold.

"We have made it our business—and pleasure—to see that you don't have any acquaintance with Greyfriars chaps," resumed Peter. "You've got to promise not to speak to any fellow belonging to Greyfriars before we let you out."

"I p-p-promise," shivered Mr. Screwe.

"Especially Wingate."

"Eh! I ain't never spoken to anybody of that there name!" mumbled Mr. Screwe.

"You awful Ananias! You beat Bunter!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "We've seen you with him."

"I tell you I don't know 'im, and I ain't 'ardly 'eard the name!" howled Mr. Screwe. "Now let me out."

"No good expecting him to tell the truth, I suppose," said Harry Wharton. "Look here, Screwe, you've got to promise not to speak to Wingate again."

"I p-p-promise."

"If you do, we shall come for you again," said Peter Todd impressively. "We shall give you a real ducking and a real walloping next time. Savvy?"

"Grooh! Ye-e-es. O s!"

"Sure you quite understand?"

"Yes!" roared Mr. Screwe. "Lemme out, 'ang you!"

"I think we can let him out now, chaps and fellows," said Peter Todd. "I think the rotter's had his lesson. Are you cold, Mr. Screwe?"

"Grooh! Yes."

"We'll warm you up!" said Peter. "You can come out."

"CHUCKLES," 14

The juniors backed away from the water's edge, and the shivering Mr. Screwe tramped and squeaked out of the water. His legs were thick with clinging mud up to the knees. His look was positively murderous.

"Yes, he looks rather cold," Peter Todd remarked, surveying him critically. "But we'll warm him up. You'd better run for Pegg, Mr. Screwe. In case you should linger on the way, we shall run after you. We shall thump you every time we get within reach of you. Do you see? It will be quite exciting, won't it?"

Mr. Screwe's reply cannot be recorded. It was couched in language that would have made one of the celebrated "army in Flanders" green with envy.

"Shut up!" snapped Peter. "Now, we give you half a minute's start."

Mr. Screwe simply bolted.

He went down the lane towards Pegg almost with the speed of a locomotive, and Peter Todd timed him, and gave him exactly thirty seconds' start. Then, with a whoop, the juniors came tearing on his track.

"After him!" roared Todd.

"Put it on!"

"Give him socks!"

Fear lent Mr. Screwe wings. Loafing about public-houses, and imbibing strong drink, and staying up to the small hours of the morning had not made him very fit for a foot-race.

But with the juniors yelling behind him, he put on a remarkably good speed, considering. He went down the lane at a terrific burst, and the juniors, good runners as they were, did not gain on him for some minutes.

But Mr. Screwe's wind was not good, and he slacked

country. "Something attempted, somebody done, to earn a night's repose," you know."

And the Co. returned very cheerfully to Greyfriars. Wingate of the Sixth met them as they came into the Close, and he glanced at them suspiciously. When eight members of the Remove came home grinning and chuckling, it was easy enough for a prefect to guess that there had been trouble for somebody.

"What have you young rascals been up to?" the Greyfriars captain demanded.

"Snuff!" said Peter.

"What have you been doing?" asked Wingate, frowning.

"A painful but necessary duty, thank you!" said Peter Todd. "A fellow got wet in a river, and we helped to dry him. He required warming, and we warmed him. It was a pleasure as well as a duty."

And Peter Todd dodged into the School House before Wingate could question him any further.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. Protection Not Required!

THE next day was Saturday, and in the afternoon the First Eleven of Greyfriars were playing a visiting team. Wingate being football captain of the school, he would be required, of course, in the match, and under the circumstances, Peter Todd confided to his com-

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suddenly, gasping. Then Bob Cherry, who was ahead of the pursuers, came within reach.

Bob reached out, and gave Mr. Screwe a playful box on the ear as he ran, and then a box on the other ear with the other hand.

Dicky Screwe roared, and ran harder.

Bob Cherry kept pace, and he boxed Mr. Screwe's ears, and poked him in the back, and dug him in the ribs, while the other fellows roared with laughter behind.

Mr. Screwe halted at last, and turned savagely upon his pursuers.

They were running too fast to stop themselves, and they simply piled into Dicky Screwe, and he went rolling over on the ground, with the juniors sprawling over him.

"Ow, ow! 'Elp!" mumbled the longshoreman feebly.

"Ow! Gerroff my neck, somebody!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What silly idiot is shoving his silly elbow in my eye?"

"Ow! I've knocked my elbow!" murmured Alonzo Todd.

"I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors scrambled off. Mr. Screwe lay gasping on the ground. Peter Todd winked to the other juniors.

"Now, all together!" he exclaimed. "When I give the word, jump on him—with both feet! One—two—three—jump!"

But before the word "jump" was out of Peter's mouth, Mr. Screwe had leaped to his feet, and was fleeing madly into Pegg village. The juniors roared with laughter as the fugitive disappeared among the cottages.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think that rotter's had his lesson," said Peter Todd, with great satisfaction, "and we have deserved well of our THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 314.

NEXT MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

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you feel as if you were simply glued down, and couldn't possibly make a move, don't you?"

"Yes," murmured Bunter.

"I'll give you something to cure all that. See this boat-hook?"

"Look here, Todd—"

"I'm going to bring it down just where you're sitting. If you don't get up, you may get hurt. Now—"

Peter flourished the boat-hook in the air, and Bunter was off the boat in a twinkling.

"There!" exclaimed Peter triumphantly. "I told you I could cure you."

"You—you beast—"

"Come on," said Peter. "We'll have some cake and ginger-beer before we go home. I'm peckish."

Billy Bunter brightened up wonderfully.

"Good idea!" he exclaimed heartily. "I'm simply famished. Come on!"

And they walked up from the beach. As they came into the village, Tom Dutton uttered an exclamation.

"My hat! There's Wingate again!"

"Great Scott!" said Peter.

He stared at the figure coming down the village street.

"But the match can hardly be over at Greyfriars yet," he exclaimed.

"He's cut the match, to come down here to meet his precious friend Scrawe, just as I told you the other day—"

"Great pip!" said Dutton. "He's going into the Anchor."

Peter Todd's brow grew dark as the youth opened the gate close by the inn, and went into the garden, and disappeared.

"The silly ass!" he exclaimed. "The awful chump! Why, anybody might have seen him going in there, and—"

Great Scott! Look there! Prout, by Jove!"

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth at Greyfriars, was walking sedately along by the cliffs, and he came up into the village only a minute after the reckless youth had disappeared into the garden of the Anchor Inn. If he had been sixty seconds earlier, Mr. Prout would certainly have seen him.

The juniors exchanged glances. Such utter recklessness on Wingate's part was simply astounding.

"He must be off his onion!" Dutton muttered.

Mr. Prout nodded kindly to the juniors, who lifted their caps respectfully, and walked on. Peter drew a deep breath of relief as he disappeared. He had feared that Wingate might come out of the inn again, right under the eyes of the Greyfriars Form-master.

"This is shocking, my dear friends!" murmured Alonzo.

"My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted. Wingate is certainly going on the road to ruin. Shall I follow him in and remonstrate with him, Peter?"

"Rats!" said Peter disrespectfully.

"But, my dear Peter—"

"Here he comes again, and Scrawe with him!" muttered Billy Bunter excitedly. "I say, you fellows, this is thick, isn't it? Why, they might have run right into old Prout!"

"Oh, he's dotty! He's simply dotty and potty!" muttered Peter Todd, watching the two figures as they proceeded down the street. "He's asking for trouble—simply begging for the sack! And, my only hat, there's Prout again!"

Mr. Prout had reappeared in sight, and he had halted in the street, and was gazing after the two figures as if he could scarcely believe his eyes. Dicky Scrawe and his companion were crossing the street, and their faces were in full view of the astounded Form-master. Then they passed a cottage and disappeared. Peter Todd groaned.

"Prout's spotted him!" he exclaimed. "It's all up with Wingate now! It means the sack! Look at Prout's face! Looks as if a thunderbolt had dropped on his giddy napper, don't he? By George, Wingate must be fairly off his dot! Come on!"

"Where—"

"Don't jaw! Come on!" said Peter abruptly.

Mr. Prout, still looking thunderstruck, stood in the village street, apparently trying to collect his startled thoughts. It was enough to astound him, to see George Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, walking and talking on the friendliest possible terms with Dicky Scrawe, the worst character in the whole district.

Peter Todd and his companions hurried away after the two, and came in sight of them again in the lane.

"They're going to Friardale!" said Peter. "But perhaps they won't get there. We're going to talk to them. Scrawe made us a little promise yesterday, and he seems to have forgotten all about it. I'm going to remind him."

"Look here, Todd!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "Wingate will be ratty—"

"I know he will."

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"Well, I'm not going to get into a row with Wingate—"

"Yes, you are!" said Peter Todd, seizing the fat junior by the collar. "You're going to back up your study! Come on!"

"Leggo!" howled Bunter. "I tell you—"

"Shut up, and come on!"

Peter Todd ran Bunter along the road, and Alonzo and Dutton followed. They quickly overtook the two walkers, and swung round and stopped directly in their path.

Mr. Scrawe scowled ferociously at the sight of the Greyfriars fellows.

"So it's you again, is it?" he said between his teeth.

Peter Todd nodded calmly.

"Us!" he agreed.

"Get out of the way!" said Scrawe savagely.

"Not just yet. I've got to talk to your friend," said Peter. "You shut up! Wingate, are you right off your rocker, you silly chump?"

Mr. Scrawe's companion stared at Peter Todd.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Business!" said Peter promptly. "Mr. Prout spotted you in the street just now."

"Spotted me!"

"Yes; Mr. Prout."

"Who's Mr. Prout?"

Peter stared at him. That Wingate of the Sixth should ask him who Mr. Prout was, was a little too much. Todd turned red with anger.

"I suppose you are very funny," he said, "but I don't see it. I've said that I'll save you from getting yourself ruined, and I'm going to do it. You're going to part company with that thief Scrawe at once!"

"Wot d'ye call me?" yelled Mr. Scrawe.

"And I'm going to see that you do it!" said Peter determinedly, unheeding Mr. Scrawe. "Now, sharp's the word! Don't you understand that Prout may come along at any moment? I tell you he spotted you in the street."

"Ha, ha, ha! You're making a mistake, kid!"

"I'm not making any mistake. Prout spotted you. We saw him—"

"No; I mean that—"

"There's no time to waste in jaw!" shouted Peter. "I tell you you've got to part company with that rotter before Prout gets on to you again! He's coming this way, I believe."

"Look here, young 'un—"

"Lend me a 'and, and we'll larrup 'em!" said Mr. Scrawe, taking a tighter grip on his heavy walking-cane. "They assaulted me yesterday, the young varmint! I'll give 'em tit for tat now, so I will!"

And Mr. Scrawe ran right at the juniors, lashing out with his stick.

Billy Bunter uttered a howl of terror, and fled at top speed. The other three juniors fastened upon Mr. Scrawe, receiving several severe lashes with the cane as they did so, and brought him to the ground.

"Elp, ole pal!" yelled Scrawe, as he struggled with the juniors.

His companion rushed to his aid. Todd and Dutton and Alonzo found themselves dragged off Dicky Scrawe and hurled into the road. Mr. Scrawe staggered up.

His face was purple with rage, and he brandished his cane furiously.

"Give 'em beans, the cheeky young whelps!" he howled.

Lash—lash—lash!

"Yaroor!" roared Peter. "Stop! Great Scott! Oh!"

He jumped up, dodging the cane as best he could. It was borne in even upon Peter's reckless mind that three juniors were no match for a man with a stick, backed up by a fellow like Wingate. He reluctantly gave the signal to retreat, and the three Removites ran. Mr. Scrawe ran a dozen yards after them, lashing out fiercely, till they were out of reach. Then he returned, panting, to his companion.

Peter Todd groaned dismally, and rubbed his arms and shoulders, as he gazed after the two figures that disappeared down the lane towards Friardale.

"Oh, my hat! Blessed if I will ever take Wingate under my protection again! Ow! Fancy the beast going for us, when we were trying to help him! Ow!"

"What did you expect, my dear Peter? Ow! I am considerably hurt!"

"Oh, my head!" groaned Dutton. "That beast fetched me a lick right on the napper! Todd, you silly idiot, what did you tackle them for? What business is it of yours if Wingate gets the sack, anyway?"

"I'm protecting him!" snapped Peter.

"Detecting him! Well, Prout's detected him now, and he'll get it in the neck, and serve him jolly well right!"

growled Dutton, rubbing his head dolorously. "I don't care a rap if the beast is expelled now! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Well, we've suffered in a good cause," murmured Peter. "Only our sufferings have been rather thick, and the cause doesn't seem to have benefited much. I wish I'd left him to you and your tracts, Lonzy! Ow!"

And the three very ill-used juniors took their way dolefully back to Greyfriars, feeling that life was hardly worth living in a world where fellows who tried to do good were so exceedingly roughly used. They overtook Bunter as they came up to the gates of Greyfriars. The Owl of the Remove blinked at them a little doubtfully.

"I—I—I ran for help!" he explained. "I—I was going to bring a lot of fellows to—to help you, Toddy—"

He did not stay to finish his explanation, but fled into the gateway just in time to escape Peter's boot.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER. Light at Last!

"WINGATE!"

"Hallo, Wharton!"

George Wingate was at tea in his study when Wharton knocked at the door and looked in. The captain of Greyfriars was looking more cheerful than he had looked during the past week. He nodded very kindly to Wharton.

"You're wanted, Wingate," said Harry.

Wingate gave him a sharp look. Wharton's face was very grave and troubled.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"I'm afraid so. The Head has sent for you."

"The Head?" said Wingate, in surprise.

"Yes. Mr. Prout's with him. And Prout has taken Todd—both Todds—and Bunter and Dutton with him to the Head's study—"

"What a giddy collection!" said Wingate, laughing. "Is

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ONE
PENNY.

have any explanation to make seems impossible—but I wish to hear what you have to say. Tell Wingate what you have seen, Mr. Prout, and then let these juniors speak. You will listen, Wingate, and then make your answer—if you have one to make."

"Very well, sir."

"I am sorry for this, Wingate," Mr. Prout began; "very sorry, and very shocked. But I had my duty to do—after what I saw, I had no choice about reporting it to Dr. Locke. You will realise that, I hope. I saw you, in the open street, on familiar and friendly terms with a notoriously bad character—a person named Screwe, who is well known to make money by swindling the fishermen of Pegg, and inducing persons in a higher station to make betting transactions with him. He is a dangerous character, and you must be well aware of the fact."

"That is quite true, sir. The man is an utter scoundrel," said Wingate quietly.

"I am glad you say so. Yet you were on familiar terms with him—and my impression was that you had come out of the Anchor Inn with him. These juniors were in the street at the same time, and they will confirm what I say. Todd!"

"Yes, sir," said Peter dimly.

"Did you see Wingate in the street of Pegg this afternoon?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"Whom was he with?"

"I—I didn't ask him, sir," stammered Peter.

Wingate smiled.

"But you know very well," said Mr. Prout sternly. "This is a serious matter, Todd, and you must speak out frankly."

"I command you to speak, Todd," said the Head.



he going to ask the Head to send them to a freak collection?"

"It's serious, Wingate. The Head was looking quite black when he told me to come for you," said Harry earnestly.

"I—I'm afraid it's come out."

"What's come out?"

"About your being in Pegg at the Anchor with that rotter Screwe. I know that the Todds and Dutton knew about it, and Bunter saw you the other day, too. I'm afraid their being taken to the Head's study shows that Mr. Prout has found something out, and knows that those kids know. I thought I'd warn you."

"Thanks!" said Wingate, with a smile. "Perhaps it's not quite so serious as you think, Wharton, even if it has come out. I didn't want it to, but if it has it can't be helped. Anyway, I'll go to the Head."

And George Wingate, leaving his unfinished tea on the table, made his way to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke was there, with Mr. Prout and the four juniors from Study No. 7. Peter Todd & Co. were looking very uncomfortable. Mr. Prout had swooped down on them and marched them off to the Head's study without a word of explanation, but they guessed, of course, what they were wanted for. Mr. Prout knew that they must have seen what he had seen in the street of Pegg, and he wanted their evidence in confirmation of his statement to the Head.

And, in spite of the rough handling they had received in their last efforts to do good, the juniors did not want to say anything to injure Wingate. But the matter was out of their hands now.

Dr. Locke fixed a penetrating glance upon Wingate as he came in. The Greyfriars captain's manner was quiet and respectful.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Wingate. Mr. Prout has given me a piece of most remarkable—most astounding information. That you can

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

"Well, sir, he was talking to that man Screwe," said Peter reluctantly, with a dismal feeling that Wingate was likely to be worse instead of better off by his means. "But—but he might only have been saying good-afternoon to him, sir. I didn't hear what they said."

"It's all right, Todd—speak out," said Wingate.

"And you?" said Mr. Prout, turning to Alonzo. "Did you see the same?"

"Yes, sir," said Alonzo mournfully. "I was greatly shocked, sir—nay, disgusted. Especially after my endeavour to reform Wingate by means of tracts—"

"That will do, Todd. You saw him also, Bunter?"

"I'm rather short-sighted, sir—"

"Did you see him, or did you not?"

"Yee-e-es, sir."

"Very well. Dutton, you say the same, I suppose?"

"Eh?" said Tom Dutton.

"You say the same, do you not?" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

"I hope so, sir," said Dutton. "I always try to play the game, sir."

"What! What! What do you mean, Dutton? I asked you if you say the same as your companions?" exclaimed Mr. Prout, raising his voice.

"Well, that's according, sir," said Dutton, puzzled. "I like pickled onions, but—"

"What! Who is speaking about pickled onions?" shrieked Mr. Prout.

"Didn't you ask me if I liked pickled onions, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" said the Head, though his own lips twitched for a moment. "I think we may—er—dispense with Dutton's evidence, Mr. Prout, as the matter seems to be so well established. Wingate, you have heard what has been said. Have you anything to say in extenuation of your conduct?"

(Continued on page 27.)

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

New Readers Can Start This Grand Story To-day!



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. While Ferrers Lord and his party are exploring the inside of Mysteria, Hal Honour, the engineer, takes a walk. He is captured by Julius Faber and his men, and is imprisoned in their camp. During the night, however, he awakens, and sees that Faber himself is keeping guard. He enters into conversation with him, and suddenly the engineer raises his clenched fists, and strikes Faber senseless to the ground. Hal Honour succeeds in getting away in a boat, and when he is well at sea he finds that Stumpy, Faber's wooden-legged accomplice, is also in the boat. Meanwhile, Ferrers Lord and his companions in the cave are experiencing a rough time. The naphtha lamp, accidentally upset, catch fire, and the cavern becomes like a furnace. Rupert Thurston, on board the submarine, sees the flames issuing from the top of the cave, and sends out a raft, manned by Joe and the German cook, to the rescue.

(Now go on with the story.)

On the Lake of Darkness—Pull and Pull Again—In the Current—An Astounding Surprise.

As they pulled away into the great gloom, Joe and the cook listened to the cheers of their comrades. The raft, a long and well-balanced craft, moved well through the water. The carpenter had not doubted the cook's pluck, but he had rather doubted his staying powers and skill as an oarsman. He was agreeably surprised. They had no sliding seats, running on ball-bearings, and no patent rowlocks, but Herr Schwartz swung cleanly and steadily, and kept proper time.

Joe had brought the compass, though he could not rely upon it. They had started off at a hot pace, but he called a halt at last. The lights were only a smear.

"Whoa!" he said. "We've made her move like a little teamboat. You row well, cooky."

"Ach, I vas do dot often, Choe," said Herr Schwartz. "I vos vin brizes vor id vonce, yes. Not we nexd do, is ud?"

"Get our breath a bit," answered Joe. "Don't the place smell of burning—eh? Let's have a look at the wet."

The chef passed over a syphon of soda-water and a glass.

"Like der prandy?"

"No brandy for me. I only want to get the taste of the smell out of my mouth," said Joe. "We don't know where we're going, Dutchy; so anywhere is good enough for us. This dismal 'ole can't be big enough to get lost in. We'll keep in sight of their lights as long as we can, and then row anywhere."

"Dot vas der t'ing only do to," agreed the German.

"Shaf! Ve are yed not tead, Choe. Ve vas kick, is ud?"

"Get hold of the sticks and pull," said the carpenter.

Herr Schwartz spat on his hands, and proved that he could use an oar quite as well as a rolling-pin or a frying-pan. The lights dwindled into a luminous smear.

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FRANK RICHARDS

Contributes a Splendid, Complete School Tale in our New Saturday Companion Paper—

"CHUCKLES," ½

"Steady a minute," said Joe. "You pull a stroke or two."

He looked at the compass.

"Now, according to this blessed thing," he said, with disgust, "we're going clean east. That's the silly island 'opping all over the sea. Why didn't it blow to bits as they expected? Just it's cheek and sauciness, I reckon! Due east. We'll be bangin' into the North Pole, and then bump into the South ditto 'fore we've gone another mile! Push 'er along again, polony. We'll get our brains ravelled up if we watch this thing."

They worked at the oars for another ten minutes.

"See the lights?"

"Der vas choost ein twinkle, Choe. Dot vas all—choost ein twinkle."

"Switch off, and we'll see better!" said the carpenter.

As they turned out the lamps and rested on their oars, they could discern a faint yellow haze hanging on the very limit of the blackness.

"Ve nod come all dot vay, Choe!" said the cook wisely.

"Id vas der smoke dot hang apoudt. Ach, yes, der smoke!"

"You're about right, sausage!" said Joe. "That's what makes 'em look so misty. What about a yell?"

"Aho!"

"Ja, ja! Aho-oy!" howled the cook.

In the tense, all-enshrouding blackness they listened for a reply. The echoes gave it with a hundred tongues.

"It's a kind of double whisperin'-gallery!" growled Joe.

"Say, steak and onions, we're bound to find 'em, and we shan't do that waitin' here. Start the engines again, old man, and stick your lamp on; one's plenty."

"Ja!" grunted the brave little cook.

They were silent for another long ten minutes.

"I vas nod see der lights, Choe."

"Blink yours out; it dazzles me!" said Joe.

They shut their eyes and opened them again to get rid of the glare of their own lamp.

"The black 'ole of Calcutta wasn't in it w' this, Germany!" said the carpenter. "I've pretty near twisted my neck out o' joint, but it's as dark as the inside of a camera w' the shutter down!"

"Id vas as black as der soul of Gan-Vaga!"

Joe laughed, but not comfortably.

"Oh, never mind poor old Gan. Very like he's got troubles enough," he said. "We'd be four-eyed lunatics to stop 'ere! Get 'old of the push-er-alongs, and push. It'll keep us warm, anyhow."

"Und der light, Choe?"

"Oh, we'll 'ave a light. There's something cheerful about it. Stow me, I wish it was the sun, chummy!"

Herr Schwartz sighed. That was his own fervent wish.

"Ja, ja!" he said sadly. "Ve vas do pe bowls nod porn, Choe."

"What the gridrons do you mean by bowls, lunatic? Not born to be what?"

"Der tings dot live unter der ground, and make der heaps of earth on der tob," explained the chef.

"You mean moles, fathead!" said Joe.

"Vas ud? I tought moles vas der black marks dot vas come on beople's faces," said the chef simply. "Bud ud to nod madder. Vere vas ged now, Choe?"

They rested on their oars again. Joe's liking for the cook had leapt into admiration. He fancied there was rather a quaver in his comrade's voice, but that did not alter his opinion. Darkness and silence unutterable shut them in. Joe blew his nose.

"That's where you lick me, sonny," he said cheerfully; "but that ain't any reason why we shouldn't have a smoke."

"Dunder! Dot vas charst der ting I vant, and I nod know. Ve shall haf ein smoke, Choe."

Joe's heart was at its lowest ebb. Their shouts had echoed unheeded through that dismal abode, and their light had received no halloo or call; but Joe, like the intrepid engineer, knew nothing about giving in, and nothing about losing hope.

He was the servant of Ferrers Lord, and, though he did not understand Latin, he knew the meaning of the two words painted on a scroll beneath the name of the submarine.

The two words were:

"Vae victis."

Ching-Lung had translated them as, "Rough luck on the Johnny whose head you've got in chancery," a translation nearly as good as the real one: "Woe to the vanquished."

Barry's vision of the millionaire's motto was: "Av he's too big to hit, kick, or bedad, yez'll nade a stretcher!"

Joe remembered both. A beaten man is not worth the value of the boots he wears.

"Got yer wind again, Dutchy?"

"Ja!"

"Then pull, and chance the ducks!" said the carpenter. "Pull till we bump!"

"Vot ve pump against, Choe?"

"The wall," snapped Joe. "This shockin' place can't last for ever, can it? Drag away."

"I vas trag," sighed the chef, "und dere vas plisters on mine hands mit der dragging. Und ten vat, Choe?"

"We'll stick to the rock, and keep nigh it. It stands to sense, if we do that long enough, we'll get back to where we started from, no matter what shape the 'ole is. We can see how we're steerin' then. As it are, we very likely pullin' round a fifty-yard ring."

"But if dot so, you nod tell how ve ged oud of dot ring, Choe."

"Oh, just drag away," said Joe, "and chance the ducks!"

Both men struggled hard to dismiss the phantom of calamity that was haunting their minds, but the dismal spectre would not be dismissed.

Gallantly and well the cook, whose hands were not leathery like Joe's, stuck to the oars; but he was beginning to flag, and his strokes were more feeble and irregular.

"I haf in mine fingers der gramp, Choe!"

"Rest a bit, then, old man," said the carpenter. "You're on the wobble, and I can pull a sight better and straighter w'out you as you are now."

"Ach, dot vas drue, and I am mosdt sorry!" sighed the cook.

"Oh, you've done grand, mate! Rub your 'ands w' brandy, and they'll soon come right."

Joe rowed like a machine. Would they ever reach the limit of the black lake?

They had been afloat for almost two hours. Had they been going in an aimless circle since the moment the lights became invisible?

Joe set his teeth. There must be an end to all things, even to that hateful pit of gloom and silence.

In four hours Joe could have pulled a dinghy completely round Mysteria, and that against the tide.

Surely the cavern did not extend to the full size of the island? It was impossible to think it.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

"Choe!"
The cook's voice was hoarse and shaky. Joe rested on his oars. He could not repress a shiver.

Out of the velvety gloom came a hoarse, grunting sound. It swelled to a kind of prolonged howl, and died away.

Then came a succession of loud reports, as if some monster was beating the water with its tail. The echoes awoke and multiplied the noise.

"Ah!" shrieked Schwartz, his face as white as ashes. A wave rolled across the low-lying raft, and a current of cold air struck them. Some shadowy thing swept past with a hiss of water, leaving the raft tossing and dancing.

Again came the hoarse grunting.

"Fish of some sort," said Joe, and his voice sounded strange in his own ears.

"I shake like a leaf!" panted the cook. "Dunder! I vas derrify aldgedders!"

"It ain't no use bein' terrified, mate," said Joe grimly. "It didn't seem to take no notice of us, which is summat to be thankful for. We'll do no good stopping 'ere, that's a moral. What are you up to?" he added sharply. "Leave that stuff alone. It won't do you no good, and you've got too much grit to need it."

Herr Schwartz put down the brandy-bottle, his heart thumping against his ribs. Once more silence filled the cavern, but it was broken by the splash of oars.

"They're dead," thought Joe, shuddering—"dead as nails!"

What else could he think? Had his comrades been alive, they must surely have heard their shouts and seen the lights by this time.

His heart was bitter within him, and his eyes grew dim; but his lusty arms did not flag.

He must save Schwartz. He knew that the cook was almost numbed with terror, and that practically everything depended on his own strength and energy.

If they could only gain the shore they would have something to guide them. But the question was, where was the shore?

At that instant there was a shock so sudden and unexpected that the cook rolled into the water with a splash and a shriek. He scrambled to his feet. The water was so shallow that it only reached to the middle of his calves. Joe raised the lamp.

They had crossed the lake at last. A wall of grey rock, as naked as his hand, sloped inwards and upwards.

"Pull yourself together, sonny!" said Joe encouragingly. "We've got summat to work on at last. I'll get you back if I've got to row my 'ands away down to the bare bones! Pity you got so wet, for the water ain't warm. Take a drop o' brandy now, if you like."

The cook's teeth were chattering with cold and fright. The brandy steadied him.

"Now comes the puzzle, mate," went on Joe. "Which is the nearest way—left or right? I guess we sha'n't never know that, so it don't matter much. Heads left, tails right."

He took a handful of silver from his pocket. Eleven coins out of fifteen were head upwards.

"All you've got to do, Shorts," said the plucky carpenter, "is to keep us in sight o' the shore, and I'll do the rest."

"Ja, ja," muttered the German. "Mit der lamp—yes!"

Joe pushed the raft clear, and Schwartz threw the light against the cliffs. He was much calmer.

"Better get out a bit further," said Joe. "We don't want to risk runnin' aground."

It was a great relief to be able to tell the progress they were making. Now and again, as the light shone on them, the walls suddenly became alive, and seemed to burst into flame. But the writhing flames were nothing more terrible than the deep-sea worms Joe had seen on the pillars.

"Cold, Cooky?"

"Ja, mosdt gold, Choe. Led me bull—yes?"

"I don't mind. Try it for a bit just to warm you up."

The chef's rate of progress did not satisfy Joe. The cook's pluck was stronger than his muscles.

"That'll do. Let me take 'em now."

Schwartz gave a cry of warning a few minutes later. Rocks jutted from the water, and they were so close together that it was impossible to find a way through. Joe rowed out.

"This makes it a bit longer," he remarked, "but we'll get there in time, sonny."

Neither of them had mentioned the real object of their perilous quest. It was better not to. They rounded the last rock, and pulled inwards. The raft seemed to travel more easily, though the carpenter was still pulling a regular twenty to the minute. For a time he did not notice it. All

at once he struck something, and the oar snapped like a carrot.

"Bad luck, partner," said the carpenter. "We can't afford to do that often. Pass me another."

Five minutes passed, and Joe paused to take breath.

"Dunder! Vat dot mean, is ud, Choe?" asked the cook.

"Ve vas standt still."

The broken blade, that ought to have been behind them, was floating alongside.

"Well, I'm hanged!"

Joe gazed at this atom of flotsam in bewilderment.

"It must 'ave 'looked on to us. Why, we're driftin'!"

There could be no doubt of it. The raft slid past a rock, and then another. There was a current. Joe puzzled his brains for an explanation of the mystery.

"Perhaps id vas der islandt durning roundt," said the cook. "Dot make ith, choost like von you durn a gup round, der tex in ith spin."

"Very likely you've hit it, sonny," said Joe, setting to work again. "I never was no good at riddles, so I give it up. Let's 'ope it's goin' our way. We're bound to go w' it, for I can't drag this chunk o' rotten wood agen the tide, and I don't mean to try. Look out for the shore."

It soon came in sight. According to the faithless—or, rather, useless—compass, they were going north-east.

"If this don't run a good three mile an hour, I'm no judge!" said Joe. "It's a runny thing to find a current down 'ere. Anyhow, it makes it easy."

"Dunder!" shouted the German. "Vieh shore vas I to keep near, yes?"

"What's the fuss?"

"Look! Dere vas two shores."

The mysteries of Mystoria were endless. To the right and to the left the lamp revealed walls of rock. The raft was in a channel barely fifty feet wide. Joe found time to scratch his head.

"Mate," he said. "it strikes me we've lost ourselves."

"Ja!" nodded the cook.

"And jolly badly, too," added Joe. "This ain't our way. I'll 'ave a try, but I don't think it's any good."

He dragged the raft round, and fixed his eyes on a white patch of rock. Once he cleared the mark, but only by inches. The current was too strong. He found himself losing ground.

"No good!" he grunted. "We've got to do what we're told, mate."

"Ja!"

"Light my pipe for me. Here are some dry matches. Don't drop 'em."

The cook's hands were shaking. While Joe steadied the raft, he managed to light the pipe.

Where were they going? All Joe could do was to keep the raft in the centre of the current. He saw that the walls were drawing closer together.

"If der vater go over ein gliff, Choe!" said Schwartz hoarsely.

Joe had no such fear, and told him so. The current was not rapid enough. The raft drifted smoothly and quietly.

Joe pulled out his watch. They had been on the underground lake five hours.

"Himmel! Der sdars—der sdars!" yelled the German.

The carpenter raised his head. Above him countless stars were gleaming.

"I've got him! He's here! Hands up, you hound! I'm covering you!" thundered a voice.

Waiting for Rescue—How to Banish Dull Care—Ching-Lung Exerts Himself.

"We've had a shipwreck, a landslide, and a conflagration," said Ching-Lung thoughtfully; "so I hardly see how we can pile on the agony of the piece much more unless we have a few murders and a suicide in the last act. You must turn this into a stirring drama, Barry."

Barry sat with his knees tucked up and his arms clasped round them, gazing moodily into the darkness.

"Bedad, Oi think Oi'd be more sensible wroitin' my last will and testament, sir," he answered.

"Wait till you have something to leave, my boy. Never throw up the sponge. This isn't a nice spot to spend your holidays in; but as there aren't any trains or steamboats running, we must stop," said Ching-Lung.

Thomas Prout heaved a sigh.

"It's a rest for our eyes, anyhow, by hokey," he remarked.

Conversation had become very fitful.

"It will give us a lesson in the difficult art of patience, lads," said the millionaire. "We are helpless to aid ourselves, and it will probably be a long time before assistance comes. They will bring the Berthon boat from the ship, and that cannot be done in a few minutes. I don't consider we are in any danger—any immediate danger, that is. It has been an extraordinary chapter of accidents, and we are lucky to have come out so well."

Again they relapsed into silence. They knew that all preparations were being made for their rescue as fast as brave hearts and willing hands could push them forward.

There was one terror, but nobody mentioned it—a dread of the monsters that haunted the inky lake. Did those awful brutes ever forsake the water for the land? What was their food? Now and again they heard distant gruntings and snortings, and grasped their rifles nervously. But as time went on, and there was no fulfilment of their fears, they grew easier in their minds.

"Barry!"

"Yes, sor," said the Irishman.

"You've got the chance of a lifetime," said Ching-Lung.

"We can't run away, and we can't spare a cartridge to shoot you. We're at your mercy, so tell us the yarn of dear Uncle Dennis and the rooster."

It was a good story, and Barry told it in his own inimitable style. Though they were so cold and wet and miserable, the story caused many a hearty laugh. Even Gan-Waga sniggered.

After this Barry, in a rich, musical voice, started a rollicking Irish song, with a rousing chorus. The tune was infectious. Presently Prout, Maddock, and Ching-Lung were roaring out the chorus at the full pitch of their lusty lungs.

"Well done, the mysterious Mystoria minstrels!" cried Ching-Lung. "Give us 'Father O'Flynn,' Barry, boy."

Ferrers Lord smiled as he listened. Strangely enough, their ringing voices hardly roused the echoes now. It puzzled the millionaire for a moment, and then he understood the reason. Owing to the landslide and the widening of the crevice, the cavern just there had lost its powers of multiplying sounds. It had become like a cracked bell.

The music acted like a tonic on their spirits. They rattled out "Donnybrook Fair" and "Pether Grogan's Wedding," and many another Irish ballad the maddest and merriest in the world.

"Moror, Barry!" said Gan-Waga, almost himself again.

"Day butterful!"

"Ahoy!" called a voice from the darkness.



A strange, deep, humming note, like the buzzing of bees, quivered on the frosty air. A cluster of dark specks hung in the starry sky. Gradually the specks grew larger, and the humming swelled into a sullen roar. "The Grey Invaders" were getting closer and closer, and Britain's peril was hourly increasing. If you want to read the most amazing invasion story ever written see to-day's "Boys' Friend."

1d.

They all started up except the millionaire. He laughed softly, betraying Ching-Lung's trick.

"Got you that time!" laughed the prince. "Aho! Who are you out there?"

"O'm O'Roonney's Uncle Dennis, bedad, and O'm gettin' me fate wot, bad luck to ut!" replied the voice. "Could yez oblige me wid a match, for O'm thryin' to foind the road to Ballybunion, me an'cestral home? Is that blissid, ugly, bow-legged, pudden-faced blayard Barry wid yez?"

"He are, souse me!" grinned Maddock.

"Thin kape your hands in your pockets, or yez'll be afther losin' somethin'," said the invisible gentleman. "He'd stule the mustard-plaster off a dyn' man's chist, the rogue! Bad scan to the spalpeen who lift the tap on. Faix, Oi can't tell whether ut's a road or a sioice of the Atlantic Ocean! Och! Murther!"

There was the noise of a splash. Uncle Dennis had evidently had a spill.

"That ould rascal's a bare-faced imposther, bhoys!" said Barry. "Av he's took a bath he's no relation of mine!"

"I believe you, by hokey!" said the steersman. "I'm sure on it."

"Moror, Chingy. Likes dat," said Gan-Waga. "Do some moror, Chingy!"

"An imitation of Mr. Thomas Prout asking the cook for a bottle of beer," said Ching-Lung. "Scene, the galley of the Lord of the Deep. Cooky discovered washing up plates. Enter the terrible Tommy, fancying he owns the earth."

It was Prout's voice that came out of the gloom.

"'Allo, Shorts!" he roared. "Ow are you, by hokey! Vas dere sossidge vor breakfast, is ud?"

"Dere vas no sossidge vor breakfast, dere vas vried ribs of umprella mit hobnail sauce!" replied the cook.

"Fried ribs of umbrella wi' 'obnail sauce, by hokey!" said the steersman thoughtfully.

They heard the sound of a chair being moved. Prout had taken a seat near the stove. The plates rattled.

"I say, cooky, I am dry, by hokey!" said the steersman sweetly. "Got any beer left?"

"Dunder! Vat to I hear mit der ears of me?" shouted Herr Schwartz. "Vas dere peer lefth? Himmell! I'd vas not six minutes dot I gif you ein pig pottle. You tink mein lofely galley ein public-house, den, is ud? You vas live for peer. Look ad der red nose of der ugly vace of you! Dot vos peer. Shaf! You vas ein indoxicated rascal mid ein tanger-signal burning on der vace of you! I gif you no peer. Ged out of mine galley, or I gif you peer mit der garving-knife! A-r-r-r! Skettattle, queek!"

"Bravo, Chingy!" said the quiet voice of Ferrers Lord.

"Go on, sir!" grinned Maddock. "It's them to the life, souse me!"

"Strikes me that cook's going to get hurt," said Prout, highly amused. "Keep it up, sir!"

The next instant a new character appeared on the scene.

"What der matters, hunk, Tommy?" gurgled the Eskimo's voice. "Why you laughs such a lots, hunk?"

"Laugh, you lump of drippin' and suet!" roared Prout, amidst chuckles that could not be suppressed. "Who's laughing? I ain't laughing, by hokey! I'm an intoxicated rascal wi' a danger-signal burnin' in the middle of my face! That's me, my honey! Und dere vill vor breakfast be sossidges. The cat's a corpse, and that wall-eyed Dutchman'll be another in a minute. 'Ow's that, by hokey?"

Loud and distinct came the noise of a blow.

"A-r-r-r-r!" shrieked the cook. "Ow der nose of me—der only nose of me! Ach, it vas vlaten! Tog! Take dot, und dot!"

The realism of it all was marvellous and incomparable. Though peril lurked around them in the impenetrable shadows, Barry, Gan-Waga, Maddock, and Prout were in convulsions of laughter. A loud thump—it required no effort of imagination—announced that Prout had landed on the floor.

Then came a silence. It was broken at last by the voice of the cook.

"Dere vill pe lods of sossidges for preakvast," it said. "He vas snuff oudt Gan-Waga."

"Curtain," said Ching-Lung.

The millionaire's hand found the prince's, and clasped it.

"Go on, laddie," he whispered. "We shall need it all."

"Right!" muttered the prince.

"Moror, moror, Chingy," said Gan-Waga. "Oh, dats vas butterfuls—grandfuls! Ho, ho, ho-o-o! Moror, my Chingy!"

And Ching-Lung gave them "moror."

(This grand serial will be continued next Monday.

Order early.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 314.

NEXT MONDAY—

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early!

Wingate smiled slightly.

"I have only to say that Mr. Prout was mistaken, sir, and I was not in Pegg at all this afternoon," he replied.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Wingate! This is impudence!"

And the juniors stared at Wingate blankly. They had certainly not expected him to take that line of defence.

"It is a very natural mistake to make, as they have seen somebody like me," said Wingate calmly. "At what time was this meeting in Pegg, Mr. Prout?"

"At about four o'clock," said the Fifth Form master.

"Very good. At four o'clock I was playing football, here in Greyfriars," said Wingate composedly.

"What!" yelled Peter Todd.

There was a dead silence in the study. Wingate's statement was true on the face of it; he could not have made such a statement unless it were true.

"Then—then," gasped Mr. Prout. "You—you have a double, Wingate?"

"There is a fellow very like me, sir, staying in Pegg—at the Anchor," said Wingate. "He has been mistaken for me by some others. That is the fellow you have seen with Dicky Screwe, sir."

"How—how extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "I—I am very relieved to hear this, Wingate. I trust you will forgive me—but—but I could not possibly guess that such was the case."

"It is all right, sir."

"My only hat!" gasped Peter Todd. "Then—then the fellow wasn't you at all, Wingate!"

Wingate smiled genially.

"Not at all, Todd. Not a little bit."

"Well, that beats the giddy band!"

"Shall I call in the eleven, sir, to give evidence that I was here in Greyfriars all the afternoon?" asked Wingate, with a humorous gleam in his eyes. "Half the school can tell you the same thing—a good half of Greyfriars were watching the match. It was just about four o'clock when I kicked the second goal. Shall I send them in, sir?"

"It is not necessary," said the Head, with a smile. "You are completely cleared, Wingate. Mr. Prout has only done his duty—a painful duty—but I am glad that you have been able to explain. The matter is ended now."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Wingate left the Head's study, and Peter Todd & Co. followed, in amazement. George Wingate returned thoughtfully to his own study, and started a little as he found Harry Wharton there.

"Hallo! What do you want?" he asked, with a curious look at the junior. Wharton's face was pale with anxiety.

"Is it the sack?" Harry asked, in a low voice.

"No; it's all right. It was a mistake," said Wingate.

"Look here, Wharton, as you seem to be really concerned about this, I'll explain—only it's a dead secret, mind. I don't want my family skeletons made the talk of the school. There is a chap in Pegg who is just like me—to look at."

"Wingate!"

"And it's not at all surprising, as he's my cousin—my first cousin," said Wingate. "But he wouldn't clear out. I went to see him, and asked him. He laughed at me. He's a hard case. He was only amused at the idea of his being mistaken for me, and my getting a bad reputation over it. But I've written to my uncle, his father, and put it to him—and I've had a letter to-day saying that he's ordered Philip to clear out of Pegg, and go somewhere else for his rotten holiday. So that's all right. Prout saw Philip in Pegg to-day with Dicky Screwe, and came back full of it—and if it hadn't been that all the school knew I was playing footer at the time, I should have had to bring the whole story out in public. You can guess I'm not anxious to let all Greyfriars know that I've got a close relation who spends all his time pub-haunting, and going about with gamblers and bookmakers and all sorts of rotters."

"I understand!" said Harry.

"I've explained it to you, because you seem to take it to heart," said Wingate kindly. "You're a good kid—give me your fist, and clear out!"

And Wingate shook hands with Harry Wharton; and Harry "cleared out," with a very light heart.

Old Wingate was true blue after all—and it certainly wasn't his fault if he had a cousin who was a "rotter," though it was just as well not to tell everybody that latter fact. Wingate was the Wingate they had always known—straight as a die, and honest as the day—and not in the least in need of Peter Todd's protection.

THE END.

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My Readers' Page

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FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In this splendid, long, complete tale of the juniors of Greyfriars, Snoop of the Remove Form has an experience which, unpleasant as it is while it lasts, should teach him a valuable lesson for the future. Snoop is a hopeless snob, and as such dreads the threatened visit of his uncle from Canada. In imagination, he conjures up a dreadful vision of his rough-and-ready uncle's appearance and manners, and his snobbish soul revolts at the picture, despite the fact that his Uncle Huggins is a generous benefactor to Sidney Snoop. When the dreaded relative really does put in an appearance at Greyfriars, Snoop finds that his fears are more than justified, and his dreadful uncle's eccentric conduct keeps the unfortunate snob on tenterhooks all the time. The surprising climax, however, provides the greatest shock of all for the vngratifol nephew, and all Greyfriars agree that if ever any lesson was well-deserved, it was

"THE SNOB'S LESSON!"

NOTHING QUITE LIKE IT!

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So writes a newsagent in a large way of business, in sending a greatly-increased order for "Chuckles" our latest Saturday companion paper. The same tale comes from all over the country. "My regular customers have all plumped for 'Chuckles'; they say it stands in a class by itself among halfpenny papers, and they will have it," is another newsagent's tribute. There is no one able to judge so well of the real merit of a new paper as the newsagent; the newsagent knows. And when his verdict is overwhelmingly favourable, as in the case of "Chuckles!" then it will be realised by all my chums that our latest paper—your latest paper—

"CHUCKLES" IS A WINNER!

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

D. Green (The "Magnet" Club, Dublin).—If you send me your full address, I shall be pleased to publish it on this page.

J. J. Payne (Thornton Heath).—Many thanks for your letter. I wish all possible success to your League.

"Moonraker" (Wilt.).—A punching-ball can be obtained from Messrs. Gamage, of Holborn, London, at small cost.

"Minim" (Norwood).—Study harmony and counterpoint at a good school of music, or with a proficient teacher.

A. Kennedy (Finsbury Park).—Many thanks for pointing out the mistake.

"Canadian Chum" (Toronto).—I do not advise you to read any papers—not even our three companion papers—against your father's wish. I think the best thing you can do is to get him to read one himself. Wun Lung is still at Greyfriars. With regard to your query about writing a letter to the King, you must send it through his private secretary, Lord Stamfordham.

V. W. Castle (Birmingham).—Very many thanks for your letter and enclosures.

C. W. P. (Hammersmith).—Whether you should be paid for the extra work on Sunday depends entirely upon what agreement you entered into with the firm.

THE HOME WIZARD—No. 3.

A Penetrative Penny.

The effect of this trick is that a borrowed penny is made to pass through the bottom of an inverted tumbler, and back again.

At the outset of the trick the performer has on his table, laid evenly one over the other, a couple of pieces of white paper, about seven inches by six. On these stands, upside-down, a champagne-tumbler of clear, white glass.

He picks up the glass, exhibits, and replaces it, still inverted, on the paper. As he does so, he draws from under it the upper sheet, and after showing this on both sides, twists it into a cone, open at both ends, and of such a size as just to fit over the glass, securing it in shape with a pin. This he places over the glass, which it should overtop by about two inches.

He then borrows a penny, and announces that, by his magic power, he will make it pass right through the glass on to the table.

First, however, he lifts the paper cone once more, that all may see that there is nothing under the glass.

Having done so, and replaced the cone, he drops the penny through its open end, and at the same time pronouncing the mystic "Pass." The coin is heard to strike the bottom of the glass.

"It has arrived. I dare say you heard it go through," he remarks, and, lifting the cone, with the glass inside it, shows that the coin is lying on the white paper, having apparently passed through the glass.

"That is easy enough," he explains. "The real difficulty is to make the penny pass up again through the glass; but with a powerful effort of the will, I dare say I shall be able to do so. Presto! Pass!"

He now lifts the cone without the glass. The penny is no longer on the paper, but is seen to be lying on the upturned bottom of the glass.

The deceptive item in this case is the tumbler, which is prepared by pasting a piece of white paper over its mouth, and when dry trimming off any superfluous paper that may project beyond the edge.

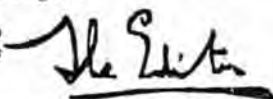
There are cheap glasses of German make which have the brim ground flat, and which will be found very suitable for the purpose.

The two pieces of paper on the table must be of the same description as that with which the glass is covered, and between them, on the centre of the lower sheet, must be laid a penny. The glass is then placed upside-down on the upper sheet, just over the coin.

When the performer picks up the glass to exhibit it, he grasps it low down, between the forefinger and thumb. Thus held, it may be shown pretty freely, without disclosing the fact that the mouth is covered. In replacing it, he draws away, as already stated, the upper sheet of paper. The concealed penny is now immediately under the glass, but is still hidden, by reason of the covering of the mouth.

With this explanation the reader will readily understand how the supposed passage of the coin is effected. The borrowed penny falls on the bottom of the glass, and remains there, the one shown by the lifting of the glass being the one which has been under it from the beginning. When the glass, still in the paper cone, is placed over this, it is again concealed, and when the cone alone is lifted, the penny originally dropped is disclosed, resting on the bottom of the glass, having ostensibly come back again.

(More Tricks for the Home Wizard in next Monday's "Magnet" Library.)



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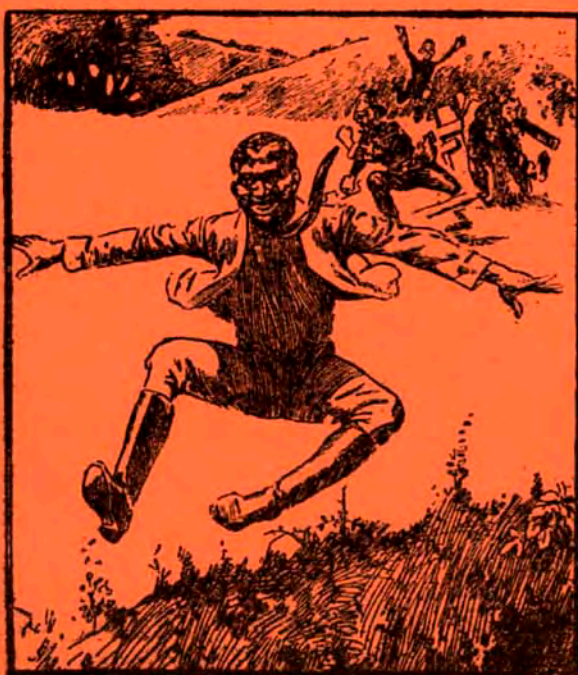
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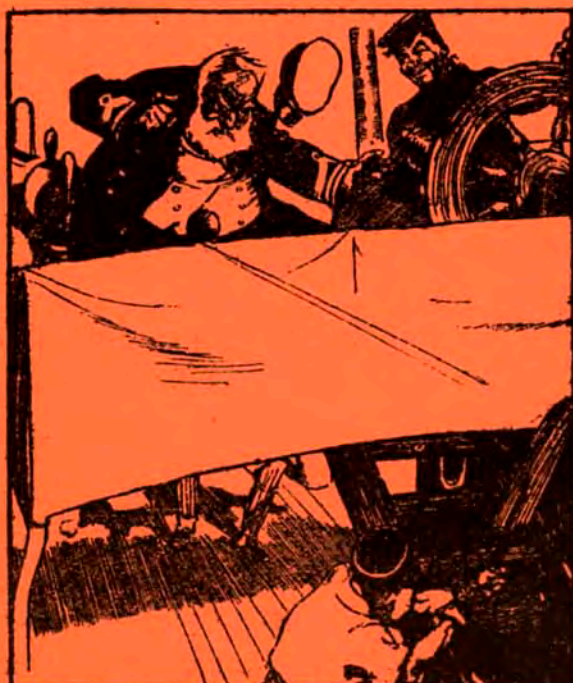


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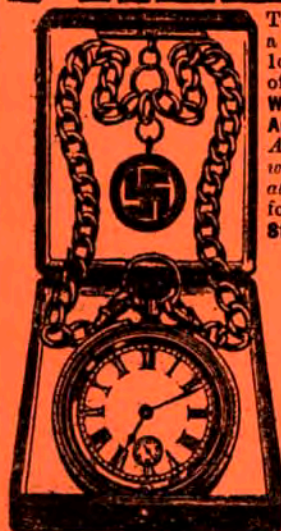


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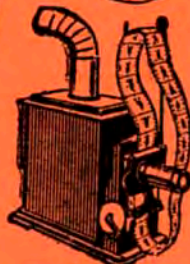


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