

APRIL FOOLS ALL!

Grand Complete
School Story
in this issue.



Temple kicked hard for goal, but his aim was not quite true, and the goal on this occasion was Alonzo Todd's chest. "Ow!" yelled Alonzo, "Yaroooh! Ow!" "You silly lunatic!" roared Temple. "That would have been a goal!" (An amusing incident in the grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, which is contained in this issue.)

**WRITE
NOW
FOR
LISTS**

BUY BIKE.

It is so easy. I sell Coventry's Best Cycles at 2 POUNDS below the makers' price. Here is a fair example of my astonishing value.

**A HIGH-GRADE,
COVENTRY CYCLE,
for £3 10s. cash.**

(Makers' Price £6 6s.)
Superb quality. Finest Grade Coventry Cycles, guaranteed for 12 years, supplied on easy terms to suit your means. I grant ten days' free approval, and return your deposit in full if you are not perfectly satisfied with your bargain. Make up your mind to write for my List at once. Thousands of Testimonials.

O'Brien & Co. LTD.
THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER.
(Department 2) COVENTRY.



A Real Lever Simulation

GOLD WATCH FREE



A straightforward, generous offer from an established firm. We are giving away watches to thousands of people all over the world as a huge advertisement. Now is your chance to obtain one. **WRITE NOW**, enclosing P.O. 8d. and 2 penny stamps for postage, packing, &c., for one of our fashionable Ladies' Long Guards or Gent's Alberts to wear with the watch, which will be given FREE (these watches are guaranteed five years), should you take advantage of our marvellous offer. We expect you to tell your friends about us, and show them the beautiful watch. Don't think this offer too good to be true, but send to-day and gain a Free Watch. You will be amazed. Colonial Orders, 1/-.—**WILLIAMS & LLOYD**, Wholesale Jewellers (Desk 16), 89, Cornhill Road, London, N.

FROM FACTORY TO RIDER



Save dealer's profits. Despatched Packed Free and Carriage Paid. **Without One Penny Deposit. TEN DAYS FREE TRIAL ALLOWED** British-made All Steel **MEAD MODEL SUPERB 'COVENTRY FLYERS'** Warranted Fifteen Years. Defiance Puncture Resisting or Dunlop Tyres, Brooks' Saddles, Coasters, Variable-Speed Gears, etc.

£2-15 to £6-19-6

CASH OR EASY MONTHLY PAYMENTS. Winner of Cycling's Gold Medal—55.56 miles in 365 days. **World's Record!!** Tyres and Accessories half usual price. Shop-soiled and Second-Hand Cycles from 15/-.

Write for **Free Art Catalogue** containing our marvellous offers & **Brochure of Finest World Record Ride**. Motor Cycles at Factory Prices.

MEAD CYCLE Co., Dept. 82D
11-13 Paradise St., LIVERPOOL.



FUN! Makes everybody just "sneeze their heads off," without knowing why, with "Cachoo," harmless Electric Snuff, 7d.; 2 bottles 1/- SCARE-EM-ALL LETTERS—they open with a rattle and a bang. 3 for 7d., 6 for 1/- 7 metal PUZZLES, 1/-—Hunter's (Dept. 76), 235, High Holborn, London.

BLUSHING.

FREE, to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to Mr. D. TEMPLE (Specialist), 20, Maddox Street, Hanover Square, London, W.



FUN FOR SIXPENCE

VENTRILOQUISTS Double Throat; fits roof of mouth; astonishes and mystifies; sing like a canary, whine like a puppy, and imitate birds and beasts. Ventriloquist Treatise free. Sixpence each, four for 1s. **BENSON** (Dept. 6), 234 Pentonville Road, London, N.

A REAL LEVER SIMULATION

GOLD WATCH FREE



This truly marvellous and generous offer is made to readers of this paper as a gigantic advertisement by a London Firm. In order to obtain one simply write now, enclosing 6d. P.O. and 2 penny stamps for postage, packing, etc., for one of our handsome Ladies' Long Guards or Gent's Albert Chains to wear with the splendid timekeeping Watch which will be GIVEN FREE, ALSO AN EXTRA FREE GIFT (a signed guarantee is sent with the watch) if you take advantage of our generous offer. You must promise to show the watch to your friends. Don't think this offer too good to be true, but send to-day 8d. and gain a Free Watch. You will be delighted. Messrs. **GRAY & CO.** (Dept. 2), 349, City Road, London, E.C.



ACCORDIONS

These beautifully finished organ-toned instruments, made of the finest selected materials, are unsurpassed for power and richness of tone, for which these instruments are famous. All the latest improvements. Exceptionally low prices. Sent on Approval. Easy Installments. Catalogue Free. Douglas, 55, King's Chambers, South St., London, E.C.

6/6 each



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL

Beautifully plated and finished. May be carried in the pocket. Trains the eye and cultivates the judgment. Range 100 yards. Targets 9d. per 100. Noiseless Ball Cartridges, 9d. per 100. Shot, 1/6 per 100. Send for list. **CROWN GUN WORKS, 6, Whitall Street, BIRMINGHAM.**

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material and Catalogue **FREE**—Works: **JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**



YOURS FOR 10/-

Packed Free. Carriage Paid. Save Dealers' Profits. Ten Days' Free Riding Trial. The Old Reliable **Royal Ajax Cycles** Dunlop Tyres, Brooks' Saddles, Speed Gears, &c. **£2-15 to £6-19-6** Shop-soiled and Second-hand Cycles from 15/- Write for **Free Art Catalogue and Special Offer** on Sample Machine. Agents Wanted. Estab. 1887. **BRITISH CYCLE MFG. Co. Dept. A 503** Paradise Street, Liverpool.

HEIGHT INCREASED

4 1/2 INCHES. G. H. B. (Bradford) writes: "Before I started your system my height was 4 feet 8 1/2 inches. Now it is 5 feet 1 inch." I can increase your height by from 2 to 4 1/2 inches within three months. No appliances, drugs, nor dieting. Send three penny stamps for further particulars of my system. £100 Guarantee.—**ARTHUR GIVAN**, Specialist in the Increase of Height, Dept. A.M.P. 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N.



WATCH FREE for selling 30 pieces of Jewellery. We will send you absolutely free the 30 pieces of Jewellery, and after you have sold these, send us 6/- and we will give you **FREE** the beautiful engraved silver plated watch. A reliable time-keeper, which we guarantee to give perfect satisfaction, or replace same with a new watch any time within three years if not entirely pleased. **Henry Knopf & Co. (Dept. 40), 93, Aldergate Street, London, E.C.**

FREE



YOU can have on 10 days' free approval a luxuriously equipped 1914, Gold Medal

**WRITE
FOR
FREE
ART
LISTS
NOW**

QUADRANT

PRICES from **£3 12s.** Cash.

EASY TERMS FROM 5/- MONTHLY.

Money returned in full if dissatisfied. 10 years' guarantee. Buy direct from our Factory and save pounds.

The QUADRANT Cycle Co., Ltd., Dept. 3 COVENTRY.



Careful Purchasers study
ADVERTISING
for Bargains

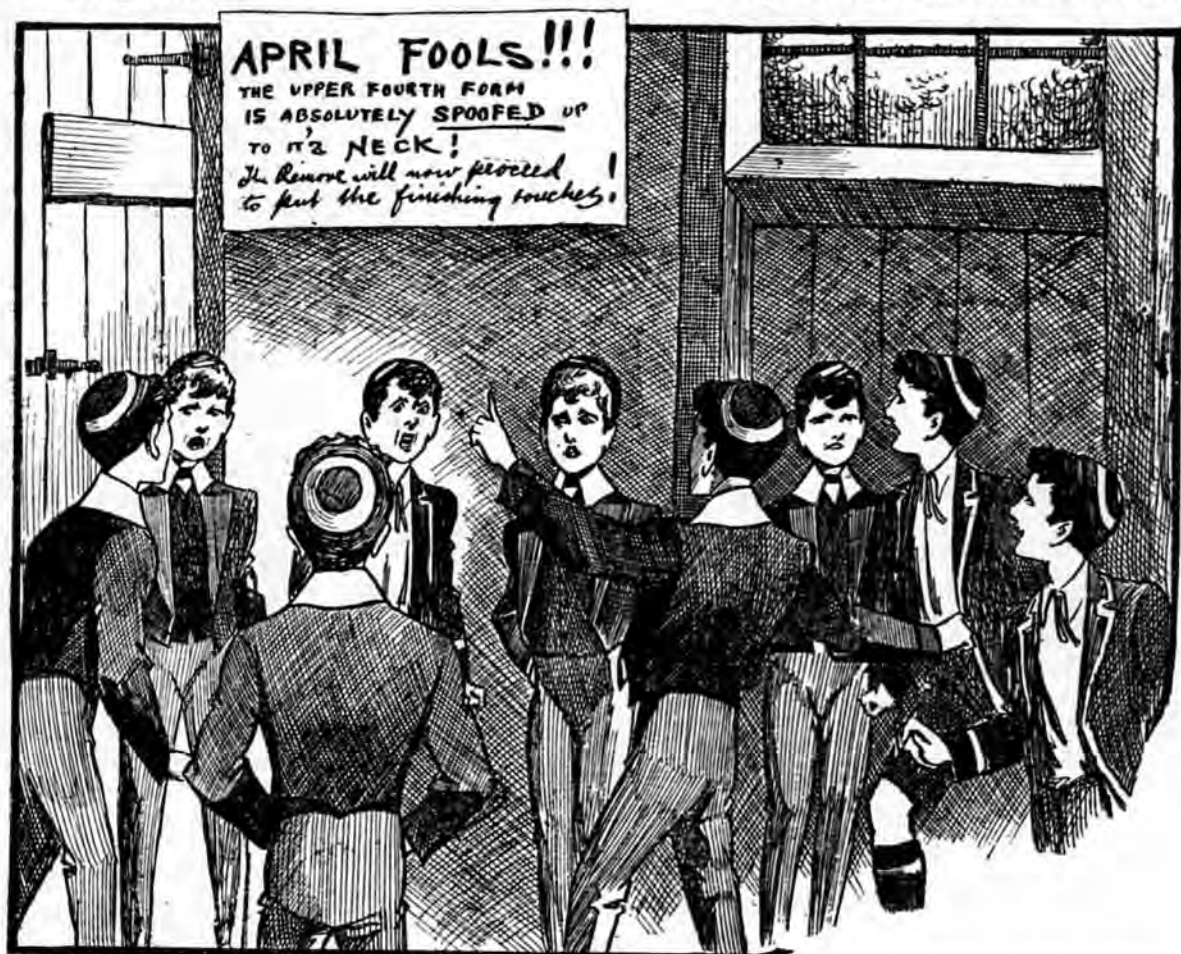
A Complete School-
Story Book, attractive
to all readers.



The Editor will be
obliged if you will
hand this book, when
finished with, to a
friend.

APRIL FOOLS ALL!

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co.
of Greyfriars. - - - - - By FRANK RICHARDS.



A Fourth-Former pointed to the notice on the barn. "Look!" he shouted. "Look at that!" Temple, Dabney & Co. looked—and gasped. "Dished! Diddled!" roared Temple. (See Chapter 9.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Eve of the "First"!

THE occasion is one upon which we must unite all our resources, and work together to one common, glorious end—that end being the entire and absolute spoofing of the Upper Fourth Form!

Thus Harry Wharton of the Greyfriars Remove. He looked round No. 1 Study with a rather flushed face. That sentence had required a little thinking out, and he was glad that it was delivered. The Famous Five were all present, and tea was just over.

"To-morrow," went on Harry Wharton, "is Wednesday." "Well, that's not particularly strange, considering that to-day is Tuesday," said Bob Cherry. "Why can't you speak sensibly, ass?"

Harry Wharton looked severe. "The subject under-discussion is serious," he said. "To-morrow is the great day——"

"The glorious Fifth!" said Frank Nugent. "No, I mean the giddy First!"

"That's it," went on Wharton; "the First of April. It's a day that only comes once a year——"

"Blessed if I know where you get all this information from!" said Bob Cherry. "Who told you that the First of April only comes once a year?"

Harry Wharton glared. "Look here, if you chaps are going to chip me, I sha'n't make a speech at all!" he said warmly. "This isn't a time for talking rot, anyhow——"

"Then sit down, my son!" murmured Bob blandly.

"Oh, shut up, Bob!" said Johnny Bull. "We don't want to start a giddy row in here. To-morrow's All Fools' Day, and we want to think of a wheeze to spoof the Upper Fourth."

"The spoof-fulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Rani Singh. "I am sure that my worthy chums do not want to start the esteemed rowfulness!"

"Inky's right," said Wharton. "But if we're to think out a proper wheeze, we've got to do it seriously, without any of you asses chipping in with fatheaded remarks."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent. "Order in court!" The matter really was serious—from the Remove's point of view. The next day was a half-holiday, and it also happened to be April 1st. All Fools' Day didn't often fall upon a half-holiday, and the juniors were anxious to make the most of the opportunity.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth had been boasting that nobody would be able to fool them. In fact, they went so far as to say that if the Remove tried any tricks on, they—the Remove—would be heartily sorry for themselves afterwards.

Now, the Greyfriars Remove wasn't a Form to put up with that sort of thing, and the Famous Five were exceedingly anxious to hit upon a wheeze which would result in Temple, Dabney & Co. being properly fooled.

"It will have to be something jolly elaborate," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "It's no good working off some stale old wheeze that they can see through!"

"Not a bit," said Bob Cherry; "so trot out the new one!" "I'm waiting for you chaps to do that!" said Harry, with a grin.

"No harm in waiting, that I can see!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "I might as well admit that this is one of my off days. I'm devoid of wheezes—"

"Then dry up, and let somebody else think," said Bull. And there was silence in No. 1 Study.

But not for long. The Famous Five glowered at one another, each busy with his own thoughts, and totally unconscious of the concentrated expressions which prevailed. Bob Cherry suddenly slapped the table, and set the teacups rattling.

"Got it!" he exclaimed.

"Good!"

"Trot out the wheeze!"

"It's not a very elaborate one!" began Bob.

"Then it's off!" said Harry Wharton firmly. "We don't want any mouldy old wheezes. If you can't think of a—"

"Hold on!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "Give a chap a chance! Now, my idea's a ripping one—"

"Of course!"

"It's very simple," went on Bob, "and it'll absolutely spoof Temple, Dabney & Co. Tom Brown's got a model aeroplane, and we'll take that out on the moor!"

"Fat lot of wheeze in that!" growled Johnny Bull. "What the dickens is the good of taking a model aeroplane on the moor?"

"Let me finish!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's only the beginning of the wheeze. After we've shoved the thing on the moor some of us will rush up to Temple, Dabney & Co. and shout out that there's an aeroplane on the moor. They'll all rush off, arrive on the moor, and—there you are! They'll be fooled!"

Bob Cherry's enthusiasm dwindled a little as he saw the stony glares which were cast upon him.

"And is that your wheeze?" asked Harry Wharton witheringly.

"Yes—and a jolly good wheeze, too!"

"You—you ass!"

"You burbling fathead!"

"Look here—"

"I am looking," said Frank Nugent grimly, "and I can see a frajulous josses! Of all the mouldy wheezes—"

"Mouldy wheezes!" roared Bob Cherry. "You'll have a job to find a better one, anyhow. You can go and eat coke

for all I care! I've finished. I've contributed my idea, and you can do all the rest of the thinking yourselves!"

Bob Cherry glared round. He knew, as a matter of fact, that his suggestion was not an exceptionally brilliant one, but he had hardly expected it to be received with such disdain.

"An idea like that's no good at all!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We want something elaborate—something that they won't see through. It'll be no good having the thing fizzle out!"

"In fact," said Nugent, "it would be a good move to do something to-night, as a sort of preliminary preparation. It wouldn't be the jape at all really, but it would prepare them for it to-morrow."

"Yes, that's all right," said Wharton; "but where's the idea? I thought you said your mind was a blank, Franky?"

"I didn't say anything of the sort!" said Frank Nugent.

"Well, you said you couldn't think!"

"But I did think—and think hard, too!"

"I don't think!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh, don't start again, for goodness' sake!" growled Nugent. "Listen to what I've got to say. And if my wheeze doesn't knock spots off Bob Cherry's rotten idea, I'll stand down!"

"Right-ho!" said Bob cheerfully. "But don't stand down—stand up, and let's hear the wheeze!"

Frank Nugent, in spite of his former statement, proceeded to outline his scheme. It met with an enthusiastic reception immediately.

"Ripping!" said Harry Wharton, to Nugent's satisfaction. "It only needs elaborating, and it'll be a really topping jape."

"It's not so dusty," admitted Bob Cherry. "Not so good as mine, of course—"

"Rats!"

"Oh, well, have it your own way!" said Bob. "Let's get on with the elaborating bizney. We might be able to make quite a decent thing of it after all!"

So the Famous Five put their heads together and talked excitedly and animatedly for over half an hour. Then Wharton rose to his feet, and there was a gleam in his eyes.

"There's nothing more to discuss," he said. "My only hat! We shall have Temple, Dabney & Co. on toast, and no mistake!"

"It can't go wrong!" said Nugent enthusiastically. "What we do to-night will simply be a bit of preliminary work. The real jape won't start until to-morrow morning!"

"And those Upper Fourth asses will find themselves absolutely dished and diddled!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Mind! I don't say that my wheeze wasn't a good one, but I'll certainly admit that Franky's is better!"

"The betterfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, and the Famous Five left No. 1 Study and strolled along the Remove passage, all of them looking extremely satisfied with themselves. As they turned the corner they came face to face with Temple, Dabney, and Fry, the leaders of the Upper Fourth juniors.

"Hallo, you kids are looking jolly pleased with yourselves," remarked Temple.

"Oh, we'll soon alter that to-morrow," said Dabney. "We'll take the young beggars down a peg or two."

Harry Wharton chuckled.

"We don't mind being taken down all the pegs you chaps are capable of," he said. "But I warn you, Temple—"

"Rats!"

"I warn you that you'd better look out for yourselves," said Wharton. "We shall be out for—"

"Blood," suggested Bob Cherry. "We shall be out for gory bleed."

Temple, Dabney, & Co. sniffed.

"It's like your cheek, you young bounders," said Fry.

"Do you think for a moment that you could fool us?"

"We do," said Wharton.

"We does," said Nugent.

"And we don't think so for a moment—we think it for hours," added Bob. "In fact, we've always thought it."

"Rather!"

And the Famous Five passed on, chuckling. Temple looked after them thoughtfully.

"Those rotters have thought out some wheeze or other," he said. "You can see that by their beastly smug grins. We shall have to look out for ourselves."

"Well, we shall be on our guard," said Dabney carelessly. "No need to be particularly careful, either. Those Remove kids aren't likely to diddle us."

"Don't be too sure," said Temple. "It would be simply rotten if they caught us napping."

The Upper Fourth leaders walked away, Temple feeling rather uneasy. He and his chums were somewhat inclined to swanking; but they knew quite well that unless they kept

**"THE GEM" LIBRARY
FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE
COUPON.**

To be enclosed, with coupon taken from page 2, GEM, No. 321, with all requests for correspondents. This may only be used by readers in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, India, or other of our Colonies.

See Page 26, "The Gem" Library, Number 321.

**M
321**

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday. "THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Saturday, 2



The tramp held the watch under Alonzo Todd's nose. "Dear me, that is an eight-day watch," said Alonzo. "It looks exactly like the one that belongs to Temple, of the Fourth!" "There's a good many of 'em about, young gent!" said the tramp. "You can have this one for a bob!" (See Chapter 8.)

their eyes very wide open they would find that the Remove would get the better of them. It would never do to admit that such a possibility existed, however, so Temple, Dabney, & Co. wore a superior air, and seemed to regard the Remove with a sort of fatherly interest.

Harry Wharton chuckled as he and his chums strolled out into the Close. The evening was a fine one, and the air was clear. The weather promised to be fine for the morrow. "Those Upper Fourth bouncers can shove on enough airs," said Harry, "but they don't stand an earthly—not a giddy earthly. With this wheeze of ours we'll fool 'em terrifically."

"My esteemed chum is right!" exclaimed Hurree Singh, the Indian junior. "The foolfulness will indeed be terrific."

"But we must be jolly cautious," said Bob Cherry. "We don't want to give the whole show away at the outset. I don't think we'd better tell the other chaps until the morning, or Temple & Co. will suspect things."

"Yes, perhaps it will be as well," agreed Nugent. "Well, there's nothing to be done until after supper; and then the little bit of preliminary work happens along. You'll do that, Harry."

"Yes, I'll do that," replied Wharton. "It's not much of a job, but I don't think the Upper Fourth will see through it."

And the Famous Five continued strolling about until it was time for prep. Most of the other juniors noticed the cheerful looks of Harry Wharton & Co., and guessed that something was "on." But they didn't know what it was, and their curiosity was not satisfied.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Most Unaccountable!

COKER of the Fifth—the high and mighty Coker—paused for a moment as he passed down the steps of the School House to have a breath of fresh air before bed-time.

"Just a word of warning to you kids!" he said severely.

"Oh, rats to you, Coker!"

"Go and eat coke, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth frowned. Temple, Dabney, and Fry were the juniors he had addressed, and they did not seem to be particularly polite.

"I don't want any cheek!" he growled. "To-morrow is the first of April—"

"Go hon!"

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

"The first of April," proceeded Coker. "And if you youngsters get playing any All-Fools'-Day nonsense, I shall have something to say!"

"You generally have," said Temple.
"Anyhow, I don't see what it's got to do with you," said Fry. "I suppose we can do as we like without consulting you? You don't happen to have been made headmaster, or—"

"I mean, you'd better not try to fool me," said Coker. "You can do what you like amongst the juniors. If you try any dodges on with me they won't work, and I shall give you all jolly good lammings."

Temple, Dabney, & Co. grinned. They were used to Coker's little ways.

"Well, as a matter of fact, we hadn't thought about you," said Dabney reflectively. "But still, as you've put it into our heads, we don't mind fooling you, just to oblige."

"You're about the easiest chap to fool in Greyfriars, I should say!" chuckled Temple.

Coker glared.
"You cheeky young sweeps!" he exclaimed warmly.

And he walked out into the dusky Close, feeling a little unequal to carrying on the discussion. He walked across to the gym with a thoughtful expression on his face.

"Come to think of it," he murmured, "it wouldn't be a bad wheeze to get up a jape on my own. If I could fool a whole crowd of those cheeky juniors they might respect me more."

Coker resolved to think it over. It was a little below the dignity of a senior to partake of April fooling; but if he succeeded triumphantly in "diddling" the juniors, it would be a feather in his cap.

"I really must get out a plan," he told himself. "Of course—"

Then Coker paused.

Right before him, against the thick trees of the Head's shrubbery, he had seen a shadow move. Coker stopped walking, and looked harder. Again the form moved.

"Wonder who it can be?" murmured Coker. "Blessed if I like this! Might be a rotten tramp!"

He felt a little lonely, and he turned, to look at Temple, Dabney, & Co. And as he did so, the strange form moved quickly towards the thick hedge which separated Little Side from the Close.

"My hat!" muttered Coker.
He looked round again.

"I say, you chaps!" he shouted.

"Calling us?" bawled Temple. And Bob Cherry, who had just come out, asked what was up.

"There's some chap in the trees here!" shouted Horace Coker. "Come quick, and help me to collar him!"

"Rats!" yelled Temple. "None of that bizney, Coker! It isn't the 1st of April yet!"

"You young ass!" roared Coker. "There's really somebody here!"

Temple looked across the Close, and he, too, saw something moving to the left of Coker.

"There's a form there, anyhow," he said. "Shall we go over and see?"

"Might as well," said Dabney. "If Coker's trying an advance fooling game, we'll duck him in the giddy fountain!"

And Temple, Dabney, & Co. ran across the Close. Bob Cherry looked after them with a grin of satisfaction.

"Good!" he murmured. "They've taken the bait!"

"They've swallowed it whole!" grinned Frank Nugent, who was with Bob—in fact, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were there, too. And several members of the Upper Fourth who had been in the entrance-hall, came out to see what the shouting was about.

"It's some tramp—at least, Coker says it is!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "I'm going over to have a look. We don't want any of those merchants hanging about the grounds."

And the Remove chums ran across the Close, followed by the Fourth-Formers—which was exactly what the Removites wanted.

Coker, Temple, Dabney, and Fry were dodging about amongst the trees. Coker was hot and flushed. The mysterious form had not been seen.

"It's a take-in!" growled Temple. "Look here, Coker—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Coker. "I'm not swanking you. I saw some chap skulking against the trees—"

"There he is!" yelled Nugent.

"Where?"

Nugent pointed excitedly and ran forward. Dim, but indistinct, a form was outlined against the spring night sky. And it could be seen that it wore a cloak and large, wide-brimmed hat.

"My only aunt! Who is it?"

"Blest if I know!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FRANK RICHARDS

Contributes a Splendid, Complete School Tale "CHUCKLES," 1d. in our New Saturday Companion Paper—

"Let's collar him!"

The juniors rushed forward. But when they arrived at the spot the form had disappeared. He had dodged into the trees at the sudden shout, and was nowhere to be seen.

The juniors were excited now, and they were determined to find the stranger and bring him to light. But their search was futile.

"Seems to have vanished into thin air," said Harry Wharton. "Well, this is jolly queer, Temple!"

"Beastly queer!" panted Temple.

Harry Wharton had just joined the crowd, although nobody had noticed that he had not been present all the time.

Harry was looking cheerful, and the darkness hid a gleam of merriment in his eyes. He found himself next to Bob Cherry, a little apart from the others.

"Well, the preliminary bit has come off all right," he murmured. "Those Upper Fourth bounders will be wondering who the 'stranger' was. Fancy old Coker joining in, too!"

"Yes; he saw you first," grinned Bob. "You did it rippingly, my son. I was afraid you'd be-copped for a minute. Where did you shove the clobber?"

"Oh, it was only an old cloak and a battered hat!" replied Wharton. "I stuffed them into a hole in one of the trees, and then dodged round and pretended to be searching with the rest. Fry nearly collared me, but he doesn't suspect anything."

"Good egg!"

The search went on for the mysterious marauder. Not a single junior guessed that the "stranger" had been Harry Wharton. The Famous Five kept up the search for the sake of appearances, but they didn't want it to go too far.

The little incident was in no way necessary. It was not an essential part of the morrow's jape, but the jape would be much more likely to succeed now that the incident was over.

Harry Wharton had set out to make Temple, Dabney & Co. believe that a stranger had been prowling about the grounds, and he had succeeded well. But the stranger could not be found, which was not so very peculiar, considering that there was no stranger.

"It's no good," said Nugent. "He's cleared off!"

"I'll bet he's not far away," said Coker doggedly; and he did not guess how near the truth he was, for Harry Wharton was standing within four feet of him. "I tell you I saw him—"

"We all saw him," growled Temple; "but we don't see him now!"

"I do!" murmured Bob Cherry, under his breath.

"He's gone," said Fry. "Some giddy tramp, I expect, prowling about to see what he could catch. Shouldn't be surprised if he came back after lights-out and—"

"Oh, rats!" said Harry Wharton. "The chap wasn't a burglar!"

But he was hugely delighted at Fry's remark, for, as after events proved, it was very significant. The juniors grew a little tired after a while, and walked towards the School House. Coker was with them, looking dissatisfied.

"It was the fault of you kids!" he said. "If you hadn't come interfering, I should have collared the awful bounder. He slipped away while we were all in a cluster."

"Well, that's good!" said Temple indignantly. "It was you who yelled to us to help you. You were afraid to go alone."

"Afraid!" roared Coker.

"Well, you wouldn't go alone, would you?" said Temple.

"Of course I would!" exclaimed Coker indignantly.

"When I called out, I'd no idea a whole beastly crowd of kids would come up. If I hadn't shouted to you to come, the tramp would have been collared by now."

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. "You'd never have found him, Coker; not if you'd searched all the giddy night. You're not made that way, you know."

The juniors chuckled, and Coker grunted. He thought it was a little unwise to indulge in any corporal punishment, for such a move would have been followed by unpleasant results to himself.

"Cheeky young rotters!" he growled.

And he went indoors. But Temple, Dabney & Co. and the others remained outside discussing the remarkable incident of the "stranger."

"It's unaccountable, that's what it is!" declared Temple. "I saw the chap as plainly as I can see you, and he simply couldn't have got away! We were surrounding him, as a matter of fact."

"Well, he did get away," said Dabney, "so what's the good of talking? I'm blest if I can see how he did the trick, though!"

"Might have got up a tree," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Well, I'm not going to see!" growled Temple. "I've had enough of it. I'm going to bed."

"Yes, it's just about time," said Fry. "I hope that johnnie isn't hanging about. There's no telling what a chap like that would be up to."

A fat form rolled out of the School House.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, you fellows," protested Billy Bunter, looking round through his big spectacles. "What's all the commotion about?"

"Find out!" said Temple politely.

"That's what I am trying to do," said Bunter. "I think you might let a chap into the know!"

"Well, we're not going to let you into the know!" replied Temple irritably. "I say, you chaps, don't tell Bunter anything! Let his curiosity go unsatisfied for once!"

The others were quite agreeable, for none of them felt inclined to explain matters to the inquisitive Bunter. So the Owl of the Remove was left to guess at the cause of the excitement.

In the dormitory, however, he soon learned what had happened, as the Famous Five were talking about it. But they had decided not to "let on" that night. In any case, it would not have done to say anything while Billy Bunter was present, for that prying youth would very soon have spread the true explanation throughout the junior school. Billy Bunter had a most exceptional knack of letting out facts which the others wished to keep secret.

And in the Upper Fourth dormitory Temple, Dabney & Co. also discussed the queer incident in the Close. Harry Wharton had set out to create a little excitement concerning a "stranger," and he had undoubtedly succeeded.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Coker Plots a Plot!

THE Fifth Form did not retire so early as the Remove and Upper Fourth. Being seniors, an extra half-hour was allowed, and while the juniors were trooping up to bed Horace Coker sat before the fire in his study. With him were Potter and Greene, his study-mates.

The famous firm of Coker & Co. were discussing the affair in the Close.

"Looks to me as if some of the young boggars were japing you," said Potter. "It couldn't have been a tramp, or you'd have found him."

"That's rot!" said Coker. "If I could have found a tramp I could have found a junior. That only stands to reason. I should have caught the fellow easily if the young asses hadn't crowded round so much. They absolutely gave him a chance to slip off."

"Oh, well, let the thing rest!" grunted Greene. "It's not worth discussing, anyhow, old man."

Potter yawned.

"I'm ready for bed," he said sleepily.

But Coker rose to his feet with a decisive movement.

"Rats!" he said. "We've twenty minutes yet, and want to discuss something with you."

"Fire away, then!"

"Get it off your chest!"

"You asses! I said I want to discuss something with you!" exclaimed Coker. "So far, I haven't got anything to get off my chest. But I've been thinking."

"Rather unusual," remarked Potter, with a grin.

"And I don't want any fatheaded humour, either," said Coker. "To-morrow is the first of April, and there'll be a lot of fooling done. Well, I don't see why I shouldn't be in it as well as the others."

"Oh, rot!" said Potter. "You can't do that sort of thing, Coker. It's too kiddish. Better leave it to the juniors."

But Coker dissented.

"I don't see that at all," he said. "Of course, I don't suggest any silly little wheeze on Bland, Blundell, or any of our fellows."

"Then what's the idea?" asked Greene.

"Well, to think of a jape that'll fool the whole Remove," said Coker. "I thought about going for the Upper Fourth, but the Remove need taking down several pegs. If we can only think out a wheeze—"

"Yes, if!" said Potter doubtfully. "Those Remove kids are a jolly smart pack. Between ourselves, it's a bit of a tall order to pit ourselves against them. We've done it before, and they've generally come off best—though, of course, I wouldn't admit it to anyone else."

Coker wouldn't admit it to himself.

"That's sheer piffle!" he declared. "The Remove may have divided the honours with us, but they've never really bested us."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

Potter and Greene said nothing. There was no arguing with the lofty Coker.

"The first of April is a special occasion—a regular harvest-time for japes," went on Coker. "Of course, at any ordinary time it would be a bit above us to go in for fooling."

His chums did not pass forth any comment, although they were of the opinion that Coker was quite an adept at that gentle art. And Coker himself seemed to forget the many rebuffs he had received when endeavouring to take a rise out of the Remove.

"To-morrow," he said, "will be a splendid chance of showing the kids who's who. If we can only fool them down to the soles of their giddy feet we shall be most respected."

"Well, you seem to have a lot to say!" exclaimed Greene. "Where's the wheeze? Have you got anything in your head?"

"He's never seen inside, so he can't say," said Potter solemnly. "I've heard chaps say that it's a rather doubtful problem."

"You let my head alone!" growled Coker. "There's no time to be funny. Haven't either of you got any suggestions to make?"

His chums thought hard, and Coker himself looked into the fire with a concentrated stare, as though the sight of the burning embers inspired him. Perhaps the fire had burned too low—anyhow, Coker was not inspired.

"A thing like this wants a bit of thinking out," he said thoughtfully. "I've got a lot of wheezes, but they're not daring enough. I want to do something that wants a bit of doing. I'm a jolly good actor," he added modestly, "and—"

"I suppose you couldn't work anything in connection with old Quelch?" asked Greene.

"How could I?"

"I don't mean with Quelch himself, but with the other chap."

"The other chap?"

"Yes; the fellow who's coming down to-morrow," said Greene.

Coker stared. "I wish you'd talk sense!" he exclaimed testily. "What's the good of talking in riddles? Who's this other chap?"

"Haven't you heard?"

"No, I haven't heard!" roared Coker. "At least, I haven't heard anything except your fatheaded tongue!"

"Well, old Quelch is going away for three days," said Greene. "I heard it from Courtney of the Sixth. Quelch has got to see a sick relative—or his grandmother, or aunt, or somebody. Anyhow, he's going away for a day or two. And while he's away some chap is coming down to take the Remove. It'll only be a very temporary arrangement, but you might be able to work something."

"What time is Quelch going?" asked Coker interestedly.

"Courtney said that he was leaving by the three train in the afternoon," replied Greene. "It's a half-holiday, you see, and there'll be no lessons. The other joker isn't coming until the evening."

"Oh!" said Coker.

He stared into the fire more steadily than ever.

"So there'll be nobody really in charge of the Remove from the time Quelch goes to the time the new man comes down?"

"That's it—three or four hours," said Greene. "But it doesn't matter; it's a half-holiday, and the new chap won't have to take the Remove properly until Thursday morning. The kids will do prep. in their own studies as usual."

"H'm!" said Coker. "That's jolly interesting! You're quite sure about this, I suppose?"

"Well, I can't swear to it," replied Greene. "But there's no reason why Courtney should try to stuff me up."

Potter yawned prodigiously.

"Oh, I'm weary," he grumbled—"bored to death, in fact!"

"Half a minute! I've got a wheeze!" exclaimed Coker briskly, and with a gleam in his eyes. "It's not an exceptionally original one, but if it's worked properly I can fool the Remove rippingly! Not only Harry Wharton and his set, but the whole blessed crowd!"

"Alone?" asked Potter.

"Absolutely alone!" replied Coker. "I sha'n't need any help, except in getting prepared for the jape. I know I can rely on you fellows."

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale
C7 Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.

"Of course you can," they answered together.

And Coker proceeded to outline his scheme. As he had said, it was not quite original; but, worked up in a new way, it would form a splendid weapon for dealing a blow at the Remove. And the circumstances would be such that the Removites would never guess that the whole thing was a joke on them. It would all depend upon Coker's ability—and Coker had no doubt on that point, even if Potter and Greene had.

"I'll make sure of the facts in the morning," said Coker, "and if you're right, Greene—well, the Remove will have a jolly hot time of it to-morrow afternoon. I'll see to that!"

And Coker & Co. went up to bed highly satisfied with the result of the discussion.

Altogether, April Fool's Day at Greyfriars promised to be highly uproarious.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious Losses of Temple, Dabney & Co.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were up very early the following morning. Overnight Bob Cherry had offered to call his chums before rising-bell, but they had not shown any great enthusiasm at the idea. So an alarm-clock had been borrowed from Mark Linley.

This useful little article had awakened Harry Wharton an hour before rising-bell, and the Famous Five were up unusually early.

They had a good reason for this seemingly unaccountable activity; for, usually, they showed no great desire to leave their beds before the recognised hour.

They had the junior studies to themselves, and they made good use of their opportunity. But when the other juniors got up, and looked out of the windows, they saw the Famous Five hard at it on Little Side, practising football.

"Those chaps seem jolly active this morning," said Temple of the Fourth as he was dressing. "I believe in putting in practice, but I'm blessed if I'd get up before rising-bell to do it!"

As a matter of fact, footer practice was not the reason for the Famous Five's early rising. They had performed other work before sallying out to the football ground.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were among the first down after rising-bell. They leaned against the School House steps sunning themselves.

"First of April!" remarked Temple. "Don't forget to be on your guard! Somebody's sure to play the giddy ox!"

"We'll be on the look-out, right enough!" said Fry. "Still, if I were you, I shouldn't stand there and let a giddy beetle crawl up my leg. Quick, look at your sock!"

Temple had a particular dislike to beetles, and he looked down quickly and shook his leg.

"You ass!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell me before? The rotten thing's crawled inside my trousers now! I can feel it up my leg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fry.

Temple looked up sharply and reddened.

"I suppose you think that's funny?" he sneered.

"April fool!" grinned Fry. "Mind your leg, Temple, old man! You said you could feel the beetle, you know. I didn't see one, but I thought—"

"Oh, rats!" growled Temple, looking round. Then his frown changed to a grin. "Here's old Alonzo!" he said.

"The second victim!" murmured Dabney.

Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, strolled out and looked up at the clear blue sky. And then he transferred his gaze to the Fourth Formers.

"A perfect morning, my friends!" he exclaimed gently.

"As my Uncle Benjamin always used to say—"

"Oh, blow you giddy uncle!" interrupted Temple. "Give the old boy a rest!"

His chums were grinning, for they knew that the newcomer was indeed Alonzo. Until he had spoken, they weren't exactly sure that it wasn't Peter Todd—and it would have been decidedly risky to attempt to fool the astute Peter.

"Half-a-tick, before you dismiss Uncle Benjamin," said Dabney, with a wink at his chums. "Haven't you seen him this morning, Alonzo?"

Alonzo looked surprised.

"Seen him this morning?" he repeated. "Of course not! How could I have seen him this morning when he isn't at Greyfriars? Really, Dabney, I do not think I understand."

"Then I'll soon explain," said Dabney. "Of course, having only just come down, you wouldn't know. Still, now we've spoken to you, I should have thought you would have liked to speak to the old boy."

"The old boy!"

"Your Uncle Benjamin, you know," explained Dabney.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Alonzo in surprise. "Surely he is not at Greyfriars?"

"Well, we shouldn't be asking you if you'd seen him if he wasn't here, should we?" asked Temple innocently.

"Then he is here?" exclaimed Alonzo delightedly. "Upon my word, this is most pleasing news! I must find him at once!"

He looked round the Close, but Uncle Benjamin was not within sight.

"Do you know where he is?" asked Alonzo.

"Oh, somewhere," answered Dabney vaguely.

And as Alonzo walked back into the School House the Fourth Form trio burst into a roar of laughter. They were still chuckling when Bulstrode, Mark Linley, and Tom Brown, of the Remove, appeared.

"Hallo! What's the merriment about?" asked Bulstrode. "We've just been speaking to Alonzo," grinned Temple.

"He's going round now, looking for Uncle Benjamin!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You've fooled him, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Poor old Alonzo!" chuckled Tom Brown. "I'll bet he'll be fooled fifty times to-day!"

The Removites didn't attempt to try any catches on Temple, Dabney & Co.—they knew that the Fourth-Formers were on their guard, and that they would want a lot of catching unawares.

Very soon the Close was dotted with juniors, and mild forms of fooling were in progress on all sides. In a weak and absent-minded moment, Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, decided to attempt the task of fooling Tom Dutton, the deaf junior.

"I say, Dutton, there's a great rent in your coat behind," said Bolsover major, who wasn't very particular about telling the truth. "It's slit from top to bottom."

Dutton looked round.

"Got what?" he asked.

"What do you mean by 'got what?'" shouted Bolsover.

"You said I'd got 'em!" exclaimed Dutton. "If you mean that I'm dotty, I'll give you a thick ear!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bolsover. "I said that your coat was torn, Dutton! There's a great rent in it!"

"Why can't you speak distinctly?" grumbled Dutton.

"What's the good of mumbling? You said there was scent in something, didn't you?"

"Scent in something?" gasped Bolsover faintly, while several other juniors chuckled. "Oh, take him away, somebody!"

Bolsover walked away, beaten, and nobody else seemed inclined to take up the task of fooling Tom Dutton. Alonzo Todd had made a complete search of the school, and now came out and inquired of everybody where his Uncle Benjamin was. And it was not until Peter Todd explained that Alonzo realised the truth. Even then he seemed half inclined to believe that his precious uncle was on the premises.

Harry Wharton & Co. had come in from footer, and had changed into their ordinary things. And while they stood in a little group under one of the old elms, Hobson, of the Shell, suddenly gave a shout. He was standing close against a small window which opened into one of the lower passages.

"There's something queer about this," said Hobson, as several Removites came up, most of them grinning.

"Something queer about you, more likely," said Treluce.

"None of your giddy games, Hobson."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Hobson. "I'm not trying to fool you! There's something peculiar about this window. It's partly open, and one of the panes near the catch is broken. And the catch itself is all twisted."

"My hat, he's right!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "That window leads into the Fourth Form passage! I say, I wonder if anybody's broken in?"

In a short time a small crowd had collected. The window certainly bore every appearance of having been broken open. It had been broken open—there was no doubt about that. But by whom? And for what purpose?

Temple, Dabney, and another Fourth-Former strolled across to see what the excitement was about. And just as they arrived Fry came dashing out, looking a little startled.

"I say!" he exclaimed. "Somebody's been having a game in the studies! My footer's gone, and your new bat, Temple, which you were getting out for the cricket practice—"

"My bat!" shouted Temple.

"Yes, it's gone!" said Fry excitedly. "I looked into other studies, too. All sorts of things seem to have been pinched!"

The Fourth-Formers stared at Fry—and Bulstrode grinned.

"Don't take any notice of the ass!" he said. "He's carted the things away himself, and he's doing this to fool you!"

"My only topper, the awful spoofer!" said Temple.



"I hope there's a currant cake in it, Hobson!" said Hoskins. "I dote on currant cakes!" Hobson untied the string round his hamper, and groped for the contents. He fished something out, and held it up. "A brick!" roared Hoskins. "April fool!" (See Chapter 6.)

"But I haven't!" shouted Fry.
"You haven't? It's not a wheeze, then?"
"No, you chumps!"
"Honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" said Fry. "It's not a jape at all. My footer's gone, and Temple's bat, and goodness knows what else. I can't understand it at all. Where's the sense in doing such a thing?"

There was a general run towards the School House by the majority of the Upper-Fourth fellows who were present. Fry stayed behind, and saw the forced window.

The others came out soon, and numerous losses were announced. One had lost a fountain-pen, another an overcoat, another a silver ink-stand, and so on. In every case the loss consisted of something valuable—something which could be disposed of easily.

"It must be a silly joke of somebody's," said Dabney. "Yet—yet I can't see the point of it. There's nothing funny in pinching things from a chap's study, is there?"

The Famous Five stood looking on and listening with serious faces.

"If it was a joke," said Harry Wharton, "there must be a joker. Who's been in the Fourth-Form passage this morning?"

Nobody answered except Fry. All the juniors had come THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

straight out into the Close, and Fry had gone indoors to fetch something. Then he had noticed that several things were missing.

"It's jolly queer," said Frank Nugent seriously. "Looks almost as if somebody had broken in during the night—"

"Broken in!"
"Great Scott!"

"I say, that's a bit thick, you know!"

"Thick or not, it's a possibility," persisted Nugent. "I don't say that it is so, but things certainly look queer. If any chap can tell me where the joke comes in, I'll be obliged!"

Nugent was quite secure in making that request, for at the present stage the thing seemed to be far from a joke. Yet, even while their faces were grave and serious, the Famous Five were chuckling hugely inwardly. Their plans were working smoothly, and Temple, Dabney & Co. did not suspect an elaborate first of April jape.

"There's this window, too," said Temple suddenly. "I'd forgotten that for the moment!"

"My hat!"

"This is where the burglar got in!"

Fresh interest was at once evinced in the window. In the light of the new discoveries, it looked very significant.

The excitement was growing, for most of the juniors

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

thought that a genuine burglary had occurred. For the time being all thoughts of the first of April were put aside.

Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting for somebody to remember the incident of the previous night. It was that which would put the finishing touch to the present situation, and would fix firmly in the minds of Temple, Dabney & Co. the conviction that this affair was not a joke, but a real, over-night-planned robbery.

And the Famous Five had not long to wait, for Dabney himself suddenly gave an exclamation.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he ejaculated excitedly.

"Well, what's up with her?" asked Bob Cherry.

"There's been a burglar in the house, you chaps!" declared Dabney. "It's not a joke—it can't be a joke! Apart from the fact that there'd be no sense in nicking the things, we've got proof that the articles were stolen by a genuine robber."

"Proof! Where?" asked Temple, who was extremely concerned about the loss of his cricket-bat.

"Why, there's this broken window, for one thing," said Dabney, "and last night's affair for another—that chap over against the Head's shrubbery!"

"By Jove, yes!"

"That's it!" ejaculated Fry. "He's the rotter who's been on the pinch! He was hanging about the school, waiting for quietness to settle down, and slipped away from us and hid himself until all was quiet. Oh, crumbs! We'd better say good-bye to our property!"

"How about my bat?" it was brand-new!" howled Temple. "Can't help it. The thief's probably miles and miles away by now, and the goods with him," said Fry. "It's beastly rotten, and we shall have to tell Mr. Queleh; but we can't do anything else."

And the Upper Fourth fellows stared at one another rather blankly. The thing was no joke, and Temple, Dabney & Co. didn't feel like being joyous and merry.

Harry Wharton and his chums, detaching themselves from the crowd, strolled across the Close. Bob Cherry looked round carelessly, and saw that they were alone, and he chuckled gleefully.

"Ripping!" he murmured. "Your wheeze is working A1, Franks! All these 'proofs' of a real burglar have diddled those Upper Fourth bouncers up to their necks! When the climax comes we shall have them absolutely on toast, and make them the biggest April fools that ever were fooled!"

"Rather!" said Wharton heartily. "They won't smell a rat now, and the steady carrying out of the wheeze will make it all the more effective. There's nothing further to do until the afternoon—except listen to the guesses and conjectures! And after dinner we'll lead Temple & Co. such a dance that they won't forget it for ages!"

"Oh, longer than that!" grinned Frank Nugent.

And the Nabob murmured that the agefulness would be terrific.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Loss!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER rolled out of the tuckshop, rolled across the Close, and rolled amongst the crowd of fellows who were still gathered round the discomfited Fourth-Formers.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, say it somewhere else!" grunted Temple irritably. "We don't want you bothering, Bunter! Buzz off!"

"Oh, really, Temple, I've as much right to be here as anybody else," protested Billy Bunter. "What's the excitement about? I've been in the tuckshop, so I don't know what's on!"

"I should say this is a giddy record for Bunter!" said Bulstrode. "Both last night and this morning he's arrived on the scene too late. I wonder if he's ill?"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Bulstrode—"

"Don't be a what?" said Bulstrode, advancing on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove backed away hastily.

"Don't—dud—don't be unreasonable!" he gasped. "I wasn't on hand, so I didn't see. I'm not a curious chap, and—"

Hoskins of the Shell suddenly thrust something in front of Billy Bunter's nose. It was a bracelet, and Bunter promptly took it, and stuffed it into his mouth.

"Thanks!" he mumbled. "What's it for?"

"You take it, that's all!" said Hoskins calmly. "In fact, you take the whole giddy cake-factory! Not a curious chap! Oh, help!"

Bunter looked aggrieved.

"I don't see why you should want to keep me in the dark," he complained.

But most of the juniors didn't want Bunter, and he was forced to hear the facts from Snoop of the Remove.

"So somebody's been pinching things from the studies?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Yes; and he's nicked no end of valuables!" said Snoop.

"My hat!" said Bunter, looking round at the other juniors. "I hope the awful blighter hasn't been in my study! There was some money in my desk—"

"Rats!"

"No swanking, Bunter!"

"There was!" roared Billy Bunter. "A lot of it, too! I—I got a remittance by post last night, and I haven't started spending any of it yet!"

"When did it come?" asked Tom Brown.

"Last night—by registered letter!"

"Liar!" said Tom Brown calmly.

"Oh, really, Brown—"

"You're an awful fibber, Bunter," said the New Zealand junior. "I met the postman when he came last night, and he'd only got four letters altogether. They were all for seniors!"

"Bowled out, Bunter!" said Bulstrode.

"Rot!" replied the Owl of the Remove hastily. "I made a mistake, that's all. It came by the morning post!"

"How does he do it?" murmured Bob Cherry, who was standing by. "There's one good point about Bunter's whoppers—they're such obvious whoppers that nobody could ever possibly believe them!"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"You can say what you like!" he growled. "I know I had the money in my desk, and I'm going to see if it's been stolen. It's pretty certain that the burglar ransacked the studies in the Remove passage as well; and if my cash has gone I shall report it to the Head, and demand to have it back!"

Bunter, as a matter of fact, had a wild idea of getting some cash on the strength of the "burglar's" visit. As he went off, Bob Cherry walked away and joined his chums.

"Here's a lark!" he exclaimed. "Bunter says there was some money in his study, and he's gone to see if it's been stolen!"

Harry Wharton and the others grinned loudly.

"I'll bet a dollar he'll come back and say that every penny of it's gone!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "Considering that there's no burglar at all, it'll be rather curious if he's lost his tin, won't it?"

And the Famous Five chuckled afresh.

Sure enough, in about two minutes Billy Bunter rolled down the steps from the entrance-hall, and panted across the Close. He had worked himself up into a state of excitement, and, in fact, had almost made himself believe that he had been robbed.

"Yes, it's gone!" he gasped. "The awful beast's pinched it!"

"How much was it?" asked Bolsover major.

"Oh, about two cents, I guess!" murmured Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.

And there was a chuckle.

"Two cents be blowed!" exclaimed Bunter. "It was a large amount—the largest I've had for days!"

"Then it would have been sixpence, perhaps?" suggested Nugent.

"Yes; that's about Bunter's mark!"

Billy Bunter blinked round excitedly.

"I tell you I've been robbed!" he shouted. "There was a fiver in my desk—"

"Eh?"

"A whatter?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"A fiver!" roared Bunter. "Don't you know what a fiver is?"

"Perhaps it's a new name for a five-bob piece," suggested Johnny Bull. "You can't possibly mean a five-pound note, because such things don't come within your ken!"

"I do mean a five-pound note!" howled Billy Bunter. "And it's gone! Five quid! Oh, my hat, what a rotten shame! It's not often I get a fiver—"

"No, those periods are rather rare," chuckled Bulstrode. "In fact, they're so rare that they don't exist!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chuckled loudly, and some of them were roaring with laughter. The very idea of Bunter having a five-pound note was sufficiently humorous. But Bunter didn't seem to see anything funny in the matter.

"Five quid is a jolly serious loss," he said. "I'm blessed if I know what I am going to do about it."

"Do nothing, except dry up!" said Peter Todd sharply.

"We've had about enough of this bunkum, Bunter. You're

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FRANK RICHARDS Contributes a Splendid, Complete School Tale In our New Saturday Companion Paper— "CHUCKLES." 1d.

in my study, and it's up to me to keep you in order. If you tell any more rotten fibs—"

"Fibs!" roared Bunter. "It's the truth!"
"Well, it's the queerest truth I ever knew," said Peter. "You seem to be the only chap in the Remove who's lost anything, Bunter. The burglar was evidently loaded up with articles from the Fourth-Form passage. If you mention that fiver again I shall have to take you in hand!"

Bunter snorted.
"I shall mention it as much as I like," he exclaimed hotly. "I don't see why you chaps should doubt my word."
"Preposterous idea!" scoffed Bob Cherry. "How can we doubt Bunter's word, you chaps? He's such a truthful chap that it's a gross injustice. In fact, I feel quite sorry for him."

And Bob Cherry expressed his sorrow by uttering a roar of laughter.

"I've got a good idea," said Hoskins of the Shell, with a wink. "As Bunter seems to be in trouble, why shouldn't we help him out of it? We might raise a fiver between us and give it to him. Then, when he recovers his note, he can divide it out. I suppose you've got the number of the note, Bunter, haven't you?"

Billy Bunter blinked.
"Ye-es, of course," he said quickly. "I—I've got the number in my pocket-book. You needn't worry. I say, it's awfully good of you chaps to do this for me. I'll pay it all back out of the fiver."

"Pay all what back?" asked Hoskins, in surprise.
"Why, the tin you lend me," replied Bunter.
"Oh, there'll be no necessity to pay that back, old chap," said Hoskins generously.

"Thanks, awfully, Hoskins!" said Bunter eagerly.
"Thanks! What are you thanking me for?" asked the Shell fellow. "As I'm not going to lend you any money there'll be none to pay back, will there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"But—but you said you were going to raise a subscription," howled Billy Bunter.

"No, I didn't," said Hoskins.
"You did!"
"I didn't!"
"If you say that you're a rotten fibber!" roared Bunter. Hoskins turned red.

"I'll give you a chance to take that back, you fat worm!" he exclaimed, pushing up his sleeves. "Now, am I a rotten fibber?"

Billy Bunter backed away.
"Nunno! I—I didn't mean that, Hoskins, old chap!" he stammered. "But you said—"

"I said that we might raise a subscription," grinned Hoskins. "We might do lots of things, as a matter of fact. Just because I say we might lend you some money it doesn't mean to say we shall!"

"Because, as a matter of fact, we sha'n't!" said Tom Brown blandly.

"Not a penny, Bunter!" chuckled Harry Wharton. "That fiver yarn of yours is just a little too steep! Still, as it's the first of April, we'll forgive you. I suppose you've been trying to fool us."

"There's no fooling about it!" roared Billy Bunter, realising that he was being made fun of. "I've really lost a fiver!"

"Rats!"
"Piffle!"
"Won't wash, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter looked round wildly.
"Then—then ain't—"

"No," said Hoskins, "we ain't!"
"Ain't you going to—lend me some tin?" howled the Owl of the Remove.

"We are not," grinned Bob Cherry. "We is not!"
"In point of fact, Bunter, we're fed-up with you," said Hoskins. "It's breakfast-time, and there's this genuine robbery of the Upper Fourth to discuss. You can buzz off!"

"I won't!" roared Bunter.
"All right; stop where you are!" said Bulstrode. "But if you make another sound we'll bump you across the Close!"

"And back again!" added Wharton.
"Look here—" began Bunter indignantly.
"Don't forget that warning!"

"Blow the rotten warning!" shouted Billy Bunter. "I'm not going to be treated like this! I want—"

Bulstrode sighed.
"I don't know what you want, but I know what you'll get!" he said grimly. "Come on, you chaps; collar him!"

But Bunter gave one wild look round, and fled.
Across the Close he went, and a roar of laughter followed him. He shook his fist wrathfully.

"Beasts!" he roared.
Then he rolled away, his face red with his exertions.

"I'll get even with 'em!" he told himself. "Hoskins was the rotter who started that subscription bizney! All right, Hoskins had better look out for himself!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Wheeze!

FOOLING, on a minor scale, was practised throughout the morning. In the class-rooms the juniors had to be extremely cautious. Vernon-Smith, with his usual daring, had actually attempted to make an April fool of Mr. Quelch. But the Remove-master was very keen, and the result for the Bounder was not exactly triumphant. He had received a hundred lines for his pains, and the rest of the Remove said that he jolly well deserved them for his nerve!

After morning lessons quite a little host of japes were practised which had been evolved during the work time. But most of them did not materialise, for the juniors were on their guard.

Coker & Co. were seen to be in high spirits, but nobody guessed that the Fifth-Formers were contemplating a gigantic jape.

Temple, Dabney, & Co. did not feel up to much, for their losses had put a damper on their spirits. Mr. Quelch had been informed, and the village constable had been told to keep a look-out. But, so far, the missing goods had not been recovered, nor had any traces of the burglar been found. Which was not very surprising, considering that there was no burglar, and that the missing articles were not stolen. But never for a moment did the Upper Fourth fellows suspect a first of April jape.

There seemed no reason for a jape at present. The crux of the idea had not yet materialised. That was to come during the afternoon, and Temple, Dabney, & Co., would then find out how completely they had been "dished."

The Famous Five did not give the game away by indulging in private roars of laughter, as some juniors would have done. For such a course would have raised the Upper Fourth fellows' suspicions. Harry Wharton & Co. acted quite the opposite. Several times they discussed the "robbery" with members of the Fourth, and gave the impression that they were quite puzzled.

Nobody took any notice of Bunter's protestations of the truth of his yarn about the lost fiver. They all knew Bunter too well. Had he said his loss was a shilling postal-order some of the fellows might have credited the story. But the fiver yarn was too tall.

And Billy Bunter felt badly used.
"The rotters!" he muttered, as he lounged on the School House steps just after morning lessons. "I'll get even. I shouldn't have cared if only I'd got five bob!"

Bunter had the steps to himself. Nearly all the fellows were on the football-ground, and those who were not were lounging in the shade of the gym or under the elms; for the day was a brilliant one, and the sunshine streamed down with quite summerlike intensity.

Bunter leaned against the stonework, and looked thoughtfully across the Close at the gates. And while he did so he saw the carrier's cart from Friardale stop outside. Bunter looked curiously, wondering what had arrived, and, determining to satisfy his curiosity, he rolled across to the gates.

Gosling, the porter, was just setting off somewhere with a wheelbarrow, and he turned as the carrier called him.

"My hat, a hamper!" murmured Bunter.
Gosling signed for the hamper, and the carrier went off.

"What I says is this 'ere," muttered Gosling. "These kids is a datted nuisance! Hamper for Master Hoskins. Well, I've got to go over to the pavilion, and I ain't goin' to take this into the 'ouse until I've done!"

And Gosling put the hamper down against the door of his lodge, and went off with the barrow.

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed.
"A hamper for Hoskins—eh?" he murmured, licking his lips. "I'll bet it's packed with good things, and I'm just longing for a decent feed! If I could only get hold of that hamper—"

But Bunter shook his head. Such a thing was impossible. He could, of course, confiscate the hamper, and consume the contents. But he knew that after the feast would come the reckoning, and Bunter knew that the reckoning would take a very painful form.

Gosling would miss the hamper, and would ask Hoskins if he had taken it. And the Shell-Former would very soon learn the truth. The result for Bunter would be disastrous; he would be bumped until he was sore, and generally slaughtered. And even the most gorgeous feed was not worth that.

No; he must think of something subtle.
Bunter was cunning, and, when a feed was in question, displayed quite brilliant flashes of intelligence. After thinking for two or three minutes, he slapped his fat thigh, and his little eyes gleamed with satisfaction.

"My only aunt, I've got a wheeze!" he muttered. "It

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

might not work, but it's a ten-to-one chance that it will. Anyway, it's worth trying on, and chance it!"

Without delay the Owl of the Remove disappeared into the School House. He went straight up into one of the box-rooms, and in a very short time had routed out an empty hamper.

"This'll do a treat!" he told himself.

He stuffed the hamper full of old rubbish, and then tied the lid down.

"Now for the label!" he murmured.

And in a very short time he had found a luggage label. Upon this, in printed characters, he wrote the name of Hobson, and addressed it to Greyfriars College.

"They'll never recognise my list," he muttered. "Hobson—that's right! He and Hoskins are always together."

Without further loss of time Billy Bunter carried the hamper down to the entrance-hall, and placed it almost out of sight against the hatstand. Then he sallied out to Little Side. As he had expected, Hobson and Hoskins were together, watching practice. Several other juniors were near them, and they looked at Bunter curiously as he rolled up with a flushed and excited face.

"I say, Hobson, old man—"

"Don't you 'old man' me!" growled Hobson, turning. "I suppose you want to borrow something—until you get a postal-order? You generally use terms of familiarity on such occasions!"

"I don't want to borrow anything!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly.

Hobson grinned.

"Well, it would be all the same if you did," he said.

"But what do you want me for?"

"I don't want you," said Bunter. "I've only come to tell you something."

"Well, I don't want to know!" said Hobson. "Buzz off!"

"But—"

"Vamoose, Bunter!"

"But there's a hamper—"

"Eh?"

"A hamper, addressed to you—"

"What?"

"Addressed to you," repeated Bunter excitedly. "A hamper, in the entrance-hall, with your name on the label."

"Oh!" said Hobson.

"That makes a difference!" grinned Hoskins.

"I—I say," exclaimed Bunter eagerly, acting his part really well, "I'm awfully short of cash, Hobson! I—I suppose you couldn't lend me some jam or cakes out of your hamper?"

Hobson nodded.

"You suppose quite right," he said calmly—"I couldn't!"

"Oh, really, Hobson, I took all the trouble to come here to tell you—"

"Oh, all right, Bunter; I'll let you have a taste of something!" said Hobson, who was certainly not expecting a hamper. "We'll go along now and have a squint at it. Is it a big one?"

"Rather!" exclaimed Bunter, smacking his lips. "I'll bet it's packed with good things!"

"Good things? Who's talking about good things?" inquired Penfold, of the Remove, coming up with Morgan.

"Hamper come for Hobson," replied Hoskins. "We're now going to open it."

"Oh, good!" said Morgan. "We'll come with you!"

Hobson grunted.

"You can come, if you like," he said; "but I'm not going to divide out my hamper among you Remove kids!"

"We don't want any of your rotten hamper!" said Morgan. "Hampers don't arrive very often, though, and it's always interesting to watch!"

"Well, this'll be an interesting one, anyhow!" murmured Bunter, under his breath. Aloud he said: "Come on, Hobson!"

And the two Shell-Formers hastened off indoors, accompanied by Bunter and two or three other juniors. Hobson didn't think Bunter capable of working an April Fool trick, so never even questioned the genuineness of the information.

They arrived in the entrance-hall, where several other juniors were talking in a clump.

"Now, where's the giddy hamper?" said Hobson.

Bunter lugged it out into view.

"Decent size," said Hoskins critically.

"Rather!" agreed Hobson, with satisfaction. "I wonder who the dickens could have sent it? I don't seem to recognise the writing."

"Oh, blow the writing!" growled Hoskins. "It doesn't matter twopence who a hamper comes from, so long as it's packed full of good things! Fish out your knife and cut the string!"

Hobson was already doing so, and Bunter, standing in the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

background, grinned all over his fat face. He knew that the laugh would be against Hobson, and he also knew that Hobson would be unable to inflict corporal punishment for the jape. It was All Fools' Day, and if Hobson was caught napping, he could do nothing but make the best of it.

"I hope there's a currant-cake in it," said Hoskins. "I dote on currant-cakes!"

"Oh, blow the currant-cake!" said the other Shell fellow.

"I—I say— Hallo, what the dickens— Where's the giddy provisions? This doesn't seem to be— Great Scott!"

Hobson fished something out of the hamper, and held it up.

"A brick!" roared Hoskins.

"Well, I'm blessed!" gasped Hobson, staring blankly at the brick. "There's a label tied to it, too! Oh, crumbs!"

Hobson dropped the brick suddenly, and it fell upon Hoskins's toe.

"Ow! You blithering chump!" he howled.

Treluce, of the Remove, picked up the brick, looked at the label, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"April fool!" he chuckled. "Oh, my only Aunt Georgina! This is rich!"

"It's a spoof hamper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hobson's nicely done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hobson glared around.

"Nothing funny in it!" he growled. "Blessed if I can see why all you chaps should set up this fatheaded cackle!"

"It's not funny at all!" grinned Mark Linley. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who did it?" roared Hobson, glaring round.

"He, he, he!" giggled Billy Bunter, red in the face with mirth. "I caught you that time, Hobson, fair and square! I say, can I have a pot of jam?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hobson looked furious for a moment, then his face broke into a sheepish smile.

"The joke's on me!" he growled. "I'll admit I didn't think Bunter was capable of it. Of course, I had expected to find the hamper full of bricks!"

"Rats!"

"All right," said Hobson, "you needn't believe me."

"We don't!"

"You were fooled properly!"

And Hobson had to admit it. The juniors roared, and the two Shell fellows passed out into the Close. The other juniors followed, and there were many chucklings.

Left alone in the entrance hall, Billy Bunter rubbed his fat hands together with satisfaction.

"Good!" he muttered. "That came off all serene. I fooled Hobson; but Hoskins is the chap I want to floor—and I'll bet I'll do it, too!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Takes the Cake—And Other Things!

BILLY BUNTER lounged about impatiently for five or ten minutes. He badly wanted to gain possession of Hoskins's genuine hamper, but he did not wish to be too precipitate. He kept his eye on Gosling's lodge, and felt somewhat anxious. If the porter returned, he would probably take the hamper indoors, and the wheeze would be ruined.

So Bunter decided to act.

Hoskins was standing against one of the old arches of the cloisters, talking to Temple and Dabney of the Upper Fourth. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were there, too, and they were all discussing the mysterious disappearance of the Fourth Form's property. Harry Wharton and Bob were looking as solemn as owls.

Bunter rolled up excitedly.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, clear off, Bunter!"

"I sha'n't clear off!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I've got just as much right here as you have, Cherry! Besides, I've come to speak to Hoskins."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Hoskins. "You can clear off just the same."

"Oh, really, Hoskins—"

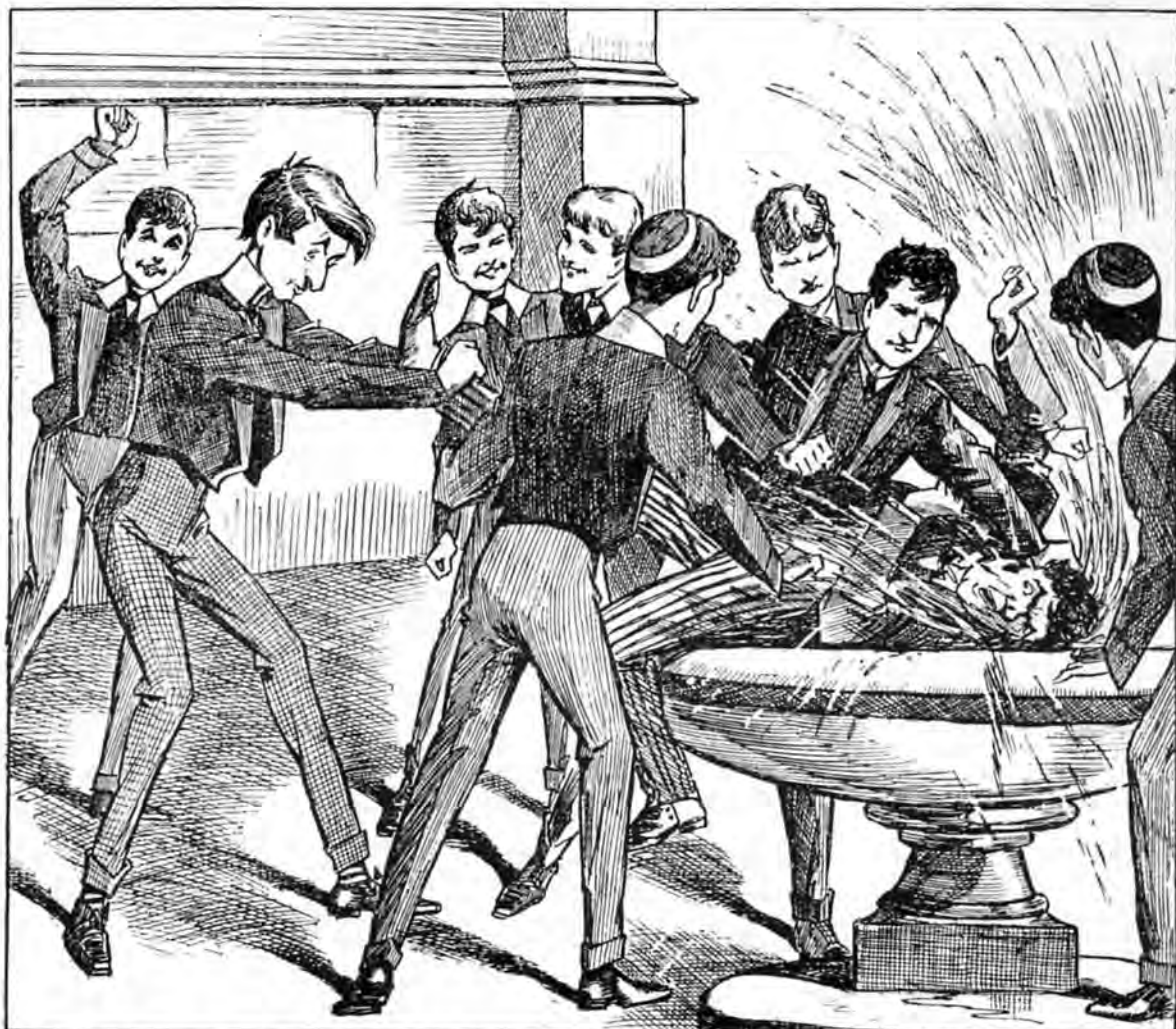
"Oh, let him speak," said Harry Wharton. "What is it, Bunter?"

"There's a hamper—"

"What?"

"There's a hamper for you, Hoskins," said Billy Bunter calmly. "It's just arrived by the carrier's cart from Friar-dale. I thought I'd come and tell you."

The juniors stared, and Hoskins gave Bunter a pitying look.



Horace Coker was dragged across the Close to the fountain. "Don't you dare shove me in that rotten fountain!" he roared. But the juniors dared, and Coker was ducked, yelling, in the cold water! (See Chapter 16.)

"You fathead!" he exclaimed.
"It's the truth!" roared Bunter.
"It's a giddy lie!"
"Of course it is!" said Bob Cherry.
"I thought that joke on Hobson was rather neat," said Hoskins; "but to try the same game on twice is a bit too thick! You're not catching me, Bunter."

"I tell you there's a hamper—"
"Rats!"
"Don't you believe me?"
"No, I don't!" said Hoskins tartly. "And I think it's like your blessed nerve to come here with the same old yarn! Buzz off!"

Billy Bunter looked indignant.
"Oh, all right, if that's the way you treat me!" he exclaimed. "But I've been speaking the truth."

It was such an unusual thing for Bunter to speak the truth that it was hardly to be expected that the juniors would take his word for it.

"The hamper came by carrier's cart," he went on. "I saw it myself."

"Then you saw double!" growled Hoskins.
"I didn't! I saw a whacking great hamper for you. If you come with me I'll take you to it."

Hoskins grinned.
"The offer is declined with thanks," he said. "I'm not coming. Great Scott! I've a jolly good mind to bump you for having such a rotten nerve!"

"Yes, it is a bit steep," said Temple.
"Steep!" said Hoskins. "It's—"
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

"The truth," put in Bunter. "Look here. This isn't an April Fool dodge at all."

"Fibber!"
"I'm speaking—"

"Out of your giddy hat!" said Hoskins. "I'm fed up with you, Bunter. Sheer off—scat!"

"Look here—"
"Dry up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I sha'n't! Look here, Hoskins—"
"Go and eat coke!" growled Hoskins, who really thought that Bunter was fooling.

"Go and eat the contents of the giddy hamper!" grinned Harry Wharton. "It'll give your teeth a good testing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"All right; I will!" said Bunter savagely; although he was inwardly chuckling with delight. "I'll go and eat your rotten hamper, Hoskins!"

"Don't eat the hamper!" said Temple, grinning.

"I mean, the contents of it, you ass!"
"All right," said Hoskins. "Only buzz off!"

Bunter looked disappointed.
"I shall open the hamper, and eat everything in it," he said flatly.

"All serene! You're quite welcome," said Hoskins impatiently.

"Then—then you give it to me?"
"Yes!" roared the Shell fellow.

"Good! I—I mean, I think you're a set of silly asses!"
And Billy Bunter rolled off. The juniors did not see the

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

grin of triumph which broke over his face. He had received Hoskins' full permission to appropriate the contents of the hamper—and in the hearing of several other juniors.

"Silly young ass!" growled Hoskins. "I thought that jape against Hobson was rather decent, but to try the same thing on again immediately, spoils it."

"Just like Bunter!" said Dabney.

They went on talking about the "robbery," and Bunter was forgotten.

Some little time later—close upon dinner-time, in fact—Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh passed the wood-shed, on their way indoors.

Nugent paused.

"Somebody in the wood-shed!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you hear a creak?"

"The creakfulness was terrific," answered Inky. "But our esteemed selves do not wishfully require to stop."

"No; come on in," said Bull. "It's only Snoop, or Stott, or some other fathard, having a rotten cigarette!"

"Well, let's surprise him," said Nugent.

And he walked up to the wood-shed and pushed open the door. His two chums followed. But before they reached the door Nugent staggered back, with a sudden exclamation. "My only Sunday tile!" he gasped.

"What's up?" asked Johnny Bull.

"What is the esteemed matter, my worthy chum?"

"Look!" ejaculated Nugent. "Great Scott! Look!"

They looked.

"Oh, my hat, it's Bunter!" exclaimed Bull. "But what on earth is the meaning of all this?"

The juniors gazed into the woodshed with surprised eyes. There, sitting on a little heap of sucking, was William George Bunter. In front of him was a large hamper, with the lid off. And all round, on every side, were good things galore—jam, cakes, pastry, potted meats, pies, etc.

And Billy Bunter was tucking in for all he was worth. It didn't matter a jot to him that it was dinner-time. He looked at the new-comers rather in alarm, but could not speak, as his mouth was filled to its utmost capacity.

It was too unheard-of for Bunter to have a hamper, so the juniors came to the only conclusion possible—that the Owl of the Remove had confiscated some other fellow's property.

"You young burglar!" exclaimed Nugent. "Who's pro-vendor is this you're scoffing up?"

"Mine!" mumbled Bunter.

"Is it your hamper?"

Billy Bunter nodded.

"Sounds a bit tall!" said Johnny Bull dubiously. "Let's have a squint at the giddy label!"

He bent down and read the name and address upon the label. Then he glared at Bunter wrathfully.

"Why, you fat robber," he exclaimed, "this belongs to Hoskins of the Shell. It's his hamper!"

Bunter swallowed his mouthful, and grinned cheerfully.

"It isn't," he declared—"it's mine!"

"But it's got Hoskins' name—"

"That's nothing—he's given it to me."

The three juniors looked at one another.

"Given it to you?" repeated Nugent blankly.

"Yes—he told me I could have the contents of the hamper!"

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull flatly. "I don't believe you, Bunter. It's a horrible whepper. I'm going to tell Hoskins of this—it's nothing less than robbery!"

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Tell him," he mumbled; "I don't care!"

"You don't care?"

"No!"

"Well, it's jolly queer!" said Johnny Bull, scratching his head. "I can't understand it. I can't believe that Hoskins gave this hamper to Bunter. He wouldn't do a thing like that unless he was off his silly rocker!"

"Let's go and ask him," said Nugent.

And they left.

Hoskins was standing against the School House steps. Hobson and two or three other Shell fellows were there, and Temple, Dabney & Co. were near by.

"I say, Hoskins!" shouted Johnny Bull, as he came up.

"Hallo! What's up?" asked Hoskins.

"About that hamper—"

Hoskins glared.

"Oh, blow the beastly hamper!" he said irritably.

"You're as bad as that ass Bunter!"

Johnny Bull opened his mouth in surprise.

"Then you know?" he gasped.

"Yes, of course I know!" said Hoskins. "Do you think I believed Bunter's silly tale? It was a bit too thick to spring it on me after fooling Hobson!"

"What do you mean?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, don't bother!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FRANK RICHARDS

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

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Alonzo Finds the Thief!

HOSKINS was chipped unmercifully by the juniors until dinner was over. Then a meeting of the Remove was called suddenly by Harry Wharton, and Hoskins was forgotten.

The Remove meeting was a sharp, brisk one, and it was

"But I want to know!" said Nugent. "We saw Hobson diddled, but what's this about another hamper?"

"Why, Bunter had the nerve to come to me and say that a hamper had arrived for me!" growled Hoskins wrathfully.

"And—and did you tell him to—"

"I told him to eat the contents!" grinned Hoskins—"bricks, and rubbish, most likely!"

"Then—then you gave him the hamper?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yes, but I don't see—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bull.

"Oh, my hat, that's rich!" howled Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The richfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

The three Removites simply roared with mirth.

Hoskins gazed at them in surprise.

"What's the joke?" he asked. "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! If you think it was funny for Bunter to come to me with that yarn, I don't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" bellowed Johnny Bull, wiping his eyes.

"Oh, crumbs, this is too funny!" gurgled Nugent.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, what's all the mirth about?" asked Bob Cherry, appearing with Wharton.

"Why, these three asses seem to think it humorous because I sent Bunter off with that yarn of his," said Hoskins.

"Hoskins gave him permission to eat the contents!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!" panted Bull. "I never thought Bunter had it in him!"

"Hold me up, my worthy chum!" chuckled Inky, leaning against Temple. "I am in the august state of esteemed faithfulness with mirth!"

Harry Wharton grabbed hold of Nugent.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

"Shut up, you ass!" shouted Harry. "Can't you speak?"

"Wait a minute!" gasped Nugent, holding his sides.

"Oh, this is the prize joke of the day! That hamper Bunter spoke of wasn't a spoof one at all!"

"Not a spoof one!" ejaculated Temple.

"No, it was genuine!"

"What!" howled Hoskins.

"It was genuine!" gurgled Nugent. "And Bunter's having the feed of his life! You gave him permission to scoff up the contents of the giddy hamper, and he's doing it!"

Hoskins turned a sickly colour.

"Then—then it wasn't a jape at all?" he ejaculated faintly. "I told him he could have a real hamper?"

"Yes."

Bob Cherry went off like a rocket:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can't do anything, Hoskins!" said Harry Wharton, with a chuckle. "You told him he could have it!"

"Yes, but—" began Hoskins wildly.

"There are no buts about it!" said Wharton. "Bunter told you several times that it was a genuine hamper, and you wouldn't believe him. Oh, the artful porpoise!"

The juniors shook their sides with merriment.

Hoskins looked round him helplessly, and felt an awful fool. There was no doubt at all that Billy Bunter had succeeded remarkably well in spoofing the two Shell fellows—and to his own advantage into the bargain!

"It was a put-up job from the start, I expect!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Bunter worked the spoof hamper trick in order to make you give him the real one. I never thought he was so jolly deep!"

A crowd of juniors rushed across the Close to the woodshed and stood at the door. Bunter was still busy, and he did not attempt to move when he found that the juniors were not hostile. They were only laughing at the jape—and, indeed, most of the Removites were inclined to make a hero of Bunter—a most unusual position for him to occupy. For, absolutely unaided, he had succeeded in making fools of Hobson and Hoskins.

Of Hoskins there was no sign—that youth had rushed indoors to hide his diminished head in his own study. The sight of Billy Bunter eating his good things would have been too much.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Alonzo Finds the Thief!

HOSKINS was chipped unmercifully by the juniors until dinner was over. Then a meeting of the Remove was called suddenly by Harry Wharton, and Hoskins was forgotten.

The Remove meeting was a sharp, brisk one, and it was

FRANK RICHARDS

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

"CHUCKLES," 1d.

ever before any of the other fellows knew of it. But Harry Wharton had told the Remove of the impending jape—and the explanation of the "robbery." The Removes caught on to the idea at once, and all agreed to help.

Of course, a good many Remove fellows were excluded—Vernon-Smith, Stott, Snoot, Bolsover major, Billy Bunter, Alonzo Todd, and a few others. Peter Todd was there, and he agreed to set the ball rolling.

Very soon after, the Famous Five sallied out, and went down the lane towards Friardale, Harry Wharton carrying a bundle. The afternoon was brilliant with spring sunshine.

"This is going to be a regular day for the Remove," said Bob Cherry. "Even Bunter's distinguished himself. Temple & Co. were looking as blue as anything when we set out—but I'll bet they'll look bluer before the day's over!"

"Rather!" chuckled Harry Wharton. "Our great jape hasn't really started yet, but when it does things will hum! Jolly lucky for us that Temple and the other Fourth-Formers are practicing on the playing-fields this afternoon."

"I say, do you think Alonzo will do the trick?" asked Nugent. "I'm rather doubtful myself, you know."

"Oh, he'll do it all right," said Wharton. "He doesn't know anything about the jape, and that will make it all the better. He's seen Temple's watch, and will recognise it at once. Oh, we can count on old 'Lonzy to give Temple the tip."

And the Famous Five proceeded on their way.

Meanwhile, Peter Todd lounged about the Close. When twenty minutes had passed he walked briskly into the School House and went up into No. 7 Study. Alonzo was there, and he looked up as Peter entered.

"I want you to do something for me, 'Lonzy," said Peter.

"I shall be only too pleased to do anything," said Alonzo willingly.

"Good!"

"My Uncle Benjamin always told me to bear in mind

"Exactly, but that's not to the point," said Peter calmly.

"I want you to run down to Friardale for me. Get a large tin of sardines; we've got nothing for tea, and they'll come in handy."

"Very well, my dear Peter, although I don't see the necessity of going to the village," said Alonzo. "Mrs. Mimble sells very excellent sardines—"

"Horrible things!" said Peter, shuddering.

"You had some last night, and you said they were delicious!" exclaimed Alonzo mildly.

"Yes, but the village ones are better. It won't take you long to pop down."

And Peter Todd handed over the money and left. Alonzo thought it rather strange that Peter should require the sardines so early in the afternoon, but he did not suspect a plot.

Alonzo walked down the lane towards Friardale, and his thoughts were far away—perhaps he was thinking of the sayings of his famous Uncle Benjamin.

Suddenly there was a rustle in the woods at the side of the road. The sun was shining brilliantly, but under the trees the light was almost dim. And this was the shadiest place of the whole road.

Alonzo did not notice anything, and he walked on.

Then, in a moment, a form stepped out and confronted him. It seemed to be a man. His clothes were stained and worn, his hat a mere rag.

He wore a beard, and the rest of his face was grimy.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo. "A tramp!"

"Excuse me, young gent—"

"I am very sorry, but I am in a hurry," said Alonzo, regarding the other rather doubtfully.

"I shan't keep you a minut, young gentleman," said the stranger. "I just want to give you the opportunity of buying something good at a dirt-cheap price."

"But, really, my good fellow—"

"Now, what do you say to this 'ere?" went on the tramp, fishing something from his pocket. He held it under Alonzo's nose. It was a watch—a silver one, with a very ornamental face.

"Dear me! That is an eight-day watch," said Alonzo, in surprise. "It looks exactly like one that belongs to Temple of the Fourth."

"Yes, there's a good many of 'em about, young gent. Now, you can have this 'ere watch for next to nothing—a bob!"

"What!"

"A bob—a shilling!"

Alonzo stared at the other.

"But that is an absurd figure!" he exclaimed. "And it looks very much like Temple's. But it can't be—Good gracious! Temple's watch is missing!"

Alonzo stared at the stranger. Temple's watch was missing, and this tramp was offering him one that was exactly like it. Alonzo realised, with a start, that this was actually Temple's watch. This man was the thief—probably he had all the other missing articles in his possession.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Are you goin' to 'ave it?" asked the tramp. "One shilling!"

"I—I— Dear me!" ejaculated Alonzo.

He turned abruptly, and rushed up the lane towards Greyfriars. And as he did so a low chuckle sounded from the woods.

Alonzo ran on. He knew that the watch belonged to Temple, as he had seen it several times before. It was not an ordinary watch, which could be mistaken for another.

"Dear me! I am all in a fluster!" muttered Alonzo, as he panted along. "My Uncle Benjamin always told me that it is unwise to get into a fluster. But if I hurry and tell Temple what I know, the tramp may be captured!"

He hurried on to Little Side without pausing once. Temple, Dabney & Co. were playing a practice match, and just at that moment there was an exciting scrimmage in mid-field.

Alonzo rushed across the touch-line, right on to the field. As it happened, Temple had at that moment captured the ball, and he was just preparing to shoot for goal.

And Alonzo was dodging in the way.

"Look out, you ass!" roared Temple.

"Clear off!"

"Get off the field!"

"You young idiot—"

Alonzo stopped, and gaped round him.

"Really, I—"

The backs were almost upon Temple, and he didn't waste any more time. He kicked the ball hard for goal. But his aim wasn't quite true, and the goal, on this occasion, happened to be Alonzo's chest.

The ball struck him with terrific force.

"Ow!" he howled. "Ow! Yaroo!"

Alonzo was practically lifted off his feet, and he sprawled on to the grass. Temple, Dabney & Co. rushed up with wrathful faces.

"You young lunatic!" roared Temple. "That would have been a goal if your silly carcass hadn't been in the way!"

"Rats!" said Fry, who was on the other side. "It was nowhere near goal. Still, Todd oughtn't to have been on the field."

"Sling him off!"

"Chuck him clear of the field!"

Alonzo sat up.

"Ow!" he groaned. "My Uncle—ow!—Benjamin says that—ow!—football is a most—ow!—dangerous—"

"It will be dangerous—for you!" growled Temple. "Buzz off, Alonzo, before we slaughter you! What on earth was the reason for this idiotic rush on to the field? Didn't you know we were playing?"

"No," said Alonzo mildly.

"Didn't know!" shouted Dabney.

"I have something of great importance to tell you—"

"That can wait—get off the field!"

"But, my dear Temple—"

"Get off!" roared the Upper Fourth skipper.

"Every minute is of value," said Alonzo quickly. "I was so excited that I rushed on to the field without noticing what was going on."

Temple grunted.

"Well, you can expend your excitement somewhere else," he growled. "We're playing a match."

"Your property—your bat, your watch—"

"Well, what about 'em?" demanded Temple.

"I know where they are," said Alonzo quickly.

The Fourth-Formers stared.

"Rats!" said Dabney. "Look here, Todd, we don't want any cheek from an ass like you! If you think you can fool

"But I'm not trying to fool you!" protested Alonzo. "I do not agree with all this April Fool business. My Uncle Benjamin always led me to believe that—"

"Oh, blow your fatheaded uncle!" shouted Temple. "What's that you were saying about my watch and my bat?"

"I think I know where they are."

"You do—really?"

Alonzo nodded.

"I was going down to the village just now," he said, "when a tramp sprang out of the hedge on to me. He offered me a watch for a shilling. It was yours, Temple, a silver one."

Temple's face fell. He knew that the Duffer of Greyfriars had not been given his nickname for nothing. Of course, this tramp had offered him a watch, and he immediately had taken it for Temple's.

"It's no good, Alonzo, it wasn't my watch," said Temple.

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

"But it was!" persisted Alonzo. "A silver one, with an ornamental face, and it goes for eight days without winding."

"How long does it go if you wind it up?" asked Fry facetiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's my watch!" declared Temple. "Shut up, you chaps! Where did you see this chap, Alonzo?"

"In the lane."

"And he offered you my watch for a bob?"

"Yes."

"And dear at the price!" murmured Fry.

"Dear!" roared Temple. "Why, you fatted head, that watch cost five guineas. And it was offered to Alonzo for a bob—a bob! Look here, we shall have to chuck this game, and search the woods."

"That's it!"

"Good wheeze!"

"We'll collar the bounder!"

"We'll do more than that," said Fry. "We'll collar our property!"

And the Upper Fourth, completely forgetting their match, rushed off the field, and pelted across the close in a body. They disappeared out of the gates in a little cloud of dust.

And from the window of No. 7 Study Peter Todd stood looking. His face was one huge grin, and as Temple, Dabney & Co. disappeared he burst into a roar of laughter.

"They've taken the bait!" he chuckled. "I thought old Lonzo would do the trick. Well, we've hooked the giddy fish, and it's up to Harry Wharton and the others to do the landing bizney!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

April Fools!

TEMPLE, Dabney & Co. rushed down Friardale Lane. Some of them had been rather dubious, but Temple's excitement was catching, and in a very few minutes all the Fourth Formers had caught the fever.

"Where's Alonzo?" panted Dabney.

"Oh, he hasn't come," said Temple. "He'd have been no good if he had come. This tramp stopped him just at the darkest part of the road a little lower down. If we enter the wood at that spot we stand a jolly good chance of catching sight of him."

"Yes, it's only ten minutes since Alonzo was here, so the tramp couldn't have got far away," said Fry. "Perhaps we'd better spread out, and search the wood in little parties."

But the Fourth Formers stuck together for the time being. They entered the wood at the spot where Alonzo had been accosted. And, almost immediately, Temple gave a shout.

"There he goes!"

"My hat!"

"Where?"

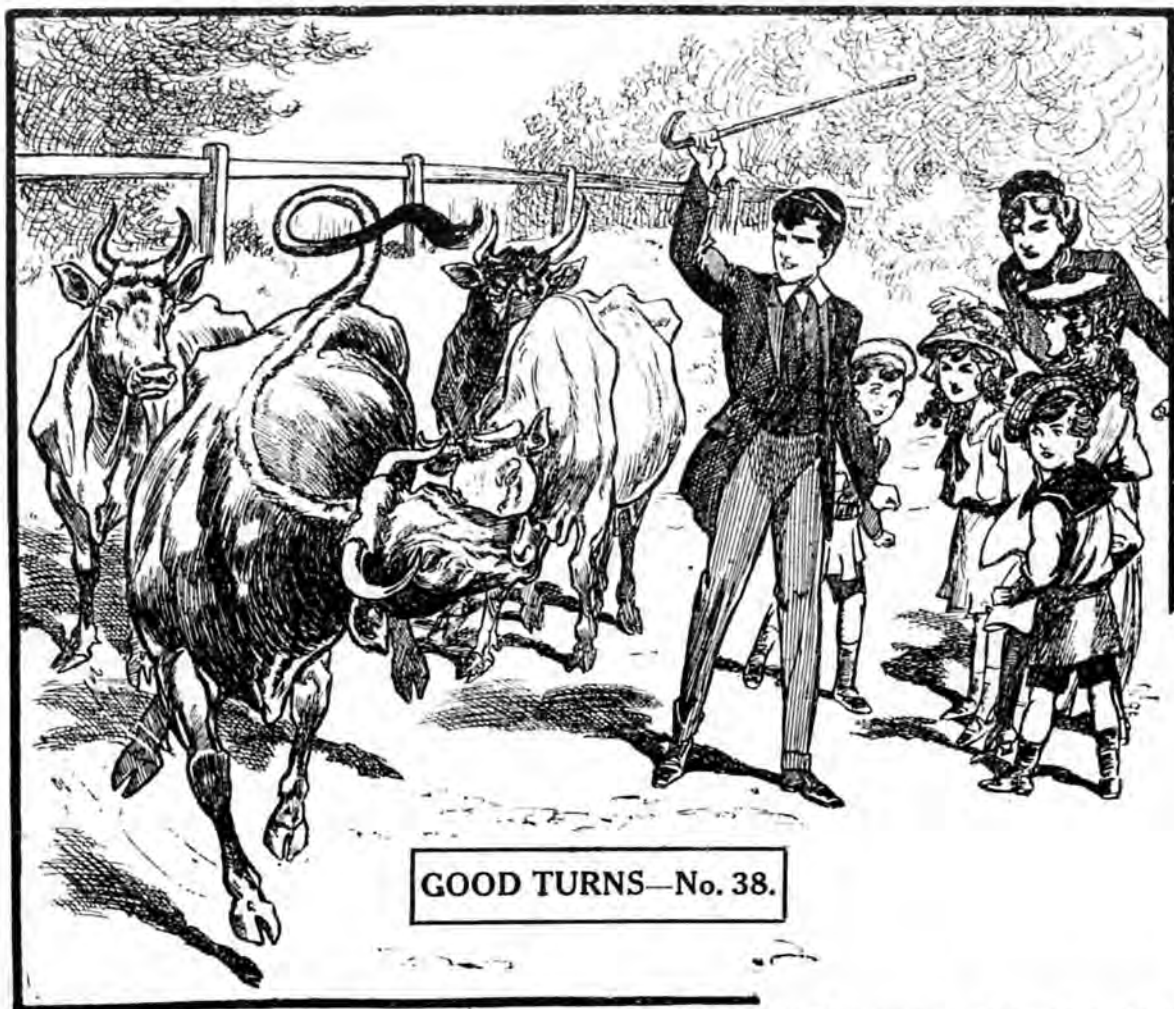
"I'm blessed if I can see him!"

Temple pointed excitedly.

"Through those trees!" he shouted. "The chap just dodged behind some bushes. An awful-looking bounder with fearful whiskers. He didn't seem to be very big, though, so we ought to be able to capture him."

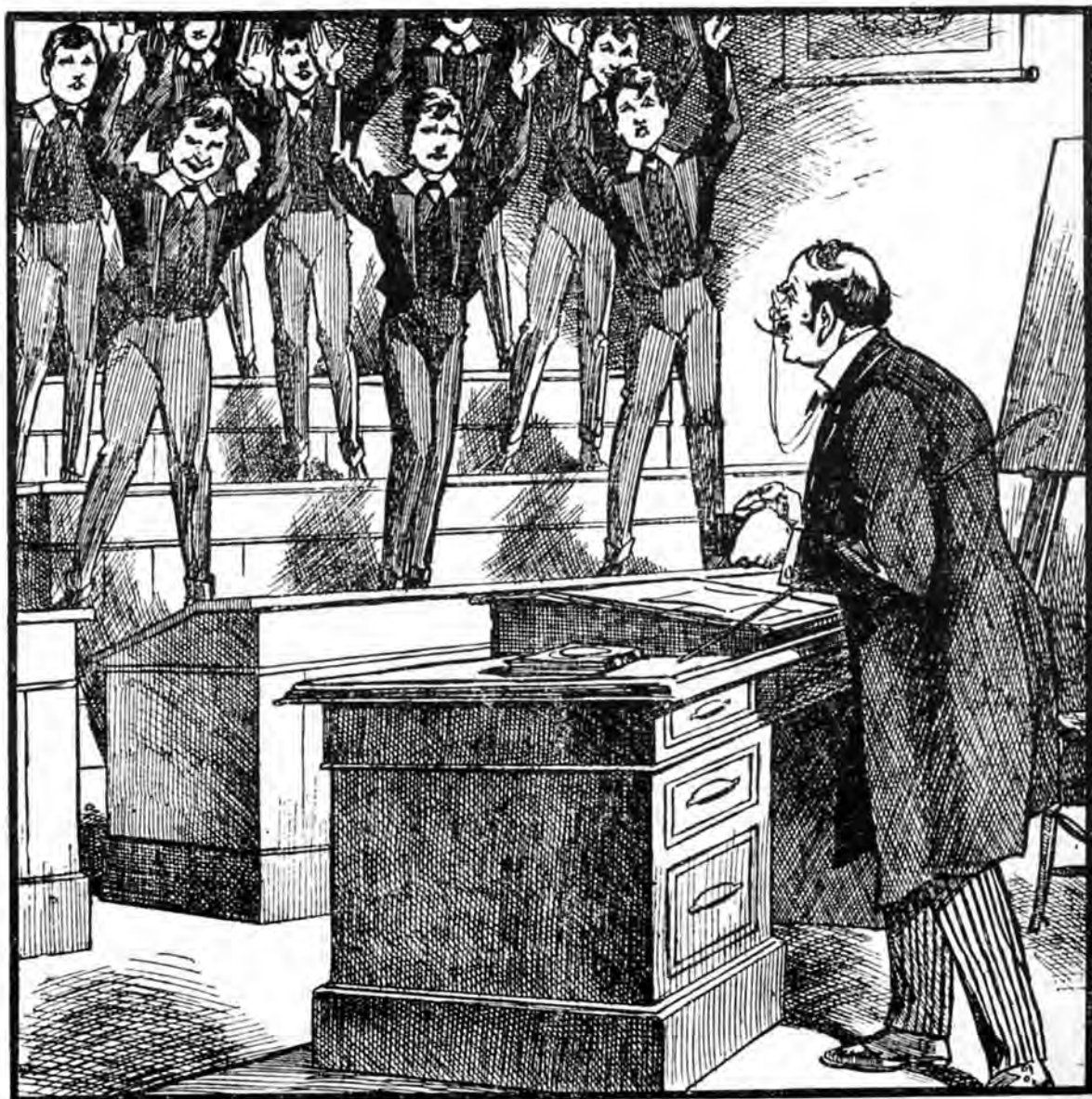
Temple led the way.

And this time many of the other juniors also saw the figure ahead. It was the person who had accosted Alonzo, and, to



GOOD TURNS—No. 38.

A kindly Magnetite comes to the rescue of a nervous nursemaid and her charges, whose progress along a field-path is barred by a herd of cows. A vigorously-flourished stick soon disperses the fierce-looking but harmless beasts, and the little party is able to proceed without further anxiety, thanks to our Magnetite's timely "good turn."



"We will now have the endurance test," said the new master. "It's an invention of my own. Every boy will stand upon his desk and hold his hands above his head. The first one who lowers them will receive five hundred lines." As the dismayed Removites obeyed, Coker chuckled and pulled out his camera. (See Chapter 12.)

make matters absolutely conclusive, he carried, under his arm, Temple's new cricket bat.

"It's the thief right enough!" panted Temple wrathfully. "I expect he's sold my giddy watch to somebody going down the lane, and was going to try the same dodge with my bat. Oh, the awful scoundrel!"

"Well, it's not so bad as it might have been, thank goodness!" panted Fry.

"Isn't it!" grunted Temple. "What do you mean?"

"Well, the rotter might have sold my gold pencil case!"

"You ass!"

"Well, it's more valuable than your fatheaded cricket-bat, any day!" said Fry. "It would have been a nice thing if my pencil-case was sold to some village fathead for a penny!"

Temple declined to continue the argument. The chase was getting too exciting, and talking was difficult at the pace they were running. Presently the fugitive broke clear of the woods, and ran at full tilt across a grassy meadow.

"After him!"

"On the ball!"

But fast as the Fourth Formers ran the fugitive seemed to THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

keep ahead with perfect ease. Yet he did not make any attempt to run for all he was worth, and get clear away.

"My hat, he's got some legs on him!" panted Dabney. "You wouldn't think a chap like that would be able to run so fast!"

"Well, he can run, and it's no good kidding ourselves," said Temple. "If we want to cop him we shall have to do better than we are doing!"

"I'm nearly dead now," groaned Fry.

All the juniors were perspiring freely. The afternoon was warm, and although the chase was exciting, it was strenuous work.

A party of Removites, who were strolling through one of the meadows, noticed the chase, and came rushing up. It did not strike Temple, Dabney & Co. that it was rather an unusual place for Removites to stroll.

"Hallo! What's the row?" asked Bulstrode, falling into line beside Temple. "Who's that chap in front, with the rag-time coat?"

"Tramp!" puffed Temple shortly. "Chap who pinched our things. Got to catch him."

"Oh, good!" said Mark Linley. "We'll help!"

Tom Brown, Trevor, Morgan, and many other Removites fell in with the Fourth-Formers, and things looked a bit doubtful for the fugitive. But he kept up the speed, and, try as they would, they could not reduce the space which separated them from their quarry.

Presently the tramp left the meadows, and emerged into a little by-road. Up this he ran, and suddenly a trio of Removites appeared ahead. They were Fisher T. Fish, Penfold, and Johnny Bull.

"Hi!" yelled Temple frantically. "Stop that chap!"

"Collar him!"

"Don't let him pass you!"

The three Removites stopped.

"What's that?" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Stop that chap—he's a thief!"

"None of your April fool dodges!" shouted Penfold. "We're not going to stop the chap!"

"I guess not!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "We're wide—some!"

And they allowed the tramp to rush past them unmolested. Temple, Dabney & Co. came up panting and furious.

"You blithering idiots!" roared Temple hoarsely. "Didn't you see that chap had my bat under his arm?"

"Your bat?" repeated Johnny Bull.

"My hat, yes!" exclaimed Penfold. "So it was!"

"Guess we'll chase him," said Fish.

And the trio joined in.

Their meeting with the Fourth-Formers had caused a little delay, and the fugitive had slackened down to a walk, in order to regain his breath. Now and again he glanced behind.

"Buck up!" panted Temple. "The chap's nearly done!"

And they bucked up. But the stranger immediately started running again, and made straight for an old barn which was adjoining the roadway.

"My hat, we'll run him to earth there!" said Dabney excitedly.

"We're gaining—we're gaining!" exclaimed Temple.

And there was no doubt about the matter. The fugitive seemed to have lost his strength, and he ran erratically. Staggering he ran into the barn, passing through the huge doorway. The Fourth-Formers were not twenty yards behind.

"Come on!" roared Temple.

He dashed into the barn.

A glance round showed him that the building was empty. Then he noticed a small door at the far end. Not one of the juniors had time to glance up at the walls as they rushed pell-mell into the barn.

"He's gone through here!" ejaculated Temple.

He attempted to open the little door, but it was locked fast, and he saw at once that there was no way of breaking it down.

"We shall have to go out again!" he exclaimed quickly. "Clear the way, you fellows. The rotter's stolen a march on us!"

As the Fourth-Formers attempted to leave the barn, the big door swung to with a crash. For a moment they caught a glimpse of Johnny Bull's grinning face, and then the bolt was shot.

"What the——"

"How the——"

"Open this door, Bull!" roared Temple. "What's the giddy idea?"

Then he noticed with a start that there was not a single Removite in the barn. And from outside came a loud, continuous roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Spoofed!"

"Diddled!"

"Dished!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. gazed at one another with sickly expressions.

"Dished, diddled!" murmured Temple faintly. "What does it mean?"

Then, before anybody could answer, another Fourth-Former pointed up to the walls.

"Look!" he gasped. "Look at that!"

The Fourth-Formers looked, and gasped also.

There was a huge placard upon the wall, and upon it, in Harry Wharton's handwriting, were the following words:

"April fools! The Upper Fourth-Form is absolutely spoofed up to its neck! The Remove will now proceed to put the finishing touches."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

And on a little shelf under the notice were every one of the articles that had been annexed from the studies.

Temple, Dabney & Co. gazed at one another with feelings that were too deep for words. They had been fooled! The whole thing had been a terrific jape! And they had never suspected! They had mucked up a football-match, had run themselves almost to exhaustion, only to find that they were trapped, and in the hands of the Remove.

Temple guessed what the result would be, and he almost turned pale. When the truth got about the school, the Upper Fourth would be the laughing-stock of Greyfriars.

"Oh, what an ass you are!" exclaimed Fry tearfully.

"Me!" shouted Temple.

"Yes, you!" ejaculated Dabney. "You're the giddy leader, and you ought to have seen through the jape!"

"Of course!" chorused the others.

"Well, of all the rotters!" exclaimed Temple.

"You're leader," repeated Dabney, "and it's you who have led us into this hole. I suggest we bump you until you're sore!"

"Hear, hear!"

Things were beginning to look rather alarming for Temple, but an interruption occurred in time to save him.

Harry Wharton & Co. were outside in force. In fact, two thirds of the Remove were present, and they would be quite capable of dealing with the Fourth-Formers, who numbered less than half.

Harry Wharton was looking a curious sight. He had just pulled some clothes off, which he had worn over his ordinary suit. And from his chin he stripped a false beard.

"My hat, that's better!" he panted. "I'm blazing hot from that run. But we've got the bounders, and that's the main thing. Everything went off splendidly."

"Rather!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "They never even suspected. It was absolutely funny to see them rush pell-mell into the barn!"

And the Removites chuckled.

"Come on!" said Harry, wiping his face.

And the crowd of juniors collected round the barn door and waited for Harry Wharton to open it. He did so suddenly, and they all rushed in before Temple, Dabney & Co. realised it. The door was slammed to and fastened.

"Now for the giddy inquisition!" grinned Bob Cherry. "This is where the prisoners get put to the torture! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's that bashing me on the napper?"

Bob Cherry turned, and in a moment was in the midst of an uproarious struggle. The Fourth-Formers did not intend to give in without making a fight for it. But most of the Removites were fresh, while they were spent and hot. So the struggle did not last for long.

In a few moments Temple, Dabney & Co. were flat on the floor, with two Removites upon each of them.

"Vanquished!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Who's the cock-Form at Greyfriars?"

"Remove!" roared every Removite present.

"Rats!" gasped Temple. "We're not beaten yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, no!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It's only a rumour!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're landed, Temple, and you jolly well know it!" said Harry Wharton. "The whole thing has been a spoof from start to finish. There wasn't any burglar at all—we got up early this morning and took the things from your studies. And we faked that window, too! We knew that old Alonzo wouldn't see through my disguise, so Peter Todd sent him down to the village especially for me to accost. He recognised your ticker at once!"

"Yes, the young ass!" growled Temple. "It was his fault. He ought to have seen through your fatheaded disguise. Instead of that he rushed on to the footer-field and told us that he'd discovered the thief!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now," said Harry Wharton calmly, "we're going to——"

"Start right in!" put in Fisher T. Fish. "We're going to show you slab-sided hoboes who's who at Greyfriars. I guess you'll be sorry for yourselves before we've finished!"

"What are you going to do?" demanded Temple.

"Well, to start with, we shall bind you all together in a long line," said Wharton grinning. "Then, when you're all roped together, we shall fasten complimentary placards to your chests and march you all back to Greyfriars!"

"My hat, it'll cause a sensation!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"The sensationfulness will be terrific!"

"And old Quelch is gone by this time!" said Johnny Bull. "We don't know when the new chap's going to arrive, but I shouldn't think he'll come till after tea."

"Oh, blow the new master!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's get on with the bizney!"

"You rotters!" gasped Temple. "You don't mean it!"

"Don't we!" grinned Wharton. "We'll start with you, Temple, just to convince you."

"If you touch me—"

Bang!

Several juniors turned their heads.

Bang! Bang!

"Who the dickens is that?" muttered Harry Wharton, looking round at his chums. But they shook their heads.

"Blessed if I know!" said Bob Cherry practically. "Bawl out and ask!"

Bang!

Harry Wharton got up and crossed to the door.

"Who's that?" he shouted.

"Boy," exclaimed a harsh voice, "how dare you ask who I am! Open the door at once!"

"Rats!" said Harry Wharton calmly.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated the unseen one. "Did you address yourself to me, wretched boy?"

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Harry. "What freak is this?"

Then he said in a loud voice: "I don't know who you are, but I'll say 'rats' to you as many times as I like! If you'd asked to come in in a proper manner, I should have opened the door; but as it is, you can go and eat coke!"

There was a gasp.

"Astounding impudence!" declared the strange voice.

"You will take a hundred lines if you are a Remove boy!"

"A hundred lines?" gasped Harry blankly.

"That is what I said," proceeded the voice. "If this door is not opened within a minute, the imposition will be altered to a thousand lines! I am Mr. Carr, temporary master of the Greyfriars Remove."

And if a bomb-shell had exploded outside the barn, it could not have caused more consternation than this startling disclosure.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Coker Makes Things Hum!

HARRY WHARTON caught his breath in sharply.

"The New Remove-master. Oh, my only Sunday topper, this has done it!"

"Better let him in," muttered Bob Cherry. "I say, he seems to be an awful bounder by the sound of his voice."

Temple chuckled.

"Good egg!" he murmured. "This is where you Remove bounders get it where the chicken got the axe—in the neck!"

"Shut up!" hissed Bob Cherry. "Better open the door, Harry, old man."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton, and he opened it.

A curious figure walked sharply into the barn. Mr. Carr was fairly tall, and wore a thick, fierce-looking moustache, the ends of which were waxed and pointed. Upon his nose were a pair of large spectacles, and his hair was iron-grey—what little there was seen of it, for his wide-brimmed hat shadowed his face.

He looked round the barn with an intense stare, and then waved his stick round, incidentally giving Bulstrode a sharp crack on the head.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded sternly.

"Why are you boys so disgracefully using these weaker ones?"

"Weaker!" roared Temple.

"Silence, boy!" thundered Mr. Carr. "If you were not weaker you would not be in your present positions. It is quite obvious to me that you have been diddled—ahem!—made the victims of a cruel joke."

"Oh, rot, sir!" exclaimed Fry. "There's nothing cruel in it. It's the first of April, you see, sir, and we've been caught napping!"

Mr. Carr frowned.

"I have no sympathy whatever with this nonsense!" he snapped. "Every boy will rise to his feet at once. I think the whole affair is disgraceful. It is unworthy of the fair name of Greyfriars!"

"Oh, draw it mild, sir!"

"How dare you use that vulgar expression?" said Mr. Carr, glaring at Johnny Bull. "You will take fifty lines!"

"Oh, I say, sir—"

"One hundred lines!"

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Bull blankly.

"Two hundred lines!" thundered Mr. Carr.

The juniors stood silent, awed. The new master was evidently something of a freak. To begin with, it was a half-holiday, and it was really outrageous of him to interfere with them at all. But it would have been disastrous to question his actions.

"As I have said, I do not believe in these absurd tricks," proceeded Mr. Carr. "While I am at Greyfriars I mean to show the Remove exactly how I think it ought to be governed. It is the iron hand that is wanted, and it is the iron hand that I shall administer!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

The juniors stared. They really couldn't help themselves.

"My hat, you're in for it properly!" murmured Temple.

"I'm jolly glad I'm not in the Remove. Before this chap's done with you you'll be skeletons—worn to skin and bone!"

"Who was that speaking?" demanded Mr. Carr.

"Me, sir," said Temple ungrammatically. "I'm in the Upper Fourth, you know. You can't give me lines!"

"Indeed!"

"It's not the thing at Greyfriars, sir," said Temple.

"Then I shall make it the thing at once!" said Mr. Carr.

"You will take five hundred lines for insolence!"

Temple staggered. But he didn't answer; he mentally resolved that nothing on earth should make him write the lines.

"Every Remove boy present will please understand that the rest of the afternoon is forfeited!" exclaimed Mr. Carr sharply. "I intend to take you in hand myself. The Fourth Form boys may leave at once!"

"Oh, good!" muttered Dabney.

And the Upper Fourth made themselves scarce. They had been fooled; but the Removeites' jape had had an unexpected conclusion, which was fortunate for Temple, Dabney, & Co.

In the barn, Mr. Carr walked up and down and formed the Removeites into pairs. They were all inwardly furious, and breathing hard; but the new master seemed to be a terror, and it would have been futile to remonstrate.

But Harry Wharton could not contain himself. He felt that, as captain of the Remove, it was up to him to ask what the new master was about to do.

"I—I—"

"Well, boy, what do you want?"

"I thought I'd better just mention, sir, that to-day's a half-holiday, and that we're always allowed a pretty free band on half-holidays. We are not out of bounds, and were only having a harmless joke with the Upper Fourth."

"Well?" exclaimed Mr. Carr ominously.

"Well, sir, it's not fair to treat us—"

"Not fair!" roared the new master. "You dare to stand there and criticise my actions! I can see that you have been treated altogether too leniently. It would be a good thing if Mr. Quelch were going away for all time. I would soon make a difference in the Remove then!"

"That's a giddy fact!" murmured Bob Cherry, under his breath. "In a month there wouldn't be any Remove left at Greyfriars. Thank goodness, we've only got to stand this blighter for three days! Even that will be rotten enough!"

"Do not dare to question my movements again!" said Mr. Carr sternly. "You will all march to Greyfriars at once. I intend to keep you in the Form-room for the rest of the afternoon."

Several mouths were opened to emit exclamations, but no sounds came forth. The juniors eyed Mr. Carr askance, and decided that he was a man to be treated with discretion. His appearance was remarkable, for he did not look a bit like a schoolmaster.

Boiling over with indignation, the juniors filed out of the barn, and marched down the road in a long double line towards Greyfriars. Nugent was beside Harry Wharton, and the latter turned his head.

"I say, this is too thick!" he muttered. "We shall have grey hairs showing to-night. And those Fourth Form bounders will have told everybody at Greyfriars, and we shall have to march in through a regular crowd."

"Horrible!" said Nugent miserably. "Can't we do something? Suppose you give the word to break away? Before the rotter could do anything we should be scattered all over the place."

"Too risky," muttered Wharton. "He'd only make us pay for it to-night, too. So it makes no difference. I say, what an awful bounder he seems to be!"

"Oh, he's a regular outsider! I think—"

Mr. Carr strode forward.

"You were talking!" he said severely.

"Oh, really, sir, can't we talk while we're walking?" asked Nugent. "Surely there's no harm—Ow!"

Mr. Carr's cane had descended rather sharply upon Nugent's shoulder, and it stung. Nugent glared round ferociously, but Wharton had gripped his arm. So the incident finished, and Mr. Carr moved forward up the line to keep order ahead.

"The rotter!" gasped Nugent. "The fearful bounder!"

"Better be careful," muttered Wharton.

And Nugent subsided. The other juniors were already feeling fit for rebellion. Such a proceeding as this by a new master, and actually before he had been to the school, was unprecedented in the history of Greyfriars.

They marched on, and as they approached the school they gave one another expressive looks. Mr. Carr marched behind, at the rear of them all, keeping his eye upon them.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry. "There's Potter

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

and Greene in front, and they're grinning like Cheshire cats! Can't see Coker, though."

"He's somewhere about, I expect!" growled Johnny Bull. Potter and Greene roared as the Removites passed them, although there was nothing particularly funny in the procession. It almost seemed as though they could see something of which the juniors were unaware.

Mr. Carr came opposite the two Fifth-Formers as he passed at the end of the double line. And as he strode by, his left eye closed down suddenly in a prodigious wink.

Potter and Greene went off into a hysterical shriek.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. Ructions in the Form-room!

POTTER wiped his eyes and gasped.

"My only Aunt Mary Jane!" he gurgled. "It's too rich! Look at 'em! All those Remove kids walking in front of him like giddy sheep!"

Greene nearly exploded.

"Old Coker may be a bit of an ass," he said, "but he can work a jape like this, and no mistake! Why, with that moustache and wig on, I'm blessed if I should have known him myself!"

"It's ripping!" said Potter. "The only thing is, that the Head, or old Prout, might spot him, and then, of course, the game would be up. The longer he can keep the jape up the better."

"Even if Coker was spotted now it wouldn't make any difference; the Remove have been fooled beautifully. My hat, I should like to be in the Form-room this afternoon!"

And Potter and Greene followed the disguised Coker and the Remove to Greyfriars.

Coker's disguise was certainly a remarkable one. He had spent an hour in making himself up, and the result was very satisfactory, for not a single Removeite had associated "Mr. Carr" with Horace Coker of the Fifth.

Coker had seen the chase to the old barn, and had expected a jape, so had followed. A glance into the building through a little slit had shown him the lie of the land, and he was extremely gratified at being provided with an opening for his own wheeze.

He kept a straight face as he walked along.

"The young buggars don't suspect anything," he murmured to himself. "By George, I'm going to make it hot for them before I'm done! It's not often I get a chance like this, and now I have one I am going to let them see that I'm not such an ass as I look!"

Coker reflected that the last sentence was not exactly complimentary to himself, for, as a matter of fact, Coker considered himself an exceedingly intelligent person, and quite a power at Greyfriars.

There was one fellow in the school who had the very highest opinion of Coker of the Fifth, and that fellow, needless to say, was Horace Coker.

Temple, Dabney, & Co. had arrived home before the Removites, and, as Harry Wharton had suspected, they had informed nearly everybody of "Mr. Carr's" dramatic appearance. Consequently, the entrance gates and Close were well filled with curious fellows.

Coker had only taken Potter and Greene into his confidence, so nobody else in Greyfriars knew of the jape.

Harry Wharton & Co. marched up to the entrance gates with furious but impotent looks. Their position was galling, but they could do nothing. After all, Mr. Carr was their Form-master, and it would have been sheer mutiny to openly defy him. If they had only known that Mr. Carr was Coker of the Fifth—

With burning faces the Removites trooped in at the gates. Coker, behind them, looked rather anxiously into the Close, in case there were any masters knocking about.

But the coast was clear. It was still early in the afternoon, and all the masters were in the house. Mr. Quelch had gone, there was no danger from his quarter.

"Straight into the Form-room!" said Coker, in his assumed, harsh voice. "Any boy who lags will receive fifty lines!"

Temple, Dabney, & Co. looked on, grinning. And there were other fellows, too. Vernon-Smith & Co. watched their Form-mates go past, and they chuckled unsympathetically. Coker thought of making them accompany him, too, but decided that he would have quite enough to deal with without further additions.

Billy Bunter chuckled hugely.

But he took care to stand a good distance away. He was a Removeite, and he had no wish to stay in all the rest of the afternoon.

"This is what comes of playing the giddy ox!" he said to THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

Snoop. "Those asses have let themselves in for a nice time! Well, I don't pity 'em."

"Neither do I," said Snoop. "It's about time they were put in their places."

"If they worked off their japes properly, like I do—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Well, I diddled Hobson and Hoskins!" boasted Bunter. "And I've still got a lot of grub left!"

"Yes; I was going to suggest a little feed together, Bunter, old man," said Snoop. "I think—Hi, Bunter!"

But Billy Bunter had rolled off hurriedly. He had no wish to share the remainder of Hoskins's hamper with Sidney James Snoop.

He watched the double line of Removites file into the School House, and then went away, grinning. Harry Wharton & Co. were not likely to get any sympathy from Billy Bunter.

And they were not feeling exactly happy. They went to their places in the Form-room with grudging, unwilling footsteps. It was a glorious afternoon, and they had to be stuck indoors. And their jape against the Upper Fourth had fizzled out miserably.

Coker breathed a sigh of relief as he closed the door. With Mr. Quelch away, there was not much likelihood of any other master visiting the Form-room.

"Now, boys, to your places!" he said sharply.

"Are you going to keep us here until tea-time, sir?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I am. And if you do not behave, I shall not allow you to have any tea," said "Mr. Carr" severely. "I intend to punish you heavily for your ruffianism of this afternoon."

"Ruffianism, sir?" protested Harry Wharton.

"Silence, brat!" shouted Coker.

Harry Wharton turned red.

"Mr. Quelch or any other master never calls us brats, sir," he said warmly. "I think—"

"Never mind what you think!" exclaimed Coker. "I shall call you just what I choose. Be quiet, sir!"

"But—"

"Hold your tongue!"

Harry Wharton subsided. What was the use of talking? The new master seemed to be a perfect tartar.

Coker rapped the desk. He did not intend to do any lessons—that would have been too much like work—but he meant to give Harry Wharton & Co. an exceedingly hot time. Then, when they learned the truth, they would be absolutely humiliated by their defeat, and by the knowledge that they had been obeying every command of a Fifth-Former.

Coker enjoyed seeing the juniors doing everything he told them, and he decided to start operations at once—in a manner that would make the Removites stare.

"I am keeping you here as a punishment," he said severely; "but I do not intend to make you do any heavy lessons. Instead, I shall inflict what I call the endurance test."

"We're having that already!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The question is, how much longer can we endure you?"

Coker glared round.

"Who spoke?" he demanded.

Not a sound.

"Who spoke, I say?" roared the new master.

Silence.

"Very well, I shall cane the whole class!" said Coker, picking up Mr. Quelch's cane. "Every boy will come to the desk, one by one, and receive a cut!"

Bob Cherry made a grimace.

"It was I who spoke, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, indeed!" said Coker. "Well, it makes no difference. I shall cane the whole class just the same!"

"What, sir?"

"Cane all of us?" gasped Nugent. "What for?"

"I am not in the habit of explaining my reasons to children!" said Coker magniloquently, at which the Remove boiled with suppressed fury. "But I will tell you this once, so that it will suffice for future occasions. I am caning you all because you kept silent about that wicked boy. You all knew that he had spoken, yet you said nothing. Therefore, I am going to cane you all!"

Coker wanted to use the cane, and he was not particular about his excuse. It would be something to boast about to say that he had caned three-parts of the Remove.

"But that would have been sneaking, sir!" protested Nugent.

"Silence!" thundered Coker. "The matter is ended, except for the caning bizney ahem! I should say, the punishment. Step out here, one by one. You first," he added, pointing to Bulstrode who sat at the end desk.

BULSTRODE hesitated.
"Move yourself, idiot!" snapped Coker.
Then he came forward and held out his hand. Coker brought the cane down fairly hard, but not violently. There was just enough bite in it to sting.

And every member of the Remove present was forced to step down and take his gruel. Almost the last boy was Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. He had not heard much, and was rather curious to know why everybody was being swiped.

Coker knew that Dutton was deaf, but he had not had much experience of conversing with him. He looked up as Dutton remained in his seat.

"You next!" he said harshly.

Dutton took no notice.

"What is the name of that boy?" demanded "Mr Carr."

"Dutton, sir," said Mark Linley. "He's deaf."

"Oh, indeed?" Coker raised his voice. "Button!"

Dutton looked up.

"Speak to me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, I did speak to you, Button!" shouted Coker.

"Come here and be caned!"

"No, sir; I don't think it has," said Dutton.

Coker glared.

"Don't think it has what?" he demanded angrily. "Don't you dare to make fun of me, boy!"

Dutton looked surprised.

"You can see for yourself, sir," he said. "The sun's shining quite brightly. How can it have rained?"

"Rained?" roared Coker. "I said 'Come here and be caned!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, you young puppies!" bellowed Coker.

He rapped the desk in a pretence of fury, but, by some mischance, missed it, and the cane descended with a fearful thwack upon Coker's own leg. He dropped the cane as though it were a red-hot poker, and hopped up and down on one leg.

"Ow!" he howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove roared. It was keen enjoyment for them to see this new freak of a master in pain. Coker was really hurt, but he did not lose his temper. He kept it under control, or the game would have been up. But he pretended to be furious, all the same.

"How dare you laugh at me!" he thundered. "Every boy in this room will take five hundred lines!"

The Remove subsided. At this rate they would not have a spare minute to themselves.

Coker glared round him, and then fixed his eyes upon Dutton again.

"Now, Button," he said fiercely, "you will step to my desk at once! It is you who have caused this commotion, and I shall punish you accordingly. Come to my side!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Dutton, who had only caught the last word.

He rose to his feet, and walked to the front. Coker thought it rather peculiar that Dutton should thank him. The deaf junior walked right past the master's desk, and made for the door, the other Removes looking at him in surprise.

"Boy!" bellowed Coker.

Dutton turned.

"Where are you going to, Hutton?"

"Out, sir," said Dutton, in surprise.

"Out!" roared Coker. "How dare you be so insolent!"

"Insolent?" repeated Dutton. "You told me I could go out, sir!"

"I told you?" gasped Coker faintly.

"Yes, sir; you told me I could go for a ride."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, nearly exploding.

Coker glared at Dutton, and for a moment suspected that the deaf Remove was doing it on purpose. Then he saw that Dutton was innocent of such intention. Coker decided to let Tom Dutton severely alone.

"Go to your place!" he shouted.

Dutton's face fell, and he went back to his place. Coker decided to drop the caning part of the programme. He adjusted his spectacles, rested his hands upon the desk, and surveyed the class.

"We will now have the endurance test," he said pleasantly. "It is an invention of my own. Every boy will stand upon his desk and hold his hands above his head. The first one who lowers them will receive five hundred lines."

"Oh, I say!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"This is a bit too thick!" murmured Nugent.

"Disgraceful!"

"Rotten!"

"We won't do it!"

"No fear!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT MONDAY—
"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

Coker realised that it would be a bit of a job to get the juniors to perform such an outrageous act. But, as a matter of fact, Coker had a pocket camera, and he wished to take a snap-shot of the Remove to keep as a memento. It would certainly be a remarkable photograph.

He glared round angrily.

"Stop that noise at once!" he shouted. "Do as I tell you!"

"But, I say, sir, it's too thick altogether!" said Harry Wharton. "Such a thing is absolutely unheard of!"

Coker meant to take that photograph.

"The boy who is not upon his desk in one minute's time will receive a terrific lamming—I should say, six cuts of the cane!" he declared sternly. "You have got one minute!"

He picked up the cane and swished it up and down furiously. The juniors looked at one another, and some of the less hardy spirits climbed on to their desks. At last only the Famous Five remained sitting, and they were eyeing the cane rather dubiously.

"Might as well get up," muttered Harry Wharton. "There's no sense in asking for trouble! But, my hat, once we get out of the Form-room I'll go and see the Head."

I'm not a chap to sneak, but this is too thick for words!"

So, to avoid being caned, the Famous Five followed the example of the rest of the juniors. As Harry Wharton had said, there was no sense in looking for trouble.

They presented a most remarkable spectacle, and certainly such a scene was unprecedented in the history of Greyfriars. Coker chuckled inwardly and pulled out his camera. He fumbled with it against the desk; then, very quickly, he took a snap-shot of the juniors, talking at the same time to drown the click of the shutter. And not a single junior knew that a photo had been taken.

Coker was feeling extremely satisfied with himself. He had now a lasting proof to show how he had fooled the Remove, and he decided to let the juniors resume their seats.

"You may sit down, boys," he said suddenly.

The Removes were surprised, and got down again to their normal positions.

Coker glanced at his watch. It was just upon teatime.

"I think in a few minutes' time I shall allow you to leave," he said, in a tone of genial generosity. "But I wish to ask you a few questions concerning preparation."

"We do prep in our own studies!" growled Johnny Bull bluntly.

"Oh, indeed?" exclaimed Coker. "Then I'm afraid that the arrangement will not suit me. Preparation in your own studies is an exceedingly unsatisfactory arrangement. While I am at Greyfriars you will do it in the Form-room under my own supervision."

There was instantly a murmur of indignation.

"But, sir—" began Harry Wharton.

"I will not hear a word," roared Coker—"not a word! My system is that you do your preparation in the Form-room, and every boy must be here at six-thirty. Those who are not will receive a heavy imposition."

The juniors were looking angry and rebellious. They had stood the new master so far, but for him to send forth the decree that prep should be done in the Form-room, like the fags, was just a little beyond the limit.

"At half-past six," repeated Coker sternly. "I shall be here to receive you, and the boys who are late will be sorry for themselves. The Remove wants a hand of iron to rule it, and I shall do my utmost to provide that hand. Now go!"

And Coker sat down at his desk and pretended to write.

Harry Wharton & Co. streamed out of the Form-room, talking excitedly and indignantly. Their voices were high, and Coker allowed himself to chuckle loudly as the last junior left.

His jape had been a terrific success, and he had every reason to congratulate himself. The Remove had been fooled as they had never been fooled before.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Tells the Truth!

HORACE COKER remained in the Remove Form-room for some little time. He chuckled to himself continuously.

"My only topper!" he murmured. "When the truth comes out, I think all the fellows will have to admit that I take the cake! The chaps will roar when they see this photograph!"

Coker grinned as he remembered his last words. As a matter of fact, he did not expect for a moment that he would be able to take the Remove at prep. It would be extremely lucky if his little joke was still undiscovered at

six-thirty. Besides, Coker was very doubtful about Harry Wharton & Co. turning up. They had stood it in the afternoon, but it was very doubtful if they would stand it at night.

"Well, it doesn't matter if they don't turn up," he told himself. "I've had my jape, and they can't deny that they've been fooled! Of course, I may be bowled out at any minute, but until I am I'll keep up the role of 'Mr. Carr'!"

And Coker remained in the Form-room for another fifteen minutes. He did not wish to be seen too much, and it would be as well to let the juniors settle in their studies before he slipped along to his own.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were holding indignation meetings at almost every corner.

It was generally agreed that the new master was not to be stood. There was not a single dissenting voice. One and all were of the same opinion.

"He's just about the limit in masters," said Bob Cherry warmly. "I, for one, am not going to stand any more of his rotten tyranny! He's made me waste my half-holiday, but I'm blowed if I'm going to turn up in the Form-room at half-past six! I won't!"

"Nor I!"

"Nor I!"

"Not a giddy one of us!"

"That's generally agreed," went on Bob. "The rotter can't do what he likes at Greyfriars! It's a bit too thick when he wants to alter all the rules before he's been in the place an hour!"

The nett result of the indignation meetings was that not a single junior would attend prep in the Form-room. The news of "Mr. Carr's" treatment had got about, and the chaff of the other juniors caused Harry Wharton & Co. to be very firm.

No other subject was discussed in the various studies at tea-time.

Coker, when he thought that everything was quiet, emerged from the Form-room, and walked boldly along the passage; and, as luck would have it, not a soul was about. He succeeded in reaching the Fifth-Form corridor without being observed.

"Good!" muttered Coker.

He dodged into his own study, after seeing that he was alone in the passage. Then he shut the door quickly, and turned the key in the lock. Potter and Greene were in the study, and tea was ready.

Both Fifth-Formers were grinning broadly.

"Great Scott, you look ripping!" declared Greene.

"If I didn't know it was you," said Potter, "I should never recognise you. It's simply great, Coker, old man!"

Coker chuckled.

"Yes, it's not bad," he said modestly. "I don't think there's a chap in Greyfriars who could have done it better!"

"Of course not!" murmured his faithful chums.

Coker felt flattered.

"You wait until you've heard what I have to tell!" he grinned. "You'll burst your giddy sides! I've fooled the Remove right up to their necks! And they don't know now; they still think I'm the new master!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter and Greene.

"I've told 'em that they've got to turn up at half-past six for prep," went on Coker. "The Remove, mind you!"

"They won't come!" said Potter.

"No fear!" added Greene. "That's just a bit too much.

Besides, you'll be bowled out before half-past six!"

"Possibly," said Coker. "But I'm not going to let the truth out myself. I'll stick to it as long as they'll let me!"

"Good old Coker!"

"Let's have tea," said Greene.

And the Fifth-Form trio sat down to tea. Coker related his experiences of the afternoon, and kept his two chums in roars of laughter.

So hilarious were they, in fact, that they became a little thoughtless, and their laughter rang out loudly. It was plainly audible in the passage; and, by chance, Billy Bunter happened to pass. Bunter was always in places where he shouldn't be, and he generally managed to hear something that was not intended for his ears.

His curiosity was famous at Greyfriars—he was, in fact, the Paul Pry of the school. As he came opposite to Coker's study he paused, and turned his big spectacles towards the doorway.

His curiosity was aroused.

"Making a jolly lot of row in there!" he murmured, as Coker & Co. went off into a fresh roar. "I wonder what all the giddy fun's about? I expect they're discussing that new beast of a master!"

Bunter looked up and down the passage, but all was quiet.

The Magnet Library.—No. 321.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Wednesday. Every Friday. Every Saturday, 2

"No harm in listening for a minute," he told himself.

He knew that if he was caught, however, he would be severely bumped. But his curiosity even overcame his fears of such a happening. He bent down, and placed his ear to the keyhole.

"Oh, that's too good!" he heard Potter chuckle. "And do you mean to say you made 'em all stand on their forms, Coker?"

"Yes, every one of them," came Coker's voice. "And when they were up there, with their hands above their heads, I took a giddy snapshot!"

"Those kids'll be furious when they know," said Greene.

"Let 'em!" replied Coker calmly. "Anyhow, I shall have lasting evidence to prove how completely I fooled the young sweeps! If they turn up at six-thirty, I'll put them through their paces again; but I'm afraid that'll be too much to expect!"

Billy Bunter had felt his eyes growing round and big, and, as the truth dawned upon him, he uttered a low gasp of amazement. Without delay he applied his eye to the keyhole. And there, right before him, he could see Potter. And, sitting beside Potter, was Mr. Carr—without a grey hair in his head! A grey wig lay upon the table!

"Oh, my only chapeau!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Coker! The new Remove-master is Coker! It's a jape! Oh, crumbs! Those bounders have been taken in beautifully!"

Bunter's little eyes blinked with excitement, and his face was quite red. The sound of a chair being pushed back in one of the studies caused him to walk forward sharply, and he rolled away to the Remove passage.

He could hardly realise the truth. The man with the big moustache was Coker of the Fifth! It was amazing!

Bunter didn't waste any time. He burst straight into No. 1 Study, where the Famous Five were discussing tea and the new master.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Tea's over, and there's nothing left!"

"I don't want any tea!" said Bunter excitedly. "I've got some terrific news!"

The juniors looked at Bunter interestedly.

"Been prying again, as usual, I suppose?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Rot! I just happened to hear—"

"Yes, you always do happen to hear these things," said Bob Cherry. "Well, we don't want to hear it. You can clear out as soon as you like!"

"You'd be jolly sorry if I did clear out!" exclaimed Billy Bunter quickly. "I've found out something about the new master!"

"Oh!"

"He's not a master at all!"

"What?"

"He's one of the chaps dressed up!"

"Great Scott!"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter, aghast, and Bunter enjoyed the situation extremely. It was a favourite amusement of his to cause sensations.

"If this is an April fool dodge—" began Nugent.

"It isn't!" shouted Bunter. "It's the truth! The new master's been spoofing you all along the line! He's a senior—"

"A senior!"

"Yes," grinned Bunter; "Coker of the Fifth!"

"Coker!"

"Great pip!"

"Coker!" gasped Bob Cherry, falling back into his chair with a thud. "It ain't possible! Bunter's pulling our legs!"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"I thought I'd surprise you," he said, blinking round. "My hat! Fancy being spoofed by old Coker!"

"Coker!" ejaculated Wharton, as though he could hardly believe it. "How do you know this, Bunter? Is it the truth?"

"You know I'm not the chap to tell fibs," said Bunter indignantly. "I was passing Coker's study just now, and I happened to hear what he was saying. You see, I dropped something, and when I picked it up my ear came just opposite the keyhole!"

"And your eye, too, I suppose?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Well, I just caught a glimpse of Coker," admitted Bunter. "He'd got his wig off, and—"

"That's enough!" interrupted Wharton. "You're a prying young humbug, Bunter; but now we've got the information we'll act upon it! We'll forgive you for eavesdropping!"

"I should jolly well think you will!" exclaimed Bunter.

"This makes all the difference in the world!" exclaimed

Harry, jumping to his feet. "We'd better have a meeting in this study and decide what to do. Go and call the fellows in, you chaps, and I'll clear up a bit!"

And while Harry Wharton cleared up his chums hurried out and gathered together the victims of Horace Coker's jape.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Conspiracy!

"GREAT SCOTT!"

"My aunt!"

"By Jove!"

Many and varied were the exclamations of astonishment which greeted Harry Wharton's disclosure.

No. 1 Study was packed to suffocation. So full was it, in fact, that there seemed an imminent peril of the door bursting open with the weight of the juniors pressed against it. Billy Bunter had been excluded, as he occupied as much room as two other juniors. And he had been threatened with instant slaughter if he breathed a word of his discovery to any other fellows.

"It doesn't seem possible!" ejaculated Bulstrode. "Well, I must say I admire Coker's nerve. I always thought he was no good at acting, but he's come out on top this time."

"Come to think of it, I thought I recognised the tone of voice," said Tom Brown. "I don't mean to say I suspected anything, but something about the tone of his voice sounded familiar."

"We were asses not to jump to it!" declared Wharton. "We might have known that no real master would have acted in such a dotty way!"

"I guess that's nothing to the point," said Fisher T. Fish. "We know now, and it's up to us to make good. The laugh is all against us, but if we turn the tables Coker will be the laughing-stock, and not us."

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful.

"Well, one thing's certain. We'll all attend prep in the Form-room to-night."

"Rather!"

"We'll be there in force."

"And we'll collar Coker, tear his disguise off, and boil him in oil!" said Johnny Bull pleasantly. "Or perhaps that wouldn't be severe enough?"

"We don't want to do anything drastic," said Wharton. "It will be much more effective if we work off a simple jape—something that will take Coker completely by surprise, and make him disclose himself in his true colours."

"That's all very well," said Bob Cherry, "but these simple japes want thinking out."

Wharton nodded.

"Yes; but I've got one already thought out," he said. "Listen to this."

And in a few words he explained his idea.

There were many headshakings.

"Not good enough," said Mark Linley. "It's too simple—"

"That's the very best of it," interrupted Wharton quickly. "It's so simple that Coker won't have time to guess anything. Well, it's my belief that he'll jump at the bait like a giddy fish."

"Sounds all right," said Bulstrode doubtfully. "Of course, Coker's an excitable chap, and that makes a big difference."

"I thought of that," said Harry; "in fact, I was counting on it. Of course, if you chaps have got anything better to suggest, trot out the wheezes."

"All efforts carefully considered and judged by experts," said Bob Cherry. "First prize, a thundering good kick at Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No time for laughing now," said Harry Wharton. "I'm waiting to hear the wheezes."

But none were forthcoming. Several wild suggestions were made, but they were all rejected.

"Perhaps Wharton's jape is the best, after all," said Nugent. "If it's worked properly, I believe it would succeed. Who's the best chap to do it?"

"I am!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "You leave it to your uncle, and everything will go all right!"

"Yes; I think Bob will do the bizney as good as anybody," said Wharton, "and I think Coker will find the tables turned."

And the meeting discussed the idea at further length. Presently Harry Wharton looked at his watch.

"Twenty past six, by Jove!" he exclaimed. "We'd better be getting down to the Form-room, so that when Coker comes he'll find us all meekly sitting in our places."

And the meeting broke up.

All the juniors were feeling in high spirits. The knowledge that Mr. Carr was only a spoof master came as a great relief, and they were quite ready to end All Fools' Day in a glorious jape against Coker himself.

For as Bob Cherry had remarked, since Coker had had

the audacity to jape the Remove, it was only right that the error of his ways should be pointed out to him.

By twenty-five past six the Remove Form-room presented an active appearance. All the juniors were there in their places, with the exception of Bob Cherry, and his place had been filled by Peter Todd. So it was unlikely that "Mr. Carr" would notice the change.

"Look meek and subdued," Wharton said. "Let old Coker think that he has tamed us. He's too much of an ass to suspect things."

"Ss-h-ssh!" hissed Nugent suddenly. "He's coming down the passage."

Footsteps could be heard, and they did, indeed, belong to Coker. The Fifth-Former was quite prepared to find the Form-room deserted, and started as he heard a hum of voices.

"My hat," he muttered, "they're there! Well, I never thought I'd tamed them as much as all this!"

He pulled himself up to his full height, adjusted his wig, and opened the Form-room door.

He started. All the juniors were there, and Coker felt a wave of triumph surge through him. When he had told them of his ideas about prep he had felt quite certain that nobody would turn up. And yet here they were, looking as meek as lambs!

"I am glad to see you have obeyed my command!" he exclaimed, shutting the door. "It is just as well, for the punishment would have been severe!"

He frowned upon the Removites, and crossed over to his desk. Coker, as a matter of fact, was not prepared to take the Remove at prep, and he wondered how he should spend the time. He wanted a few minutes to think out an original idea, so he sat down.

"You will study your books for five minutes," he said sharply. "If any boy speaks or—"

From out in the passage came a chorus of wildly-excited shouts, and Coker glanced at the door curiously. The next second a scurry of footsteps sounded, and the door was burst open with great violence.

Bob Cherry stood there.

But there was something evidently the matter.

Coker started to his feet, startled at the sight

Bob's hair was standing up almost straight, his face was red and perspiring, his breath came in great, heaving gasps. His eyes appeared to be starting from his head, and he seemed absolutely wild with excitement and terror.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fire!

COKER forgot himself for a moment.

"Good heavens! What's the matter, Cherry?" he shouted.

Bob Cherry gulped.

"Fire!" he panted hoarsely. "Fire!"

Every junior in the form-room rose to his feet with a clatter.

"Fire!"

"Great Scott!"

"Where—where?"

Coker forgot himself completely now, and grabbed Bob Cherry's arm.

"Fire!" gasped Bob.

"Good heavens! Where?" yelled Coker excitedly. "Speak, you young ass!"

Bob Cherry looked dazed.

"Where?" he repeated dreamily. "In the Head's study! It's blazing—"

But Coker waited to hear no more.

"In the Head's study!" he gasped. "Great Scotland Yard! We must go and put it out!"

And Horace Coker dashed out of the form-room in the wildest excitement. Bob Cherry looked after him, and then uttered a gleeful chuckle.

"He's off!" he grinned. "I hardly expected he'd take it like that!"

"I'm not surprised a bit," said Harry Wharton. "You did it splendidly, Bob. Why, I was almost startled myself!"

Bob grinned and turned to the door.

"Come on!" he said quickly. "We shall miss all the giddy fun!"

And the Removites rushed pell-mell into the passage.

Coker, preceding them, raced along at tremendous speed. At the top of the passage he rushed blindly round the corner. There was a yell, and the next minute Coker bumped violently into somebody.

The pair went flying, and sprawled upon the floor.

Loder, of the Sixth, picked himself up.



"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the "General." "Boys, you are now in a particularly awkward situation. Extricate yourselves if you can!" There was a roar of fury from the trussel-up Courtfielders, who struggled and strained at their bonds in vain! (An amusing scene from "Spoofing the Scouts!" the splendid complete school story, by Frank Richards, appearing in the current number of our latest companion paper "CHUCKLES." Get a copy of "Chuckles" to-day. On sale everywhere, price One Halfpenny.)

"What the— You young ruffian!" he roared, grabbing hold of Coker. "What the dickens do you mean by bumping me over?"

Then Loder caught sight of Coker's face, and gasped. "I—I beg your pardon, sir!" he ejaculated. "I—I thought—"

"Fire!" yelled Coker. "Don't stand there, you ass! There's a fire in the Head's study, and if we're not quick the whole college will be burnt down!"

"Fire!" repeated Loder in alarm. "In the Head's study?"

"Yes—come along and give a hand!"

And Coker dashed off again, followed by Loder, who caught the fever. Away they went up the passage, and Bland and Blundell, of the Fifth, watched their approach in amazement. To them it appeared as though a grey-headed stranger was flying from Loder, of the Sixth.

"Who on earth's that?" ejaculated Blundell.

"Why—why, it's the new Remove-master," said Bland blankly.

"Out of the way!" roared Coker. "There's a fire in the Head's study. The whole building's in danger!"

And Coker and Loder flashed past.

"Well I'm blessed!" exclaimed Blundell. "That clap's voice sounded exactly like Coker's! But what's that he said about a fire? I haven't heard anything!"

"Let's run after them and see," suggested Bland.

And the two Fifth-Formers followed Coker's example and rushed up the passage towards the Head's study. The excitement was spreading fast. Seniors and juniors alike joined in, and very soon the whole house was echoing with shouts.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FRANK RICHARDS

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

"CHUCKLES," 1d. 2

Fellows opened their study doors and came out to inquire the cause of the hubbub. Temple, of the Upper Fourth, grabbed hold of Coker as he ran. By this time Coker had torn off his wig and moustache, and was easily recognised as himself.

"What's up, Coker?" shouted Temple, in alarm.

"The house is on fire!" panted Coker. "The Head's study is a raging mass of flames! The fire's spreading!"

They were still a good distance from the Head's study, so it was possible that Coker's words were true, for the smoke might not have penetrated so far.

And Temple, Dabney & Co. joined in the chase. The crowd had grown in proportions, and it was a wildly excited mass that fought its way along.

And in the rear hovered the Fatuous Five, and other Removeites. They were all nearly hysterical with mirth. Bob Cherry fell into Nugent's arms.

"Oh, hold me up!" he gasped. "This is too funny for words! I never expected old Coker would infect a huge crowd! Oh, what a surprise when they get to the Head's study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's gorgeous!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

"Poor old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should like to see the Head's face when all that lot pile into his study!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But that was impossible: they were right in the rear, and could only guess what was happening ahead. But guessing

alone was enough to send them into fits of hysterical merriment.

At last Coker turned into the Head's passage. He was too excited to notice that there was no dense smoke and blistering heat. True, the passage was filled with smoke, but if Coker had used his nose he would have recognised it as brown-paper smoke. Hazeldene, of the Remove, had been entrusted with that job, and he had done it well.

"Come on!" roared Coker hoarsely. "The Head might be in his study, insensible! Back up!"

Loder was immediately behind Coker, and Bland and Blundell were next. Coker staggered against the door of the Head's study, and grasped the handle.

"Look out!" he shouted. "Stand back!"

Coker flung open the door with a crash, and dashed in. He caught sight of the Head, and made a dart across the room for him. Coker was wild with excitement, and he hardly knew what he was doing.

"Grab hold of me, sir!" he panted. "I'll save you!"

Dr. Locke backed away in alarm.

"Coker," he thundered, "control yourself! Are you mad?"

Coker grasped the edge of the table, and looked round him dazedly. The doorway was filled with startled fellows, and Coker suddenly gave a violent start. He could see clearly—there was no smoke—the air was quite cool!

In fact, the Head's study wasn't on fire at all!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Honours Divided!

DR. LOCKE gazed at Coker with considerable alarm. "What is the meaning of this outrageous conduct?" he demanded sternly. "And what are you other boys doing at the door? Loder, come inside!"

Loder stepped in and looked rather pale. Coker was still staring round him as though he could not believe his eyes. He had dashed in, fully expecting to find the room in flames—and the only flames were those given out by a cheerful fire in the grate!

"I—I—"

And Coker paused, completely at a loss for words. The Head turned to Loder again.

"Explain this astounding occurrence, Loder!" he said sharply.

"We—we thought your study was on fire, sir!" gasped Loder.

"Good gracious, Loder! Have you taken leave of your senses?" ejaculated the Head. "What on earth put such an insane idea into your head? Explain at once!"

"It—it was Coker, sir!"

"That's right, sir!" put in Temple, from the doorway.

"Coker dashed along all the passages yelling out that your study was on fire. We simply followed him."

"Coker, is this correct?" demanded the Head.

"Kyboshed!" muttered Coker dazedly. "It was nothing but a jape of those young Remove rotters! Oh, my only Uncle Bill!"

"Coker!" shouted the Head. "Answer me at once!"

"I—I'm very sorry, sir!" stammered Coker. "I thought—that means to say, I was given to believe that—that your study was on fire, sir. It's my fault entirely, sir. I—I'm frightfully sorry!"

The Head looked at Coker keenly, and saw that the Fifth-Former was quite pale with consternation. And Dr. Locke had just remembered something. It was the First of April.

"I do not think I wish to inquire further"—with a twinkle in his eye. "If you really thought that my study was on fire, Coker, I can understand your excitement."

"I did, sir—I did!"

"Very well, you may go, and I will say no more about the matter!" exclaimed the Head kindly.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" exclaimed Coker.

He made for the door, and the Head requested all the other fellows to make themselves scarce. Which they did, and large knots of them collected in the Close in the gathering dusk. It was realised that the whole thing was a jape, and everybody was chuckling immensely. Even Loder, who had been drawn into it, could not help grinning.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

The only fellow who didn't smile was Coker, of the Fifth. Coker was feeling exceedingly sore. He had been congratulating himself upon his astuteness. And now, in the hour of his triumph, he had been hopelessly defeated by a trick that seemed absurd and childish. It was too galling.

A yell of laughter greeted him as he appeared upon the School House steps.

"Hallo, Coker, how do you like 'em done?"

"What's become of your giddy moustache?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We admit you took us in, Coker, old man!" shouted Harry Wharton, "but I think we got the best of you in the end—what!"

Coker frowned darkly. As a rule he was a good-tempered chap, but just now he was feeling quite fed-up with everything in general. He strode down the steps and grabbed hold of Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?" inquired that cheerful youth.

"You'll see soon enough," growled Coker ominously.

"You're the young sweep who started the thing!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, there was a fire in the Head's study, wasn't there?"

he grinned. "I didn't misrepresent it, did I? I simply came into the Form-room and said there was a fire in the Head's study. Well, wasn't I right? It's not warm enough to do without one yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky young bounder!" roared Coker, in exasperation. And he proceeded to cuff Bob Cherry right and left.

"Ow! Yaroooh!" howled Bob. "Rescue, Remove!"

Coker's action was certainly unwise. Seeing that the joke had been against him, the Removites might have forgiven him for his treatment of them. But they rushed to the rescue of Bob Cherry and seized Coker with hands that could hardly be called gentle.

"Let me alone, you young rotters!" shouted Coker wildly.

"Not till we've paid you out for keeping us in the Form-room all the afternoon. You've got to learn that the Remove isn't a body to be lightly dealt with!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "You've had part of your lesson already, and we'll now proceed to convince you for all time!"

And the proceedings commenced.

Amidst a swaying crowd of Removites, Horace Coker was dragged across the Close. Coker saw that the juniors were going in the direction of the fountain, and he uttered a roar.

"Don't you dare—dare to shove me in the rotten fountain!" howled Coker wrathfully.

"Don't worry, Coker, old man!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"We sha'n't shove you in—we shall simply drop you gently!"

"Don't you dare—" began Coker again.

But the juniors dared all the same. They were all in high spirits, and they had no grudge against Coker. After all, he had only played a First of April joke upon them, as they had, in return, played upon him. But they thought it only right and proper that Coker should be made to realise that the Remove was one of the powers that were.

And Coker realised it right enough.

He was ducked in the cold water of the fountain, and when all remonstrances failed, when all threats fell upon deaf ears, he gave a sickly grin.

"I give you best!" he said good-humouredly, although he was soaked to the skin. "All the same, you're a cheeky set of young bounders, and I fooled you properly this afternoon!"

Coker was allowed to go, and he rushed indoors to change. When he had done so he felt all the better for his ducking, and was in quite a good humour for the rest of the evening. In fact, everybody was feeling good-humoured.

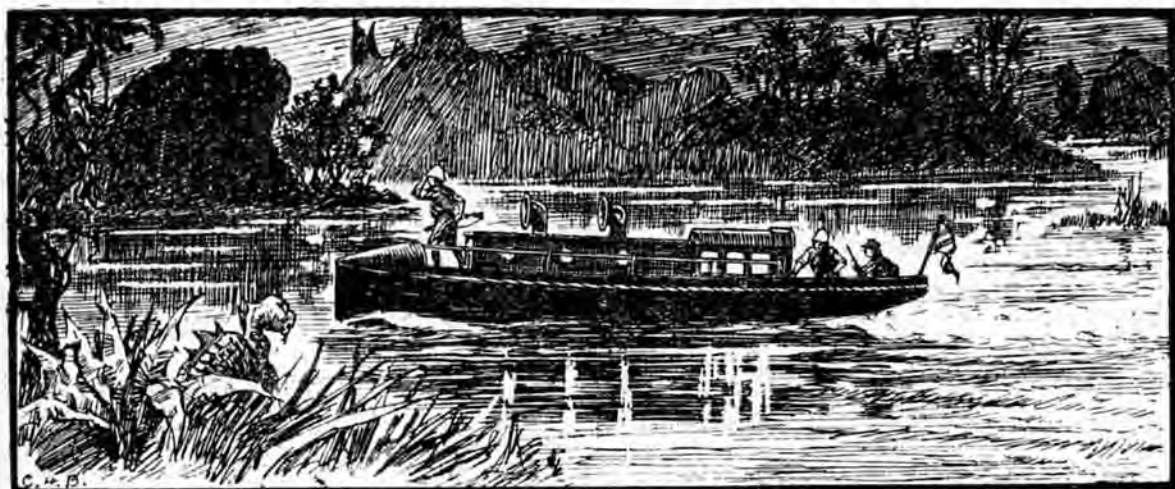
For, although there had been many defeats, there was no denying that April Fools' Day had not been devoid of successes.

Temple, Dabney & Co., Harry Wharton & Co., Coker, Hobson, and Hoskins, had all been made April Fools. But the Famous Five and Coker shared the honours of the day for successfully bringing off the two most elaborate japes.

Billy Bunter claimed that his wheeze was the smartest of the lot, as he had had something extremely substantial to show for it—and there was no denying that there was something in what he said. The honours were divided, and everybody felt satisfied that All Fools' Day at Greyfriars had been made the most of.



THE BLUE ORCHID!



Grand Story of Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung & Co.

By **SIDNEY DREW.**

READ THIS FIRST.

Ching-Lung (Prince of China), Rupert Thurston, and Gan-Waga (the Eskimo), with Prout, Maddock, and the rest of the famous crew of the Lord of the Deep, the marvellous submarine belonging to Ferrers Lord, the multi-millionaire and adventurer, find themselves on board the Philomel, a little paddle-steamer which is puffing up the broad bosom of the mighty Amazon River. Ferrers Lord himself is in command of the expedition, and he tells them that he is in search of a "field" of blue orchids, the secret place of which was mapped out and given to him by a dying man. A rascally German millionaire, named Hausmann, determines to secure these plans, and pursues the Philomel in his magnificent yacht Medea. A storm comes on, and the flashes of lightning reveal the position of the Philomel, and a shell is sent hurtling towards her from the Medea. The Medea collides with a Brazilian warship, which has been renamed the Blue Orchid. After an uneventful voyage the Blue Orchid. The Philomel's cargo is transferred to the launch, which has been renamed the Blue Orchid. After an uneventful voyage the Blue Orchid is anchored at the edge of the trackless Brazilian forest, and Rupert Thurston, with Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung and Barry O'Rooney, set out for a trip in the forest. After they have been in the forest for a few hours, they hear the sounds of firing, and making their way to the spot, are just in time to help a tribe of natives, who are being besieged by a fierce foe. The latter are put to flight, and the leader of the victorious natives goes to thank Ferrers Lord for his timely help. In this man, Ferrers Lord recognises Vasco, the son of a native whom he had befriended years before. He tells Vasco to gather in his men, and follow on his trail. Meanwhile, the inimitable Gan-Waga prepares a surprise for Prout. He fills the latter's hammock with blacking, and, anticipating Prout's hurried visit to the bath, places there a baby alligator which he had previously caught. Prout goes to bed, and pulling down his hammock preparatory to getting in, upsets the whole of the blacking, which drenches him from head to foot.

(Now go on with the story.)

Prout and Maddock Have a Rough Time!

"Stars and garters!" said Maddock. "You've made rather a mess of yourself, souse me. Did you do it a-purpose, Tommy, or was it a haccidental misfortune?"

"It was Gan-Waga, you tow-headed maniac!" shrieked the steersman. "I'll bang 'im into bits the size o' sago, by honey! I'll stoke up the bi'er wi' his fragments! Spoo! Look at me! I'll tar and feather the fat, candle-eating villain! Murder and fire-irons! I'm in a beautiful mess. I'll tear 'im up to tape. Look at me, Ben!" he added, with a woeiful wail. "Ow, look at me!"

"I'm looking, souse me!" said the bo'sun. "Are it far?"

He picked up his garments hastily and retired to a safe distance, for Prout was beginning to show temper by dancing about, and this set the drops flying. Seeing Gan-Waga's parasol in the corner, the bo'sun seized it—the parasol, not the corner—to keep off the rain.

"Whoa! Drop your hanchor, Tommy!" he shouted. "Down wi' your mud'-ook, souse me! This ain't an ink factory. Cheese it afore I slings a boot at you!"

For five solid minutes Prout bellowed out a dreadful list of the deaths Gan-Waga had to die. They were all deaths of the most excruciating torture, and Gan, as he listened, narrowly avoided dying on the spot of strangulation. Having blown off steam, the wretched steersman was a little calmer.

"If I sees the whisper of a grin on your ugly face, Ben," he said warningly, "I'll knock you slap through the bulk-head. You're grinning now, by honey!"

"No, I ain't: it's a little corf I've got," said the bo'sun. "If I was you, souse me, I'd go and wash."

"Ow can I wash? 'Ow can I go on deck like this 'ere, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

idjit?" roared Prout. "I ain't going to mess the ship up, by honey."

Maddock reflected

"Well, if you don't mean to rub it off wi' sandpaper," he said, rubbing his swollen nose, "I should go and 'ave a barth. I'll come along wi' a swab and wipe up the drippings. That's my advice, souse me!"

Although not a rapid thinker, Benjamin often thought sound sense. Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga crawled back to the galley and cried a little, for such heart-breaking scenes as this made them feel very sad. But they had put their heads outside in time to see Prout limping wearily aft, followed by the bo'sun with a bucket and a swab to pick up the ruins.

"Is the little allygooter tame and gentle, petsy?" asked Ching-Lung.

"He most tenderfuls, Chingy," gurgled the Eskimo. "He, he, he, he-ee! He waggle him little tail fo' joyfulness when he meet Tommy. O-oh! I so soreful ails over the ribs part, Chingy. I hopes it nots rheumatics comings on. Ha, ha, ha-a-a!"

"Prout has a big red neck," lisped Ching-Lung of Kwai-hal.

"Oh, paints dat red necks blue!" choked Gan-Waga. "Oh, do, do, do, do, do!"

The unhappy steersman, not daring to touch the walls, growled to Benjamin to turn on the light. Ben found the switch, but he could not produce a light. Ching-Lung had attended to that little detail.

"It's gone and fused," said the bo'sun. "You don't want no light, souse me! 'Ere's the tap. Get in and scrub!"

Maddock bent over the bath and turned on the tap—the hot-water tap. Gan-Waga had securely tied up the alligator's jaws, but he had left the reptile's tail at liberty.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Wednesday. Every Friday. Every Saturday, 2

"Why, the barth's full!" said Maddock, stopping the tap. "Op in while I fetches a candle. I'll get one in—"

Something smote Benjamin in the ribs with a force that drove him into the sticky arms of his comrade in misfortune. Prout was bending forward at the time. The cork mat on which he stood slid from under him, and as he was in the act of falling a terrific thudding blow on the back quickened the proceedings.

Bang—boom—bump—bang—splish! pounded the reptile's tail.

"Ow-oo!" shrieked the bo'sun.

"Ouch, murder!" yelled Prout.

The alligator was quite as scared as they were. A frantic plunge brought it over the edge of the bath, and it fell, all wet, wriggling, and clammy, on the two seamen. Maddock grasped one of its legs, and that was enough. In less than a five-hundredth fraction of a second two appalling, howling scarecrows were making for the deck as fast as they could make their legs work.

Ching-Lung lighted a match, and, with a thick tarpaulin spread out before him, Gan-Waga, the dauntless alligator tamer, fell upon the reptile. They rolled him up. A few cuts freed his mouth and legs. Then they pushed him through the porthole and fled.

"Gan," said Ching-Lung, as he locked the door of his cabin, "you are a heartless monster! You're laughing!"

"I nots, Chingy!" said Gan-Waga solemnly. "Dat the wind blowing through the keyholes. Ooh, ha, ha, heo! Oh, Chingy, I dyings now! Dey coming backs to see what him was. Ooh, dears, dears! Ho, ho, ho-oo-ooo!"

A Glimpse of the Pursuer—Twenty-five Feet of It—Barry's Peril!

To keep a couple of irrepressibles like Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga in anything that resembled order required a firm hand. Though a strict disciplinarian, Ferrers Lord rarely interfered unless he was compelled to do so. On this occasion he did interfere. To the delight of Prout and Maddock, Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga were sternly reprimanded. They were also ordered to clean up the mess. This would not have been such a terrible task except for the perfidy of Prout. He not only rubbed himself against the paint and brasswork, but he ladled the remainder of the filthy mixture out of his hammock and poured it about in awkward corners which barked the culprits' knuckles to reach.

Ching-Lung and the Eskimo accepted their punishment meekly, but their bones ached and their hands were sore long before the labour was completed. And the remarks passed by the steersman and the bo'sun were enough to make a Chinese idol shed sorrowful tears. Even Vasco's face betokened mirth as he watched them scrubbing the deck on hands and knees in the vivid moonlight.

"I don't think that little giggle of ours was all we cracked it up to be, friend of my sorrows," sighed Ching-Lung. "This blessed stuff sticks like cement. Gan-Wagtail, you've got a lot to answer for!"

"It bad 'nough horribleness!" moaned the Eskimo. "I sick of him. Ohmi, I suanicide myselfs, Chingy!"

"Wait till after breakfast, kid," advised Ching-Lung. "It's silly to suicide yourself by moonlight. Here, you fat

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

misery, I'll finish the job if you're tired! Scuttle off to bed!"

Gan was tired, but he would not hear of any such arrangement. It was dawn before it was all over.

When Ching-Lung appeared on deck the next morning Barry O'Rooney was ducking his well-soaped head into a pail of water. After using a towel until his pink face shone, Barry saluted the prince politely.

"Nice day, sir."

"Well, I've seen worse," admitted his Imperial Highness. "What a nice clean little chap you look! Mind you don't catch cold washing in that damp water! You ought to dry it first, you know!"

"Thank yez kindly for the tip, sir," said Barry. "O'll dhry the next lot in front o' the foire, sor."

In the saloon Ferrers Lord was bending over a map. It was the best chart procurable, but it was very vague and unreliable.

"You will not make much of that, Vasco, I fear," he said.

The Indian shrugged his shoulders.

"No, Excellency. That map was made for fools by fools. A man who tried to guide himself by that would come to an evil end. Who could follow the lines of that in the heart of the forest and live? He would feed the jaguars and the ants. And whoever saw a river run uphill? Pah! Where this river is marked there are mountains."

Ferrers Lord tore up the map and tossed the fragments through a porthole. Then he handed the paper he had received from the Italian doctor at Para to Vasco, the guide. The Indian shook his head in a puzzled way.

"What do you make of it?"

"Only what another man would make of it, Excellency," answered the guide, gazing at the dead orchid-hunter's hieroglyphics. "One thing alone is definite—the direction of Obidos. Who can read knowledge from this?"

"Then let us wait until we got to Obidos," said Ferrers Lord. "Perhaps we shall find the key to the riddle there. Did you know Whateman? Surely he must have taken guides and carriers with him?"

"I did not know him, Excellency; but we have eyes and ears and tongues. And yet, though I have hunted in the forests since a little child, I have never seen the blue blossom you speak of. But I will guide you to it."

Prout rapped his knuckles against the door and stood at salute.

"Yes?"

"Smoke astern, sir," said the steersman. "It's a steamer, by the look on it."

"How far astern?"

"Bout eight or nine mile, sir," answered Prout.

Ferrers Lord took his glasses and went up the ladder. The smoke was only a grey patch. He watched it for a time until the outline of a funnel crept into view. Whatever the vessel might be, she was coming along at a rare pace, and time on the lazy Amazon is rarely considered of much value in comparison with the value of coal.

"Ching!"

"Hullo!" said Ching-Lung.

The millionaire signalled to the engine-room to get every knot out of the little craft. The patent fuel threw off hardly any smoke, and was very hot, as well as being very expensive. Luckily expense was a minor matter. Ching-Lung glanced through the binoculars, and his pigtail stood erect.

"Oho!" he said. "A funnel with a blue band, Lord! I'm not feeling very safe."

"It's the Medea," said Ferrers Lord coolly, "and she is not burning coal at that speed for amusement."

"This is where we don't smile, then, sonny. I was flattering myself that she was at the muddy bottom of this sweet river and converted into a hotel for eels. Are we going to get into trouble?"

"I trust not," said the millionaire. "Hausmann has learned that we have got clear, or he would not be in such a hurry. It is difficult to imagine a man of his weight in a hurry; but Hausmann is what the Yankees call a downright hustler. If we fall foul of him we shall suffer. The little brute has neither nerves nor scruples. It would be a pity to have to scuttle the boat and take to the woods."

"It would be beastly, old chap!" said Ching-Lung. "Pity the boat can't fly!"

Vasco joined them at a signal from the millionaire. They jabbered together in a tongue unknown to the prince, and then the Indian took the wheel. Hausmann had gone too far to draw back. All the world was at peace except Russia, and Russia was only at war with herself. Even the monarch whom Hausmann owned as his emperor could not protect the German pirate from a crushing punishment if his crime became known. Every civilised harbour was a certain snare

Rudge-Whitworth Britain's Best Bicycle

Your new bicycle

should be chosen now. The Rudge-Whitworths for 1914 are now ready at all Rudge-Whitworth Depots and Agencies.

Prompt Delivery. The easiest of Easy Payments. 10 years' Guarantee Certificate.

The new Catalogue NOW READY & POST FREE from Rudge-Whitworth, Ltd. (Dept. 331), Coventry.

London Depots: 230, Tottenham Court Road (Oxford Street End), W.; 23, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.



R261

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

FOR NEXT MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

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

for the Medea, as the ingenious trap he had invented was for mice.

Hausmann had learned the truth from Pedro. With a bullet from Ferrers Lord's revolver in the fleshy part of his neck, the traitor had managed to clamber unseen aboard the Philomel and to hide himself. He had been left behind on the blazing paddle-boat, and had clung to her until the blistering heat drove him into the water. Then some natives, attracted by the blazing craft, had picked him up.

"If they sight us, Vasco," said Ferrers Lord, "we shall be compelled to leave the vessel and run for it."

The Indian glanced back.

"They will not sight us. Excellency, unless we draw too much water," he answered. "We can but blow her up and take to the forests. It would be wise to be prepared."

"Full marching order, with ammunition and rations, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. "Pass the word."

All was bustle at once. The Blue Orchid was so near the bank that the leaves of the overhanging trees occasionally brushed her funnel.

"Joye, she's travelling!" said Ching-Lung, watching the nearing smoke.

The Medea was gaining on them swiftly. She was one of the speediest steam-yachts afloat. If she came up with them they could expect no mercy. Hausmann would blow them out of the water. Provisions, weapons, and ammunition were placed in the boat.

"Hold tight there!" shouted Ferrers Lord.

Vasco clenched his teeth.

"The river is very low, Excellency."

"We must risk it; it's our only chance," said Ferrers Lord. "Is this the place?"

The Indian peered forward. A reed-covered promontory, with a background of forest, jutted out into the river.

"Full speed!"

The Blue Orchid dashed at the reeds and tore her way through them. Then she trembled, hesitated, and slid on. Her screw was reversed, and she came to a halt.

"Clear the boat there, lads, and cut all the reeds you can!" said Ferrers Lord. "We've made a suspicious-looking hole, and we must fill it up. Quick!"

It had been a matter of inches, for the keel had been scraping the bottom for quite forty yards. Had she grounded she would have been at the Medea's mercy. She was floating now on a small lagoon, with only the top of her funnel showing above the tall reeds. This was promptly lowered.

Prount slashed down the reeds, and Joe and Maddock tied them into bundles and weighted them with spanners, lumps of coal, and anything else that came to hand. In a quarter of an hour the gap had been closed. Had they been seen? At the utmost the Medea could not be more than five miles behind them. If she had sighted the little boat the expedition would come to an abrupt end.

Ching-Lung threw off his blouse and let himself into the water. Gan-Waga dived in after him. Like a pair of human eels they glided through the thick rushes.

"I on de bottoms, Chingy," said the Eskimo. "It alls mudiness!"

The prince found his feet, and parted the reeds. He could see the Medea distinctly, and hear the beat of her propeller. She was well away from the shore, for she drew a good deal of water, and mudbanks were far from uncommon.

"Whew! It's all U-P," said Ching-Lung, with a long, low whistle. "She's slowing down."

Gan's eyes were big and round.

"If deys goings to shoots, Chingy, I not stops," he muttered. "Not likes shooting."

Ching-Lung whistled again. The propeller had been stopped, and the big yacht dropped anchor barely a mile from their hiding-place.

"My stars! Can the fat rogue want to parley with us?" thought the prince.

They were lowering a boat. Ching-Lung heard a soft chuckle. Vasco, shoulder deep in water, was beside him.

"We are too cunning for them," he said, with a smile that showed all his splendid teeth.

"Think so? It doesn't look like it, to me, if that boat is coming ashore, Vasco."

"But it is not coming ashore, excellency," said the native, with assurance.

Vasco was right. The boat dropped astern and made fast. A man, whose naked skin showed in the clear light, lowered himself over the side. Presently he was dragged into the boat, and another man stripped and took his place. They were doing something to the screw.

"They have fouled their propeller, Chingy," said the millionaire's quiet voice, "and I hope they have not fouled it badly. Hausmann is rather fond of shooting, and he might take it into his head to visit the shore. That would be awkward for us, and probably awkward for him."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

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

"CHUCKLES," 1/2

"M'yes, it would be mighty awkward for him if I bumped up against him," said Ching-Lung grimly. "He's a real beast. Why couldn't he tie up his propeller with weeds somewhere else? My nerves are of the best quality procurable, but I don't like this! It would be nasty if he smelled us out. Besides, the pig has got the start of us now. Oh, you fat Dutch rascal, I'd like to talk to you quietly for about ten minutes!"

Ferrers Lord laughed.

"If he gets ahead of us that will only add to the excitement," he said, "for I have no intention of going back. I like big odds."

More than an hour later the Medea weighed anchor and continued her voyage under full steam. It was wonderful that the Blue Orchid had not stripped the blades off her propeller in the tangle of rushes and weed and floating sticks. Gan-Waga, who could remain under water almost as long as a seal, went down to inspect it. With a knife he cut away the rubbish.

"All butterfuls now," he gurgled, as he rose to the surface. "I weeded de gardens, Chingy."

"Was it very bad?"

"Dere was butterfuls whiskers on hims," cooed the Eskimo, "but I shaves dem off. I goings to bed nows."

With his hands deep in his pockets Ching-Lung sauntered aft. Thurston and Ferrers Lord were seated under the awning, chatting together.

"Welcome, friend," said Thurston. "We're holding a council of war."

"My priceless wisdom is at your service, children," said Ching-Lung. "Unfortunately, however, it's altogether wasted. My dear friend Lord will listen politely, and then do what he likes."

"That is a mistake, my dear lad. I am quite ready to take advice," said Ferrers Lord.

"Then 'bout ship and slide back to civilisation," grinned Ching-Lung. "Now's our chance. That's my advice, and I'll bet you a monkey you don't take it."

Without a word Ferrers Lord took out his pocket-book and paid ten fifty-pound Bank of England notes into Ching-Lung's hand.

"I wish I'd bet you ten monkeys," said the prince. "I'll buy a new face for Prount with these. You're not going back, I presume, or you wouldn't have given me these bits of tissue paper. Well, don't ask me for any more advice. Shall I tell you what I think?"

"It may bore us, but go on," said Rupert Thurston. "It astonishes me to learn that you ever think."

"Thanks, Scoffer! These are the things that I have thunked. Herr Hausmann, M.T.M.—which signifies nice-trap merchant—will jolly soon discover that he's passed us. M.T.M. will jolly soon come back. If M.T.M. finds our little nutshell floating about, he'll promptly proceed to crack it. And if he cracks it, the chances of wearing blue orchids in our buttonholes look very very blue. He'll learn from the niggers that we haven't gone up, just as he learned from the niggers that we haven't gone down. M.T.M. looks to me like the boss of the bargain."

"Your opinion is, for once in a way, remarkably sensible," said Ferrers Lord. "That is what will happen."

"Two monkeys to one you don't follow my further advice."

"No thanks. We are going on," said Ferrers Lord.

"I knew it," laughed the prince. "So I don't intend to waste any further advice on you. When Mr. Hausmann has converted all of us into cold corpses you'll be sorry. My word, it's hot in here! Are you going to wait until the Medea goes down-stream again, or are you going out to be sunk?"

"I am going out to be sunk as soon as it is dark, Ching," said the millionaire. "If our friend can sink us. I am dubious on the point. The Blue Orchid is very small and the Medea is very large, but"—he shrugged his shoulders—"the battle is not always to the strong."

Ching-Lung perched himself on the rail and proceeded to comb out his wet pigtail. Gan-Waga helped him to plait and coil it up, for Gan had soon slept long enough. The heat was terrific.

"I alls melting, Chingy," sighed Gan wearily. "Tink I catches another sallygators, hunk?"

"But what will you do with it, cherub?"

"P'raps Prounts and Maddocks likes him, Chingy. Nots wants him fo' mineseelf, Chingy."

"It's most thoughtful and kind of you, Eskimotor," said Ching-Lung. "Perhaps they might. But I'm not going to have any more scrubbing. My hands are still sore. Why don't you give 'em that for a present? Wouldn't it make Prount a lovely plaything?"

"Hoo! Wishes I could gets him, Chingy," said Gan-Waga. "He not comes if I whistles, hunk?"

A monkey was peering down at them from the branches, but it fled when Gan-Waga moved. Ching-Lung strolled aft

to take a siesta under the shade of the awning, and he was soon asleep. It was hotter than ever.

Suddenly there was a soft rustling in the reeds, and an anaconda slid quietly into the water, for the great snakes of the Amazonian forests are gallant swimmers. With his head well above the surface, the monster writhed its way across the lagoon. It turned back and swam alongside of the yacht. Thurston and Ching-Lung were snoring, and Gan-Waga was whittling a stick. Ferrers Lord had gone below to dress Filson's scalds, and Joe was busy in the galley. Maddock sat on an upturned pail, yawning lazily. Even Vasco felt the drowsy influence of the oppressive heat.

"By honey," groaned Prout, as he filled an oil-can, "I shall melt away if this goes on, Barry! It's like living in an oven! D'ye think there's any chance of it snowing?"

Barry O'Rooney made no answer. The book he had been glancing over had slipped from his hands and a buzzing sound came from his nose; for Barry was in the land of dreams.

"Tommy," called the voice of Joe, "would you like some lemonade?"

Prout put down the oil-can and made for the galley without further delay. Barry's head sank lower, and the buzzing noise grew louder. The opened porthole was suddenly darkened. Six feet of writhing snake slid through, and a head, in which two ugly eyes sparkled, swayed to and fro and up and down. Then the slender neck touched the floor, and coil by coil the anaconda wormed itself into the engine-room. Had such a thing happened with the machinery working, it would have been bad both for the snake and the engines.

The brute lifted its head and rubbed it along the guard-rail. Then it opened its jaws, closed them again, and coiled itself up, apparently quite at home and quite contented. Dropping its neck over the rail it blinked at Barry, and then became motionless. Except for the regular swelling of its throat the reptile might have been stuffed.

"Uz! Og-gog-gug! z-z-z! gurrh! gorrh! z-z-z!" snored the musical Barry.

A humming-bird darted in, and finding nothing there to please it flitted out again. Then came the sound of the steersman's boots and Prout entered, wiping his mouth.

"By honey!"

Prout stopped as if he had been suddenly frozen. The snake was in a good humour, having dined off a monkey a couple of evenings before, and was very comfortable. It gazed at the petrified steersman and Prout gazed back at it.

"Z-z-z-z-z-z-z!"

Barry's nose seemed to be sawing wood, and very tough wood at that. Prout, generally prompt in action, was at a loss. He carried a big Service revolver at his hip, and his hand grasped the butt; but he did not draw the weapon. Twenty-five feet of wounded snake lashing and pounding in the little engine-room might cause irreparable damage. The anaconda began to swing its head to and fro, and to rub its neck once more against the polished rail. Each swing grew longer until the flat, vicious head almost touched Barry's shoulder.

The Bursting of the Dam—"Where's Vasco?"—Bravely Rescued—Gan-Waga Goes on Strike!

"Barry, wake up and bolt!" roared Prout, recovering his wits.

"Och! Phwat's that yez say?" yawned Barry O'Rooney, starting. "Bedad, Ow—Ow! Murder!"

With a terrified howl Barry leapt from the chair, his hair standing on end. They did not know how it happened, but the engine-room was flooded with scalding steam. Two human bodies rolled into the galley, upsetting Joe, and then something, rendered invisible by the steam, whizzed past the door—twenty-five feet of the semi-boiled and horrified anaconda.

"Hi! There's another valve gone, souse me!" yelled Maddock, as the steam rushed up.

The bo's'un said nothing else for two hours, and it was amazing that he ever spoke again. The snake, as it shot up the ladder, struck him with its head, and hurled him into the deck-chair from which Thurston had just sprung. Vasco rolled out of the way. The brute drove clean through a life-buoy, bursting it like a ring of cotton, and went overboard with a mighty splash.

Maddock was as senseless as a log when they picked him up, and the chair was only a mass of canvas and splinters.

"Where's Prout? Where's O'Rooney?" shouted Thurston, in alarm.

To his relief, Prout, Ferrers Lord, Barry, and Joe appeared out of the thinning steam, sound and undamaged. They gathered round the bo's'un, silent and anxious. There was blood on his lips, and his eyes were closed. All at once the clatter of a pail broke the silence. Vasco turned sharply and looked at it. It had not been touched. The Indian walked to the rail and bent over it. Then, opening a basket, he tossed a pigeon into the air.

They were aground, for the river was going down rapidly. As yet, the yacht's list to port was not pronounced; but, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 321.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

as the bottom was soft mud, it was impossible to tell how deeply her keel was embedded. Ferrers Lord frowned slightly when he saw what had happened.

"Vasco," he said, "we ought to have foreseen this."

"I cannot understand it, Excellency," answered the Indian. "I have never known the river fall so quickly. I have sent a message to my village for help. Fifty of my men might haul her clear."

"And when will your men arrive?"

"In seven hours, Excellency."

"In seven hours, Vasco," said the millionaire, "we may be high and dry."

Getting into the boat, he took the oars, while Ching-Lung used the plummet. The result was not encouraging. On the bar there were barely three feet of water, and a steady outgoing current ran through the bundles of reeds. The millionaire made a passage, and the boat drifted through.

"Look, Ching," he said, "the river has not dropped an inch, and yet that abominable lagoon is running dry! It must have a feeder somewhere."

"If it has that feeder is stopping supplies, old chap," said Ching-Lung. "You're right about the river. Couldn't we blow up some of the mud here, and make a struggle for it?"

"We should drain the lagoon dry. It is running out fast enough as it is," said Ferrers Lord.

They were in a most unenviable plight. Even if, after infinite labour, they succeeded in moving the stores and coal from the vessel, she would, in all probability, still be aground. Were they able to get her back to the river, the task of reloading her would be appalling. To dig a canal through the neck of land between the lagoon and the river would take weeks. It was a disastrous outlook.

"I'm not going to stop on that boat very long," said Ching-Lung, as he wrapped up the line. "As soon as the sun starts to blaze it will draw enough fever out of that mud to poison a colony of alligators. How do you explain this?"

Ferrers Lord caught hold of the ladder.

"A billhook, Prout!" he shouted.

The lagoon was no longer stagnant, for it was slowly and steadily draining away. Ferrers Lord threw off his coat. For a second or two, he watched the slow progress of a broken reed as it drifted down.

"Pull very gently," he said.

He hacked a passage tirelessly through the reeds.

"Hallo!" said Ching-Lung. "We've struck it!"

The boat emerged between two sloping banks thickly grown with trees. It was a small and sluggish tributary of the Amazon on which they floated, the stream that fed the lagoon. The banks glistened as if they had been varnished.

"Now I fancy I can answer your question, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. "Some big tree has fallen and dammed this little river up. The dam may be ten miles away, or thirty miles away. The longer it holds together the worse for us—when it bursts. We must go and look for it."

The sudden subsidence of the water could be explained in no other way. Ching-Lung whistled softly.

"Yes," he said, "if it goes with a pop, I wouldn't give a bad sixpence for our chances."

Ching-Lung took a last look at Maddock, who was still unconscious.

"Rupert," said the millionaire, "take a good supply of necessities ashore in case of the worst, and put them high and dry. She's a good little boat, and may pull through. If we find the dam, we shall cut it as carefully as possible. Get up steam at once."

"There's plenty of steam, sir," said Prout. "I've seen to that."

Barry O'Rooney brought up a bundle of hatchets, picks, and saws.

"Listen, Excellency," said Vasco sharply. "Listen—listen!"

They heard a sound like the buzzing of a vast swarm of bees.

"To the wheel, Prout! Get her nose to it!" shouted the millionaire. "Below, carpenter; the dam has burst!"

Next Week!

WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!

A splendid long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

And another splendid long instalment of

THE BLUE ORCHID!

By SIDNEY DREW.

Order in Advance.

Price One Penny.

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

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
EVERY WEDNESDAY
AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his Chums, at home or abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In this splendid complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, a new fellow arrives who seems inclined to think more of himself than the Removites quite approve of. Wibley, as the new fellow is called, announces that he is a splendid amateur actor, and claims a leading part in the play which is about to be performed by the Form Dramatic Society.

Harry Wharton & Co. suppress the presumptuous new fellow, but Wibley determines to prove his contention. To do this he conceals an ingenious scheme, the nature of which I will leave my readers to conjecture for the present.

"WIBLEY'S WHEEZE!"

is a particularly interesting and amusing story, and every Magnetite will enjoy it to the full.

ALL-ROUND EXCELLENCE FOR ONE PENNY!

In the current week's issue of our famous companion paper, "The Penny Popular," will be found something to please fiction-lovers of every degree, however widely varying their tastes. The most popular fiction may be divided roughly into three classes, viz.—school stories, adventure tales, and detective dramas. In "The Penny Popular" alone of all story-papers can

ALL THREE OF THESE TYPES

of story be found in the highest perfection and in complete form. The complete stories of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford; of Jack, Sam, and Pete, by S. Clarke Hook; and of the famous crime-investigator, Sexton Blake, fulfil in every issue of "The Penny Popular" the most exacting requirements of every fiction-lover. That is why "The Penny Popular" maintains in the face of all competition its proud position as the

BEST ALL-ROUND STORY-PAPER

for week-end reading.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Will the following readers accept my best thanks for their most interesting letters, which contained valuable suggestions:

C. Mallor (Kensington), Bernice Mobbs (Australia), C. Vowles (Weymouth), J. B. T. (New Zealand), "Gemite" (Transvaal), and D. M. (Gloucester).

"A Constant Reader" (Dublin). There are no covers issued from this office for binding "The Magnet" Library at present.

"A Constant Reader" (Highbridge).—A Portrait Gallery has already been published in the "Magnet" Library.

E. Goodchild.—To stop smoking, carry a packet of acid-drops in your pocket, and when the inclination to smoke comes on suck one of the tablets.

"Lilian."—Very many thanks for your letter and suggestion.

E. Cockle.—(Winhill).—Brandreth is still at Greyfriars.

W. B. N.—Your question would take up too much space to answer in these columns. If you send me your full name and address I shall be pleased to write to you.

W. H. Collen.—Cigarette cards can be used for decorative purposes. Paste them artistically on a screen. The effect is good if done neatly.

F. W. Millard.—Gamage's supply beards and moustaches and everything appertaining to amateur theatricals.

"Interested."—W. H. Smith & Son, Bradford Branch, would be able to get you a book on the subject you mention.

T. Leake.—Any music-dealer will supply you with a violin tutor. I should advise you to go through the elementary stages with a music-master.

J. H. (Partick).—Gather together your friends and propound your idea to them. Collectively you should be able to form a League without any aid from this office. I should like to have your name and address if you succeed in starting a League.

W. A. Stephenson (Carlisle).—Volume 7 started with No. 241 and ended No. 292. There are 52 numbers in a volume.

A. P. 236 (Derby).—I think you will find that the Kodak is one of the best cameras you can get.

CAGE BIRDS.

By Arthur G. Butler, Ph.D., F.L.S., F.Z.S., etc.

The study of captive birds is probably a natural outcome of civilisation, having its origin in all countries, even from the earliest times, so soon as man has been sufficiently educated to take delight in the book of Nature. There can be little doubt that King Solomon was not satisfied with having peacocks in his gardens, but kept parrots and other birds in his aviaries, although the prophet Jeremiah was the first to speak of cage-birds—Jer. v. 27—in the Israelitish records.

In modern times, since about the beginning of the sixteenth century, the canary has claimed the attention of the majority of bird-keepers; its plasticity has endeared it to breeders, who, from the original wild type—a race of the serinfinch, inhabiting Madeira, the Canaries, and Azores—evolved all the fancy breeds now seen at bird shows.

The Norwich Fancy.

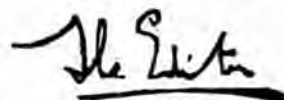
It is quite likely that, if breeders would continue to select with that end in view, they might add greatly to the number of varieties already produced; but, unhappily, the fancier of to-day seems far more keen on perfecting existing breeds, with a view to the acquisition of cups and medals, than on testing the capacity for variation latent in the canary as a species. In the British Islands perhaps the most popular of all the fancy breeds is the "Norwich"; it certainly is the bird most frequently seen in the windows of middle-class houses. To my mind it is the most pleasing in outline of all the breeds, and, though very noisy, is fairly hardy. If fed by hand from the time it leaves the nest, the Norwich canary, even after it is able to cater for itself, makes a confiding and engaging pet.

A somewhat more slender and considerably larger bird is the "Yorkshire" or "Lancashire" type. It is more coarsely feathered, and if crossed with the "Norwich," whilst it improves the size of that breed, gives trouble in breeding out that coarseness. Still, I found the birds produced from this cross more vigorous than pure "Norwich."

The "London Fancy" is less shapely than the "Norwich," and, I think, not such a general favourite. Still it has its votaries. All these varieties are of two types—plain head and crested—the "Yorkshire" and "Lancashire" crested birds are known as "Coppies"—the crests being all of one character, brushed evenly down all round the head from a central depression on the top of the crown. These must be about as unpleasant to the wearers as the hair on the head of a Scotch terrier, always more or less obscuring the vision.

(Next Week: Another

Article on Cage Birds.)



THE ALL-ROUND COMPLETE STORY-PAPER.

The
NOW
ON
SALE
1^D POPULAR



HONOURS EASY! A Long, Complete School Tale
of the Chums of St. Jim's.

STILL OBTAINABLE!



.. Three Splendid Numbers of

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d. LIBRARY.



No. 256:

"DICK OF THE HIGHWAYS."

A Magnificent Tale of the Road. By DAVID GOODWIN.

No. 257:

"THE SCHOOLBOY PROFESSIONALS."

A Splendid Story of School and Football. By ROBERT MURRAY.

No. 258:

"THE LAND OF THE KNOUT."

A Thrilling Story of Jack, Sam, and Pete. By S. CLARKE HOOK.



Be Sure to Ask for

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3^d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

"CHUCKLES"

*The Champion
Coloured Paper,*

CONTAINS

**EVERYTHING OF
THE BEST—
AND ALL FOR $\frac{1}{2}$ ^d!**

ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT TO-DAY FOR

"CHUCKLES"

ONE HALFPENNY. EVERY SATURDAY.

3 Splendid Long,
Complete Stories of
SEXTON BLAKE,
(Detective),

TOM MERRY & CO.
and

JACK, SAM & PETE,
EVERY FRIDAY
IN

**THE PENNY
POPULAR.**