

Whit-Monday Number!



A FAG FOR BILLY BUNTER!

An amusing incident in "The Wrong Sort," this week's school story.

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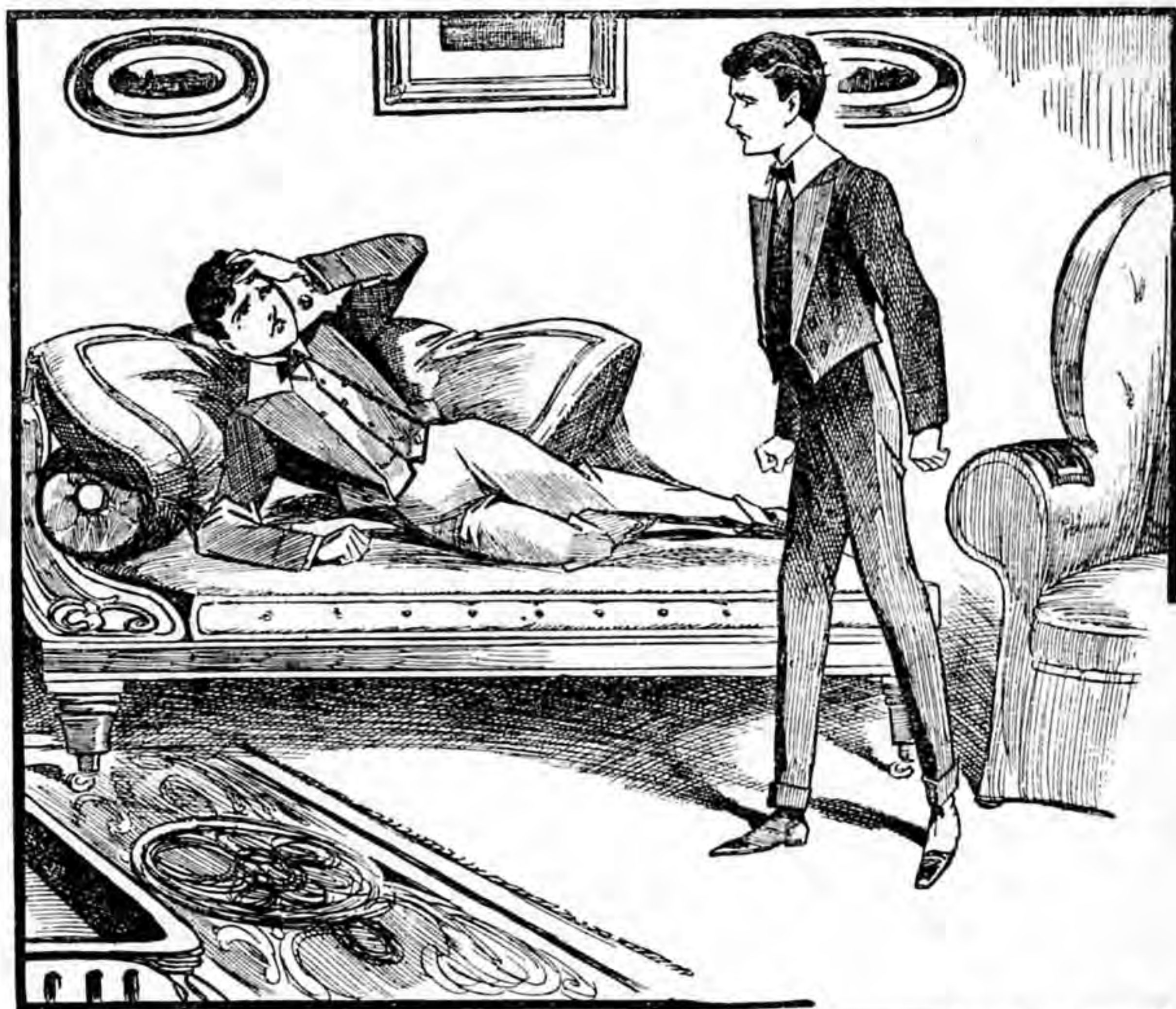


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THE WRONG SORT!

A Grand, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"I'm not looking out for friends of your sort," said Lord Mauleverer. "I think you are a rank outsider, you know, begad!" Sir Harry Beauclerc rose to his feet and stood looking down on the lazily recumbent form with flashing eyes and clenched fists. "Shut the door after you, won't you?" hinted Mauleverer. (See Chapter 3.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Rank Outsider!

"HARD lines!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically.
"Beastly hard!" said Johnny Bull. "But there's nothing to be done but to grin and bear it."
Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove at Greyfriars, and Frank Nugent, his study-mate in No. 1, wore glum looks.

It was evident that something had occurred to disturb the serenity of the Co.

"It's rotten!" said Nugent, in an aggrieved tone. "We've always had the study to ourselves, and now to have that awful retter planted on us—"

"A rotten, rank outsider!" said Wharton.

"An unspeakable beast!" added Nugent.

"A frabjous toad!" said Wharton, exasperated.

Johnny Bull grinned.

"Perhaps he will improve on acquaintance?" he suggested. "New boys soon get licked into shape, you know. If he gives you any rot, you can bump him, and jump on him, and make him understand things."

"Here he comes!" said Bob Cherry.

The chums of the Remove—the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars—were standing in the Form-room passage. Afternoon lessons were over. A slim, handsome junior, with an almost childish petulance of expression on his face, and a sullen brow, came towards them. It was the new boy in the Remove—Sir Harry Beauclerc, Baronet.

The Remove fellows looked at him grimly. They had not seen much of him that afternoon in class, certainly; but they had seen something of him before he came to Greyfriars—and had heard more.

They knew that he was supercilious, insolent, and arrogant—qualities that did not recommend him a bit to Harry Wharton & Co. He was a new boy—it was his first day at Greyfriars—and yet even now his manner was overbearing.

"You are Wharton, I think?" he said, addressing the captain of the Remove.

"Yes!" said Harry shortly.

"Mr. Quelch has told me that I share your study—No. 1. I think he said was the number."

"That's right!"

"I understand that there is another fellow in the study, too?"

"I'm there!" said Nugent curtly.

Sir Harry Beauclerc gave him a careless glance.

"It's doocid inconvenient to have three fellows to a study," he observed. "I want to come to some arrangement with you fellows, if possible."

Wharton and Nugent brightened up at once. They were glum and worried at the prospect of having the baronet in their study. His title and his wealth did not appeal to them at all; they only wanted to be clear of him.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Wharton. "It's no good our asking Quelch to put you in another study, but if you ask him he might change you out. There are a lot of fellows in the Remove you'd get on with better than with us."

"Quite so!" chimed in Nugent. "Skinner, or Snoop, or Stott—several chaps would be glad to have you, Beauclerc!"

Beauclerc stared at him.

"I'm not thinking of changing out of the study," he said. "I've looked at it, and it seems to be the best room in the passage, excepting one. I was thinking that you fellows might change out, and leave me the room to myself."

"What!"

"My hat!"

"I understand that Lord Mauleverer has a study to himself. I should like the same," said Beauclerc. "And I like that room. You can take your sticks away with you. I have plenty of money, and I shall have it decently furnished for myself. I couldn't live in it with the rubbish you have there now!"

Wharton and Nugent looked at him hard. They were rather proud of Study No. 1. They had furnished it themselves, only the table, chairs, and carpet being provided by the school. Of course, the funds of the juniors did not run to luxurious furnishing. Lord Mauleverer, the schoolboy millionaire, and Vernon-Smith, were the only juniors who fitted up their quarters on sybaritic lines.

But the chums of No. 1 were very pleased with their quarters—they flattered themselves that No. 1 was a very cosy "den," and "done" in quite good taste. Sir Harry Beauclerc's candid opinion of their study was not gratifying.

Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and Hurree Janset Ram Singh grinned as they saw the clouds gathering on the faces of the owners of Study No. 1. The new boy was looking for trouble, although he appeared to be unconscious of it. In fact, at that moment the baronet was very near to be used as a duster to wipe up the Form-room passage. But the indignant chums of No. 1 held themselves in check. They did not

want to "pile" on a new kid, unpleasant as he was, unless he forced them to it.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Beauclerc, seemingly puzzled by the pause. "I want the study. If you clear out, you can take all your things with you—I don't want them. I'll make it worth your while to oblige me."

"Worth our while!" repeated Wharton.

"Yes!"

"I don't quite understand you," said Harry, a gleam coming into his eyes. "How are you going to make it worth our while?"

Beauclerc shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I should have thought my meaning was clear enough," he said. "By the look of your study, I should think you are pretty hard up."

"Hard up!" repeated Nugent.

"Yes, I suppose so, or you wouldn't use a jam-jar for a milk-jug, or disfigure the window with those rotten curtains."

"They're jolly good curtains!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly. "My aunt sent me those curtains!"

"They may have been good when your aunt sent them, but they're pretty rotten now," said Beauclerc. "But never mind that. I'll make it worth your while to clear out of the study. I dare say you know I've got plenty of tin."

"We know you're a purse-proud upstart, if that's what you mean?" said Wharton bluntly. He was angry, and he did not measure his words.

Beauclerc started back a pace. Plain speaking was not to his taste. He clenched his hands for a moment; and Wharton followed his example; but Beauclerc speedily unclenched his hands again, and shrugged his slim shoulders.

"I don't want to row with you," he said. "Let's come to business. Will you take a fiver to clear out of the study?"

The Famous Five looked at him in silence. They knew that Sir Harry Beauclerc had lately come unexpectedly into title and fortune. It was only natural that his head should be turned a little by his sudden accession to wealth, after an early boyhood of poverty. He might be expected to show off his money a little. But that he should venture to offer them money, that was the limit. But the baronet did not seem to see that he had committed any unpardonable offence. He looked at Wharton inquiringly, waiting for his answer. Wharton's answer did not come—he was unable to find words for a moment.

"Well," said Beauclerc, "what do you say?"

Wharton found his voice.

"Say?" he repeated. "I say that you are a rotten cad, a rank outsider, a purse-proud puppy, and a sneaking toad. That's what I say. And if you dare to offer me any of your filthy money again, I'll lay you on your back, there, where you stand!"

"Hear, hear!" chirruped Bob Cherry.

Beauclerc flushed crimson.

"I suppose I might have expected this kind of manners here," he said, after a pause. "I did not want to come to this school—I wanted to go to Highcliffe, but my rotten guardian forced me to come here. Ponsonby, my pal at Highcliffe, warned me that I should find a gang of uncouth outsiders here—it seems that he was right."

"Which eye do you prefer to have coloured?" asked Bob Cherry, pushing back his cuffs.

Beauclerc looked at him contemptuously.

"Don't touch me!" he said. "I don't intend to enter into vulgar scrapping with you. If you touch me, I shall complain to the headmaster immediately."

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bob, almost overcome.

"The crumbliness is terrific, my esteemed Bob," purred Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The august Beauclerc is the esteemed and ludicrous limit!"

"Come, Wharton," said the baronet, turning to the captain of the Remove again. "I want that study to myself, and I don't want you fellows in it! I'm willing to pay for my convenience. Name your price!"

Harry Wharton did not reply; but he stretched out his hand, and took the somewhat prominent nose of the school-boy baronet between his finger and thumb. He compressed his grip until the water came into Beauclerc's eyes, and he yelled with pain.

"Grooh! Leggo! Oh! Groogh!"

"You utter cad!" said Wharton, holding him at arm's length with the vicelike grip on his nose. "You crawling worm! We all knew you were a cad, before you came here; but you've shown yourself a bigger cad than we supposed. You're not worth licking—having your nose pulled is the right thing for you!"

"Groooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co.

Beauclerc's face was crimson and his eyes blazed with rage. He struck out savagely at Wharton's cool and contemptuous face. With his left Harry warded the clumsy

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Up went Beauclerc, and he turned over in the air, and came down plump into the blanket in a heap. He was hurt, and his yells rang through the dormitory. "Shut up!" growled Bolsover. "Keep still, and you won't be hurt! Up he goes!" (See Chapter 7.)

blows easily; with his right he compressed his grip upon Beauclerc's nose till the baronet was almost doubled up.

"Groo-hoogh! Leggo!" mumbled Beauclerc.

"I'll let go when you've begged my pardon for your caddish insolence," said Wharton quietly.

"Groogh! I—I—I beg your pardon!" gasped Beauclerc. "Leggo!"

Wharton released him. Beauclerc stood quivering with rage and nursing his reddened nose tenderly. His eyes gleamed with rage and hatred as they were fixed on the captain of the Remove.

"Now, if you want it to go any further, I'm willing to step over to the gym with you—with or without gloves," said Wharton scornfully.

"Grooh! I'll make you pay for this! Grooh!"

Wharton turned on his heel contemptuously. The Famous Five walked out into the Close, leaving the schoolboy baronet still caressing his inflamed nose.

"And that," said Nugent—"that is what we've got planted on us in our study!"

"Oh, it's rotten!"

"Disgusting!" agreed Bob Cherry sympathetically. "But if that merchant goes on in the way he's begun, he'll make the Remove too hot to hold him. It wouldn't be a bad idea to get up a petition to his guardian to let him go to Highcliffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Wharton and Nugent could not help feeling glum. It would not have been agreeable to have any new kid

"planted" on them in their study; but to have so utter an outsider as this a perpetual partner in their cosy quarters, it was the limit. The prospect for them was not pleasant; nor was it pleasant, as a matter of fact, for Sir Harry Beauclerc. The self-satisfied youth was not likely to find that his lines had fallen in pleasant places in the Greyfriars Remove.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble in No. 1 Study!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had gone down to cricket practice, and forgotten all about the new boy in the Remove for the time. They came back to the School House as dusk was falling, ruddy and cheerful and ready for tea. Wharton remembered him, however, as he came up to the Remove passage with Nugent. The cosy tea in the study would not be the same with the sullen-browed Beauclerc there.

"I wonder if that chap's there?" said Harry, pausing. "He may have had his tea in hall. It would be only decent of him to let us have the study to ourselves a bit."

"Well, it's his study too, now," Nugent remarked. "I suppose he will have his tea there. If he will behave himself we'd better keep from rowing as much as we can; it's rotten to be at daggers drawn with a study-mate. Perhaps that pulling his nose has done him good. Let's propose to him to go equal whacks in tea, and let bygones be bygones."

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Wharton hesitated.

"He isn't the kind of chap to let bygones be bygones," he said. "I never saw a more vindictive-looking rotter."

"Let's give him a chance," said the good-natured Nugent.

"Oh, all right! But I don't think it will be much good."

They went on to the study, and Wharton opened the door. A sharp and angry exclamation fell from his lips.

The study was in a haze with tobacco-smoke. Sir Harry Beauclerc was seated in the armchair, with a cigarette between his lips. Several cigarette-ends lay on the hearth-rug. There were the remains of a meal on the table, and Billy Bunter was seated at the table, devouring the last of them. Bunter blinked up at the two juniors through his big spectacles. The Owl of the Remove had evidently succeeded in ingratiating himself with the baronet. Beauclerc did not look round as the juniors entered; he affected to take no notice of their existence.

"Beauclerc!" rapped out Wharton.

Then the baronet turned his head.

"Don't talk to me!" he said. "If I'm compelled to share this study with you, I don't want your society more than I can help. You'll oblige me by not speaking to me. I don't care for your acquaintance."

"Yes, you fellows, you let Beau alone!" said Bunter, blinking round. "I'm Beau's pal, ain't I, Beau?"

"You're my fag!" said Beauclerc.

"Fag—eh?" said Nugent, in astonishment. "So you have a fag—in the same Form?"

"Well, not exactly a fag," said Bunter, with a cough. "I'm looking after Beau, you know, as he's a new chap and I know the ropes. We're really relations, you know. The Bunters are connected by marriage with the Beauclercs."

Beauclerc stared at him.

"Don't talk rot!" he said.

"Ahem!"

"You're no relation of mine," went on the baronet, knocking off the ash of his cigarette. "You may be related to some of our grooms or butlers, perhaps."

"Ahem!"

"You're my fag," went on Beauclerc calmly. "So long as you fag for me you are welcome to feed at my expense. That's all."

Bunter smiled a sickly smile.

"That's only Beau's little joke, you know, you fellows," he said feebly. "We're really old pals, you know."

"Nothing of the sort," said Beauclerc. "And don't call me Beau. I only allow my friends to call me that."

"Ahem!"

If Billy Bunter had not had a skin as thick as a rhinoceros's he would have felt that his feed in No. 1 Study was dearly purchased. But the jam-tarts were good, and the cake was plentiful, and Bunter swallowed the baronet's insolence along with the feed.

"Beauclerc," said Harry Wharton, "you'll listen to me, please!"

"Thanks! I don't care to listen to you."

"You'll listen, whether you care to or not," said Wharton angrily. "You are smoking in my study."

"In my study!" said Beauclerc.

"Don't you know that smoking isn't allowed in the school?"

"I don't know, and I don't care."

"If a prefect found you smoking you would be reported to the Form-master and caned."

Beauclerc shrugged his shoulders.

"And whether you are found out or not, we don't intend to have anything of the kind here," said Harry, with a gleam in his eyes. "Why, the place fairly reeks with tobacco. It will become the talk of the Form. We shall have Loder or Walker down on us in next to no time. We're not going to get into a row to please you, and we don't like it, anyway. You can't smoke here!"

"I shall please myself about that."

Wharton's lips set grimly.

"You won't please yourself, Beauclerc; you'll please us!" he rapped out sharply. "I've told you it's against the rules and that it will get the whole study into trouble, and I give you an opportunity of chucking it of your own accord."

"Thanks!"

"Well, are you going to chuck it?"

"No!"

"Then you'll be made to!" said Harry. "I may tell you that I'm captain of the Remove. You're to stop smoking here."

"Rubbish!"

"Throw away that cigarette!"

"I decline to do anything of the sort."

"Very well, I'll throw it away for you."

Wharton advanced upon him, his hands clenched and his eyes gleaming. He had tried to be patient with the new boy, because he was a new boy, but Beauclerc's insolence

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was too much for him. Beauclerc rose to his feet, the cigarette still between his lips.

The captain of the Remove laid hands upon him without ceremony. He grasped the cigarette and jerked it away and tossed it into the grate. Beauclerc clenched his hands convulsively. But he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and he did not care to tackle the captain of the Remove.

"Have you any more about you?" asked Wharton grimly.

"Find out!"

"I intend to!"

"Hands off!" shouted Beauclerc furiously, and he struggled in Wharton's grasp.

"Hold his hands, Franky, while I look for his smokes," said Wharton quietly.

"Let me go!"

"Rats!"

Nugent grasped Beauclerc's wrists and held them fast, and Wharton coolly turned out his pockets. Two or three packets of cigarettes came to light. Wharton opened them and broke the cigarettes into small pieces and threw them into the grate. Beauclerc watched that proceeding with eyes that almost flamed.

"That's all," said Wharton. "Let him go, Frank. Now, mind this, Beauclerc! You're not to bring any more smokes into this study. If you do, you'll be licked. The next time I catch you smoking here I'll lay a cricket-stump about you. Understand that!"

"You—you hound!"

"Better language, please!" said Wharton sharply. "I don't like being called names. You'll be civil while you're in this study."

"I'll make you smart somehow for meddling with me!" said Beauclerc, between his teeth. "And I'll smoke here as much as I like."

"You know what will happen to you, if you do. Bunter!"

"Hallo!" said Bunter.

"Get out!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Get out of this study! If you're rotten cad enough to fag for Beauclerc for the sake of a feed, you're not going to do it in this study. Clear off, or you'll go out on your neck!"

"Let Bunter alone!" exclaimed Beauclerc, fiercely. "I can have him to fag for me if I choose, and I can have him here in my study if I like."

"That's where you're mistaken; you can't! Are you going, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter rose hastily to his feet.

"I—I say, you know—" he stammered. "I—I can be here with my old pal Beau, you know. I'm jolly well not going to clear out—ow! leggo! yow!"

Wharton gave him no time for more. He grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar, swung him round to the doorway, and sent him spinning into the passage. Billy Bunter rolled over on the linoleum and roared.

"Look here—" began Beauclerc hotly.

Wharton turned on him savagely.

"Shut up! If I have any more cheek from you, I'll send you after Bunter."

"You impertinent cad—!"

That was enough for Wharton. His powerful grasp fell upon Beauclerc. The new boy made a grab for the poker, with the evident intention of using it as a defensive weapon. But Wharton gave him no time. He swept the young rascal off his feet, whirled him to the door, and hurled him into the passage. He staggered along, and collided with Bunter, who was slowly picking himself up, and rolled over him, and there was another howl of anguish from the fat junior.

Beauclerc sprang to his feet, his face convulsed with fury.

"Now come back, if you choose!" said Wharton, his eyes blazing. "I'm just inclined to give you the licking of your life, you rotten cad."

Beauclerc did not come back. He turned away, muttering furiously to himself, and stalked down the passage. Wharton turned back into No. 1 Study and slammed the door.

"Now we'll have tea," said Nugent cheerfully.

Wharton's brow cleared, and he grinned rather ruefully.

"I suppose I was an ass to lose my temper with him," he said. "But I think he would try the patience of a giddy saint. I can't stand him! Pah! The place reeks like a tap-room." He opened the window wide; and they sat down to tea. Sir Harry Beauclerc did not return; and the two chums had their tea untroubled by the presence of their obnoxious study-mate.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Lord Mauleverer on the War-Path!

LORD MAULEVERER, the dandy of the Remove, was reclining at ease on the sofa in his study, when there was a tap at his door, and Sir Harry Beauclerc came in. Lord Mauleverer did not trouble to rise, but he turned his head and nodded politely to his visitor. Lord Mauleverer never troubled to do anything if he could help it. He was the champion slacker of the Remove; but withal so kind and good-natured that he was very popular.

"Hullo!" he said lazily. "You're the new chap—what? Squat down somewhere, my dear boy."

Beauclerc sat down.

He glanced about the study with an approving eye. Lord Mauleverer's quarters were quite sybaritic. The schoolboy millionaire had as much money as he wanted—and he spent it carelessly. Anything that took his fancy he purchased without reflection; and the furnishing of his study represented a good round sum. Fellows in the lower Forms at Greyfriars who regarded five shillings as a handsome allowance, heard with wonder and admiration that Mauly had given ten guineas for his curtains, and eight guineas for his sofa. Lord Mauleverer's unlimited resources had caused some little anxiety to the Head at first; and he would very soon have stepped in, if Mauleverer had shown any trace of viciousness in his extravagances. But Mauly was one of the best fellows in the school—apart from slacking and extravagance, he had no bad habits. His good-nature led him to be sponged upon by some of the less scrupulous fellows, like Buster and Snoop, but he never missed the money.

"You're Lord Mauleverer?" said Beauclerc.

"Yaas!"

"I'm Sir Harry Beauclerc!"

"Glad to meet you, my dear fellow."

"You seem to be pretty comfortably fixed here."

"Yaas!"

"The other studies seem to be pretty mean kennels, so far as I can see," Beauclerc remarked.

Lord Mauleverer made no reply to that, but he took the trouble to look a little sharply at Beauclerc.

"You have this room to yourself I understand?" Beauclerc pursued.

"Yaas; a special arrangement with the Head by my guardian," Lord Mauleverer explained. "I like to be comfy."

"Look here, Mauleverer, I think we should get on," said Beauclerc. "I have been put into No. 1. I can't get on with those cads there. We seem to be the only two decent chaps in the place."

"Oh!"

"It's rotten for a fellow of my position to have to mix with all sorts of bounders," said Beauclerc. "I don't like it naturally!"

"Begad!"

"Well, what do you say—suppose we try it together, what?"

"Sorry!"

"I think we should get on," urged Beauclerc.

"I don't think so," said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "You have alluded to the chaps in No. 1 Study as cads. They're friends of mine. I should be obliged to you if you'd take back that expression, dear boy."

Beauclerc scowled. He had expected to find Lord Mauleverer a fellow of his own sort, and he realised that he had made a mistake. Lord Mauleverer sat up on the sofa, looking much less lazy. There was a gleam in his eyes now.

"I never take anything back," said Beauclerc arrogantly.

"Begad! Don't you?"

"Certainly not."

"I'm sorry for that!" said Lord Mauleverer reflectively.

"Why?"

"Because I shall be put to the trouble of getting up and punching your nose," said his lordship lazily. "I don't like the trouble, but I can't let you call my friends names."

Beauclerc stared at him. Lord Mauleverer sighed, and pushed back his cuffs. It went very much against the grain with him to take the trouble to punch anybody's nose; but he was evidently in deadly earnest.

"Look here," said Beauclerc, with a slight laugh. "I didn't come here to quarrel with you, Mauleverer!"

"Then take back what you said about my pals!"

"Oh, all right—I take it back, if they're friends of yours."

Lord Mauleverer stretched himself on the sofa again with a sigh of relief.

"Thanks awfully, dear boy," he said affably. "It would have been a tremendous trouble to punch your nose!"

"Look here, why shouldn't we hit it off?" said Beauclerc. "You're about the only fellow in the form of my class. I don't care for the others. Why shouldn't we be friends?"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Impossible, my dear fellow. I'm afraid you are a rank outsider!"

"What!" shouted Beauclerc.

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—**"THE MISSING MASTER!"**

EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"The way you treated that kid, your foster-brother—what was his name—I never remember names—Bolt, or Colt——"

"Holt."

"Yaas, Holt. You treated him like a cad, you know," said Lord Mauleverer calmly.

Beauclerc set his lips.

"You don't understand," he said. "Jack Holt was my foster-brother—but he was only a common farmer's son. It was his business to make himself useful to me!"

"Begad!"

"I didn't want to come to Greyfriars, and I was determined I wouldn't," explained Beauclerc. "I've always been used to having my way. My guardian was laid up—so I made young Holt come here in my name."

"And then gave him away afterwards!" said Lord Mauleverer, with a curl of the lip.

Beauclerc shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, it had to end. I wanted to go to Highcliffe, and I tried to get my guardian to send me there—so Holt had to clear out of Greyfriars. I was done with him!"

"He was a good little chap!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I liked him!"

"He was useful!" said Beauclerc superciliously. "I don't know that he had any other good qualities. My guardian acted like a rotter—as soon as he found it all out, he brought me here, instead of letting me go to Highcliffe as I wanted!"

"Yaas, that was rather rotten—for Greyfriars!"

Beauclerc gritted his teeth.

"I came here to make friends with you, Mauleverer," he said.

Lord Mauleverer yawned.

"Thanks! I'm not looking out for friends of your sort. I think you are a rank outsider, you know, begad!"

The baronet rose to his feet.

He stood looking down on the lazily recumbent form of the schoolboy millionaire, his hands clenched and his eyes gleaming. He was disappointed, and he was savagely angry. He was calculating whether it would be quite safe to attempt to give Lord Mauleverer the licking he longed to bestow upon him. The slacker of the Remove certainly did not look like a fighting-man.

"Shut the door after you, won't you?" yawned Lord Mauleverer.

"I'll shut your mouth for you first," said Beauclerc, and he struck at the calm face of the schoolboy earl with his open palm.

Lord Mauleverer jerked his head aside with unexpected quickness, and Beauclerc's hand smote the head of the sofa instead, and he uttered a cry of pain.

"Better get out!" suggested Lord Mauleverer calmly. "I really don't want the trouble of throwing you out, begad!"

Beauclerc did not reply. He sucked his hand for a moment, and then hurled himself upon the schoolboy earl. All the rancour in his breast found expression now, as he assailed a victim whom he believed could not stand up to him. But he met with the surprise of his life at that moment.

Lord Mauleverer curled up on the sofa, and returned grasp for grasp; and his grasp was unexpectedly powerful.

"Begad!" he murmured. "I shall have the fearful fag of chucking you out after all!"

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!

The two juniors struggled furiously. All Lord Mauleverer's laziness was gone now. But Beauclerc was fighting hard. He had little courage, but his savage temper was fully roused, and the humiliations he had received at Greyfriars spurred him on. There was a sound of thumping on the wall from the next study. The noise of the combat had been heard, and the thumps on the wall were a gentle hint to shut up. A minute later the door was thrown open, and Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, looked in.

"What the dickens is this row about?" he demanded. "My only hat! This way, you fellows! The sight of the century—Mauly's exerting himself!"

"Yaas, begad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

There was a rush of footsteps in the passage. Remove fellows gathered from far and wide to see the unaccustomed spectacle. Lord Mauleverer was generally supposed to be too lazy to live; and to see him engaged in a fistic combat was a miracle. There were shouts of laughter and encouragement from the juniors thronging outside the door.

"Go it, Mauly!"

"Go for his beak!"

"Give him another!"

"Hurrah!"

"I'm g-g-going to chuck him out!" gasped Mauleverer. "He's a c-c-ad, you know, and I'm going to chuck him out, begad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Heave-ho!"

Bump! Lord Mauleverer went heavily to the floor of the study. Beauclerc had downed him; and as the schoolboy earl rolled on the Persian carpet, Beauclerc threw himself upon him, hitting out furiously.

"Ow! Begad! Ow! Ow!"

"Stop that, you blackguard!" roared Bob Cherry. "Don't hit a fellow when he's down! Stop it, you cad!"

Bob sprang into the study, grasped Beauclerc by the collar, and wrenched him away from Mauleverer. With a swing of his powerful arm, he sent the baronet crashing into a corner. Then he helped Mauleverer to his feet.

Lord Mauleverer mopped his perspiring brow with a cambric handkerchief, and gasped for breath. His noble features were showing some signs of damage, and there was a red gush of "claret" from his aristocratic nose.

"Begad!" he gasped. "The rotter, you know! Begad!"

"Go in and finish him," said Bob. "I'll see fair play!"

"Yaas, begad!"

Beauclerc staggered up. Lord Mauleverer advanced upon him, looking not in the least like a slacker now. His noble blood was up. Hammer and tongs he went for the new junior, and for a few minutes Beauclerc fought savagely; and then he gave ground, and retreated to the door under a shower of blows. But the crowd of Removites there did not make room for him to pass.

"Back up!" chuckled Vernon-Smith. "You're not finished yet! Go for him! He'll tire soon; he's too lazy to keep it up."

"Pile in, Beauclerc! Don't be a funk!"

"Let me pass!" shrieked Beauclerc.

"Rats!"

"Fight it out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no passing the solid phalanx of juniors in the doorway. Beauclerc, in desperation, sprang at Mauleverer, and closed with him. But this time the schoolboy earl was not downed. He grasped the new junior, swept him off his feet, and hurled him at the open doorway. There was a terrific crash as Beauclerc came into collision with the crowd there, and yells from the juniors. Beauclerc disappeared among a forest of legs.

"Begad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer, sitting down and fanning himself. "That has made me quite warm, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sir Harry Beauclerc scrambled away through the juniors, coming into violent contact with a good many boots as he did so. He escaped down the passage, dusty and dishevelled, and in a raging temper.

"After him!" roared Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, always pleased to find somebody to rag. "Let's make him come back and finish."

"Hear, hear!"

And the juniors, with a whoop, broke into a rush after the schoolboy baronet. Beauclerc tore open the door of No. 1 Study and rushed in.

Harry Wharton & Co. were having their tea, and had nearly finished. They jumped up as Beauclerc rushed in.

"Hallo! What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Wharton, in astonishment. "What's all that blessed uproar about?"

"Kick him out, you chaps!" shouted Bolsover major, looking in at the doorway. "He's started a fight with Mauly, and he won't finish. He's not half licked yet."

"Have him out!" roared Skinner.

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"I suppose he knows whether he's had enough," he said.

"Have you had enough, Beauclerc?"

"Yes!" panted Beauclerc.

"Then leave him alone, you fellows."

"Look here—" began Bolsover major gruffly.

"'Nuff said! You're not going to rag anybody in this study," said Wharton decidedly. "Clear off, and let the poor beggar alone."

And the intended raggers reluctantly cleared off. Beauclerc stood panting.

"What on earth did you get into a row with Mauly for, Beauclerc?" asked Nugent. "Mauly is the most peaceable chap in the Form. He wouldn't take the trouble to quarrel unless he was fairly driven into it."

Beauclerc snarled.

"He was insolent," he said. "I will stand insolence from no one."

Nugent whistled.

"Then you've got a high old time before you here," he remarked. "I should advise you to come down off your perch, and take things a little more sensibly."

"When I want your advice I will ask for it."

"There's something else you're asking for now—and that's a hiding," said Nugent, with a flush; "and if you hadn't had one already you'd get it."

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"Don't talk to me!" snarled Beauclerc. "I don't want your advice, and I don't want your remarks. I want nothing to do with cads!"

Nugent compressed his lips. He quietly opened the door of the study.

"They're gone now," he said. "You can go, too."

"I shall not go!"

"I give you one second to clear out!" said Nugent, his voice trembling with anger. "I'm fed up with you. Are you going?"

Beauclerc remembered his previous experience. He stepped to the door.

"I shall go directly to Mr. Quelch, and tell him that you have turned me out of this study," he said.

"You sneaking cad—"

"Sneaking or not, that is what I shall do," said Beauclerc, with a sneer. "Perhaps you will change your mind now."

"Not at all. Go and tell Mr. Quelch. Tell him I turned you out, and you can tell him at the same time that I punched your head," said Nugent; and he suited the action to the word. And Beauclerc staggered into the passage. Nugent slammed the door after him. Then he looked at his chum. Wharton was grinning.

"Who's lost his temper this time?" he queried.

Nugent breathed hard.

"We can't have him here!" he exclaimed. "I can't stand him! If he stays in this study, I shall have to get out of it. It's too thick! There will be trouble with Quelch now. The cad means to sneak!"

Harry Wharton nodded. There was no doubt that Beauclerc meant to add to his other amiable qualities the distinction of sneaking; and that the chums of No. 1 Study would in consequence be called over the coals by their Form-master. Ten minutes later they were not surprised when Nugent minor, of the Second, put his head into the study to inform them that Mr. Quelch wanted them at once.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Disagreeable Duty!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, was looking very grave when Wharton and Nugent came into his study. Beauclerc was not there, but it was pretty clear that the new junior had made his report. Mr. Quelch did not look angry; perhaps he guessed that the trouble was the result of Beauclerc's own provocation; but he was very grave.

"Come in, Wharton and Nugent. You are aware, I suppose, that the new boy, Beauclerc, has been to me."

"I suppose so, sir," said Wharton.

"He declares that you have turned him out of the study to which I assigned him," said the Remove-master.

"Well, we chucked him out, sir," said Wharton.

"I did!" said Nugent.

"Well, I did first," said Harry. "He's been chucked out twice!"

Mr. Quelch could not help smiling a little. But his face immediately became grave again.

"From what I have observed of Beauclerc, and from what I have been told by his guardian, I have very little doubt that you were provoked," he said. "But, of course, I cannot allow anything of the kind. Beauclerc has been assigned to your study, and there he must remain."

"Oh, of course, sir," said Wharton, at once. "We only chucked him out on—on principle—I mean, we're going to let him come back again, of course."

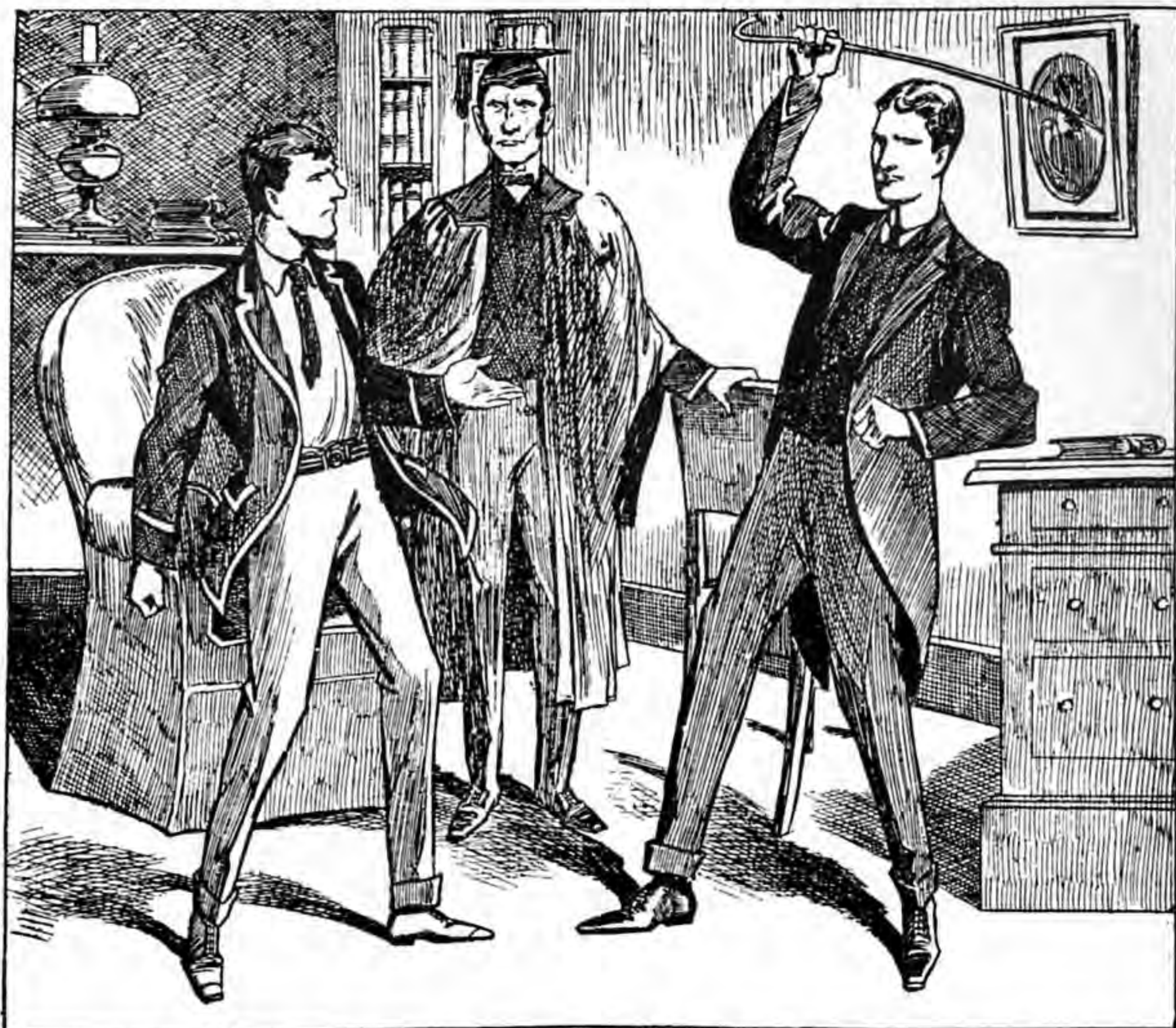
"Oh, of course, sir!" Nugent said. "Only—only if you'll allow me to suggest it, sir—there are a good many fellows in the Form Beauclerc would get on with better than with us. He's not our sort. He would pull much better with Skinner, or Snoop—"

"It is my special wish that he should be in your study, Nugent."

Nugent's face fell.

"Then there's nothing more to be said, sir!"

"Yes, I have something to say to you," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "This boy, Beauclerc, has come here under somewhat peculiar circumstances. The defects in his character are not wholly his own fault. He has been brought up under unusual circumstances. As a distant relation of the late baronet, he was not expected to succeed to the title or the estates, and he was greatly neglected. He was left to the care of his foster-father, and brought up with his foster-brother, and allowed to run quite wild. His education leaves much to be desired, and he has developed an imperious temper through being allowed always to have his own way by the people in whose charge he was. The sudden accession to wealth and importance, after years of neglect and poverty, seems to have turned his head somewhat. No doubt he makes himself very



"I command you to hold out your hands, Bolsover!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. Bolsover gritted his teeth, and held out his hands in turn, and Loder caned him, laying the six strokes on hard. (See Chapter II.)

unpleasant. But I think that some allowances ought to be made for him—don't you think so?"

At that direct appeal, the two juniors looked a little uneasy. There was certainly something in what Mr. Quelch said.

"That is what I am going to speak to you about," said the Remove-master. "I want you two boys to do the best you can for Beauclerc. Be patient with him—do not be quick to take offence—help him as much as you can over the first difficulties here. Make him understand, by means as gentle as possible, that he is simply a common junior like the rest, and that no regard is paid to rank and wealth here. Show him friendship instead of hostility, and I think that the result may be very beneficial. It would be a good deed, and I am sure you want to oblige me."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"You are members of the Boy Scouts organisation," added Mr. Quelch. "Your rules as Boy Scouts bind you to do a good turn every day, I believe?"

"That is so, sir."

"Then let this be the good turn you are bound to do—make the best of this lad, Beauclerc. Be patient and kind with him. It takes two to make a quarrel—if you will not quarrel with him, he cannot quarrel with you."

The chums of the Remove were not quite so sure about that.

"I think that your influence and example will be good for him, and in that I am paying you a compliment," said Mr. Quelch. "I hope he will learn to fall into your ways. That is one reason why he must remain with you."

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING MASTER!"

"Ahem!" murmured the juniors.

"I know that the boy is difficult to deal with. His conduct in sending his foster-brother here, in his name, because he wished to stay away from school, was outrageous. But I am sure he will learn better. You were pleased, I think, to have the foster-brother in your study, when he was supposed to be Beauclerc—"

"He was a very different sort of chap, sir," said Wharton. "He was one of the best!"

"Perhaps Beauclerc may turn out to be less troublesome than he seems at first, if he is dealt with with patience and kindness. May I ask you to make the attempt?"

There was a moment's silence. The juniors were somewhat taken by surprise; but, of course, it was impossible to refuse.

And they liked and respected Mr. Quelch, too, and wanted to please him. Nor were they insensible to the compliment implied in his selection of them to set an example to the troublesome and headstrong baronet.

"Unless Beauclerc improves in many ways, it will be impossible for him to stay at Greyfriars," the Form-master added. "Yet Greyfriars is certainly the best place for him. He will receive here the training he needs. It will be a serious thing for him if he has to go. Knowing that, I am sure you will do your best."

"Very well, sir!" said Wharton, with a glance at Nugent. "I'm willing!"

"Same here, sir!" said Nugent.

"Thank you very much. Patience and kindness and friend-

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ship may work wonders, even with an obstinate and wilful boy," said Mr. Quelch. "I am much obliged to you."

And the juniors left the study.

In the passage they stopped to give each other glum looks. "Well, this is a go!" murmured Nugent. "I was expecting a licking for chucking the cad out, but I'd rather have had the licking than this! Fancy taking that awful outsider under our wing!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders in an exasperated way. "Quelch doesn't know quite what a rotter he is, and we couldn't tell him," he said. "But it's up to us now, Franky. I suppose the rotter is entitled to be given a chance, but I do wish he'd been planted on somebody else. But it's up to us now."

"Ye-es!"

"After all, it's quite true about the scout rule—a good turn every day. We'll pile all our good turns on to Beaulere," said Wharton, with a faint smile. "We—we'll have a try at chumming with him."

"Oh, my hat!"

"May as well go the whole giddy unicorn, while we're about it!"

"All right; but—but I don't believe it will work," said Nugent. "Still, we'll try! If he's got a rag of decency about him, we'll bring it to light. Lemme see—we'll begin to-morrow—what?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Strike the iron while it's hot!" he said. "The poor beast needs looking after his first day here, more than any other time. Let's look for him now, and help him with his preparation, and—and be regular Dutch uncles to him right off!"

"Ow!" groaned Nugent. "Won't that be rather a sudden change after slinging him out of the study on his neck?"

"We'll tell him we're sorry for that," said Wharton resolutely.

"Rats! Draw a line somewhere."

"No; I mean it. I am rather sorry—he can't help being an utter outsider, perhaps, and he hasn't had time yet to profit by our shining example, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll go the whole unicorn. Come on—let's look for him, and make it up, and—and out—Eric Eric!" groaned Wharton.

And they looked for the obnoxious new boy, to whom they fully intended to be very, very good.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Sheer Check!

"SEEN Beaulere?"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent asked that question up and down the School House.

But nobody, apparently, had seen Beaulere.

As it was after dark now, and the gates were locked, it did not occur to them at first that the new boy had gone out.

But the common-room and the studies were drawn blank, and he was not in the gym or in the Close. Before they had time to proceed further with their search, the school had to assemble for calling-over.

Harry Wharton glanced up and down the ranks of the Remove when they assembled. The baronet was not to be seen there. They grinned at the sight of Lord Mauleverer. The dandy of the Remove was surreptitiously caressing his nose, which was decidedly swollen. And there was a dark ring round one of his eyes. It was very rare for Lord Mauleverer to show the signs of conflict. He was the easiest-going fellow in the Lower Fourth, and it was difficult to quarrel with him. But the new junior had succeeded in doing it. Lord Mauleverer grinned ruefully as he met the glances turned upon him.

"I feel beastly, begad!" he murmured. "That new study-mate of yours is a rotter—what?"

"Do you know where he is?" asked Nugent. "I suppose you haven't slaughtered him and buried him under your study floor, have you?"

"Begad, no! I haven't seen him since he scudded out of my study. Isn't he here?"

"No; he's missing call-over."

"Begad! He's looking for more trouble, then."

"Silence!" called out Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars. And the murmuring voices in the Remove died away.

All the Form had now remarked the absence of Beaulere. It was possible, as it was his first day at the school, that he did not know about call-over; but it was more likely that he was missing it out of carelessness and "cheek." Mr. Quelch was taking call-over, and he rapped out the name without receiving a reply.

"Beaulere!"

The Remove-master looked sharply over the Form.

"Beaulere!" he repeated.

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Then he marked down the new boy as absent.

After calling-over, the fellows dispersed, and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent went down to the lodge to speak to Gosling. In their new role of protectors, guides, philosophers and friends to the new junior, they wanted to know what had become of him. Wharton asked the school-porter if he had seen him.

"Which the young gentleman went out just before locking-up," said Gosling. "I warned 'im that I was jest goin' to close the gates, but, bless you, that didn't make no difference. Werry 'igh and 'aughty, that young gentleman!"

"And he hasn't come in?" asked Wharton.

"He ain't, that I've seed," said Gosling, "and wot I says is this 'ere, when he does come in, I'll report 'im!"

The chums returned to the schoolhouse.

"Nothing doing!" Nugent remarked. "May as well get on to our prep. I wonder where the young ass has gone."

"To see his precious friends at Highcliffe, very likely," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "He was very thick with Ponsonby & Co., you know. Well, it's his own look out; we can't help it!"

The kindly intention of helping Beaulere with his preparation was frustrated. The chums of Study No. 1 did their own prep, and came down afterwards; but they did not find Beaulere in the common-room.

"Hasn't the new kid come in yet?" Wharton asked, addressing nobody in particular.

"Haven't seen him," said Bolsover major, with a yawn.

"Quelch has been asking for him," said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "He was looking like a blessed thundercloud."

"The young ass is asking for trouble," said Hazeldene. "It's getting on for bedtime now. Perhaps he's going to make a night of it."

"Cheeky young rotter!" growled Bolsover major. "We'll take some of the impudence out of him in the dorm to-night!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Never saw a new kid put on such airs," said Russell. "He walks about as if the earth weren't quite good enough to put his feet on. Why, Mauly never puts on side like that—do you, Mauly?"

"I hope not, dear boy," said Lord Mauleverer, as the juniors laughed.

"And he's got the cheek to start a fag!" said Bulstrode indignantly. "He's got that cad Bunter to fag for him, as if he were a senior. Bunter would fag for Old Nick if Old Nick would feed him!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Mean cad!" growled Bolsover major. "Let me catch you fagging for him, that's all!"

"I suppose I can look after my own relation if I like?" said Bunter. "The Bunters and the Beauleres are closely connected—"

"Yes; we've heard what Beaulere says about that," grinned Nugent. "He thinks you may be related to a butler or a groom in his family."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's only his little joke, you know," said Bunter, with a feeble grin. "We're really great pals, and—and—"

"Let me catch you fagging for him!" repeated Bolsover. "Why, I don't have a fag myself! We don't let Coker of the Fifth fag anybody, and we don't fag even for the prefects in the Remove. Let me catch a Remove kid starting a fag, and I'll make mincemeat of him and his fag too. The awful cheek!"

And there was a murmur of indignation from the Removites. The meanness of Bunter and the swank of Beaulere equally exasperated them. Harry Wharton and Nugent looked at one another grimly. They would have all their work cut out if they were to befriend the fellow who had made himself universally unpopular on his first day at Greyfriars. They could hear some of the Fourth talking about him, too. Temple, the captain of the Fourth, was expressing his opinion of Beaulere to Dabney and Fry, and his opinion was not complimentary. Every fellow who had seen the baronet, in fact, seemed to have taken a dislike to him. It was a decidedly bad start.

It was all the more reason, perhaps, why he needed help and counsel from his study-mates. But their promise to Mr. Quelch weighed heavily upon the two juniors. However, they fully intended to keep it.

Wingate of the Sixth looked into the common-room soon after nine o'clock. Bedtime was at half-past for all the Lower Forms. The captain of Greyfriars glanced over the crowd of the Remove and Third and Fourth, evidently in search of someone; but he did not find the one he sought.

"Hasn't Beaulere come in?" he called out.

"Not yet," said Wharton.

"Anybody know where he's gone?"

"No."

Wingate frowned.

"He has gone out without leave," he said. "If he comes in before bedtime, tell him he's to go to Mr. Quelch's study."

"Right-ho!"

The prefect walked away frowning. The cool "check" of the new boy in thus absenting himself deeply exasperated the usually good-natured Wingate. For the rules of the school to be treated with open contempt by a new boy on his first day there was something quite new in his experience.

A little later Loder of the Sixth came in to shepherd the Remove away to their dormitory.

As they came down the passage, they caught sight of Beauclerc. He had just come in. He looked tired, and as sullen as usual.

"Here he is!" sang out Hazeldene.

"Oh! So you've come back, have you?" said Loder grimly, looking at Beauclerc. "You're to report yourself to Mr. Quelch."

Beauclerc nodded carelessly, and walked away to the Form-master's study.

Mr. Quelch received him with a frown.

"Have you only just returned, Beauclerc?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Yes? Yes what?" thundered Mr. Quelch, his hand reaching out towards a cane.

"Yes, sir," muttered Beauclerc, scared by the light in the Form-master's eyes.

"That is better!" said Mr. Quelch. "You must learn to speak to your masters with proper respect, Beauclerc. Otherwise, you will be punished."

"Yes, sir," muttered the junior.

"Where have you been?"

"I've been visiting my friends at Highcliffe."

"Surely you were not allowed to remain so late at Highcliffe School?" Mr. Quelch exclaimed.

"I've had a walk since."

Mr. Quelch looked at him searchingly.

"I trust, Beauclerc, that you have been to no place that you cannot mention to me?" he exclaimed. "Your guardian has informed me that you have contracted bad habits, such as smoking and card-playing for money. I need hardly say that nothing of the kind is allowed here."

Beauclerc was silent.

"You missed calling-over, and you have stayed out till after nine o'clock," said Mr. Quelch. "That is a very serious offence. I am disposed, however, to be lenient with you, as you are a new boy, and possibly did not know the rules. Remember, in future, that you are bound to be present, and to answer to your name whenever the roll is called. Also, no one is allowed out of gates after locking-up without a special pass signed by a master or a prefect. I will pass this offence, as it is probably due to your ignorance of the rules of the school. But I shall not accept ignorance as an excuse on another occasion. It is your business to learn the rules of the school you belong to, and to abide by them dutifully. Do you understand?"

"Yes—sir."

"Very well. Now you may go to bed."

The junior sullenly left the study. Mr. Quelch sighed a little as the door closed after him. His new pupil seemed likely to be a source of trouble to him, but the Remove-master wanted to do his duty by him. Outside the closed door Beauclerc shook his fist at the study, and then sullenly made his way to the Remove dormitory. All eyes in the Remove were turned upon him as he came in.

"Licked?" asked Skinner.

Beauclerc made a haughty gesture.

"Certainly not!" he said.

There was a general exclamation of amazement.

"You don't mean to say that Quelch has let you off!" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"My hat! What's the matter with Quelch?" said Tom Brown. "Any of us would have got the licking of our lives for it."

"Yaas, begad!"

"Rotten favouritism, I call it!" snorted Hazeldene.

"Well, perhaps Quelch thinks he ought to go easy with a new chap," remarked Bob Cherry mildly. "Perhaps Beauclerc didn't know he wasn't allowed out after locking-up."

"Rats! He knew all right."

"Certainly I know," said Beauclerc. "But I acted to please myself. I always do."

"You'll be given something to cure all that," growled Bolsover major.

Beauclerc shrugged his shoulders, and sat down on his bed, and glanced round for Bunter.

Loder, the prefect, had left the juniors to turn in, and was coming back to put the light out. The Remove were left to themselves for ten minutes.

"Bunter!" called out Beauclerc.

"Yes, Beau, old chap!" said Billy Bunter, delighted at

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being taken notice of by the baronet. "Anything I can do for you, Beau?"

"Yes. Don't call me Beau, for one thing. I don't like it."

"Ahem!"

"Come and take my boots off!"

"Certainly, old fellow!"

The Removites simply gasped as Bunter knelt down by the bed and Beauclerc stretched out his legs for his boots to be unlaced.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Nipped in the Bud!

BEAUCLERC sat with his hands in his pockets, apparently unconscious of the astonished gaze of the Removites. Bunter proceeded to unlace his boots.

Beauclerc had made him his fag, with Bunter's willing consent. Bunter would have fagged for anybody who had made it worth his while. But it was a point of honour in the Remove to fag for nobody. Wingate, the captain of the school, was the only fellow any Removite would condescend to fag for. There had been endless trouble with prefects like Loder and Walker because the Remove would not fag for them. But even Loder would never have carried fagging so far as to make a junior take his boots off. It was reserved for Beauclerc, a junior himself, to go to that extreme.

Some of the juniors laughed, some looked very angry. The "side" put on by the new boy was intensely exasperating to most of them. There were fellows there who were quite as well off as Beauclerc, and certainly who had been brought up in more expensive surroundings, but they never thought of having their boots taken off for them. Even Lord Mauleverer, slacker and dandy as he was, was quite able to take his own boots off.

Bolsover major's face became like a thundercloud. Bolsover major seemed to take the new boy's insolence as a special affront to himself. Bolsover had his faults, but sucking up to titles and wealth was not one of them. He stood transfixed, as it were, for some moments, and then he strode towards the baronet and his fag.

"Bunter!" he roared.

Bunter blinked up through his spectacles.

"Stop that!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover——"

"Let him alone!" said Beauclerc, with a dark look at the bully of the Remove. "Bunter is fagging for me. You've no right to interfere."

"Yes, lemme alone, Bolsover," said Bunter. "I can do as I like, I suppose. I'm going to take my old pal's boots off if I choose."

Bolsover made no reply; but he raised his boot, and gave Bunter a rough shove in the ribs, and the Owl of the Remove rolled over on the floor.

"If you touch Beauclerc's boots again, I'll wipe up the dorm with you, you fat toad!" said Bolsover between his teeth. "There's going to be no fagging here."

"Ow, ow!"

"But as you're so fond of taking boots off, you can take off the boots of the whole Form," went on Bolsover. "Sit down, you chaps. Bunter wants to take your boots off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, I don't want to do anything of the sort!" howled Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to take your boots off. I—ow!—ow!—leggo my ear, Bolsover, you beast! Ow—ow!"

Bolsover compressed Bunter's fat ear between his finger and thumb.

"You've chosen to fag for that cad," he said. "Well, you sha'n't fag for him, but you shall jolly well fag for the whole Form, as a lesson to you. Take my boots off."

"Oh, really—yaroooh!"

"Are you going to take my boots off?" roared Bolsover.

"Ow—yes—I—I really meant to say I'd be very pleased to take them off!" groaned Bunter. "Ow! Leggo! Oh!"

Bolsover released his ear and picked up a slipper.

"Now pile in," he said. "Let him take your boots off, all you chaps! If he's looking for a fag's job, let him have plenty of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Here you are, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked apprehensively at Bolsover, and slowly unlaced his boots and drew them off. There was no arguing with the bully of the Remove. And all the Form were on Bolsover's side. They were utterly disgusted with Bunter, and the idea of making him fag for the whole Form met with

unanimous approval. Bolsover's boots were taken off, and Bunter grunted and rose to his feet.

"Now Skinner's," said Bolsover.

"I—I say—yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as the slipper came down across his fat shoulders. "I—yow!—ow!—all right! I'm just going to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Beaulere sat looking on and scowling, but the rest of the Remove roared with laughter. From one to another of the juniors Bunter went dismally, Bolsover following him, slipper in hand. When Bunter slacked down, the slipper came into play, and he yelled and set to work again. Harry Wharton & Co. seldom joined in any of Bolsover's "rags," but this time they were quite at one with him. He had to take off the boots of the Co. along with the rest. By the time he had finished, Bunter was looking quite fatigued, and he was considerably sore from the applications of the slipper.

He rolled away towards his own bed, groaning.

"Now come and take my boots off, Bunter," said Beaulere.

Bunter blinked at Bolsover, who gave him a grim look.

"If you do, I'll squash you, you fat toad!" said Bolsover.

"I—I'm sorry, Beau, old chap," faltered Bunter. "You—you see—"

Beaulere gritted his teeth. There was evidently no more fagging to be done in the Remove dormitory. The baronet unlaced his boots himself, and kicked them off ill-temperedly.

"And now you listen to me, Sir Harry Swanky Beaulere!" said Bolsover major. "You've put on too much swank here. You've got to stop it. We don't like it in the Remove. If there's any more of it, you'll get it ragged out of you. See?"

"I shall please myself, and I'll thank you not to interfere in my affairs," said Beaulere, with a supercilious look.

"Oh, knock his silly head off!" said Hazeldene.

"If you touch me I shall complain to the prefect," said Beaulere coldly.

"Yes, you're the sort of rotter who'd start sneaking," said Bolsover. "Well, I'm going to touch you. Come here, Bunter!"

Bunter approached unwillingly.

"Sit on that bed!"

Bunter sat down.

"Take his boots off, Beaulere!"

"What!" howled the baronet.

"Take his boots off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. The expression upon Beaulere's face tickled them.

"I—I say! I don't want Beau to take my boots off, you know," murmured Bunter.

"Shut up!"

"But—but I say, you know—"

"Hold your tongue, Bunter! You hear me, Beaulere? Take Bunter's boots off!"

"I won't!"

"If you don't, I shall make you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bolsover's getting quite brilliant," said Bob Cherry admiringly. "I should never have thought of that, you know. But it's quite a good idea. Go it, Beaulere! What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gander, you know."

Harry Wharton and Nugent had turned into bed. They did not feel inclined to interfere. Beaulere had brought Bolsover major's attentions upon himself by his insolence, and they did not feel called upon to "scrap" with the bully of the Remove on Beaulere's account—on this occasion, at least. He deserved all he was getting, and more.

"Are you going to do as I tell you?" Bolsover major demanded.

"No!" shouted Beaulere furiously.

"I'll jolly soon make you, then!"

Bolsover rushed upon him, and grasped him by the back of the neck. Beaulere struggled, but he was like an infant in Bolsover's powerful grasp. By sheer force Bolsover major forced him to his knees before Bunter. Beaulere's face was crimson with rage and humiliation, and he twisted like a snake in Bolsover's grasp, but he could not escape from it. With his left hand Bolsover flourished the slipper.

"Pile in!" he said.

"I won't!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack! The slipper came down with heavy whacks upon Beaulere's back, and he yelled with pain.

"Now!" said Bolsover.

Beaulere, trembling with rage, began to take off Bunter's boots. There was no help for it. He had the pride that goeth before a fall, but he had not the determination to stand on his pride in spite of everything. There were fellows in the Remove who would have been cut to pieces before they would have obeyed Bolsover's order, but Beaulere was not one of that kind.

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With shaking fingers he unlaced Bunter's boots and drew them off. First one and then the other came off in his hands, while Bolsover's knuckles ground into the back of his neck. The Removites stood round or sat up in bed, almost suffocating with laughter at the sight. The swanker of the Remove was getting exactly what he deserved, and he received no sympathy.

"Now let me go, you hound!" said Beaulere, in a choking voice.

"Hallo! What did you call me?" demanded Bolsover.

"Hound!" yelled Beaulere.

"I don't let new kids call me names," said Bolsover.

"I lick them for it, my pippin! This is where you get it in the neck!"

And the slipper came into play again. Then Bolsover tossed the gasping junior on his bed, and left him there.

Loder, the prefect, had just appeared in the doorway.

"Hallo! Rowing here, as usual?" growled Loder.

Beaulere sprang off the bed, crimson, panting, and furious.

"You are a prefect!" he exclaimed. "I report that fellow to you—Bolsover. He has assaulted me!"

"Sneak!" howled the juniors.

"You have been going for the new boy, Bolsover?" rapped out Loder.

"He asked for it!" said Bolsover savagely.

"He asked for it, Loder!" chorused the Remove.

"This kind of thing can't be allowed," said Loder loftily.

"You will take three hundred lines, Bolsover."

"What!" gasped Bolsover. That was a huge imposition. He might have expected a hundred lines—but three hundred!

"You heard what I said!" snapped Loder. "Now turn in! Not another word! And if Beaulere is ragged any more you'll hear from me."

"Look here—"

"Another word, and I'll double it!" said Loder.

Bolsover major relapsed into furious silence. His brow was like thunder as he turned in.

Loder paused with his hand on the electric light switch.

"Mind, no ragging here to-night!" he said. "I shall keep my eye on this dormitory. I'll keep you young rascals in order somehow."

There was no reply from the Removites, and Loder turned out the light and quitted the dormitory.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Remove Ragging!

THE door of the Remove dormitory had scarcely closed behind the prefect when a buzz of voices broke out. The juniors did not speak loudly; they did not want to bring Loder back into the room. The bully of the Sixth had a heavy hand in dealing with juniors. So their remarks were not loud, but deep. They wanted Beaulere to understand what they thought of him, and certainly they left him in no doubt upon that point.

"Sneak!"

"Cad!"

"Rotter!"

"Worm!"

"Tell-tale!"

"Sneak! Sneak! Sneak!"

These epithets, and a good many more of the same sort, rained upon Beaulere. He made no reply to them. Hard words break no bones, and, so long as the juniors contented themselves with words, Beaulere was not much troubled by their opinion of him. His haughty spirit sustained him under the contempt and disgust of his Form-fellows.

"My hat!" Nugent murmured. "That's the awful cad we're to stand by and help, Harry, old son! Pleasant, ain't it?"

Wharton grunted.

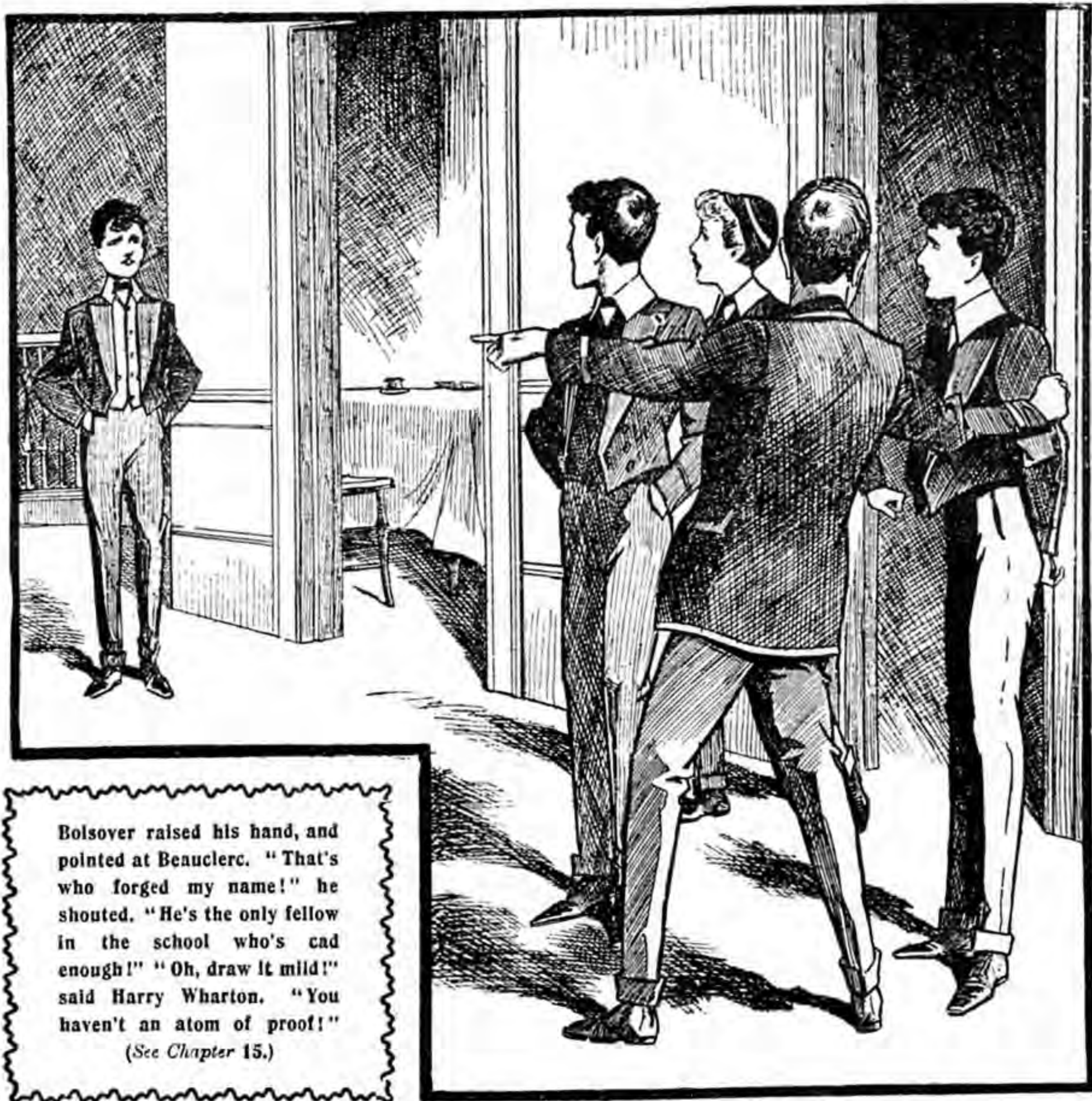
"Three hundred lines!" said Bolsover major, in measured tones. "You all heard it, you fellows—three hundred lines! That's enough to keep me going all to-morrow afternoon! Three hundred dashed lines, because that cad sneaked! And I didn't really lick him—only a whack or two! If he's not satisfied, why can't he stand up for himself—eh?"

"Rotten sneak!"

"He wants to swank over us, and we're not to touch him, or he'll sneak to the prefects," went on Bolsover. "Three hundred lines, by gosh! Why, I'll make the cad wish that he'd never been born!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured the juniors.

"You wait a little bit, Beaulere, my boy!" went on Bolsover. "I'll let you see whether you can sneak about me, and get me three hundred dashed lines! By Jove! I'll make you do the lines to-morrow afternoon, so I will!"



Bolsover raised his hand, and pointed at Beauclerc. "That's who forged my name!" he shouted. "He's the only fellow in the school who's cad enough!" "Oh, draw it mild!" said Harry Wharton. "You haven't an atom of proof!"

(See Chapter 15.)

"Faith, and that's a good idea intirely!" said Micky Desmond. "Make the spalpeen do the lines, bedad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we'll give him a lesson about sneaking, too," said Bolsover. "Only wait a bit, till that spying cad Loder is clear off! I know jolly well why he came down on me like that. It's because Beauclerc is rich, and Loder's got an eye on his money. I know Loder! He'll back that cad up through thick and thin, and borrow money of him! I know him!"

Beauclerc's eyes glinted as he heard that remark. He had wondered a little why the prefect came down so heavily on the bully of the Remove. He did not know Gerald Loder, the black sheep of the Sixth. But he understood now. A murmur of assent followed Percy Bolsover's remark. The Removites knew that he spoke correctly. Loder did not care twopence whether a new boy was ragged or not. It was the loaves and fishes that the cad of the Sixth was thinking of.

It was a piece of valuable information for Beauclerc. He had plenty of money, and if he could purchase a prefect's protection by lending him tin, it was well worth his while, he considered. It would have been simpler to behave himself, and drop his unpleasant and provoking manners and customs; but Beauclerc did not think of that. He was quite

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satisfied with himself, and opposition and punishment had only the effect of increasing his obstinacy and arrogance.

Bolsover major lay simply palpitating with rage. But he knew that Loder would keep his eyes and ears open for a little while, in case a ragging should follow his departure from the dormitory, and Bolsover did not want trouble with the bullying prefect, so he bided his time.

But he did not think of sleep. And the other juniors did not sleep, either. They knew that there was trouble to come, before the Remove settled down for the night. Bolsover major was impatient, but he waited till ten o'clock sounded. By that time there was no doubt that Loder was satisfied. He would have gone back to his study, and was probably smoking and playing cards with Walker and Carno—that being Loder's delectable way of passing the evening when he felt it safe.

As the last stroke of ten died away, Bolsover major slipped out of bed. He lighted a candle, and it glimmered through the dormitory. Most of the juniors sat up in bed, or turned on their elbows to watch the fun.

"Up with you!" exclaimed Bolsover. "It's all serene! I suppose you fellows agree with me that that cad isn't to be allowed to sneak?"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll toss him in a blanket, to begin with!"

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

Half a dozen of the juniors turned out of bed. Harry Wharton & Co. remained where they were. They did not intend to take part in the ragging, but they could not but admit that the victim deserved it.

Wharton was somewhat exercised in his mind about it. He was captain of the Form, and he had promised Mr. Quelch to look after the new junior as much as he could. But he could not be expected to place himself in opposition to the whole Form, when the new boy was utterly in the wrong.

He determined to hold his peace, and not to chip in unless Bolsover went too far. That, indeed, was quite likely to happen. Bolsover happened to be in the right; but he was a bully, and he never knew when to stop. Bolsover strode towards Beaulere's bed.

"Get out!" he said.

Beaulere glared up at him from the pillow.

"I won't get up!"

Bolsover major grasped the bedclothes, and whirled them off. Then Beaulere rolled out of bed in the grasp of two or three of the raggers. He descended with a bump on the floor of the dormitory.

"Take the blanket," said Bolsover coolly; and Skinner and Stott and Vernon-Smith and Ogilvy took the four corners. They stood ready to toss the new junior. Beaulere struggled to his feet, panting.

Bolsover pointed to the blanket.

"Tumble in!" he rapped out.

"I won't!"

"Then I'll tumble you in sharp enough!"

Beaulere dodged as Bolsover reached for him, and ran to the door of the dormitory.

"Stop him!" panted Bolsover. "We don't want Loder here again!"

Skinner put out his foot just in time, and Beaulere stumbled over it, and rolled on the floor. Then Bolsover grasped him, and tossed him into the blanket.

"Got it? Up with him!"

Beaulere struggled in the blanket. The four grinning juniors swung it upward. The new boy swung out of the blanket towards the ceiling, going up four or five feet, and coming down heavily into the blanket again.

"Grooh!" he gasped. "Oh! Ow!"

"Up again!"

Up went Beaulere, higher this time; and he turned over in the air, and came down plump into the blanket in a heap.

He was hurt this time, and his yell rang through the dormitory.

"Shut up!" growled Bolsover. "Keep steady, and you won't be hurt! If you wriggle like a blessed worm, you may fall out of the blanket next time; and if you come wallop on the floor, you'll know it! Up he goes!"

Whiz! went Beaulere again, half-way to the ceiling. The dormitory swam before his dazzled eyes. He came down once more, throwing out his arms wildly, and his fist caught Skinner across the face; and Skinner staggered back, and released his corner of the blanket. Beaulere rolled out on the floor with a heavy bump.

"Oh, the silly ass!" gasped Skinner.

Beaulere lay stretched on the floor, dazed by the fall. Bolsover major stirred him with his foot.

"Get up!" he commanded. "We're not done with you yet! You're going right up to the ceiling before we've finished with you!"

Beaulere groaned. Harry Wharton sat up in bed.

"That's enough, Bolsover," he said quietly.

Bolsover major snorted.

"That's not nearly enough," he retorted. "I've got three hundred lines! We're going to teach that cad not to sneak! He's going up to the ceiling. Tumble into that blanket, Beaulere, or I'll pitch you in! Do you hear?"

"He's had enough," said Ogilvy, dropping his corner of the blanket. "I'm finished with him. 'Nuff's as good as a feast!"

And Ogilvy turned into bed.

"Oh, give him another!" said Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton jumped out of bed. He could see that Beaulere had had a hard knock on the floor, and he thought the ragging had gone far enough. Bolsover major stared at him truculently.

"You keep back, and mind your own business!" he exclaimed. "I tell you we're going to toss that cad up to the ceiling!"

"And I tell you you're not!" said Harry Wharton determinedly. "And I'm captain of the Form, Bolsover. Let him alone. Beaulere, you can get into bed!"

"Look here," roared Bolsover, "if you chip in here, you'll get walloped! Mind your own business, I tell you, Wharton!"

"This is my business!"

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The raggers looked at one another doubtfully, and then tossed the blanket away, and went back to bed. Bolsover major scowled at them as they deserted him.

"Take that blanket again, you rotten funks!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, he's had enough!" said Vernon-Smith. "Besides, you're going to make him do your lines to-morrow. Let the brute alone now!"

Bolsover major hesitated. But his followers had gone back to bed, and Wharton's chums were ready to back up their leader, so there was nothing for the bully of the Remove to do but to give in. He gave in with a very bad grace.

"You can put him to bed, and tuck him in, and kiss him on his baby brow!" he sneered. "He will be sneaking to Quelch to-morrow. That's all you'll get for it!"

"I shall tell this to Mr. Quelch to-morrow!" panted Beaulere.

"You hear him!" growled Bolsover major. "Well, if Quelch goes for me, I'll make that sneak sorry for himself, I know that!"

And the bully of the Remove went sulkily to bed.

Wharton helped Beaulere to his feet. The new boy was very badly shaken, and he had a big bruise on his shoulder. Without a word of thanks to the captain of the Remove, he got into bed, and Wharton went back to his. The ragging was over, but Bolsover major for the next ten minutes or so talked to Beaulere in a strain that would have made any other fellow hurl a pillow or a boot at him. But Beaulere lay in sullen silence.

"Shut up, Bolsover!" said Bob Cherry at last. "Blessed if you're not like the little brook—you go on for ever. I want to go to sleep."

And Bolsover's flow of eloquence ceased at last, and the Removites dropped off to sleep. Beaulere was the last to sleep; he lay for a long time, with wakeful, burning eyes, and bitterness, hatred, and uncharitableness in his heart. But at last his eyes closed, too, and the Remove dormitory was wrapped in slumber till the rising-bell rang out in the morning.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Difficult Matter!

"I GUESS it's rather hard cheese on you, Beaulere," remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, the next morning. The Remove were all down, and Fisher T. Fish had met the new junior in the passage, while the rest of the Form were mostly out of doors.

Fisher T. Fish approached the sullen junior with a sympathetic expression. As a matter of fact, Fish did not like Beaulere any more than the other Removites did. But Fish was a true republican—he had an intense love of titles. The fact that Sir Harry Beaulere was a baronet covered a multitude of sins in the democratic eyes of Fisher T. Fish.

Beaulere was coming away from Mr. Quelch's study. He had been there to lay his complaint against Bolsover major for the Remove ragging. Somewhat surprised at being spoken to in a friendly tone by a member of the Remove, Beaulere nodded to the Yankee junior.

"It's rotten!" he growled. "I've just told Quelch about what happened last night."

"Oh!" said Fish.

"And he says he won't do anything in the matter," said Beaulere passionately. "He says he has no doubt that I provoked them, and that it will be better for me not to take complaints to a Form-master in future."

"I guess that's about right, too," said Fish. "You see, the fellows don't like sneaks. It won't do you any good to tell tales, Beaulere. I'm speaking as a friend, you know."

Beaulere stared at him haughtily.

"You are no friend of mine," he said.

Fisher T. Fish coughed. It was the snub direct; but Fish remembered in time that Beaulere was a baronet, and refrained from "dotting" him on the nose.

"Ahem! I'm willing to be your friend," he said. "You want friends here, you know; you can't go on like this. I understand you, you know—I belong to an old family myself," Fish explained. "The Fishes, of Noo York, are quite historical; the family has been very well known for close on thirty years."

Beaulere laughed. He was not blessed with a very great sense of humour, but that claim to historical distinction struck him as funny.

"So, you see, there's a fellow-feeling between us," said Fish, encouraged by Beaulere's sudden good-humour. "I guess we could pull together, Beaulere. And you want a friend here, I reckon; you can't go on as you've started. You'll be sent to Coventry by the whole Form soon, I guess."

"I don't care!"

"Better forget all about what happened last night," urged Fish. "You stick to me, and I'll help you out, Beauclerc. I guess we shall pull together, just a few. What do you say?"

"I don't care to chum with a Yankee bouncer, thanks," said Beauclerc, with cool insolence.

Fisher T. Fish breathed hard through his long, thin nose. He wanted very much to be able to write to his "popper" and his friends in "Noo" York about his friend the baronet. But even a republican and democrat could not quite swallow Beauclerc's insolence. Fish clenched his bony fists.

"You—you lop-eared, slab-sided galoot!" he exclaimed. "I'll give you 'Yankee bouncer'! Take that!"

Beauclerc took it—on his nose—and staggered against the wall. Then Fisher T. Fish danced round him, with his bony fists brandishing in the air.

"Come on!" he yelled. "I'll give you 'Yankee bouncer,' you mugwump! Kim on! I'll show you how we treat galoots of your sort over there!"

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Here's Fishy on the war-path!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, coming in from the Close. "Beauclerc in trouble again! Blessed if that chap ain't born to trouble, as the giddy sparks fly upwards!"

"I guess I'm going to lick him! He's called me a 'Yankee bouncer,' and I offered to be his friend!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Keep your friendship till I ask for it!" sneered Beauclerc.

"Go easy, Fishy," said Harry Wharton, coming along with Nugent. "Don't you be so jolly warlike all of a sudden. It's not in your line."

Fisher T. Fish, as a matter of fact, was not celebrated as a fighting-man. He generally contrived to avoid fistic encounters; though he related great stories of his prowess on occasions when the Remove fellows had not happened to be present. But Beauclerc's evident reluctance to fight spurred Fish on. A fellow who would not hit back was just the kind of antagonist Fishy wanted to go for. The more Beauclerc shrank from the combat, the more Fishy became determined to give him an "all-fired" whopping, as he called it. He danced round Beauclerc, sparring at him wildly.

"I guess I'm going to lick him!" roared Fishy. "Come on, you galoot! Walk up, you mugwump! Come on and be slaughtered!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Fishy!"

The juniors gathered round, laughing. It was very entertaining to see Fisher T. Fish in the character of a bloodthirsty warrior.

"Let me alone, will you?" howled Beauclerc.

"Nope!"

"Hands off, you fool!" exclaimed Beauclerc, as Fish made a dive at him.

"Come on, you mugwump!"

Fisher T. Fish gave Beauclerc a tap on the nose with his bony knuckles. It was a hard tap, and it brought a rush of water to the baronet's eyes. In a sudden rage, Beauclerc sprang at him, hitting out right and left.

The warlike Fish was quite unprepared for that attack. Beauclerc's fists crashed into his face, and he reeled back; and the new boy followed up his advantage, hitting hard; and Fish went with a bump to the floor.

He lay there and gasped.

"Oh, crikey! Oh, crumbs! I guess my nose is out of joint! My eye! Oh!"

"Now get up and have some more!" shouted Beauclerc, flushed with victory, and realising that Fishy's warlike ardour was all "gas," and that the gas had all escaped now.

Fish sat up on the floor and caressed his nose tenderly. He blinked out of one eye at the juniors, who were howling with laughter. They shouted to him to jump up and pile in; but Fisher T. Fish shook his head.

"I ain't a hog," he remarked; "I guess I know when I've had enough. Groo! You jest keep off, you mugwump! I guess I don't want to have anything more to do with you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Beauclerc sneered, and turned on his heel loftily. Fisher T. Fish saw him go, with great relief, and staggered to his feet, still holding his nose.

"I guess I'll give that galoot an all-fired whopping one of these days," he declared; "I ain't exactly in form this morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind! You can write to them in Noo York that you've been knocked down by a baronet!" grinned Bob Cherry. "That's the next best thing to being kicked by a duke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish grinned feebly and snibled off. Beauclerc was looking more pleased with himself when the Remove went in to breakfast. The licking of Fisher T. Fish had afforded him great solace. Fish, as it happened, was sitting

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next to him at the table, and he gave the baronet a feeble smile as he sat down.

"I guess I don't bear any malice," he remarked. "Can I pass you anything, Sir Harry?"

"You can shut up, and not talk to me!" said Beauclerc.

And Fish, thus discouraged, shut up.

Harry Wharton and Nugent joined Beauclerc as the juniors came out from breakfast. They came up to him with friendly looks; they were trying to feel friendly. After their promise to Mr. Quelch they felt bound to feel as friendly as they could towards him. They had made the heroic resolve to try to swallow him whole, as it were. It was a bitter pill to get down—he was a swanker and a cad and a sneak—but they had made up their minds to do their best.

"We were going to speak to you last night, Beauclerc, only you were out—" Wharton began.

Beauclerc gave him a supercilious look. As a matter of fact, he had begun to feel a little lonely, and to wish that there was someone in the Remove with whom he was on friendly terms—someone a little better than Bunter. But at the first advance in a friendly way, his arrogant nature showed itself at once. It never even occurred to his proud and selfish mind that a fellow could wish to be friendly towards him for his sake; his immediate conclusion was that his acquaintance was being sought, and he regarded that as a tribute to his superiority, and he was "stand-offish" at once.

"Indeed!" he said.

"Yes. I—I'm sorry I pitched you out of the study yesterday!" said Wharton, with an effort.

"And I'm sorry, too!" said Nugent heroically.

"I accept your apology!" said Beauclerc loftily. "Don't let anything of the sort occur again, that's all!"

"Oh!" murmured Wharton and Nugent together blankly.

Beauclerc walked away. The chums of No. 1 Study looked at one another, with rather queer expressions, and then Nugent burst into a laugh.

"How's that, umpire?" he asked.

"Oh, he's impossible!" growled Wharton. "He's past the limit! I'm blessed if I know how a chap is to be civil to him!"

"Are we going on trying?" asked Frank.

"Ye-es. We told Quelch we would—and we will. I'd rather punch his head, but we'll try our level best to be friendly to him."

"Right-ho!"

But neither of the chums had much hope of success.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Beauclerc Does Lines!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were busy that afternoon. It was a half-holiday, and the Remove were playing the Shell at cricket, and Wharton and all his friends were wanted in the match. He had very little time to think of Beauclerc; but, faithful to his word, he sought out the schoolboy baronet before he went down to the playing-fields. He found Beauclerc in the study, smoking a cigarette. Wharton choked back the words that rose to his lips. He had told Beauclerc that if he smoked in the study again he would be licked with a cricket-stump. But since then there was his promise to Mr. Quelch. He wondered whether the Form-master would expect him to be "kind and patient" with the new junior on an occasion like this.

Beauclerc looked at him with a sneering smile through the haze of a cigarette smoke. Wharton affected to take no notice of it, heroically controlling his desire to take the new boy by the neck and wipe up the floor with him.

"Not staying in on a half-holiday?" he asked, as genially as he could. "Wouldn't you care to come down to the cricket?"

"Thanks, no! I don't care for cricket."

"We're playing the Shell," said Harry. "It will be worth seeing, and you can pick up some tips about the game, if you don't play it yet. I suppose you'll take up cricket?"

"I don't intend to take it up."

"Then you won't come?"

"No."

"All right!"

Wharton quitted the study. He had done his best, and he felt his duty discharged. He also felt that he had done very well in keeping his temper with the fellow who persisted in smoking in the study against the will of its owners.

The Famous Five were soon busy on the cricket-field. They had no time to bother about Beauclerc, and they forgot him and his trouble with Bolsover. But Bolsover had not forgotten. Bolsover major had three hundred lines to get done that afternoon. Loder had not forgotten him, and he had

mentioned to the Removite that he expected the lines by tea-time. Bolsover major waited till Harry Wharton & Co. were busy on the cricket-field, then he came up to Study No. 1 with Skinner and Ogilvy. Vernon-Smith was in the Remove eleven.

Beaulere had smoked several cigarettes, as the fag-ends littered about the study showed.

He was looking at his watch when the three juniors came in. Bolsover major closed the door as soon as they were inside the study.

"Going out?" he inquired pleasantly.

"Yes," said Beaulere shortly; "I've got an appointment for three. Let me pass, please."

"Highcliffe chaps, I suppose?" grinned Bolsover major.

"A little game of billiards at the Cross Keys—what?"

"That's my business."

"I'm afraid you won't keep that appointment," said Bolsover coolly. "All the better for you if you don't. Your Highcliffe friends will end by getting you into trouble. But never mind that now. You're welcome to go to the dogs any way you choose. But just at present you've got three hundred lines to do."

Beaulere stared at him.

"I have no lines," he said.

"Your mistake; you have—three hundred. Loder gave them to me, and he expects them by tea-time. You've got to do them."

"I won't do them."

"Won't you?" Bolsover major picked up a cricket-stump. "Keep at the door, Ogilvy, in case the cad tries to bolt. You're going to do those lines, Beaulere, or I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life!"

Beaulere turned pale. He glanced at the door. Ogilvy had his back to it. He looked at Bolsover. He was no match for the bully of the Remove, and there was Skinner, too. And Bolsover evidently meant business.

"I won't do a single line," said Beaulere, between his teeth; "and if you touch me I'll go direct to Mr. Quelch."

"You've been to him once this morning, and it hasn't seemed to do you much good," jeered Bolsover. "Quelch doesn't like sneaks. That's one good point about old Quelch. You're going to do my lines, as you got them for me by sneaking. There's a page of my writing. You're going to copy it till you can do a fist like mine and then you're going to do three hundred lines of Virgil, and I'm going to look you in this study while you do them."



AMBITIONS—No. 7.

The ambition to become a jockey has been cherished by thousands of British boys for many generations. And many a Magnetite of the present day, in his dreams, sees himself riding "the favourite" first past the post, the winner of a big race!



The Removites simply gasped as Billy Bunter knelt down by the bed and proceeded to unlace Beauclerc's boots.
"Bunter!" roared Bolsover. "Stop that! There's going to be no fagging here!" (See Chapter 6.)

"I won't!" screamed Beauclerc.

"Then take this for a start!"

Bolsover major ran at him, grasped him by the collar, and brought the stump into play. Beauclerc kicked out furiously, and the bully of the Remove gave a yell of anguish as he caught a hard heel on his shin. But he did not let go. The pain only roused his temper, and his blows descended like rain across Beauclerc's shoulders. The wretched junior was soon yelling for mercy.

"Now, will you write the lines?" demanded Bolsover, pausing, almost out of breath with the castigation he had inflicted.

"Yes," parted Beauclerc.

"Sit down and start then."

Beauclerc dropped into a chair at the table. He was quivering all over. That kick on the shin had made Bolsover savage, and he had thrashed the baronet without mercy. His hand trembled as he took the pen.

Bolsover placed before him the page of specimen writing he had brought with him, and a sheet of impot paper.

"Copy that!" he said. "No good doing the lines till your fist is something like mine. Loder isn't very keen, but I'm not taking chances. Work away. I'll sit down and watch you."

"I see you've been smoking, Beauclerc," Skinner remarked. "I'll trouble you for some of the cigs. Hand 'em over!"

"Oh, chuck that!" said Ogilvy. "We didn't come here to play the giddy goat."

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"Rats!"

"Well, I'm off, if you're going to smoke," said Ogilvy. "I'll back you up to make that cad pay for sneaking, but I'm not going to join in playing the silly ox."

"Cut off, then!" said Bolsover. "We can do without you!"

Ogilvy left the study and slammed the door. Beauclerc looked up quickly, and the bully of the Remove made a motion with the cricket-stump. He was sitting between Beauclerc and the door, and there was no escape for him. The hapless baronet bent to his task again.

The thrashing he had received had given him an ache all over, and it had taken all the insolence out of him. His appointment with Ponsonby & Co., of Highcliffe, and the projected afternoon in the billiard-room at the Cross Keys, had to go by the board. Under the grim eye of Bolsover major he had to obey orders, or take the consequences. Never had a sneak so bitterly repented his sneaking. The three hundred lines were enough to occupy almost all the afternoon, and before he could set to work upon them he had to practise the imitation of Bolsover's hand. That task was not difficult, however. Bolsover wrote a large, sprawling, round hand, which anybody could have imitated after a few attempts. With straggling and sprawling letters, clumsy capitals, and a sufficiency of blots and smudges, Bolsover's "fist" could easily be reproduced.

Bolsover major and Skinner had taken possession of Beauclerc's box of cigarettes, and were smoking them cheerfully while Beauclerc laboured at his task. He covered sheet after

sheet with sprawling writing in imitation of Bolsover's. The bully of the Remove scanned each in turn, and at each shook his head.

"Not good enough," he said. "Keep on; you're improving. But it's got to be good enough for Loder!"

And Beauclerc ground his teeth, and kept on. The thought of calling for help came into his mind, but he did not do it. Help might come, but Bolsover was close at hand with the cricket-stump ready, and his back was still aching from the thrashing he had received. He was in a cleft stick, as it were, and there was no escape for him. He laboured away wearily at the task set before him.

Not till Bolsover and Skinner had smoked most of the cigarettes, and were feeling a little sick and "rotten" in consequence, was Beauclerc's task allowed to end. Bolsover rose to his feet, and scanned his latest essay.

"Not bad," he said. "That'll do, if you do the impot exactly like that. Mind, every line has got to be as good as that, as much like my writing as that, or I'll make you do the page over again. You understand?"

"Yes," snarled Beauclerc.

"Here's Wharton's Virgil. You can begin where you like, and do three hundred lines, all in my fist, mind. It will take longer than doing it in your own fist, but that's your own fault for getting me the impot. And mind, every time you get a fellow line through sneaking, you'll be made to do them yourself."

Skinner chuckled.

"That's simply a topping idea of yours, Bolsover," he said. "Blessed if I know how you came to think of it. Beauclerc will be a pretty handy forger by the time he's finished learning all our hands. That chap Levison, who used to be here, was pretty clever at it, but Beauclerc will be able to beat him hollow if he keeps on. But, I say, we've stayed in here long enough. Let's go and watch the cricket. Those beastly smokes have given me a headache."

"Right-ho! Pile in, Beauclerc. I'm going to lock you in here. If you make a row I shall come back again and wallop you. See?"

Beauclerc made no reply. Skinner and Bolsover left the study, changing the key to the outside of the door after them, and locking it. Beauclerc watched them go, with glittering eyes. He had no intention of doing the lines if he could possibly get out of it. As soon as their footsteps had died away down the passage, he began hammering on the door, and shouting to be released. There was a sound of footsteps almost immediately.

"Hallo! Is that you, Beau?" It was Billy Bunter's voice through the keyhole.

"Yes; let me out."

"Are you locked in?"

"Yes, you fat fool! Do you think I am doing this for amusement?" growled Beauclerc.

"Ahem! The key's gone," said Bunter. "I can't open the door without a key. I say, Beauclerc, there isn't a key here to fit the door. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go and buy a bunch of keys in Friardale, and find one to fit it. Shall I?"

"It would take too long," growled Beauclerc. "Get something and smash in the lock."

"Ahem! Bolsover's in his study, and he'd hear me."

"Hasn't the hound gone out?"

"No; he's in his study."

Beauclerc gritted his teeth. He did not want to bring the bully of the Remove back to the spot if it could be avoided.

"Besides, it won't take long," said Bunter. "I'll borrow Wharton's bike and scoot down to Friardale in no time. I know exactly the kind of key wanted. I used to be in this study, you know. Shall I go?"

"Yes," said Beauclerc, "and hurry up!"

"Ahem! I shall want some money," said Bunter. "I'm rather short of tin just at present, owing to a disappointment about a postal-order."

"I can't give you money through a closed door," snarled Beauclerc.

"H'm! Well, pass a bank-note under the door," said Bunter. "I'll be very careful with the change—very careful indeed, and account for every penny."

Sir Harry Beauclerc was not the cleverest of youths, but he was not quite simple enough to accede to Bunter's modest request. He could guess how long it would be before Bunter returned if he were given a bank-note to change. The fat junior's first visit in Friardale would be to Uncle Clegg's tuckshop, and it was extremely probable that he would remain there all the afternoon.

"Better buck up!" whispered Bunter through the keyhole. "Bolsover may come back at any minute—"

"Go and find Loder, and tell him I'm locked in my study," said Beauclerc.

"Ahem! Hadn't you better pass the bank-note under the door—"

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"No. I won't."

"Then I'll tell you what. I'll go round under the window, and you can chuck a sovereign out to me," said Bunter.

"I shall do nothing of the sort. Go and tell Loder—"

"I'm sincerely sorry, Beauclerc, but I'm not on very friendly terms with Loder," said Bunter calmly. "I don't care to see him."

"I'll stand you a feed as soon as I'm out of this," said Beauclerc desperately.

"Now you're talking! A really decent feed?"

"Anything you like, only be quick before that brute comes back."

"All right, I'll— Ow, ow, ow! Leggo, Bolsover, you beast! Yaroooh! Groo! Help! Fire! Murder! Yow! Ow!"

Beauclerc clenched his hands with rage. Those wild yells from the passage showed that Bolsover had returned. The bully of the Remove had been keeping watch on the study evidently. And, to judge by the sounds, he was making an example of Bunter. There were loud bumps and smacks and crashes and wild howls and roars. Then a sound of panting breath and running feet.

Billy Bunter was gone, and Beauclerc's hope of release vanished with him. The door was thrown open, and Bolsover strode in. He did not waste time in words. He collared the schoolboy baronet, kicking and struggling, and laid on with the cricket-stump till his arm ached. Beauclerc was tossed, a white-faced and quivering heap, into a corner, where he lay panting and regarding Bolsover major with snake-like eyes. The bully of the Remove flourished the stump over him.

"Do you understand now that I mean business?" he demanded.

Beauclerc groaned.

"Are you going to do those lines?"

"Yes," panted Beauclerc. "Yes—yes! Keep off, you brute!"

Bolsover major grinned.

"I'll give you a chance," he said. "I'll look in presently and see how you're getting on, and if the lines aren't going ahead—well, I pity you."

Bolsover major quitted the study again, locking the door on the outside and taking away the key. Beauclerc groaned and rose to his feet. He was completely beaten. He dared not hammer on the door again or shout, for fear of drawing the Remove bully back again on the scene. There was nothing for him to do but to grind out Latin lines—three hundred of them—and he settled down wearily and savagely to his task.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Good!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came in ruddy and cheerful from the cricket. The match had been finished unexpectedly early. It was a single-innings match, and Hobson & Co. of the Shell had cracked up in their innings, completely knocked out by the masterly bowling of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Tom Brown, the New Zealander. The Remove had batted second, and had won with five wickets to spare—a triumph that made them rejoice with great glee. They were feeling very satisfied with themselves as they came in.

"Tea in my study—what?" said Bob Cherry. "We're going to feed together. And you've got that obnoxious merchant in No. 1 now."

Wharton looked thoughtful.

"No; come into my study," he said. "We're giving Beauclerc a chance; trying the effect of kindness, you know. I want you chaps to be nice and civil to him."

"Oh, all right!" said Bob, who was good-nature itself. "He's not easy to be civil to, but I'm willing to do my best."

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the samefulness was terrific, so far as he was concerned.

"As a matter of fact, Quelch has asked us to do the best we can with him," said Harry. "We're giving him a trial."

"And we're finding him a trial," grinned Nugent.

"Well, they say kindness is the best way of taming wild beasts," remarked Bob. "No harm in trying it, anyway. I'll cut off to the tuckshop and get in the provisions, then. Contributions, please!"

Bob held out his cricket-cap, and contributions were poured into it. Then Bob started for the tuckshop, and the rest of the Co. ascended to the Remove passage to make preparations in No. 1 Study for a feed of unusual proportions, as they happened to be in funds. Wharton turned the handle of the study door, but it did not open.

"Hallo! Some ass has locked the door!" he exclaimed,

knocking on it with his knuckles. "Here, open the door! Who's in there?"

"I'm here," came back Beauclerc's voice.

"What have you locked the door for?"

"I haven't. Bolsover locked me in."

"My hat!"

"It's all right, Wharton," said Bolsover major, who had been watching the cricket and had followed the Famous Five in. "I've got the key."

"What the dickens do you mean by locking up my study?" demanded Wharton, a little nettled.

Bolsover unlocked the door.

"There you are! I had to lock Beauclerc in, or he wouldn't have done his lines."

"His lines! What lines?"

"My three hundred lines," said Bolsover coolly. "I've made him do them. I had to whale him pretty hard with a cricket-stump first, but he's toed the line all right, I think."

Wharton frowned a little, but he could help admitting that Bolsover major had something like right on his side. Beauclerc rose from the table as the juniors came in. There was a pile of newly-written sheets there.

"Finished the three hundred?" asked Bolsover major cheerily.

"Yes," said Beauclerc, scowling.

"I'll see if they're all right. If they're not, I'll jolly well make you do them over again," said Bolsover.

He took up the sheets and scanned each of them carefully. But he had no fault to find. Those two severe lickings with the cricket-stump had had their effect upon Beauclerc. He had done his best, and the result was satisfactory.

"But Loder will know they're not your writing, won't he?" said Frank Nugent.

"Beauclerc has been kind enough to study my fist and imitate it," grinned Bolsover. "Rather a nobby idea, don't you think?"

"My hat!"

"Much obliged, Beauclerc," said Bolsover airily. "If you get me any more lines, I won't forget to come to you, and I've always got a cricket-stump at your service."

And Bolsover major quitted No. 1 Study, carrying off the heavy imposition. Beauclerc was looking pale and tired.

"That was a bit rough on you, kid," said Harry Wharton.

"Have you been shut up here all the afternoon?"

"Yes," said Beauclerc, between his teeth.

"A pity you didn't come down to the cricket, after all."

"Hang the cricket!"

"We're going to have tea now," said Wharton, with undiminished good-humour. "These chaps are going to have tea with us. You will, too, won't you?"

"Bob's just coming along with the tommy," said Nugent.

"We'll be glad if you'll join us at tea, Beauclerc," said Johnny Bull, nobly seconding the efforts of his chums.

"The gladfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Beauclerc," murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Your esteemed presence will be an august and honourful pleasure."

"I don't see what you want to crowd the study for, Wharton," said Beauclerc sullenly. "You made fuss enough about my having one chap here."

"You can have Bunter here, if you like," said Harry cheerfully. "We'll call him if you would like him to come in."

"I don't want him. Hang Bunter!"

"Just as you like. Light the fire, Franky, old man, and get the kettle going, while we lay the table," said Wharton.

"It's our treat this time, Beauclerc."

"I don't care to be treated by you, thanks!"

"All right, you shall stand your whack, then," said Harry.

"We made it two bob each. You shall whack out to the same tune, if you prefer it."

It was difficult for even Beauclerc to be disagreeable in the face of the determined good-humour of the chums of the Remove. But he was in a sulky and "ratty" temper, and what he could not venture to wreak upon Bolsover he felt it safe to wreak upon the fellows who were trying to be civil to him. Insulting words to Bolsover major would have evoked another forcible application of the cricket-stump, but fellows who wanted to be friendly could be insulted with impunity. That reflection was quite enough to make Beauclerc assume his most unpleasant manner.

"Thanks, I don't care for a crowd," he said, "and I've got some friends to see."

And he walked to the door.

"You're going over to Highcliffe?" asked Wharton.

"Certainly!"

"The gates are locked at dark, you know."

"I shall probably be late."

"Quelehy will come down on you pretty heavy, if you miss call-over again, Beauclerc," urged Wharton. "He can't pass you over a second time."

"Hang Quelehy!"

And Beauclerc walked out of the study. The chums of the Remove stood silent. But for Wharton's express wish, Beauclerc would probably not have got out of the study with-

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out having his nose pulled, or his head knocked against the wall. Bob Cherry came in laden with provisions.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Isn't Beauclerc here?"

"He's gone!" said Wharton.

"But weren't you going to—"

"He doesn't like a crowd," said Johnny Bull breathing hard through his nose. "He doesn't like our company. He—"

"Oh, my hat! How you fellows can listen to him without biffing him I don't understand."

"Never mind," said Wharton. "We told Quelehy we'd do our best, and—and we're doing it! I don't think Job himself could be more patient than we've been."

"Job was a fool to it," said Johnny Bull. "What the fellow wants is a good hiding!"

"Bolsover has been walloping him, but it doesn't seem to have done him any good," said Nugent. "Well, we've done our best, but I can't say I'm sorry he's gone. Let's have tea!"

The Famous Five sat down to tea; and in spite of their wish to do their best with Beauclerc, according to their promise to Mr. Quelehy, Wharton and Nugent could not feel sorry that he was out of the study. It was decidedly more cheerful without him. The Famous Five enjoyed a cosy feed in the study, untroubled by the presence of the swanker of the Remove.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Beauclerc Finds a Friend!

LODER, the prefect, was in the study ruminating. There was a frown upon Loder's face, and he did not look happy. Loder had had bad luck the night before, at a little card-party in his study. He had invited Walker and Carne there to play nap, with a view to replenishing the exchequer. Walker and Carne had, however, succeeded in walking off with Loder's available capital, as well as several I O U's. Loder was "stony," a most unpleasant state to be in, especially at teatime. Loder was ruminating over ways and means.

When he was hard up Loder had many and various ways of raising the wind. Sometimes he would command his fag, Tubb of the Third, to prepare tea—leaving it to Tubb's ingenuity to find the materials. Tubb was sometimes reduced to desperation; for if he didn't prepare tea, he would be licked, and Loder's lickings were very severe. Tubb sometimes had to stand the tea out of his own pocket, and sometimes he raided other studies. When Loder was in funds, he was sometimes free with his money, and Tubb had shillings and half-crowns from him, so upon the whole, Tubb did not do badly. But on this special evening, Tubb of the Third was not available, he was gone out. Loder was wondering where his tea was to come from, and debating in his mind which study in the Sixth he should invite himself into, when Bolsover major presented himself at the door, with a sheaf of impot paper in his hand.

"Hallo! What do you want?" Loder growled.

"My impot!" said Bolsover major blandly. "Three hundred lines, you know."

"Shove it on the table!" said Loder.

Bolsover major laid it down. Loder glanced over it carelessly.

There was no suspicion in his look, and Bolsover major felt relieved. The handwriting was quite like enough to his own to pass muster. Loder gave him a nod, and he left the study, and in the passage he chuckled gleefully. He had not only escaped doing the heavy imposition, but he had punished the sneak for getting it inflicted upon him; and so Bolsover had a double reason to be satisfied.

"Now, where am I going to borrow five bob?" Loder murmured to himself. "There's that new kid Beauclerc—he seems to have plenty of tin—and he's a thorough rotter, from what I can see. I wonder— Hallo, here he is!"

Beauclerc looked in at the open door.

"Come in, kid!" said Loder, quite cordially. Other fellows in the Sixth would have disdained to borrow money of a fag; but Loder was not troubled with any feelings of lofty pride on that point. He believed in the Oriental proverb that the smell of all money is sweet.

Beauclerc stepped into the study. He assumed as civil a manner as he could. He knew that a prefect of the Sixth was not to be treated with insolence.

"Can I have a pass out of the gates, Loder?" he asked.

"H'm!" said Loder thoughtfully. "I'll think about it. You're a new kid, you know. What do you want a pass for?"

"I want to visit my friends at Highcliffe."

"No harm in that," said Loder cordially. "I dare say I can manage it, Beauclerc. By the way, I wonder whether you could oblige me with a small loan. I happen to be short of money this afternoon."

"Certainly!" said Beaulere. "How much?"

"Ten bob."

"Here you are!"

Beaulere tossed a half-sovereign on the table. Loder picked it up and slipped it into his waistcoat pocket with an envious look. A mere fag in the Lower Fourth was able to throw half-sovereigns about, and he, Loder of the Sixth, was stony. It seemed quite unjust to Loder. And Beaulere's manner was already more arrogant. He knew that the loan was in return for the pass out of gates, and he felt very much as if he had paid the prefect for his services, and so was inclined to regard him with patronage.

"Thanks!" said Loder, taking paper and pen. "There's your pass. By the way, you don't seem to be getting on very well with the fellows in the Lower Fourth."

"I don't like them," said Beaulere.

"They've been ragging you—what?"

"Yes, hang them!"

"Cheeky young beggars, most of them," said Loder, with a nod. "Of course, as a prefect, it's my duty to put down ragging. I'm interested in you, Beaulere, as—as a new kid, you know. If you have any more trouble with those young rascals, you need only mention the matter to me; I'll see justice done. You can rely upon me!"

Beaulere's eyes glittered. He could see the sheaf of impat paper on Loder's table; and he thought he saw a way of making Bolsover major suffer for that afternoon's ragging.

"You're a cut above those young sweeps," went on Loder, still more cordially. "If you'd care to drop into my study this evening, Beaulere, I'll introduce you to one or two fellows in the Sixth. We generally have some little amusement going on here—of course, strictly under the rose. You know how to keep a secret?"

"Certainly!" said Beaulere. Short as had been his time at Greyfriars, he had heard talk in the Remove about Loder and his little ways, and he understood. "I'll be very glad to come, Loder. I don't care to make friends in the Lower Fourth—there isn't a fellow in the Form I like!"

"They're not your sort!" suggested Loder.

"That's it, exactly! I've always been accustomed to having a good time," said Beaulere. "I don't see why a fellow shouldn't play cards if he wants to."

Loder smiled.

"Mum's the word!" he said. "Of course, it's to be kept very dark. The Head is very strict about such matters; but as a matter of fact, we sometimes have a little game in the study, for very small stakes, of course—just enough to make it worth while playing. As you seem to be a sportsman, we'll be glad if you'll come in. And, mind, if there's any more ragging from the Remove kids, you tell me at once, and I'll see that they drop it, jolly quick!"

"I've been ragged all the afternoon," said Beaulere. "Bolsover brought those lines to you, I suppose?"

"Those lines?" said Loder, puzzled. "Yes!"

"Well, I wrote them all. He made me copy his handwriting, and beat me with a cricket-stump till I wrote them," said Beaulere, his eyes burning.

Loder uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Great Scott! Why, that's a very serious breach of the rules, for a kid to get his lines done by another chap. This is straight, Beaulere?"

"Of course. I wrote every line of the three hundred—he locked me in my study all the afternoon to do it!"

Loder's lip curled slightly; he had his own opinion of a fellow who allowed another junior to lock him in a study to do his lines for him. But it was not his business to tell Beaulere what he thought of him.

"I'm glad you've told me this," he said. "I'll make Master Bolsover understand that he can't palm off another fellow's lines on me. Don't have any doubt about that. I'll make an example of Bolsover!"

Beaulere smiled as he left the study. He had no doubt that Loder would keep his word. Besides his desire to ingratiate himself with the rich baronet, Loder felt his dignity as a prefect outraged by the trick Bolsover major had played upon him. The best-tempered prefect would have been annoyed at being taken in in such a manner.

Loder called in a fag of the Second Form, and handed him the half-sovereign, with a list of shopping to do at the School tuckshop, and with a message to Bolsover major to come to his study at once. Loder selected a cane while he was waiting for Bolsover. It was some little time before the burly Removite put in an appearance. He came in looking sulky and apprehensive. He knew that Beaulere had been to see Loder; and though he hardly thought that the new boy would dare to play the sneak after the lesson he had received, Bolsover felt very uneasy.

"Oh, here you are!" said Loder sternly. He pointed to the imposition with the cane. "Look at that! Did you write that, Bolsover? The truth, mind!"

Bolsover was sullenly silent. He knew that it was out now.

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"Answer me, Bolsover! Will you give me your word that you wrote that imposition?" Loder demanded.

"I didn't write it," said Bolsover major sulkily. "I suppose that young cad has sneaked again. I'll make him pay for it!"

"Beaulere has very properly informed me that you forced him to write your imposition," said Loder loftily. "It was his duty to tell me."

Bolsover major clenched his hands hard.

"You know the consequences of playing such a trick, Bolsover," said Loder. "Hold out your hand. I am going to cane you severely, and I shall double the imposition."

Bolsover major did not stir.

"Do you hear me?" demanded Loder.

"I'm not going to be caned," said Bolsover major sullenly.

Loder made a movement towards him, and paused. The big, burly Removite looked dangerous. He was no match, certainly, for the Sixth-Former; but he was a dangerous opponent to tackle, and Loder did not feel inclined for it.

"You refuse to hold out your hand, Bolsover?"

"Yes, I do!" growled Bolsover.

"Then I shall take you to your Form-master to deal with you. Follow me!"

Loder strode from the study. Bolsover major hesitated; but he reluctantly followed Loder. He knew that he would be sent for if he did not go, and he could not disobey Mr. Quelch.

The prefect knocked at Mr. Quelch's door and entered.

"I have to report Bolsover to you, sir," he said. "I gave him an imposition last night for ragging the new boy in the dormitory. I understand that the new junior was not to blame in any way. Bolsover bullied him, as I fear is his habit with new boys. Instead of doing the imposition, he forced Beaulere this afternoon to write the lines, in an imitation of his handwriting. Now he refuses to be caned by me. I can only leave him to you, sir."

Mr. Quelch frowned darkly.

"This is a very serious matter, Bolsover," he said. "Is it correct that you forced the new boy to write out your imposition?"

"He sneaked about me, and got me the lines," growled Bolsover.

"That is neither here nor there. You forced him to do the lines, and took them to Loder as your own?"

"Well, yes, sir. I—"

"You have refused to be caned by a prefect?"

"Loder has no right to cane me," said Bolsover sullenly. "He's only sticking up for that cad because he's got money."

"Silence!" exclaimed the Form-master angrily. "How dare you say such a thing, Bolsover. I am only too well aware that you have frequently ragged and ill-used new boys in the Form. I have, indeed, once or twice had occasion to ask Wharton to see that nothing of the kind happened. I am afraid that you are a boy of a bullying nature, Bolsover. You will write out the imposition again—do you hear?—doubled. And now Loder will cane you in my presence. You will give him six strokes, Loder."

"Very well, sir."

"I command you to hold out your hands, Bolsover."

Bolsover major gritted his teeth. He could not disobey his Form-master. He did not want to be taken before the Head and flogged. He held out his hands in turn, and Loder caned him, laying the six strokes on hard. The junior was wriggling by the time he had finished.

"Now you may go, Bolsover, and I trust that will teach you subordination and respect for authority," said Mr. Quelch.

Bolsover left the study. He went down the passage raging. There was only one thought in his mind—to make the sneak suffer for giving him away. He burst into No. 1 Study in a fury, and the Famous Five looked round from the tea-table in surprise. Bolsover glared round the study.

"Isn't that cad here?" he shouted.

"Beaulere! No; he's gone out."

"Hang him! I'll wait till he comes back!" said Bolsover, squeezing his hands together. "Oh, I'll make him sorry that he ever came to Greyfriars."

"What has he done now?" asked Wharton, with a worried look. His path as protector of the new junior seemed destined to be a thorny one.

"He's told Loder about my making him do the impot—and I've been licked!" howled Bolsover. "I've got six hundred lines to do now. What do you think of that? Are you fellows going to back up a dirty sneak?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "It was a bit hard on him, but he oughtn't to have sneaked, of course. But—"

"I'll make him sorry for it."

"Look here, Bolsover, you'd better let him alone," said Wharton uneasily. "He's a sneak; and if you go for him

he'll tell Loder again, and you'll be called over the coals again. There's no end to it. Better let the matter drop."

"After what I'm going to give him this time, he won't want to sneak again," said Bolsover, grinding his teeth. "I'll make him wish he'd never been born. Where has he gone? Highcliffe, I suppose. He's very thick with those cads. Well, it will keep till he comes back."

"Look here—"

"Oh, rats!" Bolsover swung out of the study and slammed the door.

Bob Cherry whistled.

"More trouble in the family!" he murmured. "I'm not surprised that Bolsover's ratty. He seems to have had it pretty hot."

Wharton was silent. It was not surprising that Bolsover yearned to avenge his wrongs upon the sneak of the Remove; and whether Wharton was called upon to interfere was a doubtful question. But for the appeal Mr. Quelch had made to him, he would not have troubled his mind about the matter at all. As it happened, however, it was out of his hands. Bolsover major had taken his measures to prevent interference, as the chums of the Remove discovered later.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Painful Cure!

BEAUCLERC was missing from calling-over, and all the Remove remarked upon the fact. But he was not inquired after by the prefects, and Mr. Quelch seemed satisfied, so the juniors guessed that he had a pass out of gates. They could guess, too, who had given it to him, and that, added to Bolsover's punishment, made it pretty clear that the baronet was on the right side of Loder. If anything could have made Beauclerc more unpopular in the Remove than he was already, that circumstance would have done it; the fact that his money enlisted on his side the bully of the Sixth, whose power as a prefect would, of course, be very effectual in protecting the sneak. At the same time, the juniors who were inclined to rag the baronet felt that it would be safer to let him alone. Loder was not a pleasant person to have trouble with.

Bolsover major disappeared immediately after calling-over. His intention of taking summary vengeance upon the sneak was no secret. He had borrowed a dog-whip from Temple of the Fourth, who lent it to him with pleasure when he heard what it was wanted for. The Removites anticipated an entertaining scene—with trouble to follow for Bolsover, for Loder was sure to interfere. Bolsover's disappearance rather puzzled them, but the reason was known afterwards. The fellows had wondered whether Wharton would "chip in," and Bolsover had taken care that he should not. When Bolsover came in, he was looking a little flushed, and his clothes were dusty, showing that he had been over the school wall.

"Been out?" Russell asked him, as he appeared in the junior common-room.

"Yes," said Bolsover shortly.

"Seen anything of Beauclerc?" asked Vernon-Smith.

Bolsover major grinned.

"Yes!" he said.

Then the Remove fellows understood.

"Where's my whip?" asked Temple of the Fourth.

"Sorry! I've broken it," said Bolsover. "I'll buy you a new one, Temple."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Temple, chuckling. "If you've broken it on that cad, you're welcome."

"Dash it all, that's going too far!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Do you mean to say that you've been waiting for Beauclerc in the road, Bolsover?"

"Why not?"

"And you've licked him?"

"I said I would, didn't I?"

"Where is he now?"

"I left him there," said Bolsover coolly. "He was wriggling on the ground when I left him. I dare say he'll crawl in presently. But I don't think he'll sneak to Loder this time. I fancy he's learned better."

Wharton made no reply. The juniors were very keen to see Beauclerc come in, and they gathered in the passage to wait for him. He came in about ten minutes after Bolsover. All eyes were turned upon him at once. He showed plain signs of the thrashing he had received. He was covered with dust, and his jacket was torn, and his face was very white. Bolsover major had waited for him on the road home from Highcliffe, and had dealt with him there, out of the reach of interference. It was extremely probable that the bully of the

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Remove had been brutal enough; but there was no sympathy for the victim. The fellows only wondered what Beauclerc would do.

They expected him to make for Mr. Quelch's or Loder's study at once, to tell the tale of the way he had been handled. But he did not. It was evident that the spirit had been taken out of him. It would not help him much to have Bolsover caned, if another heavy thrashing from the bully of the Remove was to follow. Bolsover was able to stand punishment better than Beauclerc, and in that he had the advantage. Beauclerc, without a word, went quietly up to his study and remained there. His face was set and white, and his eyes were burning, but he did not even look at Bolsover major, who regarded him with a sneering smile.

"I fancy he's cured of sneaking," Bolsover major remarked, as Beauclerc disappeared up the stairs.

"Looks like it!" grinned Skinner. "But if he reports you to Loder after all, you'll find yourself in queer street, old chap."

"If he does, I'll break another dog-whip on him," said Bolsover. "But I think he's had enough. You'll see."

It seemed that Bolsover major was right; for nothing was heard from Loder or the Form-master on the subject. Later in the evening, Beauclerc was seen to enter Loder's study, and there was an expectation of trouble for Bolsover. But nothing happened. The baronet remained with Loder till the juniors' bed-time, but Bolsover was not sent for. It was clear that Beauclerc had not told tales this time.

Beauclerc was the last in the dormitory at bedtime. His manner was very subdued. He did not tell Bunter to take off his boots, and he did not look at Bolsover. But the bully of the Remove, who could never let well alone, could not forbear a remark.

"Don't you want your fag, my lord?" he inquired.

Beauclerc made no reply.

"Was it nap or banker in Loder's study?" Bolsover major went on. "How much did you lose? You'll find Loder a rather expensive friend."

Still no answer.

"Sulky eh?" said Bolsover. "Perhaps a taste of the slipper will make you open your mouth—what?"

"Let him alone," said Harry Wharton quietly.

"You keep off the grass," said Bolsover, with a scowl. "I'm going to do as I like. I've taken that young

cad in hand to cure him."

"You'll let him alone!" said Harry determinedly. "He's sneaked, and he's been punished for it, and that's enough. You're not going to bully him. If you touch him with that slipper, Bolsover, you'll have a fight on your hands, I warn you."

"Yes, chuck it, Bolsover!" said Vernon-Smith. "Enough's as good as a feast, you know. Don't be such a beastly bully!"

"Well, I'm not going to have him scowling at me!" said Bolsover.

Beauclerc looked up.

"I'll do more than scowl at you," he said. "I'll make you sorry that you laid hands on me, you bullying hound!"

"Do you think I'm going to stand that?" roared Bolsover.

"Shut up, then!" said Wharton.

Bolsover major looked round truculently, but he saw that the whole Form was against him in further ragging the new boy, and he dropped the slipper.

"Well, I'll let him off till next time!" he said magnanimously. "But let's have any more sneaking from you, Beauclerc, and you know what you'll get!"

Beauclerc went to bed without a word. Loder saw lights out, and the Remove settled down to sleep. There was no disturbance in the Remove dormitory that night. But it was a long time before Beauclerc slept. He was still aching from his thrashing, and he was not pleased with the result of his chumming with the black sheep of the Sixth in Loder's study. Loder & Co. had been too clever for him, and he had, as Bolsover said, found the prefect a very expensive friend.

A five-pound note had changed hands in Loder's study, and, although the baronet had plenty of money, the loss was heavy enough to make him feel discontented and dissatisfied. As he did not dare to play the sneak again, Loder's expensive friendship was not worth what it cost. As he lay, with burning eyes staring into the darkness, Beauclerc's thoughts were all of vengeance upon the bully

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"THE MISSING MASTER!"

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of the Remove. But in that Loder could not help him. He had to depend upon himself, and a scheme of vengeance was working in his brain which would have startled the Remove fellows if they could have guessed it.

The next day Bolsover major had the pleasure, or otherwise, of grinding out his heavy imposition—which he had to do himself this time. He could not get it all done in one day; there was enough to occupy his leisure for some time to come. Bolsover was in a state of exasperation all day, and he consoled himself by taunting and worrying the new junior whenever he came into contact with him. Beauclerc took his taunts quietly, but with a gleam in his eyes that told of the spite and rage within.

After lessons Harry Wharton and Nugent joined Beauclerc as they came out of the Form-room. They were still trying to do their best with him, difficult as they found the task.

"Coming down to cricket practice?" Wharton asked as genially as he could.

"No!"

"We'll give you some tips about the game, if you like," said Nugent. "As a matter of fact, cricket practice is compulsory here, you know. You must turn up sooner or later."

"I've asked for exemption," said Beauclerc.

"Oh!" said the juniors together.

It was rare for juniors to be exempted from cricket practice—generally only when a doctor's certificate could be produced on the grounds of ill-health. Beauclerc's health was all right. It was evidently only slacking in his case.

"You'd like the game, if you gave it a trial," said Wharton persuasively. "Just come along, and we'll bowl you a few."

"I don't want to."

After that there was no more to be said. The chums of the Remove went down to the cricket-ground, and Beauclerc went to the study. When Wharton and Nugent came in to tea they found him there. He was seated at the study table, pen in hand, and there were several sheets of paper, covered with writing, before him. He started up, and gathered the sheets hastily together as the juniors entered, his face flushing.

Wharton glanced at him curiously, wondering what was the cause of his confusion. The page of Bolsover's writing, which the bully of the Remove had given him to copy the previous day, lay on the table.

"You're not doing Bolsover's impot again, surely?" Wharton exclaimed.

"No," said Beauclerc.

"Got one of your own?" asked Nugent.

"No!"

"You seem to have been pretty busy."

Beauclerc made no reply to that. He moved to the door, with the crumpled sheets in his hand.

"Aren't you going to have tea with us?" asked Harry.

"No!"

And Beauclerc left the study.

"We don't seem to be getting much forrarder," said Nugent, with a grin.

"Well, we're doing our best, and that's all we promised Quelch to do," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It's rotten to have a sulky brute in the study. I must say! But he seems to have been working. That's a new departure for him, and perhaps it's a good sign."

"Perhaps!" said Nugent doubtfully.

The chums of the Remove little guessed what it was a sign of!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Is Pleased!

"FINISHED?" asked Skinner, looking into Bolsover's study. It was Friday, and tea-time, and Bolsover major had been sitting in his study for an hour grinding out the last of his long imposition.

Bolsover major had just laid his pen down with a grunt of relief.

"Yes," he said; "just done—six hundred awful lines! I'm ready."

"We've got a good tea in the study," said Skinner, as Bolsover major rose. "Smithy is standing it. Come on!"

"Right-ho! I'll put these together."

Bolsover major had covered a good many sheets with his sprawling writing. He collected them together, and pinned them at the corner to make sure of their safety. He knew that Loder would require the full six hundred lines, and that there would be trouble if they were not forthcoming.

Loder was very much down on Bolsover—not merely on Beauclerc's account. Bolsover was so big and strong that a good many of the seniors did not care to interfere with him, and Loder was often chafed by his cool impertinence.

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He could not be incessantly reporting him to his Form-master, and at the same time he did not care to risk being knocked down by a burly and hot-tempered junior if he attempted corporal punishment; and so he generally let Bolsover alone, but disliked him all the more. He would not have been sorry to double the impot if the bully of the Remove had given him fair cause, and he had already told Bolsover that the lines must be finished that day or he would mention the matter to Mr. Quelch.

"What a blessed lot!" said Skinner. "Looks as if you've taken up a giddy literary life, by Jove, and started writing a book. Come on!"

Bolsover major left the study with his chum. Skinner shared Vernon-Smith's quarters, and the Bounder was standing a feed, to which Bolsover came as a guest. The Bounder could be kind sometimes, and he was sympathetic about that tremendous imposition.

Beauclerc was in the Remove passage, and Bolsover major scowled at him as he passed.

"Sneak!" he called out.

The schoolboy baronet did not reply. He stared out of the window. Bolsover major and Skinner went into the Bounder's study, and the door closed behind them.

Beauclerc turned round from the window then. There was a slight flush in his cheeks, and he looked in a guilty way up and down the passage. There was no one in sight, and he stepped quickly towards Bolsover's room, and entered it, closing the door behind him. As the Remove bully had gone to tea with the Bounder, it was not likely that he would return just then, and Beauclerc had seen his study-mates in the Close.

The schoolboy baronet was two minutes in the study. He was breathing a little quickly as he came out, closing the door quickly behind him.

"Hallo, Bart!" said Fisher T. Fish's genial voice. "Been in to see Bolsover—hey?"

"Bart" was a new title the Yankee junior had apparently invented, probably from seeing an envelope addressed to "Sir Harry Beauclerc, Bart." In spite of being repulsed a dozen times, and in spite of the passage of arms between them, Fisher T. Fish had not despaired of getting on good terms with Beauclerc, so that he could write home to "Noo" York about his friendship with members of the aristocracy.

"No—yes—he's not there," said Beauclerc, catching his breath. "I—I just looked in to see him."

"Had your tea, Bart?"

"N-no!"

"Come and have tea with me?" said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "I guess I've got a topping spread. My popper has sent me ten dollars from Noo York. I reckon I'll be pleased if you'll come, Bart!"

"Thanks! I don't care to come," said Beauclerc, recovering his coolness, which had been considerably disturbed by his sudden meeting with the Yankee junior as he came out of Bolsover's study. "I'm rather particular whom I have tea with!"

And he walked away with his nose in the air. Fisher T. Fish looked after him, clenching his bony hands hard.

"I guess I shall hammer that guy one of these days, just a few!" he murmured. "As if a free citizen of the great American republic ain't as good as a played-out, effete aristocrat of this sleepy old country! I guess I shall crawl all over him one of these days."

And Fish would have proceeded to "crawl over" Sir Harry Beauclerc there and then, but for a painful remembrance of their previous encounter. With that remembrance fresh in his mind, he magnanimously decided to let the effete aristocrat off.

Beauclerc quitted the School House and went round to the bike-shed. He had had a handsome "jigger" sent down from Coventry, and it had arrived that morning. Beauclerc wheeled it out and pedalled away in the direction of Highcliffe School. He had not a single friend in Greyfriars, but he was still on the best of terms with Ponsonby & Co., the "nuts" of Highcliffe. They were birds of a feather.

It was more than an hour later when Bolsover major knocked at Loder's door and presented himself with his imposition. Loder grinned at the sight of the sheaf of paper. Six hundred lines was a tremendous impot, and he knew that it must have taken up all the junior's spare time.

"I suppose you've done this all by yourself?" Loder demanded, as he took the sheets.

"Yes," growled Bolsover.

"Well, I'll look over it carefully, and if there's any trickery I'll double it again and keep you busy to-morrow afternoon with a new lot," said the prefect.

Bolsover growled and left the study. He closed the door with a slam. Walker of the Sixth, who was in the study with Loder, uttered an exclamation.

"I wouldn't stand that!"

"Come back, Bolsover!" shouted Loder.

Bolsover major did not hear, or affected not to hear. He did not come back. Loder half rose, flushing angrily, but sat down again. He never cared to provoke Percy Bolsover's savage temper too far.

"Oh, let him go!" he said. "I'll see whether this impot is all right. If there's any dodge about it I'll come down on him heavy enough."

He turned over the sheets. As he opened them one from another to examine the writing, a letter slipped out from among them. Loder picked it up.

"The young ass! He's left a letter among the papers," he grunted. "Well, it's not my business to look after his letters for him."

He glanced at the letter before crumpling it to throw it away. Then he uttered a sharp exclamation.

"Great Scott!"

"Hallo! What have you got there?" asked Walker.

"My only hat! I'll bet he didn't know how he was giving himself away, or he would have been a bit more careful with his correspondence, the young cad!" exclaimed Loder.

"What is it?" said Walker, his curiosity aroused. "Let's have a look at it."

Loder passed him the letter. Walker read it, and his face expressed his amazement.

"The young idiot! That's enough to get him sacked, or flogged at least!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"And it's jolly well going to," said Loder, rising to his feet, his eyes gleaming. "I've stood enough cheek from Bolsover of the Remove. I've got him under my thumb now, and I'll make him feel it. Give it to me."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Take it to his Form-master. No, by George, I'll take it to the Head!" said Loder, snapping his teeth. "This is a jolly serious matter, and it's my duty to report it to the Head."

"Quite right!" said Walker.

Loder left the study and made his way to the Head's presence at once. His eyes were gleaming with excitement. The junior whom he both feared and disliked was in his power, and Loder did not intend to have any mercy upon him. Indeed, a more conscientious prefect than Gerald Loder might have concluded that it was his bounden duty to place that letter before the Head of Greyfriars.

Dr. Locke observed at once the gravity of the prefect's manner as he came in.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

Loder laid the imposition and the letter on the Head's writing-table.

"These lines have just been brought to me by Bolsover of the Remove, sir," he said. "This letter was among the sheets. It must have got there by accident, I suppose. Bolsover could not have known that he was bringing it to me. I considered it my duty to place it before you at once, sir."

Dr. Locke, looking perplexed, took up the letter. His expression changed as he glanced at it, and thunder gathered on his brow, for the letter ran:

"Dear Marks,—I'm sorry I can't settle up to-day, but I will meet you to-morrow (Saturday) afternoon, in the usual place, and square up. I shall have received my allowance by then. I want you to put a half sov. on Minstrel Boy for me, for the Darchester Race, and the same on Chopsticks for a place. I'll do the best I can to get you the introduction to Mauleverer, but it will require some time; he doesn't care about betting or that kind of thing. But I hope to be able to bring him into line in the long run.—Yours always,
"P. B."

"Good heavens!" the Head exclaimed, aghast. "That is the letter of a most abandoned young scoundrel. You say this was written by Bolsover major, Loder?"

"I say that it was sticking among these sheets when he brought them to me, sir. You see, it is in the same handwriting as the imposition."

"Precisely!"

"And the initials are P. B.—Percy Bolsover."

"There is no doubt about it, then," said the Head, adjusting his glasses and carefully comparing the handwriting of the letter with that of the imposition. "Yes, they are undoubtedly by the same hand; and the fact that the letter was in such a place proves its authorship. The young rascal must have written this letter this very day, though goodness knows how long this rascality has been going on. Marks! I seem to know the name. Undoubtedly a bookmaker—"

"A very well-known bookmaker of Courtfield, sir," said Loder. "He figured in a case in a police-court last week. He is quite notorious."

"And a Greyfriars boy to be connected with such a character!" the Head exclaimed. "He speaks of meeting him in the usual place. That shows that the connection is no new thing."

"I fear not, sir. Bolsover has certainly been detected smoking several times. Wingate has punished him for it."

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—**"THE MISSING MASTER!"**

"Send him to me at once, Loder, and ask Mr Quelch to step here at the same time."

"Very well, sir!"

Loder left the study, leaving the Head in a state of considerable agitation and with an angry frown upon his usually kind and placid face.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Blow for Bolsover!

"YOU can give me a chance to-morrow!" growled Bolsover major. He was standing in No. 1 Study, where the Famous Five were gathered, discussing a cricket match that was to come off on the following afternoon with Redclyffe School. "I'm as good a bat as any of you fellows, any day in the week!"

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet," remarked Bob Cherry.

"You fellows want to keep the good matches all to yourselves—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry Wharton. "I was just thinking whether I should put you in, as Penfold wants to go home for the afternoon."

"All serene," said Bolsover, his face clearing. "Give me a chance, and I'll show you that I'll play up all right. I—"

"Oh, you're here!" said Fisher T. Fish, looking into the study. "I've been hunting for you, Bolsover, I guess."

"You can go on hunting, then," said Bolsover. "Clear off and don't bother."

"I guess you're wanted. Loder says—"

"Blow Loder!"

"Blow him as hard as you like," assented Fish. "But he's told me to find you and tell you you're wanted in the Head's study at once."

"Oh, rats! What the dickens is the matter now?" snorted Bolsover major. "That cad Beaulere can't have been sneaking again. I haven't done anything to him that I know of, excepting telling him what I think of him. There's no law against calling a sneak a sneak."

"I guess it's something serious. Loder was looking as solemn as an owl, and Mr. Quelch has just gone to the Head looking like an owl, too."

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"That looks like trouble," he remarked. "What the deuce have you been doing, Bolsover?"

"I haven't done anything," exclaimed Bolsover, in bewilderment. "Look here, Fishy, if you are rotting I'll break all your Yankee bones!"

"Honest injun!" said Fish. "And I advise you to hop it. The Head don't like to be kept waiting, and I've been looking for you for ten minutes."

"I suppose I'd better go!" growled Bolsover. "If it's that sneak again, I'll squash him!"

And he walked out of the study in a decidedly bad temper and in an apprehensive frame of mind. Harry Wharton & Co. looked concerned. They did not like the bully of the Remove much, but this looked like serious trouble for him. To be called into the presence of the Head and his Form-master together showed that it was no common delinquency that was to be discussed. It was something more serious than ragging the new junior that Bolsover was wanted for, and something more serious than smoking cigarettes in his study.

"Got any idea what's the matter?" asked Harry Wharton. Fish shook his head.

"Nope," he said. "Only they're all looking as solemn as boiled owls. Loder has been rummaging in Bolsover's study, too, looking for something, I guess. I shouldn't wonder if he's found some smokes there. I know the silly jay keeps cigarettes there. All the worse for him now."

Bolsover major reached the Head's study, and the doctor's voice bade him enter. The burly Removite looked, and felt, apprehensive as he entered and found the Head and Mr. Quelch and Loder together, all looking extremely grave. He wondered uneasily which of his sins had come to light.

"I have been waiting for you, Bolsover!" said the Head coldly.

"I came as soon as I heard you wanted me, sir," said the junior. "I—I hope there is nothing the matter!"

"There is something very serious the matter, Bolsover! Look at that letter!"

Bolsover took the letter in wonder, and glanced at it. He looked astonished.

"Why, this—this is in my handwriting!" he exclaimed.

"Exactly!" said the Head drily. "You gave it to Loder among the sheets of this imposition, by accident, I presume?"

"I—I didn't know it was there," stammered Bolsover.

"What—what does it mean?"

"That is what I wish to have explained to me. You have written a letter to a Mr. Marks; undoubtedly the notorious bookmaker of that name. It appears that you are in regular correspondence with him, and not satisfied with that, you are seeking to inveigle a more innocent lad into the same rascalities," the Head exclaimed sternly. "In addition to your own wickedness, you are attempting to lead Mauleverer into your underhand and rascally ways."

"I, sir?" stuttered Bolsover.

"Yes, you! As is proved in your own hand, in that letter," Bolsover almost staggered.

"That—that letter! I never wrote that letter! I've never seen it before!" he shouted. "Do you think I wrote it?"

"I have not the slightest doubt on that point!"

"I, sir! But I—I don't know Marks—I've never written to him. I know his name, of course—everybody's heard of him. I've never had anything to do with him. I don't bet on horses!"

"Unfortunately, I cannot take your word for that. Bolsover, you are convicted by your own handwriting. I wish to know how long this has been going on, and whether other boys are concerned with you in this business!" said the Head sternly.

Bolsover turned an almost haggard look upon Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Quelch, you'll speak for me!" he stammered. "You know I'm not that sort of chap—you will tell the Head—"

"I cannot tell the Head what I do not know, Bolsover," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I only know that you are a boy of a reckless character; but I never suspected this before. You have been punished for smoking in your study. Loder has searched your study, and found a packet of cigarettes there. They are here. Do you deny that they were in the drawer of your study table?"

"No, sir. I—I admit that!"

"You may as well admit the rest, since there is no doubt about it," Mr. Quelch said, very drily.

"But I don't, sir!" almost shrieked Bolsover. "I don't know anything about that letter! If Loder says I wrote it, he's telling lies!"

"Bolsover!"

"It's all lies, sir! Loder hates me, because he can't bully me as he does the nippers," howled Bolsover, turning a furious look upon the bully of the Sixth. "You know you do, Loder. This is a rotten plot against me—you never found the letter in the papers at all! If I wrote to Marks, I shouldn't be fool enough to let the letter get there. I should take jolly good care of that. But I never wrote it. Loder wrote it, sir, and he's palming it off as mine, to get me into trouble, because I won't let him bully me as he does the others—"

"Why, you young villain!" exclaimed Loder, taken utterly aback by this unexpected accusation. "Sir—you can't think—you can't believe—"

"Don't be uneasy, Loder!" said the Head quietly. "I know perfectly well that such a thought would never cross your mind, Bolsover. You will do yourself no good by making these wild and wicked accusations against the prefect whose duty it was to report this matter to me!"

"Walker was in my study when I found the letter in the papers, sir. It dropped out as I began to look over the imposition."

"I need no witness, Loder—I shall not descend to take the slightest notice of Bolsover's wicked and ridiculous accusation against you."

Bolsover panted for breath. A moment's reflection had been enough to show him that the charge was, indeed, ridiculous on the face of it. Loder disliked him, and was glad of the chance to ruin him; but it was absurd to suppose that the prefect would have run the risk of forging a letter in his hand. Even as he had uttered the wild accusation, the absurdity of it was borne in upon Bolsover's own mind. The unfortunate junior stood panting, the whole study seeming to swim round him in his terror and confusion.

"I expect a full confession from you, Bolsover," said the Head, and his voice was like iron. "For how long has this iniquitous conduct been going on?"

"I—I—I can't confess—I've nothing to confess. I never wrote that letter!" Bolsover faltered brokenly.

"Nonsense! If you repeat your infamous accusation against Loder, I will expel you from this school immediately!" thundered the Head.

"I—I don't say it was Loder—I don't know. But—but somebody wrote that letter. I don't know who it was. It's a trick—a rotten trick!"

"That will do, Bolsover. I will give you time to think this over," said the Head coldly. "Make a full confession, and I will punish you merely with a flogging—otherwise, I shall have no resource but to expel you from Greyfriars. You shall have two hours in which to consider the matter. You may go!"

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"I—I— Listen to me, I—"

"You may go!" said the Head, raising his voice. Bolsover almost staggered from the study.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Slip 'Twixt Cup and Lip!

"BOLSOVER! What on earth's the matter?"

Harry Wharton asked the question, in a tone of alarm, as he met the bully of the Remove.

Bolsover came along the Remove passage with a staggering step, like a drunken man; his face was bloodless, and his eyes wild in their look. Wharton caught him by the arm to steady him. The Removites crowded round him in amazement and alarm. Never had the burly Removite been seen in such a state of agitation. It looked as if he were almost out of his senses.

"What's happened?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Pull yourself together, old chap. Tell us what's the matter?"

Bolsover broke into a wild laugh.

"The matter is that I'm sacked!" he panted.

"Sacked!"

"What for?"

"Great Scott!"

"Yes, sacked, unless I confess to something that I haven't done, and then I'm to be flogged!" yelled Bolsover furiously.

"Well, I won't confess to a lie—I'll be sacked first. Somebody's played a dirty trick on me—I don't know who it was, if it wasn't Loder. But it's all lies—lies—lies!"

"Take it calmly!" advised Fisher T. Fish. "Let's hear what's happened. I guess you are talking out of the back of your neck!"

Bolsover major-panted out the story.

"Loder says there was a letter in the sheets of my impot that I handed him—a letter I'd written, and it got there by accident, and so I took it to him without knowing it—it's a lie! It's a letter to Marks the bookie, about betting, and meeting him and squaring up money I owe him! I don't owe him anything—I've never seen the man! And there's something about getting him an introduction to Mauleverer. Have I ever tried to get you to bet on horses, Mauleverer?"

"Begad, no! I'd punch your nose if you did!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"The letter's in your hand?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes; and signed with my initials. Somebody's imitated my list, and planted that letter on me somehow!" hissed Bolsover.

The juniors looked at one another. Bolsover's rage was genuine enough; but his story was, as Skinner murmured, somewhat "thick."

"I guess that sounds rather thin," said Fisher T. Fish, with a shake of the head. "Blessed if I think anybody would imitate your hand, and how could he shove it into your imposition without you knowing it? I guess you've given yourself right away this time, Bolsover. You'd better make a clean breast of it and take the flogging—it's better than being expelled!"

Bolsover clenched his fists and sprang towards the Yankee junior.

"You hound! You don't believe me——"

"Hyar, hold him off——"

Vernon-Smith and Harry Wharton grasped the bully of the Remove together, and dragged him back.

"Let me go!" shouted Bolsover. "I'll smash him! I'll——"

"I guess I've only said what all the other fellows think," said Fisher T. Fish drily.

"Yaas, begad!"

Bolsover major cast a wild glance round at the juniors. There was unbelief in almost every face. The rage in his looks gave place to a hopeless despondency.

"You—you fellows don't believe me?" he stammered.

"Then—then I suppose it's only natural the Head won't. I'm done for! But it's all lies—all lies! I never wrote the letter, I swear that!"

"That will want some proving," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, pile it on!" said Bolsover bitterly. "I'm down now, and any fellow can have a go at me. Pile it on!"

"Don't be an ass!" said Harry. "If you're innocent, I'd do anything I could to help you prove it. But——"

"Let's go into this," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "You say somebody must have written that letter in your list, Bolsover——"

"Of course, as I never wrote it!"

"Then who did it?"

Bolsover was silent.

"I don't know," he said, at last. "I can't think of any fellow who'd be villain enough. I know there are some fellows here who don't like me, but—but a thing like that, I don't know! I——"

He broke off suddenly, and his eyes seemed to blaze as he looked down the passage. The juniors followed his gaze. Sir Harry Beauclerc had just come upstairs, and he was standing looking on at the excited crowd, with his usual supercilious expression on his face. Bolsover raised his hand and pointed to him.

"That's who did it!" he shouted.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Wharton. "You haven't an atom of proof—"

"I don't care; I know he did it. He's the only fellow in the school who's villain enough!" panted Bolsover. "And I'll make him confess it, or wring his neck!"

He made a sudden rush at Beauclerc. The next instant the schoolboy baronet was struggling in his grasp. Bolsover seized him by the throat, and shook him like a rat.

"You hound! You rotter! Own up, or—"

"Help!" gurgled Beauclerc. "He's choking me! Help!"

The juniors rushed at Bolsover major to drag him off. In his fury, it really looked as if he would do the baronet some serious injury. But Bolsover refused to let go his victim. He rolled over as he was dragged back, and pulled Beauclerc down with him, and two or three juniors sprawled over them. There was a sudden call from the stairs.

"Cave!"

"Here comes Quelch!"

Mr. Quelch, with an angry frown upon his face, strode upon the scene. Bolsover major was still grasping Beauclerc, but the other juniors scrambled back.

"Bolsover!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Release Beauclerc at once! Do you hear me? How dare you attack a boy in this savage manner?"

Bolsover obeyed, and Beauclerc reeled, gasping, against the wall.

"He did it!" shrieked Bolsover. "I tell you he did it, sir! I know he did!"

"He did what? What are you talking about?"

"He wrote that letter, and planted it on me. It's because I licked him for sneaking! I tell you he did it!" yelled Bolsover.

"Silence! Calm yourself. Have you any proof whatever to offer?"

"I know he did it!"

"Nonsense! Beauclerc, I need not ask you—"

"I don't know what he is referring to, sir," said Beauclerc, recovering his composure, and giving Bolsover a steely look. "What does he accuse me of?"

"You wrote a letter in my hand. You planted it in my imposition that I was to take to Loder. You liar—you scoundrel—"

"Silence, Bolsover!"

"I certainly did nothing of the kind, sir," said Beauclerc. "The accusation is absurd. I could scarcely forge Bolsover's hand if I wanted to—"

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch. "The whole thing is ridiculous! You will gain nothing by making these wild accusations, Bolsover."

"But he can imitate my hand, and I can prove it!" panted Bolsover. "All the fellows know it. I made him do my impot on Wednesday, and he practised my writing, and it passed with Loder."

"Is that the case, Beauclerc?"

"Yes, sir; that is so. But, of course, Loder did not examine the imposition, or he would have seen the difference."

"He did examine it, and he didn't see any difference!" shouted Bolsover. "And very likely you've been practising my hand since then, you rotter!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton involuntarily.

Back to his memory came that scene in the study—the page in Bolsover's writing lying on the table; Beauclerc, with flushed cheeks, gathering hastily the sheets he had written, and keeping them from observation. What had Beauclerc been writing, then? He had wondered at the time. And now—

"What! You know it?" exclaimed Bolsover, quick to catch at a straw. "He's in your study, Wharton. You've seen him at it—is that it?"

"I don't know," confessed Wharton. "I can't help thinking—Look here, Beauclerc, what were you writing out yesterday when we came in suddenly that you wouldn't let us see?"

"Latin exercises," said Beauclerc calmly.

"Then why did you crumple them up so quick, and take them away? And why was that page of Bolsover's lying on the table?"

"I didn't see it there. By accident, I presume."

"Stuff! It wasn't there before we went out," said Wharton. "None of us had any use for it. You must have kept it somewhere, and had it there for some reason."

There was a buzz among the excited juniors. Beauclerc's face was seen to be growing pale. Mr. Quelch was watching him, and his brow grew very stern.

"This must be inquired into," he said. "I can hardly believe that Beauclerc has been guilty of such baseness."

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FOR NEXT MONDAY—**"THE MISSING MASTER!"**

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You say that this letter must have been put into your imposition, Bolsover. After finishing it, did you not take it immediately to Loder?"

"No, sir. I went to tea with Smithy, and left it on my table. It was there a good hour before I took it to Loder. Skinner knows it; he came to fetch me to tea."

"That's so," corroborated Skinner.

"He had a chance to go into my study and put the letter there if he liked," went on Bolsover. "That's what he did, too. I know—"

"Did you enter Bolsover's study while he was at tea with Vernon-Smith, Beauclerc?"

"Certainly not! I have been at Highcliffe—"

"Oh, I swear!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish, pressing forward excitedly. "I guess you're not giving us straight goods this time, Bart. You jolly well went into Bolsover's study, because I met you coming out—and spoke to you, too!"

Beauclerc turned deadly pale.

"I—I— That was earlier," he stammered. "That was—was some time before—just after lessons."

"Liar!" roared Bolsover. "I went to my study immediately after lessons, to get the impot done. If you went in, it was after I left; and I didn't leave till I went to tea with Skinner and Smithy."

"Yep; and you told me Bolsover wasn't there," added Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you've caught on the hop this time, Bart!"

Beauclerc gave a hunted look round.

"So it appears that you did enter Bolsover's study, Beauclerc, after he had left it?" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"I—I—yes; I forgot—I went in to speak to him, but—"

"You have just stated that you did not go in. Then, when Fish confuted you, you stated that it was earlier—a palpable falsehood, as you did not go in while Bolsover was there. You say you went in to speak to Bolsover? What had you to say to a junior with whom you were on the worst of terms, as I understand?"

Beauclerc did not speak; he could not. He had nothing to say, and the grim, accusing faces on all sides unnerved him. His glance fell before the Remove master's stern eyes.

"I can only conclude, Beauclerc, that Bolsover, has guessed the truth that you, having had practice in imitating his hand, forged this letter, and placed it where he was likely to convey it unconsciously to a prefect. Is that the case?"

Beauclerc raised his head. A bitter sneer was on his face, and he stared defiance at the scornful Removites.

"Yes! I don't care! I don't want to stay here! Bolsover made me copy his hand, to do his imposition, and I told him I'd make him sorry for it! I hoped he'd be sacked; and he would have been, but for that babbling Yankee fool! I don't care! The Head will have to send me away, and I want to go! That's all I've got to say!"

"That is quite enough," said Mr. Quelch. "You will not be disappointed, I assure you. Kindly follow me!"

A deep groan of disgust followed Beauclerc as he went. And when he was gone, the Remove fellows surrounded Bolsover major, congratulating him. For once Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, was the object of sympathy and cordiality. The rascally scheme to ruin him had recoiled upon the head of the schemer. But Bolsover was very quiet and subdued now. His narrow escape was not without its effect upon him.

"Thanks, you chaps," he said "thanks! That awful ead will be kicked out—that's one comfort; but I'll take jolly good care there are never any more smokes in my study. That helped. And—and I'm sorry I punched your head this morning, Fishy. It was jolly decent of you to speak up for me."

"I guess that's all right," said Fisher T. Fish; "and I guess we've seen the last of the Bart. I'm kinder sorry. We don't have Barts hyer every day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

On the following morning Sir Harry Beauclerc was publicly expelled from Greyfriars, and sent back to the charge of his unfortunate guardian. He went with his head erect, and a sneering smile upon his face. He was not sorry to go, and all Greyfriars were decidedly glad. Most satisfied of all were Harry Wharton and Nugent. Their painful task was over, and No. 1 Study was freed from the presence of the schemer and swanker.

THE END.

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~~~~~  
 READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is engaged on one of his adventurous expeditions, in company with Ching-Lung (the Prince of China), Rupert Thurston, Gan Waga (the Eskimo), also Prout, Maddock, Barry O'Rooney, and the rest of the famous band of stalwart seamen. Their quest is a field of blue orchids, which is said to exist somewhere up the great Amazon River, and their craft is a small steam launch named the Blue Orchid, which has been captured from Lord's enemy in this enterprise, a German millionaire named Hausmann, who is continually pursuing the millionaire in his magnificent yacht, the Medea. Mainly owing to the craft of Vasco, a friendly native whom Ferrers Lord befriended on one of his earlier adventures, Hausmann is successfully thrown off the trail, and Ferrers Lord and his companions succeed in reaching Obidos. After staying there a day or two, they once more set out on their quest. They stumble across a village which is reigned over by a beautiful woman, who is known as Althara the Merciless. The adventurers are captured and taken prisoners. Ching-Lung, however, tells her he is a wizard, and by simple, yet wonderful, conjuring, he earns a reward from the queen. This takes the shape of a cup of wine, out of which the queen first drinks. By this sign, no one may harm the drinker. "Tarface," a native of the village who had once been amongst English sailors, whispers to Ching-Lung to pass the cup quickly to his companions. This the prince does, and thus saves the lives of all the crew. Maddock is caught by Charkoni, and Barry O'Rooney, a few minutes later, walks into a trap made by Charkoni. Ferrers Lord and Rupert Thurston discover marks of the struggle outside the wizard's hut, and make investigations. They discover a secret tunnel, in which is a kind of miniature railway. Setting the truck on the lines, they shoot down a hill, just as they hear a moan. Charkoni is found and tied up. Meanwhile, Ching-Lung is compelled to give some more exhibitions of his powers as a juggler, and, asking for a rifle, shoots a vulture, which falls to the ground at his feet, stone dead. However, by means of his ventriloquism, he makes the bird appear to cry out, "Althara! Althara! Althara!" This considerably startles the queen, and she rises to her feet nervously.

(Now go on with the story.)

Gan-Waga in Danger.

"If I only knew the brutal language," growled Ching-Lung, "I'd give 'em a fright they wouldn't get over in six thousand years. But I don't know it. Ask 'em where Charkoni is, Tarface. No, don't bother about that. Tell the Queen I'm tired. I can't keep on at this rotten game. Tell her I've had enough."

Tarface meekly translated Ching-Lung's desire to rest. Luckily, Althara was in a good temper.

"Enough!" she said. "Take the yellow one to the palace and treat him—oh, unworthy dogs!—as ye would treat me!"

"What does she say?"

"You go palace. You very big man."

"Hold on!" said Ching-Lung. "Tell her I'd like to have my fat slave with me—Gan-Waga, you know."

Althara graciously acceded, and withdrew, followed by her maidens and advisors.

"And I'd like these guns and things, Tarface," added Ching-Lung, "if it's all the same to you."

"You have what like. Warriors bring 'em. I go fetch fat slave."

It took six men to carry the weapons and ammunition. All the warriors had heard the Queen's orders, and they bowed to the ground before his highness of Kwai-hal. The guard raised their spears in salute as he walked into the palace, smoking a cigarette. It was cool enough under the palm-leaf roof, and Ching-Lung was agreeably surprised to see that the floors were handsomely paved. A man brought him a cup of ice-cold wine, which he knelt down to present. At the bottom something sparkled. Ching-Lung took out an old-fashioned gold ring of quaint workmanship, studded with pearls.

"In exchange for the one the chief sent," he grunted.

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"I'm not very sweet on you, Althara; but I suppose I'd better wear your ring, though I'd prefer to wring your neck! Dear me! I know those accents somewhat."

"Where's my Chingy? I want my Chingy! Peek-a-boo! Where you, Chingy, hunk?" cried a well-known voice.

"Peek-a-bo-boo!" called Ching-Lung.

Gan-Waga waddled in, and caught sight of his idol. He grinned with delight from ear to ear.

"Chingy," he said, "I wants a bath. I dying for a swim, Chingy. Ain't there no butterful baths?"

"Dog of a Tarface," said Ching-Lung, "if you've got a bath, escort us thither, and don't be long about it! You don't look as if you washed a lot yourself; but if you've got any water about, let's have a look at it."

"No understand."

"A bath, idiot!" said Ching-Lung, throwing out his arms. "We want to swim—like so."

"Swimses—like so. Oh, I begs yo' butterful pardons. Didn't sees yo' tumtumtum," said Gan-Waga.

In order to explain more fully to Tarface, Gan stood on one leg and pretended to swim. In doing so he placed his foot on the waistcoat of a stout gentleman—at least, he would have put his foot there if the gentleman had worn a waistcoat, which he didn't. Tears sprang into the gentleman's eyes, and Gan bowed low and apologised profusely.

"I begges yo' puddens, ugliness," he said politely. "Why yo' bad 'nough sillynesses yo' stick yo' selluf againsts my boot! I awfufs gladfufs sorry. Ho, ho, ho! Why yo' gots eyes in yo' tears, hunk! Why yo' laughs such a lot? Likes him, hunk! Yo' go and grate nutmegs on yo' faces!"

Gan's voice was as sweet as honey, and he kept bowing to

the injured warrior, who with equal courtesy returned the bows, little dreaming what the Eskimo was really saying.

"Shall I kick him more, Chingy? Seems to like it, hunk? Not like misappoints him."

"Better not, kiddie," said Ching-Lung. "He might not misappoint you with the point of his spear if you did. What about this bath of yours, Tarface? Can't you find us a dip? Hurry up, and look quick."

"Not far off," said the interpreter. "Just in here."

He led them under a creeper-grown arch, and Gan-Waga gave a blissful yell as he sighted water. He made one dash at it and went in—clothes, boots, watch, and everything.

"Ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha! It loveliful, Chingy!" he shrieked, as his head bobbed up all black and shiny. "Oh, it gloriousness! What they make dat row fo', hunk? What de matters?"

Ching-Lung did not know. The warriors who had followed them were yelling and dancing, and waving their spears. Tarface, frozen into speechlessness, stood with open mouth and glaring eyes. For a second Ching-Lung fancied that they were going to be massacred in cold blood. Then he knew the cause of the uproar as a dark shape rushed forward below the surface, causing a green ridge on the water.

"Look out, Gan, there's an alligator after you!" he shouted. "Look out! Dive! A gun, Tarface—a gun!"

The guns had been left behind, and Gan-Waga had no weapons of any kind. As he turned, the brute opened its dripping red jaws. Gan dived under it, and wrenching a spear from the hand of one of the warriors, Ching-Lung bounded into the ornamental pool. It was barely waist-deep, but he slipped forward, and scrambled up. The brute's teeth snapped together, but it had missed its prey.

"Spears, Chingy—spears!"

Ching-Lung hurled the weapon, and Gan's quick hand caught it. The reptile whizzed round in a smother of foam, and rushed at the Eskimo again. Gan vanished. The water became tinged with blood.

"Not tink him like dat lots, Chingy," gurgled the blubberbiter, thrusting out his grinning face. "He breaks him teeth biting it, Chingy. I speeks it down him uglifuls throats. Hoo, hoo, hoo! He got a very sores necks, Chingy. Nots wants no more to eats now, hunk. Ooh! Ha, ha, hoo—o—oo! I pushes him a bit more in. How you was, Sallygatore?"

The creature rose in its death fury, the shaft of the spear protruding from its gnashing teeth.

"Oh, come out!" said Ching-Lung. "I wish you'd never gone in. He's a sacred reptile, I'll wager."

"It is Charkoni's," said Tarface, his teeth chattering.

"Glad it isn't the Queen's," said Ching-Lung. "He'll be dead in a minute. What did he feed it on?"

"Men and women. It would have been fed to-night."

"M'yes. Gan has spoiled its appetite a little. It won't want feeding again. I say—"

Ching-Lung jumped. There was a rattle of firearms and a clamour of yells. The warriors dashed through the archway. Rifles and revolvers cracked, and men in mortal agony shrieked their last shrieks. Ching-Lung dashed after the fighters. A man dropped in front of him with a bullet through his heart. It had ripped through the up-

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raised shield like going through tissue-paper. The warriors gave way, for the steps of the palace were piled with dead. Ching-Lung seized a rifle and some ammunition.

"Gan! Tarface! Help me!" he shouted.

As fast as he could he flung rifles, revolvers, and ammunition into the pond. He knew well enough what had happened. A bullet whizzed past his ear, and a hoarse yell of triumph rang through the air. A stout figure, clad in a khaki uniform, leapt over the bodies that crowded the steps, a smoking revolver in each hand.

"A hearty welcome, friend Hausmann!" said Ching-Lung.

"I've wanted to meet you, you murderer!"

As he spoke he fired. The German staggered, and rolled backwards. A second shot sent another man tottering down the steps. Then he grasped the trembling interpreter by the shoulder.

"If you want to save yourself and us," he said, "you'd better show us where to bolt."

They raced past the pond, bullets rattling after them.

"Ooh, Chingy, I doned! I shot—I shot! Ooh! Not leaves me, Chingy?" wailed the Eskimo.

Gan-Waga stumbled and went down. Ching-Lung had only four bullets left.

"I'll not leave you, sonny," he answered softly. "Don't be afraid of that. Ah!"

A bullet clipped from the stem of a palm, and cut a nick through the cloth of his coat on the shoulder. The man who had fired was the traitor Pedro, the prisoner whom they had been compelled to liberate when the Blue Orchid foundered.

"Paid," said Ching-Lung.

The half-breed tossed up his arms, and fell sideways into the pond. Three bullets more. Ching-Lung stooped down, and smoothed the Eskimo's hair lovingly.

"Good-bye, my Chingy!"

"Good-bye, old chap!" said Ching-Lung.

His revolver cracked again. It would soon be over now. Rifles gleamed under the archway, and Ching-Lung clenched his teeth. He was still stooping and holding Gan-Waga's hand—a hand that was limp and cold.

The waggon dropped into the blackness like a stone falling over a cliff, and every instant it seemed that it would strike the ground, and be dashed into fragments of matchwood. It gave a sickening lurch, and then began to mount like a switchback. Again it plunged downwards, and it again rose. The figure clinging to it did not move a muscle. The rush of air had robbed him of his cap. The pace increased, only to slacken. Then came a violent shock. The waggon had jumped the rails. Ferrers Lord was flung forward, and went crashing through some obstacle. He scrambled up, dazed and shaken, with the bright sun shining on him, and Rupert Thurston gazing at him in amazement.

"Where on earth did you spring from?" gasped Rupert. "I was just coming to you."

"Give me time to think. I hardly know."

The millionaire went to a little rill that plashed down the rocks and bathed his head. The devil-man was still unconscious. Ferrers Lord shook himself. It was a long drop from the gallery to the valley in which they stood. The waggon must have run down some species of spiral tramway. Pushing the brushwood and ferns aside, he found it overturned. For some unknown reason it had cleared the rails.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo!"

The cry was faint, but it was no echo. Ferrers Lord felt for his matchbox, and plunged into the gloom.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo!"

"Who is it?"

"It's Maddock, sir."

The millionaire had no need to burn the few matches that remained. A faint light that brightened as he advanced shone ahead. Even without that he had the rails to guide him. In a few minutes he sprang into the light again. He was in a deep, narrow shaft that seemed to have been bored out of the solid rock, a patch of clear blue sky appeared high overhead; and on a stout waggon two men side by side. O'Rooney and Maddock were found at last!

### Ferrers Lord Makes a Great Discovery!

Both Maddock and O'Rooney were conscious, but only Maddock had succeeded in getting the gag out of his mouth. Ferrers Lord set to work to undo the ropes that bound them. They were both exhausted.

"Can you walk?" asked Ferrers Lord.

"Oi think so, sor," said Barry weakly. "Oi can see three of aich of you, sor."

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 330.

FOR NEXT  
MONDAY—

"THE MISSING MASTER!"

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of Harry Wharten & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.

He clasped both hands over his dizzy, aching head.

"And you, Maddock?"

"I'll try sir, souse me," answered the bo'sun pluckily. "I don't feel fit for much all the same."

"Sit down and rest then. I can spare you five minutes," said the millionaire quickly. "You have given me some trouble. Let me look at your head, O'Rooney. I see it has been bleeding. Bah! That will not kill you."

Both men had collapsed. Ferrers Lord had no brandy with him; but they would soon pull themselves together he knew, for they were as tough as leather. He examined the waggon. It had come to rest on a thick wooden platform, and two protruding pieces of wood acting automatically had kept it from slipping back. The platform filled the whole bottom of the shaft. It had large wooden wheels at each corner. For a second or two the millionaire was puzzled. Then he noticed that the rocks had four grooves to fit these wheels—grooves that ran up perpendicularly towards the patch of blue sky. Evidently the platform could be raised and lowered, but he could find no species of machinery.

"Water, of course," he muttered. "Charkoni is a cunning rogue. He has some way of flooding the shaft that will prove useful to us. I must persuade the gentleman to show us how it is done. Now lads, pull yourselves together."

Barry and the bo'sun had both suffered severely, but they were game to the last. They limped through the tunnel. Their eyes gleamed when they saw the water, but they gleamed even more brightly when they saw the prisoner. Thurston shook hands with them silently.

"How did it happen?"

Maddock told his story first, and it was nearly the same as the Irishman had to tell. Ferrers Lord nodded. It was a dangerous thing to fall into the clutches of such a man as the devil-doctor. Charkoni had come to, and was groaning faintly. Thurston dashed some water over him.

"He'll be no good for days, Lord. It's a wonder he's alive at all."

"A great wonder, Rupert. No man has been closer to death and lived to know it. Now, what are we to do? If we go back the way we came we may die of hunger before we discover the trick of moving that box affair. I think we had better leave Maddock and O'Rooney to look after the prisoner while we explore."

The millionaire walked up and down the wheeled platform. How was it raised, for raised it must have been, unless the grooves meant nothing. The wood was sound and new, and the axles of the wheels had been recently greased.

"I have it," cried Rupert, "it's a hydraulic lift!"

He pointed to a piece of rope attached to a ring.

"We will use Charkoni's lift," said Ferrers Lord, smiling.

Between them they carried the wizard down, and laid him on the platform. His eyes were shut, and his pulses hardly seemed to beat. Ferrers Lord grasped the rope.

"Are you ready?"

"All ready."

He pulled the rope. There was a roaring sound, and jets of water spurted through the crannies and cracks of the platform. Slowly the ponderous raft lifted itself from the ground, the wheels grating and squeaking as they revolved in the grooves. The roar grew louder, and the blue blanket of sky broadened and became paler in colour. Still the rise of the platform was painfully slow. It hesitated, stopped, and threatened to descend. Then, by almost imperceptible degrees, it began to climb once more.

"An extraordinary arrangement," said the millionaire, "and built for people who are in no hurry."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Few people are in a hurry to die, Rupert, and those who have travelled by this route have gone on their final journey. I fear. Ah, that is better. I suppose the sluices are choked."

The ascent quickened. They felt the heat of the sun on their faces.

"At last," said Ferrers Lord. "Bundle him out."

Rupert picked up the unconscious devil-man, and, holding Charkoni in his arms, the millionaire stepped on solid ground. He let the body fall.

"The gridiron marked on Oscar Whiteman's map, Rupert," he said.

Thurston made no reply. He was gazing at a sight that made him forget the dead orchid-seeker and his chart. He was gazing at the Red Altars of Althara the Merciless.

### Ching-Lung's Last Stand—The Miracle of the Closed Arch—Althara to the Rescue—Charkoni Obeys the Queen's Command.

Ching-Lung expected no quarter, nor did he ask any. He had shot at Hausmann, and that in itself would have signed his death-warrant. He dropped to his knees, to shield the

Eskimo. A bullet grazed his ribs as if his skin had been scared by a red-hot bar. Again he fired as the first of the attackers passed under the arch. The man shot forward and plunged down on his face.

"All over! Good-bye, Gan."

Then came the miracle. The man, badly wounded, but far from dead, whirled his rifle round savagely and struck at the prince's head. Ching-Lung ducked, evaded the blow, and hurled himself at the German. The struggle was sharp and swift. There was a clamour of yelling and hammering, and still Ching-Lung was alive. He rose and pushed the German aside.

"Jupiter!" he said. "How did that happen?"

The arch was closed by a ponderous door, at which the maddened Germans were hammering. Their blows hardly shook it. Ching-Lung turned to pick up the Eskimo and fly. Then he saw Althara the Merciless standing in a gilded punt. As she leaned on the pole, she beckoned to him. Carrying the Eskimo, Ching-Lung went down the steps that led to the water's edge. Tarface, absolutely paralysed with terror, was huddled on one of the cushioned seats.

Althara shot the punt across the ornamental pond that was still tinged with the blood of Charkoni's sacred crocodile. She touched Ching-Lung on the shoulder, and Ching-Lung stooped. There was a low opening in the wall resembling the mouth of a sewer. The punt shot in and the light was blotted out, and with it the noise of shouting and hammering. The queen spoke a few ringing words. They seemed to electrify the native, for he scrambled up and lighted a lantern.

Ching-Lung's first thought was for Gan-Waga. The Eskimo breathed, but almost imperceptibly. He had bled a good deal, and Ching-Lung soon knew that a rib had been broken. Again Althara spoke, and Tarface took the pole.

"Thank you," said Ching-Lung. "I believe I shall get to like you."

The Queen had handed him a long scarf of soft white cloth. Ching-Lung washed the wound. Gan-Waga breathed more easily, and presently Ching-Lung lifted Althara's hand to his lips and kissed it.

"You are a skilful surgeon, Queen," he said gratefully. "I should have made a poor job of it without your help. If we have any luck, the poor chap will get over it."

"What does the Yellow One say, slave?"

Tarface translated Ching-Lung's blunt statement into flowery and flattering language. The lamp flung its yellow rays against dripping walls as the punt glided along. Althara gazed forward with a frown on her brow and anger burning in her dark eyes.

"Who are these dogs?" she asked at last. "They are of your race—at least, of the race of your master and his other slaves! Why, then, do they prey on you and seek your lives?"

Ching-Lung tried to explain, but Tarface was in a state of collapse. The Queen impatiently grasped the golden hilt of her dagger, and the squint-eyed native pulled his scattered senses together at the hint.

"So the Yellow One and the tall warrior are at war with these strangers," said Althara. "Surely, then, so am I also. Is it fate that they should come to-day when my warriors are on the hills? Is this, think you, the evil that Charkoni prophesied should come upon our land for sparing these men? Speak, slave!"

Tarface stood up gallantly for his new friends, but still the Queen frowned.

"If this be so," she went on, "and the tale the Yellow One tells me be true, I only spared the others to be slain by men of their own colour and appearance. A pretty thing for those who have drunk from my cup! I have saved but two, and one wounded. A pretty thing! Nay, they did but stand to be cut down, for I had not given back their fire-sticks. But I will avenge them, Yellow One. Tell him, slave, that Althara will avenge!"

"Queen say kill 'em all for kill your people," said the native.

"Have they killed them, then?"

"How can tell—not know," sighed Tarface dismally. "Not got guns to make fight."

"They've got brains and they've got legs," thought Ching-Lung, "and it's not easy to kill them."

He felt pretty certain that Hausmann and his raiders had entered the town at the north gate. The compound lay in the opposite direction. Hausmann would naturally attack the most imposing building first of all. Men of his stamp only know one method of dealing with natives, and no doubt he had intended to strike terror into their hearts by a general massacre.

"There's a lot of hope left yet," pondered Ching-Lung. "When the boys heard the shooting going on at such a pace, they must have guessed without telling that Hausmann

Continued on Page 28.)



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(Continued from page 26.)

had turned up. By the way he went down, I fancy I paid our debts. The boys would find out how things were going, and then bolt to safer quarters. People have to be wide awake to get the better of Ferrers Lord. But it's not all honey in the pot. The Queen has some fine warriors, but if I haven't killed Hausmann, those Germans will eat her warriors whole. Hallo!"

Gan-Waga had opened his eyes. They grew brighter when he saw the prince.

"We deads, hunk, Chingy?" His voice was but a whisper.

"We deads, hunk, ole Ching? Very darks."

"Miles off being dead, sonny. It is a bit dark, but we'll be out of it soon. Where's the pain?"

"Not much pains. Goings sleeps, Chingy. Wakes up in the mornings, Chingy, and haves some cangles."

He closed his eyes. Ching-Lung was not particularly anxious, for the Eskimo was as tough as a mule. The wound would not kill him if only he could receive moderate attention, for though it looked ugly it was not really serious. Where were they going? Any hardship might cost the Eskimo his life.

A circle of light appeared ahead of them, turning the flame of the lamp a duller yellow. It gleamed on the gilding of the punt, and flashed on the diamonds in Althara's hair. Tarface worked the pole harder, and Ching-Lung, almost dazzled by the bright glare, grasped the stem of a gigantic lily and drew the punt to the foot of a flight of ancient steps.

Then the Queen clapped her hands.

"Charkoni!" she called. "Where art thou, dog of a wizard? Charkoni! Charkoni!"

And Charkoni the wizard answered the call of his Queen. With a hiss a human body rushed downwards through the air and struck the water. The punt rocked up and down, and the spray drenched Althara the Merciless. The squint-eyed native shrieked as they watched the seething pool. Slowly through the seething water something horrible rose and floated on the surface.

It was Charkoni, battered, bound hand and foot, and horribly repulsive. The witch-doctor, who had sent thousands to their doom, had followed them at last.

**In which Prout, Joe, and Two Others Fly from Althara's City, and Meet With Stirring Adventures.**

"By honey, it's thundering!" thought Thomas Prout.



## Kit Kemble —The Call-Boy

By HENRY T. JOHNSON.

A born mimic—a clever actor and a thorough all round sportsman—a youngster who is as full of pluck as he is of mischief, Kit Kemble, the Call-Boy, gets into scrapes galore, but muddles through them successfully every time. He's a new friend well worth making. Read all about him in

**THE SPORTS**  
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"About time it did, wif all this nasty dust blowing round. That's hail, by the sound of it. If it rained a month, by honey, it wouldn't— Eh?"

The bald-headed steersman was only half awake, and his brain was not very bright. He opened one eye and closed it. Then he opened the other, shut it up, and reopened the first one. Joe was snoring like a little harmonium, Filson was wrapped in heavy slumber, and the stoker of the ill-fated Blue Orchid—of whom the reader has heard little because there has been nothing to hear—slept as heavily as Filson.

After a moment or two Prout opened both eyes at once and yawned. Then he started up.

"Firing, by honey! What's the game?"

It was a regular fusillade. The steersman kicked Joe, and the carpenter clenched both fists as he jumped to his feet ready to punish the person who had taken such a liberty.

"What do you make 'on it?" growled Prout.

Joe listened to the rattle of rifles and revolvers, and the yelling that mingled with it.

"It's Hausmann turned up," he said, and dashed towards the hut. It was empty. He rushed out again, and saw Prout, Filson, and the engineer at the gate.

"All hooked, and Vasco with 'em," he said. "What's to be done? Thunder!"

They drew back as a bullet struck the ground with a "phut" that tossed up the dust. Two of Althara's warriors fled down the street. Both of them fell, and half a dozen men in khaki uniforms turned to fire in the other direction.

"You was right, Joe, by honey!" said Prout. "It's Hausmann and his sausage-eating rascals. I takes command, and my first horder is to slide. They'll be along searching the niggers' huts in two wags of a lamb's tail, and as we can't fight 'em wif our fists, we'll slope, by honey!"

"Is that an order?" asked Filson.

"That's a horder, and I'm responsible to the chief, not you. I'm the boss. If I was to get you killed, I'd 'ave a nice time of it, wouldn't I? And if the others is in a fix, we can't do 'em no good by stoppin' 'ere to be shot; so pull up your blessed anchors and sail away."

The firing had diminished, and this fact added to their peril, for it could only mean that the Germans were the victors. That a strong force could be defeated was not to be thought of, and by the noise of firearms Hausmann seemed to have fifty or sixty men engaged.

Prout went off at a run with the others at his heels.

"They're firing the place!" cried Filson. "See the smoke!"

"If you don't move your legs faster they'll be firing you," said Joe warningly.

It was hot work. Glancing over their shoulders they saw smoke pouring up from the centre of the town. Panting and half-choked with dust they reached the forest.

"By honey," said Prout sitting down on a log to mop his forehead, "this is all rosy. I don't think. We've lost our pals, we've lost our guns, we've lost our purvisions and cattle, and we're about as badly lost ourselves as I care for. This is what 'appens when you start out to pick the pretty flowers. Orchids! Oh, my lovely luck! We'll find more fever than orchids stoppin' 'ere."

"We daren't stop here," said Joe. "There's one of the fever-trees Vasco showed us."

Prout shook his fist at the tree, which was laden with tens of thousands of beautiful blossoms.

The sun was gleaming brightly on the columns that stretched away up the slope. Afraid to go into the open lest they should be sighted and pursued, they pushed their way through the underbrush. They had every reason in the world to be dejected. Here they were, hundreds of miles from civilisation, weaponless and without food, tramping through a fever-smitten jungle. As to the fate of their friends they knew nothing, and a remorseless foe was close at hand. The terrible German had tracked them as far as Althara's city, and he would not relinquish the chase now.

"Ain't them rocks?" asked the steersman, peering through the leaves.

"Rocks they are, sonny," answered Joe, "and mighty tall ones. That's our mark. We'll find shade there, anyhow, and p'raps water, for any of the forest water would poison a wooden soldier. We can climb out of the way of the fever, too, and play 'ide-and-seek if the Germans come along."

They emerged from the trees, for they judged that they were safe from observation.

"Hallo," said Filson, "they've put that fire out! Seem to have thought better of it."

"They won't burn it till they've looted it, trust 'em for that," said Joe. "I wish they would. They'll tumble across our baggage, and they'll be ferreting arter us. And we ain't got as much as a penny pop-gun or a farthing pea-shooter. To put it plain, my boys, we're in the soup proper."

(Another splendid long instalment of this grand serial next Monday.)



# My Readers' Page

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**EDITOR.**  
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## FOR NEXT MONDAY:

### "THE MISSING MASTER!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

This splendid, long, complete school tale of the chums of Greyfriars centres round the so-called secret of the mathematics master at Greyfriars—Mr. Lascelles. That Mr. Lascelles and Larry Lynx, the famous professional pugilist, are one and the same person, has been suspected by many of the fellows for some time; but the arrival of Mr. Sawyer—evidently an old friend of Mr. Lascelles—settles the matter beyond all doubt.

Mr. Sawyer comes to Greyfriars on a special mission—a mission in which he fails. But Mr. Sawyer is not the sort to give up hope; he has other strings to his bow besides peaceful persuasion! And so Mr. Lascelles disappears—and, curiously enough, no less a person than Loder, the prefect, does the same. The mystery is complete, and causes the greatest sensation. High and low the search is made, but it is to Harry Wharton & Co. in the end to whom the credit must be given for discovering

### "THE MISSING MASTER!"

### A SPECIALLY INTERESTING NUMBER.

In giving a special Scout interest to Wednesday's issue of our companion paper, "The Gem Library," I am making a new departure, but it is one which will, I feel sure, be given a hearty welcome by all readers, whether they are themselves Scouts or not. The long, complete tale of the famous chums of St. Jim's is written in Martin Clifford's very best style—full of humour, interest, and schoolboy fun—while the special articles on Scoutcraft are of such a practical and interesting nature that they will be appreciated by all. One of these will be entitled,

### "SUMMER SCOUTING!"

and will consist of helpful advice and sensible suggestions, written by a Scoutmaster of great experience. There will also be a splendid article called

### "THINGS SCOUTS SHOULD REMEMBER!"

which is addressed primarily to my boy and girl Scout chums; at the same time, this article will prove interesting as well as profitable reading to all my chums. There will be no increase in the price of Wednesday's "Gem"—it will simply be a specially interesting issue, redolent of Scoutcraft, the green woods, and open-air, summer life in general. Tell your Scout chums about it! It is something which should not be missed!

### REPLIES IN BRIEF.

C. Wood (Robertsbridge).—The best batsman in the Remove is Harry Wharton, and the best wicketkeeper Bob Cherry. Billy Bunter's parents do not keep an inn.

G. W. R. (Stornoway).—If you will send me your name, I will be very pleased to write to you.

R. C. K. (Clapton).—I am afraid I do not know of the book you mention.

B. A. Pedersen (Sunderland).—Newcastle won by two goals to nil, after making a draw at the Crystal Palace.

J. Bucknall (Leeds).—Answer one of the advertisements in the Correspondence Exchange which appears every week in "The Gem Library," on sale every Wednesday.

"A Wellwisher."—Mr. Sidney Drew's stories are far too popular with the majority of my readers for me to consider your suggestion at present.

## FADS OF FAMOUS CRICKETERS.

### Batting Mannerisms.

The majority of first-class batsmen keep the willow grounded when preparing to face the bowler, but not so John Gunn, of Notts. This player stands straight up with his bat held high in the air, something after the manner of an American baseball expert, and just as the ball is being delivered, he steps towards the trundler in a most disconcerting way. When Mr. C. B. Fry, of Hampshire, is seen gently stroking his nose, one may be sure that he has just circumvented some wily trap of the bowler, and is therefore on especially good terms with himself, while John Tunnicliffe, the Yorkshire giant, always used to fix the trundler with his eyes and after the stroke was made he would lean forward on his bat as though snatching a few moments' rest. Albert Knight, of Leicester, has a curious air-clawing action after a stroke, apparently made for the purpose of getting his glove back into its proper position. Wilfred Rhodes, the Yorkshire bowler-batsman, appears nervous at critical moments, for he will wipe each hand alternately on the pads of either leg before he grips the bat and prepares for the stroke to come. As his hands close on the handle, however, his nervousness departs and he faces the trundler with confidence. He is also for ever tapping his knee with his left hand, and the more he taps the greater sign is it that he is in form. Mr. T. E. Manning, of Northampton, always seems to look on cricket as a huge joke. There is nothing he appears to enjoy more than fielding out all day under a hot sun, while the missing of catches by members of his own side as well as by his opponents, affords him great amusement. He is, I should say, about the only man who has ever been known to smile and thank the umpire for giving him out l.b.w. to a ball that took the skin off his elbow! Mr. A. H. Hornby, of Lancashire, is very impatient. He is always itching to "have a go" at bowling, and he has a perfect mania for stealing short runs.

### Disconcerting Deliveries.

Another player who is noted for his impatience, is Mr. C. G. Macartney, the Australian bowler. No sooner has the ball left his hand than he is seen to be ready to bowl the next, and few can equal his time for getting through an over. Schofield Haigh wears on the side of his right boot a brass plate, for although he has got out of the habit of ending a run with a hop, skip, and a jump, he still drags his foot along the ground, and the plate saves wear and tear. Mr. W. M. Bradley, of Kent, takes three curious strides at the end of his run like a skater; Mr. W. Brearley, the Lancashire express bowler, rushes like a racehorse to the crease; Mignon, the Middlesex professional, has a peculiar sideways run which is most disconcerting to the batsman; while Colin Blythe, or "blithe Blythe" as Kent followers call him on account of his smiling face, takes a few mincing steps before letting the ball go. This mannerism of his is so marked that when he is bowling, the spectators sometimes yell out in a "sing-song" tone, "There he goes hoppity-hop!" Another man who is always smiling, is "Geordie" Hirst, of Yorkshire, who gives a sort of half-jump before sending down his deadly "air swerves" which he does with a queer yet free left hand swing. Tossing the ball from hand to hand while walking back after each delivery, is a characteristic of Mr. J. N. Crawford, and just before starting his run he gives a little toss of his head.

For one who very rarely bowled in a match, Lord Dalmeny, when he was captain of Surrey, used to practise quite a lot, as the moment one of his opponents was out he would seize the ball and begin a bowling contest with one of his own side. He is ambidextrous, and sometimes sent the ball down first with one hand, and then with the other.

*The Editor*



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