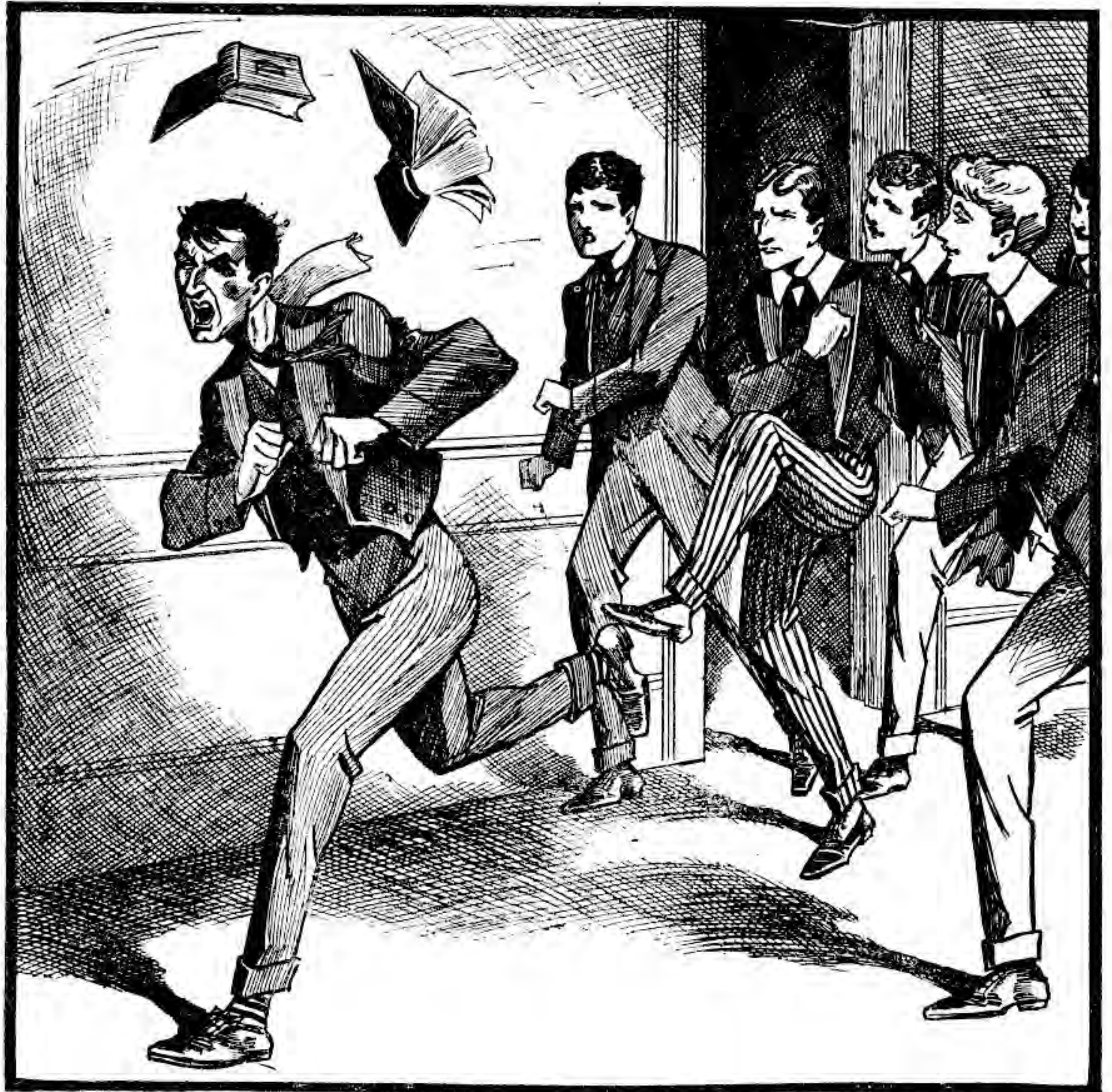


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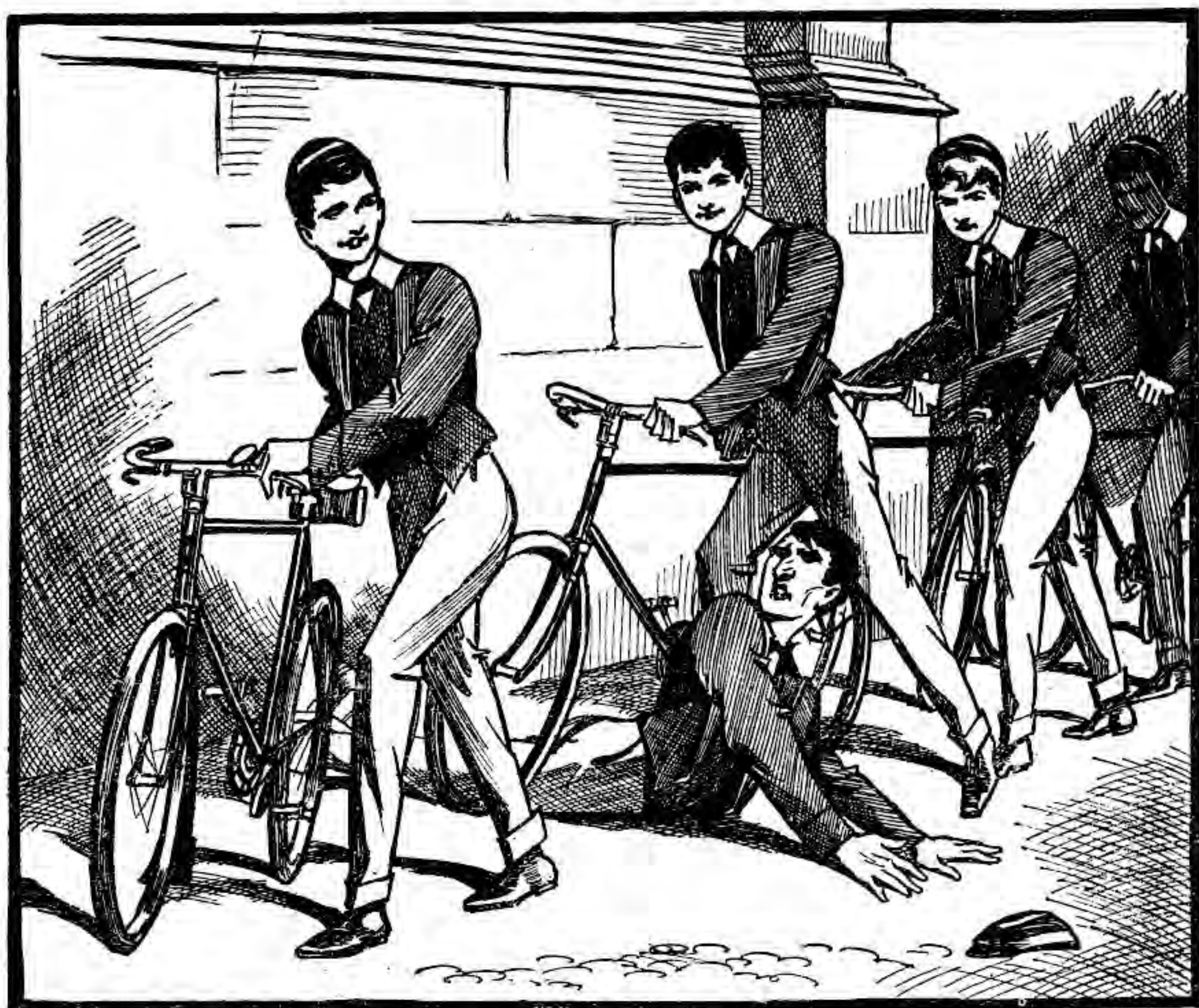


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GOING THE PACE!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Five bicycles were wheeled over the sprawling Fish, and five pairs of boots were wiped on him as the juniors passed on their way. "Yooooop! Gerroff!" yelled Fish. (See Chapter 1.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Very Fishy!

FISHER T. FISH bore down upon Harry Wharton & Co. in the Close of Greyfriars, as they were wheeling their bicycles down to the gates.

"Hold on a sec, you galoots!" called out Fish excitedly.

The Famous Five of the Remove good-naturedly halted. They had no time to waste, as they were going over to Highcliffe to tea. However, they halted.

"What's the row?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Buck up, Fishy!" said Wharton. "We want to get off. Anything happened?"

"I guess something's going to happen," said Fish. He jerked a little book and a stump of pencil from his pocket. "I guess it's a new wheeze——"

"Why, you silly ass!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly. "Are you stopping us to tell us of one of your rotten schemes?"

"You cheeky ass!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "Go and eat coke! Come on, you fellows!"

"But I guess——"

"Oh, scat!"

The five juniors wheeled their bikes on again. They were not likely to waste time, when they were in a hurry, listening to one of Fisher T. Fish's precious schemes. As a matter of fact, they didn't approve of Fisher T. Fish or his schemes either, and they had sometimes made that painfully plain to Fisher T. Fish.

Fishy prided himself on his schemes. The blood of a business-man ran in his veins; and he had all the spryness and cuteness of a "galoot" who had been "raised" in "Noo York." Fishy's one object in life was to make money. He could not put it off till he grew up. Certainly, there was a very limited scope in the Greyfriars Lower Fourth for a real live business-man from New York. But Fishy did the best he could under unfavourable circumstances.

Many were his schemes for transferring other people's money to his own pockets. He always had something to sell—generally for double its value. He was usually "open" to buy anything—in that case, for half its value. And he generally had a little scheme working in his fertile brain for making money on quite a large scale. And he did not seem discouraged by the fact that most of his schemes ended in rank failure, and sometimes in severe raggings.

Fishy had the most unbounded confidence in Fisher Tarleton Fish.

As his schemes generally involved some sharp practice, which Fishy called business, they did not make him popular. But Fishy would not have missed popularity if he could have "corralled" the "durocks," as he expressed it in the wonderful language he had learned in the Yew-nited States.

Fisher T. Fish snorted as the Famous Five tramped on towards the gates. But he did not let the matter rest there. He rushed after them breathlessly.

"Hold on, you galoots——"

"Rats!"

"I guess I don't want to borrow anything of you," said Fish, with crushing disdain. "Tain't that!"

"Oh," said Bob Cherry. "Taint a little scheme you need capital for, this time?"

"Nope!"

"What's the swindle, then?" asked Frank Nugent.

Fish snorted again. It was really exasperating that whenever the Yankee junior had a little scheme, fellows should take it for granted that it was a swindle.

"Tain't a swindle!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "It's just a little idea of mine; a real sporting idea."

"Sporting—you!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent and Harree Singh, all uttered that exclamation together, in tones of the greatest astonishment. They had never connected Fisher T. Fish in their minds with anything sporting.

"Yep!" said Fishy, emphatically.

"You're dreaming," said Bob pleasantly. "You may make a business-man some day, Fishy, if you ever grow any brains; but you'll never make a sportsman. Tell us an easier one."

"I guess I'm giving you straight goods," said Fish. "Do hold on a minute while I explain. I've got to see other clients after you."

"Clients!" ejaculated the juniors.

"Sure!"

They had reached the gates, and were wheeling their machines out. Fisher T. Fish whipped round in front of them, and they stopped.

"I guess I can explain in two shakes of a broncho's tail," said Fishy. "Jest you lend me your years. I guess this idea of mine is a regular sockdolager. You galoots have often chipped me for not being sporting, haven't you? Well, I guess that cuts no ice with me; but I'm going to show you, all the same."

"Taking up football?" asked Bob, puzzled.

"Jerusalem crickets! Nope!"

"Well, you wouldn't," agreed Bob. "But what the blunder are you going to do, then?"

"Real sport," said Fish impressively. "It's a new idea, and I guess it's going to go strong, some. Are you fellows aware that the Bunker Plate is run for this afternoon?"

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"The—the what?"

"The Bunker Plate of 200 sovs."

"My only hat!"

"Itacing!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yep!"

"Why, you rotten blackguard!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" protested Fisher T. Fish. "Ain't you galoots chipped me often enough for not being sporting——"

"It wasn't that kind of sport we meant," said Wharton. "But you wouldn't understand what sporting means, anyway. Do you really mean that you are dabbling in geegees, like Loder of the Sixth—like the Bounder used to?"

"Yep."

"Then the sooner the Head finds you out and sacks you, the better," growled Johnny Bull. "Don't tell us about it, you rotter!"

The Famous Five were astonished.

All sorts of schemes had been propounded by Fisher T. Fish—from tuckshop-keeping to money-lending and pawn-broking. But that he would start as a racing speculator they had certainly never dreamed. Fishy was sharp—very sharp—and considerably unscrupulous. But he had not shown up as a "gay dog" before. In Vernon-Smith's bad old days Fishy had often told him he guessed he was a jay for wasting money on geegees. That Fishy himself should dream of wasting money in the same way was staggering.

Duffer as he was, the juniors had never dreamed that he was that kind of a duffer. Billy Bunter had once started as a "blade." But Fishy! It was amazing.

"Rather surprised, what?" grinned Fish, watching their faces.

"Yes," said Harry Wharton. "Fishy, I suppose you're a bigger fool than rascal——"

"Waal, I swow!"

"So I'll give you a tip," said Harry. "Smithy has chucked up that kind of thing, and showed his sense by doing it. Don't play the giddy ox. You'll be sacked if you're found out. You know it's blackguardly, anyway. And you'll lose your money if you deal with bookies; you ought to know that. Don't be an ass!"

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"I guess I've got my eye-teeth cut," he said. "You don't find this child dealing with bookies—not if he knows it!"

"Blessed if I see how you're going to bet on races without a bookmaker!" said Wharton.

"I guess I'm the bookmaker."

"Wha-a-at!"

"And I'm open to take your bets," said Fish.

"Take our bets!" gasped Wharton.

"Yep!"

"Why, you—you——"

"Now, don't get your dander up over a simple business proposition," said Fish, coolly. "I guess I mean business, and there's nothing to get mad about. The Bunker Plate is run for this afternoon. Bully Boy is the favourite. I suppose you know that?"

"How should we know anything about the beastly rot?" growled Johnny Bull. "I've never heard of Bully Boy. Is it a horse?"

"Is it a horse?" repeated Fisher T. Fish, in tones of withering contempt. "Yep, it's a horse, you jay. The odds on Bully Boy are two to one—two to one on, you savvy? If you want to lay your money on Bully Boy——"

"We don't!"

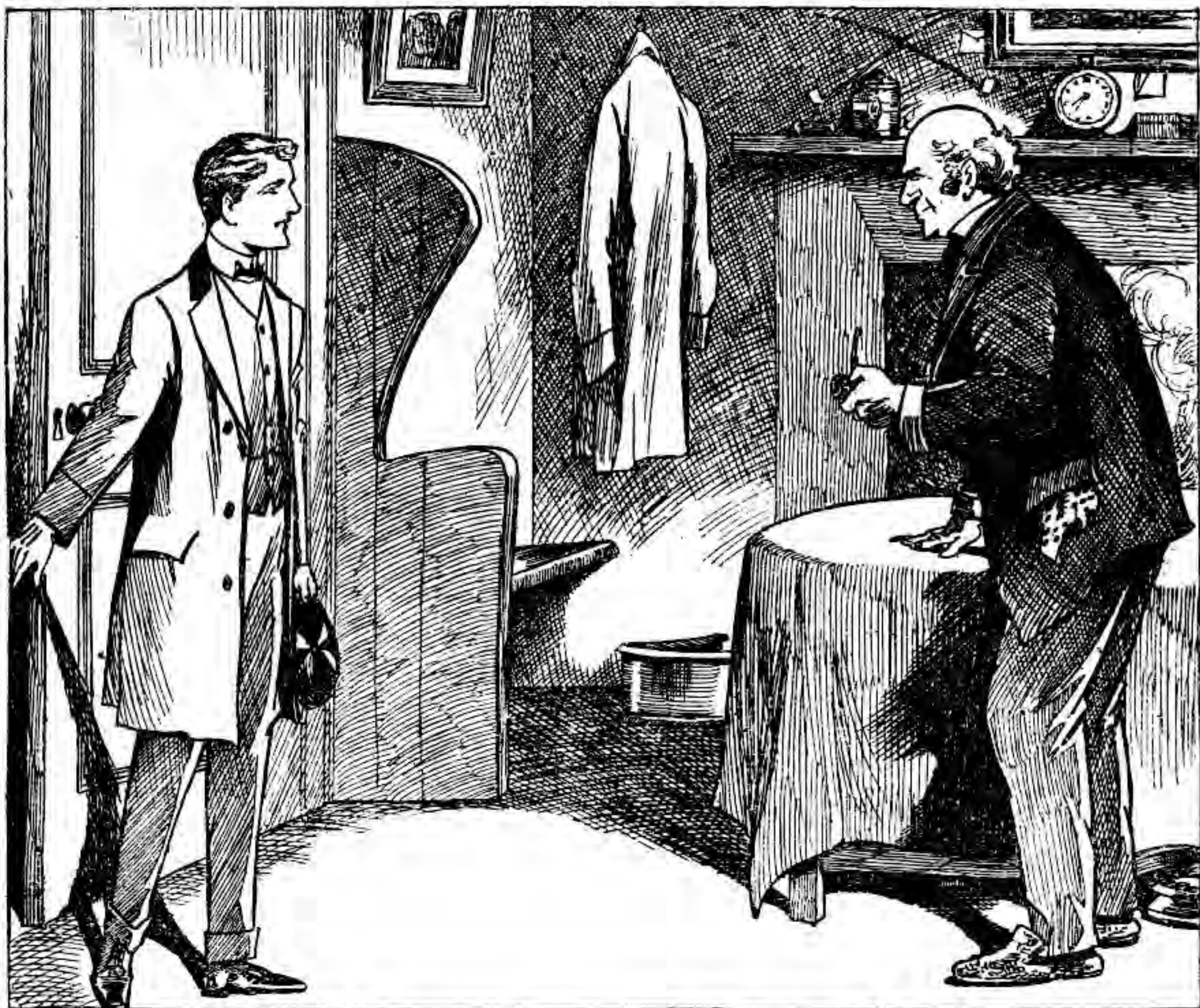
"I'm saying if you do—you have to lay a sovereign against ten bob. Now, I haven't a very high opinion of Bully Boy myself——"

"You know all about it?" said Bob sarcastically.

"Yep! I guess I do. I guess I'm willing to lay two to one against the favourite," said Fish. "You hear me? The bookies are asking you to lay a sovereign against a half-sovereign on Bully Boy. I guess I'm open to offer you odds against. I'll lay a sovereign against him, to your half-quid. How does that strike you?"

"And you'd pay up if you lost?" grinned Nugent.

"Money talks!" said Fish immediately. "Stakes to be placed in the hands of a third party in ready cash."



The innkeeper grinned. "Banks will be glad to see you," he said. "He's often asked after you. All the gents have missed you, Master De Courcy. It's quite like old times to see you 'ere." "Happy old times," said the Caterpillar urbanely. "Merry old times! Can I see Banks? I know he's generally here on a Saturday evenin'." (See Chapter 10.)

"My hat!"

"Choose your own party, so long as I can trust him," said Fish loftily. "Dash it all, I'll make Wharton the stake-holder. I can trust him."

"Thanks!"

"Not at all. I know you're the real white article."

"Which is more than I know about you," said Harry. "If you give me any stakes to hold I'll ram them down your neck!"

"Ahem! We'll soon find a reliable stake-holder, Cherry, if you care to have a flutter on the Bunker Plate—"

"You shady blackguard!" said Bob.

"H'm! What do you say, Nugent?"

"Same as Bob," said Nugent, laughing—"shady blackguard!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'm making a sporting offer. How would you like to have half-a-quid on it, Bull?"

"Get out of the way, you worm!" roared Johnny Bull.

"I say, Inky—"

"Nothing doing, my esteemed blackguardly Fish!" said Hurree Singh affably.

"Waal, of all the unsporting jays! Here, wharrer you at?" yelled Fish.

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It was really a superfluous question. The Famous Five were wheeling their bicycles into Fisher T. Fish.

The Yankee junior bumped over as the five machines converged upon him with a rush, and he sprawled in the road, yelling:

"Yarooop! I guess I'll make potato-scrapings of you, you mugwumps! Yoooop! Gerroff! Oh, Jerusalem!"

Five bicycles were wheeled over the sprawling Fish, and five pairs of boots were wiped on him as the juniors passed on their way. The unfortunate sportsman wriggled and roared under the bicycles and the boots. The road was dusty; but there seemed more dust on Fishy than on the road when the Famous Five had passed.

The juniors, grinning, mounted their machines and pedalled away towards Highcliffe. Fisher T. Fish sat up in the road and gasped.

"Yow-wow-wow-wow! The jays! The mugwumps! The rotters! Yow-ow! I guess that means two dollars' worth of damage to my clothes! Yow-ow! Oh, Jerusalem!"

Fisher T. Fish picked himself up, gasping. He shook a bony fist after the cyclists, as they disappeared laughing in the distance. Then he limped back into the school.

"Hallo! Been dust-collecting?" asked Vernon-Smith.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

As Fisher T. Fish came limping up to the School House.

"Yow! I guess——"

"Fish!" Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was standing at his study window. "Fish! You dirty, disgraceful boy! How dare you go about in that dirty condition? Is it your wish to disgrace the school you belong to? Go and clean yourself at once! Do you hear?"

"I—I guess——"

"And take two hundred lines!" thundered the Remove master. "And if I see you in such a revolting state again, Fish, I shall cane you severely! Not a word! Go! You are a disgusting sight!"

And Fisher T. Fish, with feelings too deep for words, limped away into the house. His new career as a sportsman had not opened brilliantly.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Spoofing Mr. Mobbs!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. pedalled away merrily on the road to Highcliffe. They were going over for a very interesting "jaw" with Courtenay, of the Highcliffe Fourth, on the subject of forthcoming football fixtures. Fisher T. Fish filled a very small space on their horizon, but, as it happened, they could not help thinking about him just now. Fish's new departure astonished them. Their own answer to his "sporting proposition" had been quite unmistakable, but they knew that he might find "takers" among the other fellows in the Form. Fisher T. Fish as a sporting character was amazing. In all his business ventures he had never tried anything of that kind before. The Famous Five charitably regarded him as being more fool than rogue, but they had not suspected that he was fool enough to throw away good money in betting transactions.

"Blessed if I can make Fishy out!" Cherry remarked, in a thoughtful way. "He wouldn't go in for it, or anything else, unless he saw a profit ahead—or thought he did. But he must know that there's no profit in betting, except for the bookies."

"Some sort of a swindle," growled Johnny Bull. "He isn't betting with bookies; he's too cute for that. He's going to bet with the fellows, and skin them."

"But if he places the stakes in reliable hands, how can he swindle anybody?" asked Bob. "Of course, he must mean some kind of sharp practice, or it wouldn't be Fishy. But I'm dashed if I see how he's going to work it."

"The cutefulness of the esteemed Yankee is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I would not trust him an esteemed inch."

"Same here," said Bob. "But he will get some of the fellows to bet. They'll think it sporting, the duffers. But Fishy can't spot winners—nobody can except the johnnies who arrange the races in advance. Suppose we had taken Fishy's offer and laid money on Bully Boy, and Bully Boy won? Fishy can't know whether he's going to win or not, can he?"

"I don't see how he can," said Wharton.

"Well, then, with you holding the stakes, he would have to pay up, and he offered to let you hold them."

"It's a giddy mystery," said Harry. "There must be some trick in it somewhere; Fishy didn't mean to take chances. He can't spot winners—that's all rot! But if he's discovered a way of making racing a cert, and making money out of it, he's cleverer than we thought, and a bigger rascal."

The chums of the Remove could not help puzzling over it. But the puzzle was still unsolved when they arrived at Highcliffe. Ponsonby of the Fourth was standing in the gateway as they dismounted there. He was chatting with Gadsby and Vavasour. The three "nuts," the old enemies of the Greyfriars chums, came towards Harry Wharton & Co. as they wheeled their bikes in.

Bob Cherry held his bike with one hand, and clenched the other, prepared for war. But the Highcliffians were not hostile, for once.

Ponsonby held up his hand in sign of peace.

"I didn't expect you——" he began.

Wharton looked at him.

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"Why should you expect us?" he said. "We've come over to see Courtenay and De Courcy."

"Oh!" said Ponsonby. "You haven't a message for us?"

"A message! No."

"Fish hasn't sent word by you?"

"Fish!" exclaimed Wharton

"Yes."

Wharton's brows contracted. Was it possible that Fisher T. Fish was extending the scope of his new operations to Highcliffe? It was a very irritating thought.

Ponsonby & Co., the slackers and "blades" of Highcliffe, were a decidedly "sporting" set of fellows. They had sometimes found amusement in getting Hazeldene and Billy Bunter and other Remove fellows to gamble with them, as much for the purpose of exasperating Harry Wharton & Co. as for anything else. Naturally, the Co. had been very much down on the young blackguards. It was rather annoying if the case had been reversed, and a Greyfriars fellow was acting the role of tempter with the Highcliffians as his victims.

Ponsonby & Co. grinned as they watched the changing expression in Harry Wharton's face. Getting Wharton's "rag out" was a very entertaining amusement for the nuts of Highcliffe.

"Fishy hasn't sent any message by us," said Bob Cherry gruffly. "I don't suppose we'd bring it, anyway."

"Thank you!" said Ponsonby. "You are always so civil and polite, Cherry. That's what I always admired about you."

"Absolutely!" chirped Vavasour, and Gadsby chuckled.

"I was expecting to hear from your friend Fish about the Bunker Plate this afternoon," drawled Ponsonby.

"Fish isn't a friend of ours," said Wharton shortly. "He happens to be in the same Form, that's all."

"Do you mean to say you're betting with him?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Yaas. He's got us into it," grinned Ponsonby. "Regular sporting sharper, your friend Fish—taking in us innocent kids, you know."

"Then you're as big a blackguard as he is, Ponsonby," said Johnny Bull deliberately, "and he's as big a blackguard as you are!"

"What I like about these Greyfriars chaps," remarked Ponsonby to his chums, "is their nice manners, and their well-chosen, gratifying expressions! They express themselves so gracefully, don't you think?"

"Ha, ha ha!" chuckled the nuts.

"Come on!" said Wharton abruptly.

The Famous Five wheeled their bikes in, leaving Ponsonby & Co. chuckling. They did not wish to signalise their visit to Highcliffe by bumping the Highcliffe fellows in the gateway, greatly as they felt inclined to do so.

"Rather a shock to the upright and high-minded Wharton to find a Greyfriars chap tempting us from the path of rectitude!" grinned Ponsonby. "We'll work that for all it's worth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby glanced at his watch.

"Nearly half-past three," he said. "Fishy said he would ring us up at half-past. We'd better get on the telephone."

The three nuts strolled towards the School House.

"Jolly queer that Fishy can talk to us on the 'phone about gee-gees!" Vavasour remarked. "Suppose somebody heard him?"

"Bet you he doesn't use the school telephone," said Ponsonby. "More likely to bike down to the post-office in Friardale or Courtfield, or to old Lazarus' shop. Old Lazarus, most likely. He lets his customers use the 'phone without paying. We're all right this end, as Mobby is so obliging."

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone into the School House to Courtenay's study. The three nuts sauntered in after them, and made their way into Mr. Mobbs' study. Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth, was a decidedly accommodating gentleman where his favourites were concerned. Mr. Mobbs had been asked home by Ponsonby in one vacation, and had met Ponsonby's titled uncle and half a dozen other titled people, and he had lived on the memory of that glorious time. An earl had shaken

hands with him, a marquis had told him that it was a fine morning, and a baronet had sat next to him in a whacking big motor-car. After that Mr. Mobbs was never likely to see any fault in his admired Ponsonby.

Ponsonby tapped at Mr. Mobbs' door, and the Form-master greeted him with a soft and soapy smile. The skinny little gentleman rose to his feet as the three nuts came in.

"Would you mind letting me use the telephone, sir?" said Ponsonby. "I should like to speak to my uncle at home, if you don't mind."

"My dear Ponsonby, you are welcome to use the telephone at any time, especially to speak to his lordship," said Mr. Mobbs.

"Thank you, sir. He promised to ring me up at half-past three," said Ponsonby. "I told him I was sure you wouldn't mind."

"Quite so—quite so, Ponsonby. It is now half-past, and you may wait till the bell rings. Pray be seated."

"Thank you, sir."

The juniors sat down, and Mr. Mobbs left the study. He looked back in the doorway.

"Pray remember me to his lordship, Ponsonby," he said.

"Certainly, sir! He always asks me after you," said Ponsonby.

"That is very kind of him, I am sure!"

Mr. Mobbs walked down the passage, looking very happy. A noble earl always asked after him! That was more than enough to make Mr. Mobbs happy.

There was a buzz from the telephone. Ponsonby signed to Gadsby to close the door, and took up the receiver.

"Hallo! That you, Fishy?"

"Yep!" came back the reply on the wire.

"Good! Where are you?"

"In a telephone-box, of course," said Fisher T. Fish. "Never mind that. About the Bunker Plate——"

"Well?"

"I guess I'm offering two to one against Bully Boy."

Ponsonby started.

"Two to one on, I suppose you mean?" he said.

"Against," repeated Fish.

"You must be an ass! He's the favourite, and sure to get home!"

"I mean business, all the same. Two to one against the favourite, if you choose to take it."

"I'm on that!" said Ponsonby.

"Make it quids."

"Yep."

"What's that, Pon?" said Vavasour breathlessly.

"Fishy's offering two to one in quids against the favourite."

"Nail him!"

"Same here!" said Gadsby.

"Gadsby and Vavasour take you as well, Fishy, in quids," said Ponsonby into the receiver.

"Good! Who's holding the stakes?"

"I suppose you can trust us to pay up," said Ponsonby loftily—"more than we can trust you, anyway!"

A chuckle was audible on the telephone.

"I guess this infant don't do business on trust. I'm placing the stakes with Smithy, on my side. You know him. You'll put yours with a fellow I know—say, that chap De Courcy. He's square."

"Right-ho!"

"Mind, that's the arrangement. I shall speak to De Courcy, and unless he tells me he held the stakes, it's all off, and I don't pay up if a loser. You can speak to Smithy about mine."

"Done!"

Ponsonby rang off.

"The fellow must be off his rocker, to be giving the odds against Bully Boy!" said Vavasour, in astonishment. Ponsonby chuckled.

"Fishy thinks he knows something about racing," he remarked. "He's heard of outsiders getting home, you know. I fancy he don't know quite so much as we do. Let's go and see De Courcy."

"Those other rotters will be with him," said Gadsby doubtfully.

"All the better. The Caterpillar can't refuse, anyway."

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NEXT MONDAY—**"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"**

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ONE
PENNY.

And the nuts of Highcliffe left the study. They met Mr. Mobbs at the end of the passage.

"You have finished with the telephone, Ponsonby?"

"Yes, sir, thank you. My uncle desired to be remembered to you, sir," said Ponsonby calmly. "He hopes you have recovered from your cold, sir. I mentioned in my letter home that you had a cold."

Mr. Mobbs purred with pleasure. Leaving Mr. Mobbs quite happy and contented, the nuts made their way to No. 3 Study, where a merry party had gathered.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar Holds the Stakes!

NO. 3 STUDY, in the Fourth-Form passage, was quite festive. The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove always had a warm welcome there.

In spite of the efforts of Ponsonby & Co. to keep up the old disputes and differences between the two schools, Frank Courtenay had succeeded to a great extent in healing the breach. The cricket and football fixtures had been revived—with the difference that Ponsonby & Co. were left out of them. The majority of the Highcliffe Fourth backed up Courtenay and De Courcy; Ponsonby's star was on the wane. And they were all the better for it. Out of the most unpromising materials Courtenay had formed a really good eleven, which had held its own in several matches since Courtenay had become junior captain. Under his energetic influence even the Caterpillar, pronounced slacker as he was, frequently bucked up in quite a wonderful manner.

At the present moment the Caterpillar was reclining in a deep easy-chair, with one elegant leg crossed over the other, and listening to the keen football talk that was going on. The Caterpillar had "stood" the array of tarts and ginger-pop on the table which refreshed the football meeting. But he did not share in the talk, leaving that to the others. But he was manfully striving not to look bored, and he nobly resisted his almost overpowering inclination to yawn. He even worked up sufficient interest

in the matter to ask Bob Cherry how many runs he had taken in his last football match—a question that made Bob stare.

"Is De Courcy in the eleven?" asked Harry Wharton, with a rather amused glance at the Caterpillar.

De Courcy did not look much like a footballer at that moment.

"Oh, no!" said the Caterpillar at once.

"Oh, yes!" said Courtenay emphatically.

"Franky!" murmured the Caterpillar, in feeble protest.

"He isn't such a duffer as he makes out," Courtenay explained to the grinning Removites. "He can play when I buck him up. I am going to do that."

"I'm goin' to look on and encourage the others," said the Caterpillar. "I'm goin' to cheer all Franky's wickets——"

"Wickets!"

"I mean, goals. Or I wouldn't object to being umpire——"

"Referee, fathead!"

"I mean, referee. Not knowin' anythin' about the game, I should be perfectly impartial."

"You're going to know something about the game shortly," said Courtenay. "You're baited for a forward, and that's what you're going to be. Hallo! Come in!" he added, as a tap came at the door.

The door opened, and Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour presented themselves. Courtenay's brows knitted. His natural suspicion was that Ponsonby & Co. had come there for a "rag," to worry his visitors, and he rose to his feet. Ponsonby had "ragged" the Greyfriars visitors on a previous occasion, with very painful results to him.

"Sorry to interrupt, as you seem so busy," said Pon-

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

sonby politely. "Can I speak to you for a minute, Caterpillar?"

"No objection, I'm sure," said the Caterpillar. "You don't mind if I don't get up, do you? I'm fatigued."

"I sha'n't keep you a minute. Nothing private," added Ponsonby. "All the fellows can hear. Not a secret, you know."

"I never keep secrets," yawned the Caterpillar. "Secrets are a bore. You chaps don't mind Pon borin' you for a minute, do you?"

"Not at all."

"Go ahead, Pon!"

"We want you to take charge of this for us, Caterpillar," said Ponsonby, laying three sovereigns on the table.

"Certainly. Leave it there."

"Put it in your pocket, you duffer!"

"How can I put it in my pocket when it's out of my reach?" said the Caterpillar. "However, p'r'aps one of the chaps will pass it along. Hand it over, Franky!"

Courtenay did not move.

"Haden't you better ask Ponsonby what he wants you to mind the money for him for, Caterpillar?" he said quietly.

"Never thought of it. What do you want me to mind it for, Pon?"

"Stakes," explained Ponsonby.

"All serene."

Courtenay frowned.

"Caterpillar!" he said. The Greyfriars fellows affected an elaborate unconsciousness of the whole proceedings.

"Oh, I forgot!" said the Caterpillar. "Sorry, Pon: could you find somebody else to hold the stakes? I never go in for anythin' savourin' of bettin' since I've known Franky. You may have noticed that he plucked me like a brand from the burnin' and instilled into my feeble mind the stern morality of the workin'-classes. Now I come to think of it, Pon, you shock me."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Ponsonby. "I suppose you can do me a little favour without askin' permission from Courtenay."

The Caterpillar shook his head.

"I never do anythin' without Franky's permission," he explained. "Franky is bringin' me up in the way I should go. Without Franky I should be like unto a lost sheep. Before Franky came I used to be everythin' that was bad, like the chap with the big drum at the street corners, you know. But I have reformed, under Franky's influence, haven't I, Franky?"

"Fathead!" said Courtenay, half-laughing and half-vexed.

"And that's all the thanks I get from Franky," said the Caterpillar cheerfully. "But I'm keepin' it up. You can find some roarin' blade in the Fourth who will oblige you, Pon. I'm a reformed character, and I never dabble in geegees. In fact, I've almost forgotten there are such things, now that I'm so keenly interested in football."

"Another chap won't do," said Pon. "You might oblige me, Caterpillar. I suppose you're not ratty about the little rows we've had? That's not like you."

The Caterpillar groaned dismally. He never remembered rows with anybody; his good nature had no limits. It was the expression on Courtenay's face that deterred him from obliging Ponsonby.

"You're borin' me, Pon," he said disconsolately, "and you're shockin' our friends from Greyfriars, too. Poisonin' their innocent minds with all this talk about stakes and geegees. They're learnin' of the existence of such things for the first time, Pon. Don't do it."

Ponsonby laughed.

"This bet is with a Greyfriars chap," he said, "and he's asked us specially to get you to hold the stakes."

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked extremely uncomfortable. It was impossible for them to chip in, but they silently resolved to give Fisher T. Fish the bumping of his life when they returned to Greyfriars.

"A Greyfriars chap bettin'?" said the Caterpillar.

"You're dreamin', Pon!"

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"It's that cad Fish, I suppose!" growled Johnny Bull.

"And I can't see him again to-day," went on Ponsonby, "and the bet's off unless you hold the stakes, Caterpillar. That's the condition. Dash it all, it won't hurt you! You put three quids into your pocket, and hand it to Fish if he claims it."

"I don't like havin' anythin' to do with bettin'," said the Caterpillar. "It's a shockin' thing, and ought to be suppressed. Franky thinks so, don't you, Franky?"

"Yes, I do!" said Courtenay shortly.

"There you are, straight from the horse's mouth," said the Caterpillar. "I really wish you'd excuse me, Pon."

"I've held stakes for you," said Ponsonby sulkily.

"That was in my unregenerate days, before I knew Franky. Still, it's true," said De Courcy thoughtfully. "One good turn deserves another. Suppose I hold the stakes this time, Franky, positively for one occasion only?"

"Please yourself," said Courtenay. "It's no business of mine."

The Caterpillar groaned again.

"Now Franky's gettin' his back up," he said. "He'll make me slave at footer for this, I can see."

Courtenay burst into a laugh.

"Haven't you a will of your own?" demanded Ponsonby.

The Caterpillar shook his head.

"None," he said pleasantly. "I find it's a bore. Franky does all my thinkin' for me. He's got all the brains in this study, you know."

"Look here, will you hold the stakes?" grunted Gadsby.

"I leave it to Franky."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Courtenay. "Please yourself."

"Well, Pon's done it for me when I was a bettin' blackguard," said the Caterpillar. "So I ought to do it for Pon now he's a bettin' blackguard."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, here's the tin," said Ponsonby. And he quitted the study with his chums, leaving the three sovereigns on the table.

Courtenay silently passed them to the Caterpillar, who slipped them into his pocket, with a yawn.

"Now get on with the footer," he said affably. "I was gettin' awf'ly interested. You were talkin' about wickets, or goals, or somethin'."

The juniors were soon deep in discussion again, but the visitors could not help noticing that Courtenay was not so cheerful as before. After a while they adjourned to the footer-ground to get an appetite for tea, as Courtenay said.

"I'm goin' to watch you," said the Caterpillar.

"You're going to practise," said Courtenay.

And the Caterpillar did. And although after the practice he told his chum plaintively that he was "killin'" him, he looked all the better for it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Very High-Handed!

"NOW we're going to see Fishy," remarked Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five wheeled their bicycles in at the gates of Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton nodded, frowning.

"It's too rotten that he should get Highcliffe chaps into his rascally betting," he said. "It gives the rotters a handle against us. It's rotten for Courtenay, too, as he's trying to keep that idiot De Courcy out of Ponsonby's clutches, to have it begun again like this. We'll give Fish a lesson."

The juniors put up their machines and entered the School House, and inquired at once after Fisher T. Fish. Billy Bunter met them in the passage.

"Seen Fishy?" asked Wharton.

"What-fo?" said Bunter. "You've heard, then?"

"Heard what, Tubby?"

"He's making money hand over fist," said Bunter.

"Blessed if I ever thought Fishy had any brains before."

How did he know that the favourite was going to be beaten in the Bunker Plate?"

"Has the favourite been beaten?"

"Yes, rather! It's in the evening papers," said Bunter. "You should have seen Smithy's face when Fishy showed it to him."

"Smithy!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, Fishy has simply skinned the Bounder," said Bunter, with a chuckle. "He would have skinned me, too, only I was too jolly cute for him. He declined to take a bet from me because my postal-order hadn't come—"

"Where's Fishy now?" asked Wharton.

"He went to Smithy's study for the money," said Bunter. "Smithy's got to hand out five quid. He, he, he! I wonder what Quelchy would say if he knew! Of course I'm not going to say anything."

The Famous Five made their way to the Remove passage, and looked in at Vernon-Smith's study. The Bounder was alone there, and he looked a little red and confused at the sight of the chums. What Vernon-Smith did was, of course, his own business, and nothing to do with them, but the Bounder knew what they would think of it.

"Hallo!" he said awkwardly.

"I thought Fishy was here," said Wharton.

"He's gone. You didn't look in to see me?" said Vernon-Smith, forcing a laugh.

"No."

"Come in, all the same. I suppose you've heard about Fishy?"

"Bunter's just told us about your betting with him," said Wharton coldly. "We didn't come here to give you sermons, if that's what you're thinking. It's your own business."

"I'd rather explain," said the Bounder. "The fact is, I'm not taking up that kind of thing again. But Fishy wanted me to bet, and I did—to give him a lesson. That was really what I did it for. If I'd won I was going to send the tin to the Red Cross. It simply struck me in a heap when Fishy pulled it off. I hadn't the slightest idea that he knew anything about racing. Nearly everybody thought that Bully Boy was going to win. How on earth Fishy spotted that he wasn't is a mystery. I took him on to give him a lesson. He's given me one."

Wharton wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"Fish laid odds against the favourite?" he asked.

"Yes, two to one. In this morning's paper the price was two to one on, so Fishy didn't get any tip from a sporting-paper. He seems to have spotted it by magic."

"That's jolly queer. Fishy doesn't know anything about racing."

"Well, I never thought he did," said the Bounder. "But he must. He must know a lot more about geegees than I ever did. He laid the money—real money—as I made him place the stakes in Skinner's hands, for safety. I knew Fishy wouldn't pay up otherwise."

"How did Fishy know that the favourite was going to lose, then?"

The Bounder shook his head.

"I can't get on to it," he said. "Fishy must have felt certain, or he wouldn't have risked his money. I know he's been scraping acquaintance with Banks the bookmaker lately. But Banks can't have told him how to spot certs, that's a dead certainty. He's been raising money for this, I know; he's sold a lot of things, and he's had a remittance from his father in New York. He's making a regular speculation of it. I thought I'd nip him in the bud by taking him on, but it's worked out the other way. I've just paid him five pounds—rather a hard hit!"

"Then if he'd lost he'd have had to pay you ten pounds?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"And he had the money?"

"Yes; he had raised that much. And since I've paid him and he's had his stakes back he's put six pounds in my hands to hold as a stake for another bet he's made with some Highcliffe chaps."

"Ponsonby & Co.," said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, I think so."

"Why, the swindler!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "He put those stakes in your hands after he'd won your money."

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ONE
PENNY.

That was after the race was won. If he'd lost to you he couldn't have put up the stakes."

"No jolly fear!"

"Then he couldn't have paid Ponsonby?"

"Not likely! Ten pounds was his limit in capital, and I fancy he must have done a lot of squeezing and scraping to raise that," said the Bounder.

"There's only one explanation," said Wharton. "Fish knew that Bully Boy was going to be beaten."

"How the deuce could he have known?" exclaimed Nugent. "Why, the bookmakers couldn't have known, or they'd have laid the odds against."

"It's like magic," said the Bounder. "I can't catch on to it. If Fishy can really spot results this way he can make a fortune as soon as he pleases. He told me a yarn about having studied Bully Boy's form and previous record, and so on, but I don't believe a word of it. He knows nothing about racing. I suppose it must be simply a lucky fluke."

"He seems to have done jolly well out of it," said Johnny Bull. "Did he make bets with anybody else?"

"Yes; he's screwed ten bob out of Bolsover major, and five out of Snoop."

"The rotter!"

Harry Wharton & Co. quitted the Bounder's study and went along the passage to Fish's quarters. They were in a state of the greatest astonishment. Fishy's new departure had surprised them. But the result of it was simply astounding. How on earth had Fishy known that Bully Boy, the horse favoured by the bookies, was going to be beaten? The race was run thirty miles from Greyfriars, and certainly Fishy could never even have seen the horse. How had he known? Had the Yankee junior, who was awfully careful with pennies and half-pence, carelessly risked ten pounds in a lump on the chance of a lucky fluke? That seemed impossible, knowing Fishy as they did. But if it had been a "cert," how had Fishy known?

"Must have more brains than we've given him credit for!" said Bob Cherry. "I never believed that anybody could foretell race results, let alone Fishy!"

Johnny Bull kicked open the door of No. 14. It was his study, which he shared with Fisher T. Fish and Squiff. Squiff and the Yankee junior were both there. Squiff was watching Fishy counting up the cash with an expression of astonishment on his face. Fish was beaming with delight.

His new speculation was panning out remarkably well. He had five pounds fifteen shillings in his possession that did not belong to him, unless winning it in gambling made it belong to him. Naturally, he was pleased.

He grinned at the Famous Five as they came in.

"I guess you galoots are too late," he remarked, "but I'll give you a chance next time. On Saturday there's the Slapton Plate—"

"Can you fellows understand it?" asked Sampson Quincey Illey Field in wonder. "Fishy has started as a spotter of certs, and he's winning."

"I guess I've got my eye-teeth cut—just a few!" said Fish, with great satisfaction. "I rather reckon I shall rope in the durocks some."

"That's what we've come to speak to you about, Fish," said Harry Wharton. "You've been getting some Highcliffe fellows to gamble with you—"

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"I calculate there wasn't much getting required," he remarked. "Pon & Co. are keen enough. I made them an offer and they took it."

"I suppose we can't stop you playing the dirty black-guard if you choose to, and if you can find other rotters to gamble with you—"

"I guess you'd better mind your own business."

"But you're not going to have any more of it with Highcliffe," said Wharton. "We can't stop you here, but we can stop you there, and we will!"

"Look hyer, what's it got to do with you?" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish indignantly. "I ain't asking you to lay money, am I?"

"Well, you did ask us," said Harry. "But never mind that. You can run on here till you get found out."

and sacked, so far as we're concerned. But you're not going to disgrace this school among outsiders. See?"

"I reckon I shall do as I darn well like!" said Fisher T. Fish independently.

"Then your reckoning's out. You're going to promise us, here and now, to have no further dealings of that kind with anybody at Highcliffe."

"Rats!"

"And if we hear that you've broken your promise we're going to rag you bald-headed. And we're going to rag you now, by way of a beginning, to impress on your mind that you've got to toe the line."

"Hear, hear!" said Squiff heartily.

Fisher T. Fish jumped up in alarm.

"Hyer, I say, you galoots, you keep off!" he yelled. "Ain't it a free country? Don't you dare to lay your paws on a free Amurrican citizen—yaroooooh!"

The free American citizen wriggled furiously in the grasp of the Famous Five.

Harry Wharton & Co. meant business, as Fishy soon discovered.

They had, perhaps, no actual right to interfere in Fisher T. Fish's blackguardly concerns, but they assumed the right for the occasion. It was a little high-handed, but that could not be helped.

Fisher T. Fish was brought down with a bump that made the dust rise from the study carpet. Fishy's yell could have been heard at the end of the Remove passage.

"Yarooooh! Help! Let up, you mugwumps! Yooop!"

Bump! Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Go it!" said Squiff. "That carpet's wanted shaking for a long time. This will do instead. Mind you don't damage the floor, though, he's jolly bony!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-wwwooop!" yelled Fish. "Will you let up, you galoots? Yow-ow! Help! Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"You haven't made that promise yet," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Tain't anything to do with you jays——"

Bump!

"Yow-ow! I mean, I promise!" howled Fish.

Thud! Fisher T. Fish, having made the required promise, was pitched into a corner of the study. He collapsed there, in a breathless and dusty state.

"Wow-wow-wow!" he mumbled. "Grooh! I've a jolly good mind to wipe up the study with you rotters! Wow!"

"Pile in!" said Bob.

"Grooh! I guess I can't tackle five at once. Yow!"

"Pick your man," grinned Nugent; "the others will see fair play."

"The fairplayfulness will be terrific, my esteemed rascally Fish."

Fisher T. Fish groaned.

"I guess I won't waste any time on you. Wow-wow!"

"Well, if you don't keep that promise we shall waste some more time on you," said Harry Wharton, "and it will hurt next time!"

"Groooooh!"

Squiff joined the Famous Five as they quitted the study, and Fisher T. Fish was left to groan alone. He sat on the carpet and wriggled and groaned. He was simply boiling with indignation. This infraction of the rights of a "free Amurrican citizen" was quite intolerable! Fishy was greatly inclined to take the five chums in turn and give them a terrific licking all round, but he was prevented from revenging himself in that drastic manner by the consideration that the first one he tackled would reduce him to a state of wreckage, which would not leave him fit to tackle the others. So Fisher T. Fish groaned and fumed with indignation.

But he had one comfort. Five pounds fifteen shillings

reposed in his pockets, and he had three more to come from Highcliffe. Fisher T. Fish had cast his bread upon the waters and it had come back buttered.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Money Not Returned!

"DON'T!" said the Caterpillar plaintively.

The chums of the Fourth were in their study, and settling down to their evening preparation. Courtenay had his books on the table, and the Caterpillar was sitting on the corner of the table, swinging one elegant leg. That was the way he settled down to work.

Courtenay looked up in surprise as De Courcy made that plaintive remark.

"Don't what?" he asked.

"That!" said the Caterpillar.

Courtenay looked puzzled.

"It's time for 'prep,'" he said. "We haven't left ourselves any too much time, Caterpillar."

"I'm not talking about prep," said the Caterpillar.

"I said don't, and I mean don't. I repeat—don't!"

Frank Courtenay laughed a little uneasily.

"Don't be an ass, Caterpillar! I'm not ratty about your holding these stakes for Ponsonby, if that's what you mean."

"Yaas, that's what I mean," assented the Caterpillar. "Don't! I won't do it again, never no more as ever was!"

"Fathead!"

"Good! That sounds like mine own familiar friend again," said De Courcy urbanely. "I'll chuck the three quids out of the window if you like, Franky. When Fish comes for them I'll—I'll tin him. Fish ought to be tinned."

"We may as well have this out," said Frank gravely. "You know I don't like your being mixed up in that kind of thing again, Caterpillar. If you tell me to mind my own business, I'll do it cheerfully. I should chum with you just the same if you smoked and played bridge as you used to. But——"

"But it is your business, Franky. Haven't you taken me under your wing, and pointed out to me the path of rectitude?"

"Ass! It looks to me as if it's a trick of Ponsonby to get you back into the fold," said Courtenay. "You're such a good-natured ass——"

"Thanks!"

"But let's say no more about it. You've agreed to do it, and you'll have to go through with it now. It's only keeping the money till to-morrow and giving it back to Ponsonby. Fish is sure to be a loser."

"Offside!" said the Caterpillar.

"What do you mean?"

"I've heard some of the particulars," explained De Courcy. "Fish has been laying money against the favourite for the Bunker's Plate. The nuts were simply chortlin' over it. He laid two to one against Bully Boy, and any of the noble nuts would have put their best neckties on Bully Boy. Fish must have had some awfully secret information."

"Rot!" said Courtenay. "He'll lose his money."

"Offside, I tell you. He's won the money."

"Eh! How do you know?"

The Caterpillar tossed an evening paper across the table to his chum.

"I didn't get it for the racing results, 'pon honour," he said. "I wanted to see if there was news of the Sussex Regiment—my brother's in it, you know. But as I had it, I looked to see whom those three quids would belong to. Bully Boy came in second, beaten by a short head. It was a near thing, but a miss is as good as a mile. The noble nuts have lost their money, and I've got to hand the loot over to the estimable Yankee when he calls for it."

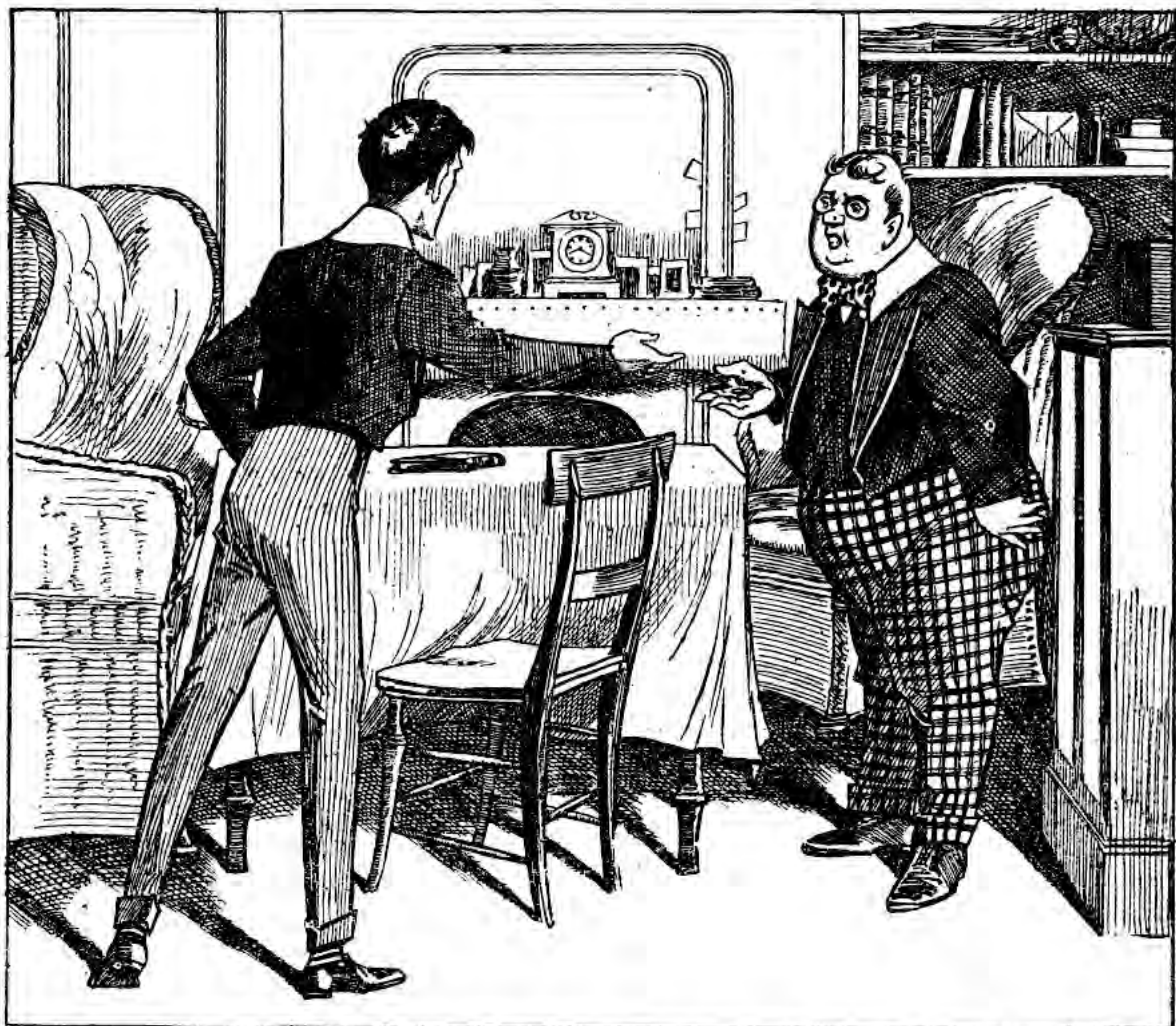
"Queer!" said Frank. "Fish didn't strike me as a fellow who knows anything about anything at all, racing included."

"Must be a fluke, I suppose. Anyway, he's won. I've got to carry the burden of guilt till Fishy calls for it."

ANSWERS

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It was like having teeth extracted to Fisher T. Fish to part with money. He almost groaned as he handed it out. "There you are, you fat clam. Now get out of my sight before I brain you." (See Chapter 8.)

"He won't be long," grinned Courtenay. "I know him. He'll be over here as early as he can get to-morrow. Serve Ponsonby right. He may keep off betting with Fishy after this."

The Caterpillar yawned, and slipped off the table.

"When are you going to work?" asked Courtenay.

"Sure you're not waxy?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Then I'll begin now."

And, with a deep groan, the Caterpillar dragged out his books and started. There was silence in the study as the two chums worked, broken only by occasional deep sighs from the Caterpillar. Until Courtenay had come to Highcliffe, the Caterpillar had done most of his work by means of a "crib," and Mr. Mobbs had always let him off very lightly in class. Nobodies like Smithson and Jones minor were dealt with very sharply by the estimable Mobbs; but the Caterpillar had more titled relations than he could count on his fingers, and such a youth was not to be driven hard—by Mr. Mobbs, at least. Under Courtenay's influence, however, the slacker had taken to work, though with many sighs and semi-serious complaints that his chum was "killin'" him.

A tap at the door interrupted the work, much to the delight of the Caterpillar. Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour came in, and De Courcy greeted them with great heartiness.

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"Trot in, dear boys! You're as welcome as the flowers in May. Never been so jolly glad to see anybody."

"Oh!" said Ponsonby, a little surprised by the Caterpillar's cordiality.

"Yaas—you're interruptin' the work, you know," explained the Caterpillar affably.

Ponsonby laughed.

"I won't keep you long," he said.

"Oh, do!"

"The fact is, we've altered our mind about those stakes," said Ponsonby. "Considerin' that your father confessor—excuse me, Courtenay!—objects, we won't trouble you to hold the stakes, De Courcy. We'll find another chap."

The Caterpillar looked very whimsically at Ponsonby. Courtenay looked grim. If he had not seen the evening paper he would have been glad to hear it. Now he could not help suspecting why Ponsonby was anxious to reclaim the stakes.

Ponsonby prided himself upon being a sportsman, but his variety of sportsmanship did not include playing the game.

"Yaas, that's it," said Gadsby. "Under the cires, we won't bother you, Caterpillar."

The Caterpillar smiled.

"No bother at all," he said.

"Still, we've altered our minds absolutely," said

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Vavasour. 'So hand over the quids, and we'll find another chap."

"My dear fellows, don't mention it!" said the Caterpillar. "As stake-holder, I'm bound to hold the stakes until claimed by the winner. You know the rules."

"But we've changed our minds," explained Ponsonby. "We don't want you to be dragged into our racin' and bettin', and so on, as you've chucked it up."

"That's awfully considerate of Pon, isn't it?" said the Caterpillar, turning to his study-mate. "You'd hardly have credited Pon with highly moral views like that, Franky, would you?"

Courtenay grunted.

"The fact is we haven't much time to waste," remarked Gadsby. "We've got our prep to do. Let's have the money, and we'll go."

"Don't go," pleaded the Caterpillar. "You're interruptin' the work, and as long as you do that you're as welcome as a long-lost brother!"

"We've got our work to do," said Vavasour. "Do hand over the money, and not so much jaw, Caterpillar."

"Result of the race known yet?" asked De Courcy blandly.

Vavasour and Gadsby looked a little guilty; but Ponsonby shook his head.

"No. How should we know?" he said.

"I understood you were gettin' an evenin' paper with the results. You generally do, I think."

"Can't get one this evening—all sold out on account of some blessed war news or other," said Ponsonby. "Something at the Dardanelles. We shall have to wait till the mornin'."

"Extraordinary!"

"Eh! What's extraordinary, you ass?" demanded Ponsonby, a little uneasily.

"Why, I got an evening paper as easily as anythin'," said the Caterpillar. "The man had quite a lot when I tackled him. Must have sold 'em off jolly quick. How jolly lucky I got one, as I can set your yearnin' mind at rest about the result*of that race without waitin' till mornin'."

Ponsonby's jaw dropped. Gadsby flushed red, and Vavasour looked sickly.

"I'm sorry to say your geegee didn't get home," continued the Caterpillar. "The giddy favourite was beaten by a short head. Hard cheese!"

"I—I don't believe it!"

"There's the paper, dear boy."

Ponsonby did not take up the paper. There was not much doubt that he had seen one already, and knew the result of the race before he came to the study. The three nuts looked at one another oddly.

"So you see," drawled the Caterpillar, "as Fishy has won your stakes, I've got to hand them over to him. Good-evenin'!"

The nuts did not move. They had come there for their money, that was evident, with the benevolent intention of letting Fisher T. Fish "whistle" for his winnings. Honour among thieves was not one of Ponsonby's maxims.

"You can hand over the money, and we'll pay Fish ourselves," said Ponsonby, after a long, long pause.

"If you were goin' to do that, why ask me to hold the stakes at all?" smiled the Caterpillar. "Fishy insisted—what! Fishy was goin' to ask me afterwards if I'd hold them—before he paid up if he lost. Didn't you expect to lose, dear boys? Bully Boy was such a rippin' dead cert. Oh, these dead certs!" said the Caterpillar, shaking his head sadly. "Nothin' so uncertain in life as a dead cert!"

"Will you hand over that money, Caterpillar, or won't you?" burst out Gadsby angrily. It was growing clear to the nuts that the Caterpillar was gently pulling their leg.

"How can I?" asked the Caterpillar, in astonishment.

"It's Fishy's money, not yours."

"We'll pay him ourselves."

"Franky," said the Caterpillar solemnly, "if I were a suspicious chap, I should think that Pon meant to collar these stakes, and swindle Fishy."

"Pretty plain, it seems to me," growled Courtenay.

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"Oh, no! I'm sure our good Pon is quite incapable of anythin' of the kind. I'm absolutely certain that he's jolly well not goin' to do anythin' of the kind. I'm handin' this money over to Fishy, and nobody else."

Ponsonby's eyes gleamed savagely.

"We want that money, De Courcy," he said.

"Can't be did! I'm not goin' to help you to swindle Fishy," remonstrated the Caterpillar. "I'm a good-natured chap; but there's limits. Dash it all, I'm not goin' to have a hand in a swindle! Too much of a bore."

"You dare to insinuate——"

"Nothin' at all, dear boy. Only I'm not handin' over the stakes to anybody but the chap they belong to."

"Nuff said!" exclaimed Gadsby savagely. "If you don't hand over our money, Caterpillar, we'll jolly well take it!"

"But it isn't your money, dear boy!"

"Will you hand it over?" shouted Ponsonby.

"Don't raise your voice, Pon, old scout. You know how it gets on my nerves when people raise their voices," said the Caterpillar plaintively.

"You slackin' idiot!"

"Yaas?"

"You—you burblin' cuckoo!"

"Pile on!"

"You're goin' to hand over that three quids——"

"Upon the whole, Pon," said the Caterpillar thoughtfully, "I think you'd better go; I prefer prep. You're borin' me!"

"Do you want us to take it by force?" said Ponsonby, breathing hard.

The Caterpillar chuckled.

There was a brief pause. Ponsonby & Co. looked furious, but they hesitated to put that threat into execution. Such a proceeding was a little "thick" even for the unscrupulous young rascals of Highcliffe. And the chums of No. 3 Study could certainly have wiped up the study carpet with the three nuts, if it had come to a tussle.

Ponsonby settled the matter by stamping out of the study, and his two companions followed him. Gadsby closed the door with a bang that rang the length of the passage.

"Pon's improvin', isn' he?" drawled the Caterpillar. "Awful check, to think that I should help him in a swindle! Fancy old Pon takin' to swindlin' in his old age."

"I suppose it's the next step to gambling!" growled Courtenay. "But it is rather thick, even for Pon. I should have thought he would pay up if he lost. I wish you'd never got mixed up in it, you duffer!"

"Right, as you always are," assented the Caterpillar. "Pon's left a nasty taste in my mouth. But I suppose I can't help him swindle Fishy?"

"I—I suppose not. You've got to give the money to the Yankee. For goodness' sake get rid of it as soon as you can."

"It's jolly odd," said the Caterpillar, in a reflective sort of way.

"Oh, they're precious rascals!" said Frank. "Might have expected it of them."

"I don't mean that. It's jolly odd about Fishy spottin' that Bully Boy was a loser, when all the bookies expected him to be a winner. How did Fishy get hold of a dead cert like that, Franky?"

"Blessed if I know."

"I'd like to know," said the Caterpillar. "It interesta me. It's a very interestin' problem, and I'm goin' in for it."

"For goodness' sake let it drop!" said Frank.

"But it's an interestin' problem. Nobody can spot certs, yet Fishy has done it. And he's an ass, you know that. Rather an unscrupulous bounder, too," said the Caterpillar. "He sold Smithson a watch, and it wouldn't go. He sold Yates a bat, and it split. They're both goin' to scalp him, I hear. You get on with your prep, Franky; I'm goin' to think out that problem."

Courtenay snorted, and went on with his work. The Caterpillar disposed himself comfortably in the arm-chair, with half-closed eyes, and proceeded to think out the interesting problem.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Running the Gauntlet!

HARRY WHARTON & Co were chatting in the quad next morning after lessons, when Fisher T. Fish bore down upon them. Five faces frowned upon the Yankee junior at once.

"Oh, don't go off on your ear!" said Fish, with a sniff. "I want to ask you chaps to do me a little favour."

"You want another bumping?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nope! You chaps are on jolly good terms with the Highcliffe bounders."

"Not with the bounders," said Wharton. "We leave those to you."

"You know young Smithson and Yates of the Fourth there?"

"We've seen them," said Harry. "They're in Courtenay's eleven."

"Pair of rotters," said Fish. "You'd hardly believe it, but those two galoots have threatened to scalp me—me!—next time they see me. Smithson actually wrote to me to say so."

"You've been swindling him?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Nope!" roared Fish. "Certainly not. I sold him a watch—"

"You mean you sold him a pup!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess it was a good watch—real American manufacture. He couldn't expect a first-class watch for ten bob, could he? I ain't to blame because it didn't go. Same with young Yates. If he buys a cricket bat at a big bargain he can't be surprised if it splits. But—would you believe it?—both those galoots are awfully ratty about it," said Fish indignantly. "They've called me names."

"Go hon!"

"The trouble is that I've got to call there," said Fish. "De Courcy is holding stakes for me, and I've got to collect them. I can't expect the galoot to come over here to hand them over, and he's too thumping lazy to come, anyway. But I don't care about showing up at Highcliffe just yet—not till those two unreasonable jays have forgotten about that watch and that bat. I guess I'm going to ask some of you galoots to run over for me."

"Eh?"

"You know they're always glad to see you at Highcliffe," said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "You can give the Caterpillar a look in, and I'll give you a note, authorising him to hand over the stakes to you. I know I can trust you—that's rather a compliment, you know."

The chums of the Remove simply glared at Fisher T. Fish. There seemed no limit to the nerve of the Yankee junior. After the ragging they had given him for extending his sporting speculation to Highcliffe he asked them quite cheerfully to collect his stakes for him from the Caterpillar. Evidently Fishy did not believe in taking offence over a ragging—not if it interfered with business, at all events.

"You'll go?" asked Fish, as they did not answer. "It won't take you long to run over on a bike, you know. And you'll be glad to see your friends there."

"We won't go!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, I guess I'll tell you what—drop your friends there a line, and ask them to tea, and mention that De Courcy can bring my stakes over with him," suggested Fish.

"Do you think we're going to get mixed up in your rotten blackguardism?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Well, you might oblige a chap," said Fish. "I don't want to go and have a row with Smithson and Yates. Look hyer, you oblige me, and I'll give you specially good terms on the Chump's Plate race, if you are for a little flutter—Yaroooh!"

Fisher T. Fish suddenly found himself horizontal on the ground, and the Famous Five strolled away, and left him there.

"Grook-hooh!" mumbled Fish, as he sat up. "Yow! Rotters! Oh, Jerusalem!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"I say, Fishy!" Billy rolled up as the Yankee junior scrambled to his feet, snorting. "I'll go for you, if you like, Fishy."

Snort!

"I'm on pally terms with De Courcy, you know," said Bunter, blinking at Fish through his big glasses. "We've both got lots of titled relations, you know, and we pal on like anything. I'll drop in and ask him for those stakes, if you'll lend me your bike."

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" growled Fishy. "You're not getting your paws on to my money, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"Oh, scat!"

Fisher T. Fish stalked away, frowning. He was not at all disposed to accept Billy Bunter's kind offer. Bunter could certainly have collected the three pounds from De Courcy. Whether Fish could have collected it from Bunter was another matter.

Fisher T. Fish was in a difficulty.

His little businesslike dealings with some of the Highcliffians made him very unwilling to visit Highcliffe till those dealings had blown over a little.

Both Skinner and Snoop had offered to go for him, but Fisher T. Fish was not of a trusting disposition. It was a curious thing that he was not disposed to make use of the services of any of his own pals where money was concerned.

The Famous Five evidently did not mean to oblige, and Peter Todd's reply to a similar request had been equally emphatic. Vernon-Smith had told him to go and eat coke, Tom Brown, the New Zealander, had punched his head simply for asking him, and Squiff had chased him out of the study.

There was nothing for it but to go himself, and risk a meeting with the indignant and vengeful purchasers of the watch and the bat. And he knew that Smithson and Yates had not yet forgotten the bat that split and the watch that wouldn't go.

The Yankee junior wheeled out his bicycle in a very bad temper. The money had to be collected. He trusted

De Courcy, but he did not want to leave his money too long even in De Courcy's hands. Fishy's opinion of human nature was a very poor one; perhaps because he judged others by himself.

He rode away from Greyfriars, followed by an ancient apple hurled by Bob Cherry, which knocked his cap off. Fish dismounted for his cap, shook a bony fist at Bob, and pedalled away again at a great rate.

He reached Highcliffe, and dismounted at the open gateway, and peered cautiously in. Smithson and Yates, fortunately, were not in sight, and, leaving his bike with the porter, the Yankee junior crossed hurriedly towards the School House.

There was a sudden shout from the direction of the football-ground, where Courtenay and most of his eleven were at practice.

"There's the spoofer!"

Fish looked round hastily. Two juniors had left the crowd on the ground, and were speeding towards him. He recognised Smithson and Yates. Evidently the watch and the bat were still fresh in their minds.

"Collar him!" shouted Yates.

Fish broke into a desperate run for the house.

He bolted in, with Smithson and Yates raging after him. Smithson's clutch just missed his bony ankle as he whipped up the stairs.

"After him!" panted Smithson.

Fish ran for De Courcy's study. He fervently hoped that the Caterpillar was there. He reached the door, and threw it open without troubling to knock. Just as he did so, the pursuers reached him. Four hands closed on Fisher T. Fish at once, and he came down in the doorway with a thud.

"Got him!" yelled Smithson jubilantly. "Now, you swindler——"

"By gad!"

The elegant form of the Caterpillar turned in the arm-chair. He looked in mild surprise at the scene in the doorway.

"Yow-ow! Help!" roared Fish, as he struggled frantically in the grasp of the two excited juniors.

"It's all right, Caterpillar!" panted Smithson. "This rotter has swindled us, and we're going to scalp him!"

"Go it!" said the Caterpillar.

Smithson and Yates did not need telling that; they were going it already. Fish struggled breathlessly.

"Yow-ow-ow! Will you leggo?" he shrieked. "Yooop! Oh, Jerusalem! Look hyer—— Oh, crumbs! Oh, my eye! Leggo my nose! If you don't leggo my nose—— Yowwwooooop!"

"Don't kill him!" said the Caterpillar, looking on cheerfully with his hands in his pockets. "It's against the law. Besides, it would make such a muck of the study. There's a cricket-stump here if you want one."

"Hand it over, Caterpillar!" gasped Yates.

"Certainly!"

"Yaroo! Help! Keep that stump away!" shrieked Fish. "You gol-darned galoots, wharrer you at? I didn't make you buy that watch, did I? Yow-ow-ow! You don't understand business—yooop! De Courcy, I came over to see you—lend me a hand!"

"Thanks awfully!" said the Caterpillar. "So good of you to give me a look in. Don't bust the furniture with that stump, Yates. It's for Fishy."

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yaroo! Lend me a hand, De Courcy, you mug-wamp!"

"My dear chap, I wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole," said the Caterpillar. "Still, I recommend you fellows to draw the line somewhere. That's Franky's stump, and he wouldn't like it broken."

"There!" panted Smithson. "I think that's enough. You won't sell me any more watches that won't go, you rotter!"

"And you won't sell me any more gammy bats," chuckled Yates. "And the next time I see you I'll give you some more of the same, unless you bring my money back!"

And the avengers, having reduced the Yankee merchant to a state of complete wreckage, walked away satisfied; leaving Fisher T. Fish squirming in the doorway of the study, and puffing and panting like a pair of very old bellows.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar's Resolve!

FISHER T. FISH sat up and blinked at the Caterpillar.

The Caterpillar regarded him with a tolerant smile.

The scene had apparently amused him.

"Ow-ow-ow!" said Fish.

"Feel rather bad?" asked the Caterpillar sympathetically.

"Groooh! Yep!"

"I suppose it's all in the day's work?" suggested the Caterpillar. "I suppose you keep a profit-and-loss account, don't you? What you get for watches and bats and things goes down to profit, and the lickings that follow go down to loss. Must be very interestin' and excitin'."

Fisher T. Fish picked himself up, and limped into the study, and sank into a chair. He was feeling "used up," as he would have described it. He was dusty, and he was rumpled, and he had a dozen separate aches all over his bony person.

The Caterpillar regarded him with genuine interest. The schoolboy merchant was a new experience for him.

"I guess I've called for those stakes," gasped Fish. "You've got three quid for me, De Courcy. Pon put 'em in your hands, I reckon."

"That's right," said the Caterpillar. "I'm the merry stake-holder. You seem to have thumpin' good luck on the geegees, Fish!"

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"I guess I've got my eye-teeth cut," said Fish. "We cut 'em early in Noo York."

"And you can spot winners and losers?" said the Caterpillar. "It's a wonderful gift. In my bold bad days I used to have little flutters on the gees, but I could never bring off these dead certs. How do you do it, Fishy?"

"I guess I study the form of a geegee," explained Fish, watching the elegant slacker of Highcliffe very narrowly. "I know a horse from A to Z before I lay money against him."

"Oh! You lay against a horse always, and not on?" asked the Caterpillar.

Fish checked himself.

"That depends, of course," he said. "I guess if you want a flutter, De Courcy, I can give you a run for your money on Wednesday. What do you say to a little flutter on the Greenfield races?"

"What's the odds?" yawned the Caterpillar.

There was a step in the passage, and Frank Courtenay came in. He nodded to Fish. The rumpled and dusty state of the visitor seemed to surprise him a little.

"You know Fishy?" said the Caterpillar gracefully. "He's called for his stakes. Smithson and Yates have been rather demonstrative; some misunderstanding about a watch and a bat, I believe. Fishy is giving me some information about next week's races. Lend us your ears, Franky, and you'll pick up a lot of information. Fishy knows the ropes, inside-out. He's offerin' me a flutter on next Wednesday's blackguardly proceedin's. I'm thinkin' of takin' him on."

"I guess you couldn't do better," said Fish eagerly. "I'll place my stakes in Courtenay's hands, if you like."

"You won't!" said Courtenay curtly.

Fish coughed.

"Any stakeholder you like, De Courcy. Now, the Greenfield Plate is run next Wednesday. Black Prince is the favourite so far, but Good Hope and Whistling Dick are good gees, too. What's your fancy?"

"I see you know all about it," said the Caterpillar.

Courtenay looked on in astonishment, without speaking.

"I guess I keep myself posted," said Fish boastfully.

"Lots of acquaintances on the Turf?" suggested the Caterpillar.

"Yep."

"Information straight from the horse's mouth, and so on?"

"That's it," said Fish.

"Then it's not much use bettin' against you, is it?"

"Oh, I don't mean that! There's a lot of chance in racing," said Fish. "You back your fancy, anyway. I'll take you on. I've had a lucky win, but I dare say it was a fluke, if you come to that. Everybody expected Bully Boy to win yesterday."

"And you laid against him, when everybody expected him to win."

"Yep. I took the chances, you know."

"I've heard you're a businesslike chap," said the Caterpillar. "Is that good business—takin' chances like that?"

"Oh, I guess I'm a sportsman!" said Fish. "Of course, a galoot has to take chances. If you'd care for a flutter, I'll ring you up on Wednesday, and tell you what odds I can give."

"Why not now?" asked the Caterpillar, with his sleepy-looking eyes, that were not so sleepy as they looked, scanning Fish's face. "Suppose I want to back Black Prince now, or Whistling Dick, for the Greenfield race?"

Fish shook his head.

"Lot of uncertainty so far ahead," he said. "Of course, I'm new to this line of business. I make up my book on the day of the race."

"So I can't lay my money till next Wednesday?"

"Correct!"

"Let me see. We're at lessons in the morning," said the Caterpillar. "It would have to be Wednesday afternoon."

"Sure."

"The race is run early in the afternoon, isn't it?"

"I dare say it is," assented Fish. "But we don't know the result till we get the evening paper, you see, so that makes no difference."

The Caterpillar smiled.

"No, I suppose it doesn't," he said. "I suppose you couldn't get a telegram to your school announcin' the result of the race, and lay your bets immediately afterwards against a horse that's already beaten?"

Courtenay started.

"I guess there would be trouble at Greyfriars if a galoot got a telegram from a racecourse about the result of a race," said Fish, laughing. "I calculate I don't get telegrams. You can ask anybody at Greyfriars whether I had a telegram yesterday, if you like."

The Caterpillar nodded.

"Besides, there wouldn't be time," he said, as if arguing it out. "You laid your bet with Ponsenby yesterday at half-past three. The Bunker's Plate was run at half-past two. But you couldn't have known the result, any more than Pon did."

"Of course I couldn't," assented Fish, though there was a peculiar glimmer in his eyes as he spoke.

"Because you couldn't get such a telegram at the school, and, besides, it would take more than an hour for delivery from the racecourse," said the Caterpillar thoughtfully. "If you'd a friend on the raceground, to telegraph the result to you immediately after the race, the wire couldn't reach you before four o'clock."

"Later, very likely," said Fish. "It takes half an hour for the kid to bring up a telegram to the school after it gets to Friardale."

"That settles that point, in case any suspicious person should think of such a thing," said the Caterpillar, with a nod. "By the way, do you know Banks?"

"Banks?" repeated Fish vaguely.

"Yes—a seedy bookmaker who hangs about Friardale and Courtfield sometimes."

"I've spoken to him," admitted Fish. "Never had any business with him. I've got my eye-tooth cut, and I steer clear of bookies."

"Shows your wisdom," said the Caterpillar admiringly. "I used to have little flutters with Banks, before Franky reformed me, and plucked me like a brand from the burnin', and it cost me a pretty penny, too. I never could spot these dead certs as you do, Fishy. By gad, if I weren't a reformed character, I should be inclined to have a little plunge next Wednesday. Would you be shocked, Franky?"

"Oh, rats!" said Courtenay.

"You won't take a bet on Black Prince now, Fishy?"

"Not till the day of the race. That's my rule."

"Suppose I offer you ten to one, in quids, with Franky to hold the stakes?" suggested the Caterpillar temptingly. The Yankee junior shook his head.

"A rule's a rule," he said. "I'll take you on next Wednesday afternoon, if you like. The race is booked to run at two-thirty. The result won't be known here till the evening. Any time in the afternoon, I'm your man."

"And a couple of fivers won't tempt you?"

"Nope."

Courtenay had compressed his lips. He did not speak. It was not his business to interfere with the Caterpillar. De Courcy sighed.

"I was just feelin' inclined for a little flutter, and you've disappointed me, Fishy," he said reproachfully. "I should have thought a bold, enterprisin' blade like you would lay odds any time. But I'm an accommodatin' chap. If you won't take the odds on Black Prince, I'll lay 'em against him, if you like."

"Not till next Wednesday."

"Firm as a rock, ain't he?" said the Caterpillar admiringly. "That's what you need in business—know your own mind, and stick to it. I never was a business chap—lackin' the great advantage of bein' brought up in Noo York. Well, if we can't do business now, I shall have to see you on Wednesday, Fishy. Meanwhile, here's Pon's money—three quids."

Fisher T. Fish slipped the three sovereigns into his pocket with great satisfaction. Then he took his leave, and successfully dodged Smithson in the quad, and cycled away to Greyfriars.

In the study the Caterpillar leaned his head on his delicately manicured hand, and reflected. Courtenay watched him grimly. De Courcy looked up at last.

"I suppose I've shocked you, Franky?"

"Yes," said Frank curtly.

"Rotten, ain't it? You shouldn't have chummed up with a brand from the burnin'," said the Caterpillar, with a shake of the head. "I'm breakin' out again, you see. The sight of a bold, bad blade like Fishy sets me

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

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ONE
PENNY.

on the go. I suppose you wouldn't think I should have much chance against a keen Yankee like Fishy, would you?"

"Hardly."

"I wonder!" said the Caterpillar reflectively. "What a joke if a remnant of a played-out and effete aristocracy like myself could dish a cute Yankee like Fishy. I'm goin' to try."

"Caterpillar!"

"I had to hand that cash to Fishy, hadn't I? I couldn't lend a hand to Pon in swindlin' him, could I, Franky?"

"No; but—"

"But suppose it turns out that Fishy has swindled Pon?" suggested the Caterpillar. "Then in handin' him the stakes I've become a party to it, and it's my business to unearth the facts, and make Fishy hand the money back if he's not entitled to it."

"I don't see how Fish could have swindled. You pointed out yourself that he couldn't have got the wire with the race result before he laid the bet."

"Quite so. But the bet was laid after the race was run, all the same."

"Lots of bets are," said Courtenay. "It makes no difference, so long as it's clear that the result can't be known to the parties concerned."

"Exactly. But it seems to be Fishy's system—it's goin' to be the same next Wednesday. Of course, it makes no difference—if he don't know the result of the race in advance. And certainly he couldn't know it by telegram. Besides, who'd suspect a kid in a school of makin' an arrangement with a man at a race to inform him of the result immediately it was known, for the sake of swindlin' unsuspectin' fellows with bets?"

"Well, nobody would suspect that, I should think."

"I might!" said the Caterpillar calmly.

"But you've proved yourself that it can't be done in Fish's case, even if he were rascal enough."

"Such things are done," said the Caterpillar. "There are lots of tricks on the Turf, Franky. It's a wicked world, and you get the quintessence of wickedness when you go in for racing. Franky, old man, at the risk of shockin' you, I'm goin' in for this interestin' problem. I'm goin' to have a hand in Fishy's wicked proceedin's next Wednesday."

"You can do as you like, of course."

"Just think, Franky—a played-out British aristocrat dishin' a cute Yankee!" pleaded the Caterpillar. "Ain't it worth while? Think of the glory!"

"You've got some idea in your silly head," said Courtenay. "I know you're not taking up Pon's rotten games again. If Fishy is swindling, he ought to be shown up. But you—"

"You think I'm not a match for him?"

"Well, hardly."

"That puts my back up," said the Caterpillar calmly. "I'm goin' to dish him now, just for your personal satisfaction, Franky."

"Oh, rats! There's the dinner-bell."

"Dinner's a bore!" yawned the Caterpillar, as he followed Courtenay from the study—"a bore, like everythin' else! What a life! A fellow must have a little excitement, Franky, and I shall find it awfully excitin' to dish the Yankee."

"He will dish you, you mean."

"Two to one on little me, in quid!" offered the Caterpillar, to which Courtenay replied with the ancient and classic monosyllable—"Rats!" And they went in to dinner.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Question of Duty!

SOMEWHAT to the surprise of Harry Wharton & Co., nothing was heard of Fisher T. Fish's new departure during the next few days.

After the phenomenally good luck the Yankee junior had experienced in his first essay as an amateur bookmaker, the chums of the Remove expected to see him booking bets every day. But it did not happen.

How Fishy did it was a mystery. The natural conclusion was that he had won by a lucky fluke. But the

Yankee junior was far too keen and cute to risk his money on flukes. He must have believed, at least, that he had a "dead cert." Yet he was too cute to believe in the dead certs of the sporting tipsters. Besides, dead certs were proverbially uncertain. They "came off" sometimes, in the nature of things. But, as a rule, they were very uncertain. How was it that Fishy, a junior in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars, knew more about racing than the oldest and most experienced bookmaker on the Turf?

That was a puzzle.

Fish's explanation was that he studied the subject deeply, and knew all that there was to be known about the form of the horses engaged. It was difficult to credit it, however, and, even so, he could not be certain of the result of a race—and without a certainty he would not have laid his money.

Fish announced he had not "chucked" his new "wheeze," by any means. But he explained that he had to give the matter very careful attention and thought, and so he was going to book bets only on Wednesday afternoons. Only on the day of the race, too, so that he would be in possession of the latest available information on the subject. That information in the morning paper was, of course, at the service of everybody else. On Wednesday afternoon the schoolboy bookmaker was ready to book bets—for strict cash.

Bolsover major pointed out that, in the afternoon, the race would have been already run. But Fishy pointed out in turn that that didn't make the slightest difference, as the result was not known at Greyfriars, to which Bolsover had to agree.

The Bounder—being perhaps of a suspicious turn of mind—inquired very carefully as to whether Fishy had had a telegram on the day of his win.

But no telegram had arrived for Fishy, as was easily proved. Skinner pointed out that Fishy might have received a telegram at another address—at the post-office, or some other address in Friardale or Courtfield. But, then, it was clearly proved that Fishy had been inside the gates of Greyfriars all the time.

Vernon-Smith, who was not easily satisfied, satisfied himself on that point. He inquired into the matter till he had established Fishy's movements on that particular afternoon.

Fisher T. Fish had, in fact, been so much in the public eye that it looked as if he had anticipated some such inquiry, and prepared for it.

After morning lessons he had been doing lines till dinner-time. Johnny Bull, who shared his study, knew that. He had turned up at dinner with the rest. After dinner he had talked to Skinner in the passage, and then gone to the school library for a book. Billy Bunter had met him coming away from the library, and sought to induce him to cash a postal-order, having found out that Fishy was in funds. A quarter of an hour after that Fishy had made his attempt

to induce the Famous Five to have a little flutter, with the results already described. Ten minutes after that he had booked his bets with Vernon-Smith, Bolsover major, and Skinner.

All that time he had not been out of the school, and he had certainly not received a telegram. Besides, as the Bounder had to admit, a telegram would not have been delivered until a later hour than that at which he had booked the bets.

Having thus cleared Fishy of his own suspicious investigations, the Bounder felt a little ashamed of his suspicions. But the puzzle remained—how had Fishy known that Bully Boy would be beaten on that famous occasion.

If it was a lucky fluke, Fish must have risked his money on the chance, and that was very unlike Fishy. Besides, he was prepared to repeat the operation on the following Wednesday. Was he taking chances?

The Bounder had to give it up.

Several of the Remove fellows of sporting proclivities had determined to take Fishy's bets the following Wednesday, at least, if he offered money against Black Prince for the Greenfield race. They considered that it was not likely that Fishy would be favoured again by such a fluke.

Fisher T. Fish announced that at half-past three he would be in his study, ready to do business. He offered the Bounder to eat any telegrams that came for him, and he advised Smithy to keep a watch on the gates, and see that he did not go out in quest of surreptitious information.

"Well, you're such a spoofer," said the Bounder. "And if you haven't spoofed us, I'm dashed if I know how you did it."

"Knowledge of the subject," explained Fisher T. Fish. "I'm taking it up seriously, you know, and what I don't know about geegees ain't worth knowing."

And the Bounder really had to admit Fishy's claim to superior knowledge. There seemed no other possible explanation.

Meanwhile, William George Bunter's mind was also exercised on the subject. On Friday evening the Owl of the Remove dropped into Fisher T. Fish's study.

"You've done awfully well out of your swindling, Fishy!" was his greeting.

Fish pointed to the door.

"But you must be awfully in funds," said Bunter. "I've heard all about it. Five quid from the Bounder, ten bob from Bolsover, and five from Snoop, and three pounds from the Highcliffe fellows. Look here, Fishy, I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Oh, light out!" said Fish.

"There's been some delay in the post—"

"Vamoose the ranch, you fat jay!"

"If you wouldn't mind cashing it in advance, Fishy, I'd hand it to you as soon as it comes—"

"Will you absquatulate?" roared Fish.

"The Remove Eleven on Tour!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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The elegant form of the Caterpillar turned in the armchair. He looked in mild surprise at the scene in the doorway. "Yow-ow! Help!" roared Fish, as he struggled frantically in the grasp of the two excited juniors. (See Chapter 6.)

"It's for ten bob," said Bunter, unmoved.
"Travel off!"

"I've been thinking over this matter, Fishy," said Bunter calmly. "I'm shocked!"

"You can go and be shocked in your own study," said Fish, picking up the poker. "Now, are you going to vamoose?"

Bunter dodged round the table.

"I'm shocked!" he repeated. "And Mr. Quelch would be awfully shocked if he knew. So would the Head. You'd be sacked, Fishy!"

"Do you mean to say that you're thinking of sneaking, you clammy clam?" hissed Fisher T. Fish.

"I hope I'm above sneaking," said Bunter, with dignity. "What's been troubling me a good deal is, whether it's my duty to acquaint Mr. Quelch with the matter. I've got a strict sense of duty, stricter than

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most fellows. I'm sorry to say, Fishy, that I can't allow this kind of thing to go on."

"You—you can't allow!" gasped Fishy.

Bunter shook his head.

"No. I've considered the matter, and I feel it to be my duty to put a stop to it. I feel bound to speak to Quelch. If the fellows call me a sneak I can't help it. I shall feel that I have done my duty," said Bunter nobly.

Fisher T. Fish looked very hard at Bunter, and laid down the poker. He reflected for a moment or two.

"I'll make it a bob," he said at last.

"Two!" said Bunter.

"You—you fat jay! Do you think I'm going to let you rob me?" said Fish, in sulphurous tones of indignation.

"If you put it like that, Fishy, I shall decline to discuss the matter at all. If you make me a loan I

might feel that, as a friend, I'm bound to keep your blackguardly secrets. Of course I should not accept a gift from you. That is entirely out of the question."

Fisher T. Fish controlled himself with great difficulty. He extracted two shillings from his pocket, and Bunter's eyes glistened. It was only too evident that, unless Fishy parted with two shillings, Bunter's sense of duty would lead him to the Remove master's study.

It was like having teeth extracted to Fisher T. Fish to part with the money. He almost groaned as he handed it out.

"There you are, you fat clam! Now get out of my sight before I brain you!"

Billy Bunter got out of his sight cheerfully enough, and departed for the tuckshop. He enjoyed the jam-tarts and ginger-pop immensely. There was a prospect of more to come—so long as Fisher T. Fish kept on his business as an amateur bookmaker!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Chumming With Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were playing the Upper Fourth on Saturday afternoon when Courtenay and the Caterpillar arrived on their bicycles. The football match was near its end when the two Highcliffe fellows strolled on the field. The Remove were two to one, and Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were making heroic efforts to equalise. Courtenay and his chum watched them with interest.

"Frightfully energetic chaps," the Caterpillar remarked, with a yawn. "And to think that they might all be sittin' down if they liked."

Courtenay laughed.

"The Remove are in fine form," he remarked. "They're walking over the Fourth. They will lick us when our match comes off if we don't buck up, Caterpillar. Do you think you could get through to goal?"

"Impossible!" said the Caterpillar. "You'd better leave me out. The Bouncer plays up well; looks very different from when he was a chum of Pon's, and they used to go after the gees together. Hallo! Here's our plump friend. How do you do, Bunter? So delighted to see you!"

Billy Bunter joined the Highcliffe chums, beaming. As Bunter often declared, the fact that they both had titled relations made a bond between him and the Caterpillar. It amused the Caterpillar sometimes to be exceedingly polite to Bunter, and treat him with deference, for no reason whatever but to pull his fat leg. He had explained to Courtenay that Bunter bored him less when he was pulling his leg.

"You're looking thinner," said the Caterpillar, with a concerned look. "I hope you're not losing your appetite, Bunter?"

"Fairish," said Bunter. "I never eat much, you know. That silly ass Cherry says I could lose a ton without noticing it. You always notice that skinny chaps are jealous of a fellow with a figure."

"Always," said the Caterpillar, surveying Bunter's figure with great admiration. "I've never seen a figure like it myself. It's that that gives you your distinguished look, in my opinion."

Billy Bunter purred with pleasure. If the nephew of an earl considered that he had a distinguished look he could afford to disregard envious fellows who likened him to a porpoise or a grampus.

"How's the sportive Fish going on?" continued the Caterpillar. "I suppose you're plungin' neck over ears now that you've got a tame bookmaker on tap—a pluggin' blade like you, Bunter."

"Too jolly fly," said Bunter. "Catch me! Besides, that cad Fishy only books bets for cash, and insists on stakes being placed in the hands of a third party. If a fellow can't trust me, I decline to bet with him."

"Quite so," agreed De Courcy. "That's exactly what I should expect of you, Bunter. Of course, Fishy's little business is quite above board, and all that?"

Courtenay glanced curiously at his chum. He could see that the Caterpillar was pumping Bunter, the tattler

and general newsbearer of the school. Bunter did not see it, however.

"Goal!" came a roar from the Remove crowd. The leather had gone in from Vernou-Smith's foot.

Courtenay turned all his attention to the football. The Caterpillar, however, was giving all his attention to the Owl of the Remove.

"I don't know about being above-board," said Bunter. "Fishy's awfully cute, and he's done the fellows lots of times. Still, he can't be swindling this time, even the Bouncer had to admit that."

"You don't mean to say that Smithy suspected him?" exclaimed the Caterpillar, with an air of astonishment.

Bunter chuckled.

"Didn't he, though! Smithy jolly well suspected that Fishy had had a wire after the race was run, and he knew that the horse had been beaten before he laid money against him. That would be just like Fishy. Only it was proved that he hadn't had a wire. He hadn't been out of the school, either."

"You don't mean to say that Smithy proved an alibi for him?"

"Yes, rather! You see, he inquired up and down the school, and accounted for all Fishy's time between morning lessons and the time the bets were laid. That settled it, of course."

"I suppose it would," said De Courcy, with a nod. "I suppose you don't know the details? I'm awfully interested in all that."

"I was jolly well on to it all the time," said Bunter. "Precious little goes on that I don't know all about, I can tell you."

"You're so jolly keen," said the Caterpillar admiringly.

Bunter smirked.

"I fancy I'm pretty keen," he remarked. "Besides, I gave part of the evidence, as it was I who saw Fishy coming away from the library. Smithy worked it all out—Fishy did lines in the study till dinner; after that he went to the library for a book; and after that he was jawing to Wharton and those chaps; and then he laid his bets with Smithy. So he jolly well never went out to get a wire from another address. Smithy had to own up that it was square."

"And you saw him coming away from the library?"

"Yes; that was my bit of evidence. He stopped me and spoke to me, really, trying to borrow some money," said Bunter calmly.

The Caterpillar glanced at the football field where a struggle was going on in front of the Fourth Form goal.

"I suppose you're jolly keen on watching the match, Bunter? You wouldn't care for a stroll round?"

"Yes, I would," said Bunter. "Anything you like, old chap!"

The Caterpillar shivered a little. "Old chap" from Bunter got on his nerves a little. But he smiled benignly.

"Franky, I'm goin' for a stroll with Bunter," he remarked. "I'll see you later. You stay and enjoy the footer."

"Right-ho!"

The elegant Caterpillar sauntered off the field with the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was blinking with delight. All Greyfriars could see what chummy terms he was on with the earl's nephew.

"What about looking in at the tuckshop?" suggested Bunter, with an eye to business.

"Yaas, later," remarked De Courcy. "If you'd take the trouble, Bunter, I'd like you to show me your school library."

"Certainly, old chap!"

They sauntered into the house, several fellows glancing at them in surprise. The sight of the fastidious De Courcy chumming with Billy Bunter was surprising enough. The Caterpillar did not seem to notice it, however. They arrived at the big oaken doors of the old library, and Bunter opened the door. The room was empty, and they entered. The Caterpillar glanced round at the book-lined walls, and his glance dwelt for a moment upon the telephone cabinet.

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"Jolly useful for you chaps, a telephone here," he remarked. "I suppose you use it whenever you like?"

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter. "Quelchy lets us use his sometimes, but this one is never used excepting by the Head. He keeps the glass door locked. A chap couldn't get at it if he wanted to."

"Chap might have another key," suggested the Caterpillar. "It's a common enough lock—anybody could get a key to it."

"I don't see how."

"Suppose a chap got a bunch of keys, and tried them all on that lock? I fancy he would soon get it open."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Bunter carelessly. "My fat! That's a tip! If ever I want to use it, I'll borrow some keys of Fishy and try."

"Does Fishy have lots of keys, then?"

Bunter sniffed.

"He always has lots of old rubbish like that. He buys up things at the second-hand shops, you know, and sells them to the fellows. If a chap loses the key to his desk or his locker or his trunk, he can always get one from Fishy for sixpence. Of course, it costs Fishy about a farthing. That's his way."

"Enterprisin' chap, Fishy," remarked the Caterpillar. "Still, I don't suppose it would be safe for you to use the 'phone, even if you could get at it, Bunter. I suppose there's always somebody about."

"I should pick my time, of course," said Bunter. "There's never anybody in here about meal-times, frinstance. I could come in after dinner without any risk."

The Caterpillar smiled.

"Suppose I wanted to ring you up from Highcliffe just for a friendly chat?" he remarked. "And suppose you had a key to the cabinet? Then if I fixed the time—say, soon after dinner—you could be here ready to take the call?"

"Easy enough!"

"Quite a good idea!" said the Caterpillar. "You are such an entertainin' chap, Bunter—I've never enjoyed anythin' more than this little chat. Supposin' you had that key, and I fixed the call for about two o'clock, say, you could talk to me over the wires without a bit of risk of bein' spotted—what?"

"No risk at all," said Bunter. "Nobody would be likely to come here then. You see, the Head's at lunch in his own house while we're at dinner, and he generally takes a nap afterwards. I'll ask Fishy if he can find me a key, if you like. I've no doubt he could."

"No, don't ask Fishy," said the Caterpillar. "Leave that to me, Bunter. Jolly old library this is, isn't it? Could have a nice time here, goin' over these books, if books weren't such a frightful bore. What do you say to lookin' in at the tuckshop, Bunt?"

"What-ho!"

"You'll let me stand treat for once, won't you?" said the Caterpillar coaxingly.

Billy Bunter did not need much coaxing.

"Oh, I don't mind, old chap!" he said. "Just as you like!"

"Thanks awf'ly!"

Bunter's face was like unto a full moon with delight as they sauntered out of the library. The Caterpillar was also looking very pleased.

"I suppose it was about here you met Fishy that time?" he remarked, in the passage.

"Just here," said Bunter. "I'd forgotten, only I remembered when Smithy started making his inquiries about what Fishy had been doing that afternoon."

"I suppose Fishy often goes there for a book?"

"Never known him to before that," said Bunter promptly. "He don't care for books. The queer thing is, too, that though he went there for a book that time he hadn't one with him when he was coming away."

"And that was soon after dinner?" yawned the Caterpillar.

"Well, some time after," said Bunter—"about half an hour, I should say—perhaps an hour. He'd been jawing with Skinner after dinner, and he was some time in the library, I believe—looking for his book perhaps."

"I suppose you couldn't remember exactly what time it was?"

"Oh, yes, I could," said Bunter. "Smithy made me think it all out. Lemme see—I know I heard half-past

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two strike while I was in the common-room talking to Tedd about a postal-order. Close on three I should say."

"Close on three!" murmured the Caterpillar, smiling. "How good! You're an awfully observant chap, Bunter!"

"Yes, I rather flatter myself I am," assented Bunter.

"Now—to mention that again—suppose I should fix it to ring you up between half-past two and three some half-holiday? You think you could use the telephone without being spotted—if you had that key?"

"Quite sure! Nobody's there at that time."

The Caterpillar dropped the subject; and Bunter soon forgot all about it as he proceeded to sample the buns, tarts, cakes, and ginger-beer in the tuckshop. The Caterpillar was standing treat in the most lavish manner. There was a trampling of feet outside soon afterwards, and the footballers came in for ginger-beer, Courtenay coming in with the Famous Five. The Caterpillar greeted them with a nod.

"My treat!" he said. "Pile in, dear boys! It's up to me. I say, have you ever noticed what an entertainin' chap Bunter is?"

"Can't say I have," said Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"Some fellows know how to appreciate a chap," said Bunter, with a snort.

"I'm one of that kind," said the Caterpillar. "I've had a very pleasant half-hour with Bunter—wasn't bored the whole time. I hope I didn't bore you, Bunter!" he added considerably.

"Not a bit of it, old fellow," said Bunter, quite affectionately.

The Removites chuckled. They concluded that the Caterpillar, with his peculiar sense of humour, had been amusing himself by pulling Bunter's leg. If that was the case, apparently he had tired of the amusement, for he dodged Bunter very skilfully when they left the tuckshop, and the Owl was seeking to link arms with him. There were evidently limits to the Caterpillar's surprising new regard for William George Bunter.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor for Mr. Banks!

THE Caterpillar and his chum stayed for tea in No. 1 Study, and the talk ran mostly upon football. The Caterpillar made no reference to Fisher T. Fish, or his sporting speculations, though that subject had interested him so much when he was with Billy Bunter. He seemed to have dismissed the matter from his mind.

After tea, Harry Wharton & Co. walked down to the gates with the two Highcliffe juniors. Fisher T. Fish hovered round them in the quadrangle, apparently seeking for an opportunity of speaking to the Caterpillar, but Bob Cherry gave him a ferocious glare, and Fishy retired from the scene. The chums of Highcliffe took their leave, and sauntered away in the growing dusk.

The Caterpillar paused as soon as they were out of sight of the school gates.

"I'm goin' for a stroll," he announced.

"Better get in," said Courtenay. "The gates will be locked."

"Mobby will excuse me—he's so jolly good-natured," yawned the Caterpillar. "You run on, Franky."

Courtenay looked surprised.

"Do you mean that you don't want me to come with you?" he asked.

"Yaas. You see, I'm goin' to pay a visit, and it would shock you," explained the Caterpillar. "You don't like bookmakers."

"Bookmakers!"

"Yaas!"

"What the thunder are you driving at, Caterpillar?"

"I'm goin' to see Banks."

"That seedy racing sharper?" exclaimed Courtenay, puzzled and worried. "What on earth are you up to, Caterpillar?"

"I'm not lookin' for a plunge or a flutter," said De Courcy reassuringly. "Nothin' of that kind since you snatched me like a brand from the burnin' I'm pittin' my brains—my poor old aristocratic brains—against that Yankee sharper, Fish. I'm goin' to dish the swindlin' cad!"

"How do you know he's a swindler?"

"Worked it out, dear boy, with my marvellous reasonin' powers!"

"Well, how can that seedy blackguard Banks help you to dish him?"

"I fancy he's the very man. I'm goin' to ask Banks a little favour. Suppose I explain to him that Fishy's goin' to be shown up, and that the game's up in that direction. Then he'll see that there's nothin' more to be got from Fishy. Then suppose I bribe and corrupt him with a couple of quids, he'll be willing to leave Fishy in the lurch, at my tender mercies. Savvy?"

"Not in the least," said the astounded Courtenay. "I can't make head or tail of a word you've said."

"I've worked it out," chuckled the Caterpillar. "I know that Fishy's scraped acquaintance with Banks, you see. I know that he doesn't bet with bookmakers; he's not imbecile enough for that, ass as he is. Well, then, why did he take the trouble and the risk of getting acquainted with Banks?"

"I can't say."

"Certain amount of risk, you know—means a flogging at least, if the powers caught him even talkin' to the seedy rotter. Yet Fishy's done it, and not for the purpose of bettin' with him as the Bounder used to do. Well, he must have had a use for Banks."

"I suppose so. But—"

"And—if I've worked it out correctly—Fishy had to have a friend who attended races to help him in the present little scheme—a friend who wasn't troubled with scruples—a friend like Banks, for instance. If Fishy were in a sporting set he could pick up such a rotter easily enough, but it ain't easy for a junior schoolboy to find a confederate like that. He found Banks. You see, the man's a local character, and Fishy knew about him."

"But what did he want Banks to do for him?" asked Courtenay, mystified.

The Caterpillar chuckled again.

"That's the 'little game,'" he said—"an awfully deep little game—quite cute. Just think how proud you'll feel of me, Franky, when I've dished Fishy—dished a real, smart, cute, spry Yank from New York—what?"

"I don't see that it's your business, Caterpillar, and I wish you'd keep out of it," said Courtenay, uneasily.

"But it is my business, Franky. Didn't I hand Fishy three quids from Pon & Co., which it turns out he wasn't entitled to? He's made me a party to his dirty swindlin' by makin' me stakeholder on that occasion. I've got to nail Fishy and make him hand that money back."

"If you are sure—"

"Well, I'm goin' to be sure," said the Caterpillar. "I'm goin' to see Banks. Don't you come; Banks will contaminate you. As for me, I'm past prayin' for, you know. Ta-ta!"

The Caterpillar walked away before his chum could reply. Courtenay hesitated a few minutes, but he knew that the Caterpillar wanted to be alone, so he went on towards Highcliffe, puzzled and disquieted.

Half an hour later the Caterpillar strolled into the garden of the Cross Keys in Friardale. He entered the house at the back, and made his way—a way he knew well from of old—to Mr. Cobb's private parlour. Mr. Cobb was there, smoking and reading a dirty newspaper, and rose in surprise as the Highcliffe junior came in.

"Quite a stranger, Master De Courcy," said the innkeeper effusively. "It's werry good of you to give an old friend a look in. How's Master Ponsonby?"

"Bloomin', as usual," replied the Caterpillar. "Is Banks about? I've got some werry important business with Banks."

The innkeeper grinned.

"Banks will be glad to see you," he said. "He's often asked after you. All the gents have missed you, Master De Courcy. It's quite like old times to see you 'ere."

"Happy old times," said the Caterpillar urbanely.

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"Merry old times! Can I see Banks? I know he's generally here on a Saturday evenin'."

"I'll call him at once."

Mr. Cobb hurried away, and in a few minutes the fat and florid Mr. Banks came into the room, bringing with him a scent of strong tobacco and a whiff of spirits. He greeted the Caterpillar with great warmth, evidently delighted to see that stray sheep returning to the fold. The Caterpillar did not seem to notice the large, flabby hand that Mr. Banks extended, however.

"Business?" asked Mr. Banks.

"Yaas!"

"Good!"

"Not exactly business like old times," explained the Caterpillar. "Rather in a different line. I suppose you are rollin' in oof, as usual?"

Mr. Banks looked dismal.

"'Ardly," he said. "The bloomin' war has knocked racin' fair on the 'ead. It's pretty 'ard to make a livin' out of it now. Why can't they 'ave conscription and get it over, so that we can get down to business again—wot?"

"What an excellent reason for having conscription!" remarked the Caterpillar. "You ought to get that explained to Kitchener, Banks, by gad! So times are rather hard, are they?"

"'Ard as nails," said Mr. Banks.

"Then a couple of quid wouldn't come amiss?"

"'Ardly."

"Good man! I want you to do me a little favour. You've arranged to ring up a fellow named Fish at Greyfriars next Wednesday afternoon, soon after half-past two?"

Mr. Banks jumped.

"Master Fish told you?" he ejaculated.

The Caterpillar smiled.

"Well, I know all about it," he replied. "I'm goin' to show Fishy up. I'm disgusted with him, so that little game will be up, Mr. Banks. How much did you get out of it?"

"'Arf a quid," said Mr. Banks discontentedly. "Course, it was worth my while, but I bet you that Yankee made more'n that. But he's close—awful close with money."

"Well, the game's up now, as I'm chippin' in, and there won't be any more half-quids. But I'm goin' to compensate you."

"That's werry generous of you, sir," said the bookmaker, in astonishment.

"I shouldn't like an honourable man like you to suffer, Banks," said the Caterpillar, with great seriousness. "It would lie upon my conscience. There's the quids." He laid two currency notes on the beer-stained table. "But I want you not to mention this to Fish. Don't ring him up, and don't tell him you're not going to; don't say a word. Is it a go?"

"Suttingly," said Mr. Banks. "I'm glad to oblige you, Master De Courcy. But Master Fish will be expecting a call from the Greenfield races."

"I'm goin' to give him a call—that's all right," said the Caterpillar. "Never mind Fishy. He can take care of himself. I wonder you didn't stick him for a percentage of his winnings."

"So I did," said Mr. Banks. "I was to 'ave a quarter. 'Arf-a-quid 'e 'anded me."

"That must be New York arithmetic," smiled the Caterpillar. "I know that Fishy made over eight pounds."

"The 'orrible young swindler!" exclaimed Mr. Banks indignantly. "He told me he got jest two quid, and gave me 'arf-a-sovereign. Course, I couldn't tell 'ow much he made, and I 'ad to take his word. 'Arf-a-quid was better'n nothin'."

"You'll leave him to me?" said the Caterpillar. "Not a word to him—not a whisper. You'll ring me up—Courtfield double-one two—and give me the information instead."

"Honour bright," said Mr. Banks.

"Good enough."

The Caterpillar smiled as he walked away from the inn. He was smiling when he arrived at Highcliffe, very late for locking-up. But Mr. Mobbs excused him for

missing call-over; the Caterpillar was a privileged person. Courtenay looked at him inquiringly when he came into No. 3 Study.

"All serene," said the Caterpillar, with a yawn. "I'm takin' a frightful lot of trouble, Franky, but it isn't borin' me; I find it quite excitin'. Now there's prep to do—oh, by gad! If ever I'm headmaster in a school, Franky, I shall abolish prep."

And with a dismal groan the Caterpillar sat down to work.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Very Mysterious!

"BLESSED if I understand it!" said Bob Cherry.

"Same here!" said Wharton.

"The blessedness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

The Famous Five were puzzled. It was Wednesday, and just before dinner a note had arrived for Harry Wharton. It was from Frank Courtenay, and it ran:

"Dear Wharton,—Will you and your friends meet us in Courtfield at two, or as soon after as you can manage? We will be waiting for you at Mr. Lazarus'. Some of you come along if you can't all come. It's important.—Yours sincerely,
FRANK COURTENAY."

"It means buzzing off on the bikes immediately after dinner," said Harry Wharton. "I can't quite see why Courtenay wants us at Lazarus' shop."

"It's a giddy mystery," said Frank Nugent. "Still, we can easily get back in time for the footer. I suppose you're going?"

"Oh, yes, we'll go! Courtenay says it is important."

"He doesn't say what it is for, though," said Bob Cherry. "Still, we'd better go. Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell."

The Famous Five went in to dinner with the Remove. Courtenay's note puzzled them a great deal. They thought about it a good deal during dinner, and immediately that meal was over they went for their bicycles.

Fisher T. Fish spotted them as they were wheeling their machines out. Fishy was in high feather, to judge by his looks.

"What price a little flutter this afternoon?" he asked, with a wary eye on the chums of the Remove. "My office will be open for business at three o'clock."

"Scat!"

"I guess I've got a good many clients, anyway," sniffed Fish. "I'm offering big odds, and I've got six clients on my list already. If you galoots—"

Then Fisher T. Fish dodged the bikes and departed.

Harry Wharton & Co mounted their machines and rode away to Courtfield, leaving Fisher T. Fish to prepare for a busy afternoon. There was no doubt that a good deal of grist was coming to the mill of the schoolboy bookmaker. Quite a number of the juniors had developed sporting proclivities, and intended to have "bobs" or half-crowns on the Greenfield race, provided that Fish would lay money against their favourite. During the week, fellows had been seen poring over the racing columns of the morning papers, studying the list of "gees." Bolsover major had announced in the common-room, with quite an experienced air, that Black Prince was absolutely certain to romp home. Black Prince was the general favourite, and several fellows had asked Fish to lay odds against him already. But Fisher T. Fish stuck to his rules. His "office" would be open at three o'clock, and before that he declined to do business. He would not even say, so far, whether he would give the odds against Black Prince or not.

Vernon-Smith had a recurrence of his suspicions, but he had to admit that it was impossible for Fishy to receive information of the result of the race. If a telegram came for him, all Greyfriars would know it, and business would be off. And he was not going out. Indeed, soon after dinner, Fishy ensconced himself in the school library—deserted as usual at that hour—with a book,

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ONE
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and seemed to be occupied only in killing time till his office opened.

Harry Wharton & Co. forgot all about Fisker T. Fish as they cycled away to Courtfield. They did not connect the Yankee junior in their minds with Courtenay's summons to the rendezvous.

They arrived at Mr. Lazarus' shop, and found Courtenay waiting for them on the pavement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" greeted Bob Cherry, as he jumped down. "What's on?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Courtenay.

"Eh! You don't know?" exclaimed Wharton.

Courtenay shook his head.

"No. The Caterpillar asked me to get you fellows to come here, and he said it was important. You don't mind?"

"Not at all," said Harry, considerably puzzled. "It's rather mysterious. Is De Courcy here?"

"Yes; he's in Mr. Lazarus' parlour. He asked me to bring you in when you arrived. We've arranged it with Mr. Lazarus. We've got the use of his parlour and telephone for an hour—goodness knows what for!"

The puzzled Removites followed Courtenay into the shop, where Mr. Lazarus met them with an expansive smile, and showed them into the stuffy little parlour. The Caterpillar was there, and he nodded to them genially.

"So glad you've come, dear boys!" he said. "Only a quarter past. Lots of time."

"Time for what?" asked Nugent.

"I hope you'll excuse my draggin' you here without explainin'," went on the Caterpillar, without replying to Nugent's question. "I was sure you'd be interested. It's an interestin' matter."

"What is?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I'm waiting for a telephone call," said De Courcy. "I know it's making a big demand on your patience, but this is really your bizney, you know. Be as patient as you can. Horrid place to ask you into. I believe the window's never opened. And these horse-hair chairs—oh, my hat! But you Greyfriars chaps are so awfully

energetic. I suppose you don't mind roughin' it for half an hour?"

"We don't mind," said Harry. "But we'd like to know what we're here for."

"For goodness' sake explain, Caterpillar!" said Courtenay.

"The explanation is comin' along," said the Caterpillar calmly. "Until it comes along, I can only ask you to be patient. Talk football."

"What?"

"Talk football. You can talk football anywhere, you know. I'll listen. I'm rather good at listenin' to football-jaw. Go ahead, and don't mind me."

The Caterpillar reclined in an easy chair, and half-closed his eyes. The juniors stared at him blankly. That De Courcy must have some reason for his extraordinary conduct they knew, but it was impossible to guess what it was. They sat down in Mr. Lazarus' parlour and waited.

As a matter of fact, they were soon talking football. Half-past two wheezed out from Mr. Lazarus' eight-day clock, then a quarter to three. Five minutes later the telephone bell rang.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There you are!" said Bob Cherry.

The Caterpillar rose and lounged to the telephone, and took up the receiver. The juniors watched him in silence. They were coming to the explanation of the mystery now, that was clear.

"Yaas," said the Caterpillar into the telephone. "Yaas; this is Courtfield double one two. Right! De Courcy speakin'. Is that Banks?"

"Banks!" murmured all the juniors together.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

There was a pause while the Caterpillar listened with the receiver at his ear.

"Good egg!" he went on. "Black Prince has won—two lengths. Right-ho! You saw him win? Easy win? Right-ho! Thanks, deah boy. Good-bye!"

The Caterpillar rang off.

He turned to the staring juniors with a genial smile.

"Any of you feel inclined for a little swindlin'?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Black Prince has won the Greenfield race, and nobody at Greyfriars will know it till the evenin' papers come," explained the Caterpillar. "You could go home now and lay money on Black Prince—and rope in the cash like thunder."

"You fathead!"

"What a chance for Fishy!" grinned Nugent.

"Dash it all, even Fishy wouldn't be rascal enough for that!" said Harry Wharton, frowning.

"Think not?" yawned the Caterpillar. "Silence in court, please, while I ring up the estimable Fishy."

"What!"

De Courcy took up the receiver again.

"Friardale one-double-two-one," he said.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That's the Head's number—Dr. Locke's private telephone."

"Yaas."

"You—you're 'phoning to Dr. Locke!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Hardly."

"Who, then?"

"Your friend Fishy," yawned the Caterpillar. "At the present moment the noble Fishy is waitin' in the library at Greyfriars, with a key to the telephone cabinet in his pocket, waitin' for a call from Mr. Banks at Greenfield!"

"What!"

"I've got Mr. Banks' call, and I'm goin' to pass it on to Fishy, with variations," said the Caterpillar, with a gentle smile. "Shush! I've got my number. Hallo!"

The juniors watched him, dumb.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

The Caterpillar's Little Game!

"HALLO!" said the Caterpillar into the telephone.

"Yes—Banks. The race is over—yes."

De Courcy turned his head, and signed to Harry Wharton to take up the second receiver. Wharton did so in silence, and put it to his ear.

The conversation between the Caterpillar and the speaker at the other end of the wire was now audible

to Wharton. His face grew grim and furious as he listened, but he did not speak a word.

"Is that Master Fish?" went on the Caterpillar, evidently speaking in the character of Mr. Banks.

"Yep."

"Safe to speak, what?"

"Yep," came back the voice of Fisher T. Fish on the telephone, recognisable from its strong nasal accent. "But hurry up. Anybody might come into the library, though it's not likely. I don't want to get caught here."

"I understand that, Master Fish."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"How has it gone?" asked Fisher T. Fish. "Has Black Prince won or lost? That's what I want to know."

Fish was evidently completely under the impression that this was the call he had been waiting for from Mr. Banks at Greenfield.

"Race started at two-thirty," said the Caterpillar into the 'phone. "Black Prince general favourite."

"I guess I know that. What's the result?"

"Lay your money against Black Prince; that's the result. Put your shirt against him if you can, and your last pair of socks."

"Good egg!" There was a nasal chuckle on the telephone. "So the favourite's beaten. I hardly expected that to happen twice running. It's real good luck. All the fellows are hot after Black Prince."

"Put your money against him, and there'll be a regular scoop. I've got to get off now. Good-bye!"

The Caterpillar rang off.

He put down the receiver, and sank into the armchair and stretched out his elegant legs.

"I suppose," he remarked thoughtfully, "that Fishy will conclude from that that Black Prince has lost the race?"

"He could hardly conclude anything else," said Courtenay.

"Yaas; but I didn't tell him so, did I? You fellows have heard of a chap called William Washington—or was it George Washington?"

"George Washington, you ass!"

"Well, George, then. He couldn't tell a lie," said the Caterpillar. "He became famous in history because he was a Yankee who never told a lie. All the other Yankees thought it a remarkable thing, and I suppose it was. Well, that's my own weakness. I couldn't tell a lie, you know. It's a bore. You have to have such a frightfully good memory if you start that. I consider that I was rather diplomatic about Fishy. I haven't told him anything, as a matter of fact, but he's sure to conclude from my remarks that Black Prince is a loser instead of a winner."

"But—"

"What I told him was to lay his money against Black Prince, and there would be a regular scoop."

"But he'll lose his money if he does!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yaas; that's what I want."

"Oh?"

"There will be a regular scoop, but the other fellows will scoop in Fishy's money, instead of Fishy scoopin' in theirs," explained the Caterpillar. "You can be diplomatic, and yet keep within the bounds of the frozen truth. At this very minute Fishy is bookin' the biggest bets he can get, and layin' his dollars against Black Prince. There will be a surprise for him when the evenin' papers come."

"Oh, crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter in the little parlour behind Mr. Lazarus' shop. The idea of Fishy laying his cash against a horse that had already won made the juniors roar.

The Caterpillar smiled sedately.

"The idea is to make the punishment fit the crime," he remarked. "I rather fancy Fishy will get fed-up with swindlin' on races after this. And I doubt whether he will have any money left. He'll find plenty of takers for odds against the Greenfield favourite."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean to say that this is how Fishy worked it before?" demanded Wharton. "He had the result of the race telephoned to him last Wednesday?"

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"Yaas."

"How on earth did you find it out?"

"Nosed it out," said the Caterpillar. "You see, he made me a party to his swindlin', as I held Pon's stakes and handed them over to him. So it was up to me. Also I wanted to convince Franky that my poor old brain was equal to a cute Yankee's. Franky was a doubting Thomas. Have I convinced you, Franky?"

"Yes," said Courtenay, laughing; "you have. What an utterly unscrupulous young scoundrel Fish must be! Why, it was simply stealing, to book bets after he knew the result of the race!"

"Lots of it done, all the same," said the Caterpillar. "The telephone is a great invention, and very useful to bookies."

"The disgraceful blackguard!" said Harry, frowning. "This explains it all. We might have known it was a swindle, knowing Fish as we do. But Smithy worked it out that it was impossible for him to have got the information."

"He didn't know about Fishy havin' a key to the Head's private telephone cabinet," smiled the Caterpillar.

"But how the dickens did you know? You're not even at Greyfriars!" exclaimed Wharton, in astonishment.

"My powerful brain, you know. I fished it out. Pretty scheme, wasn't it? But it's dished now!" chuckled the Caterpillar. "Fishy will be rather sick of gee-gees after this."

"The cad ought to be made to hand back the money to Ponsonby!" exclaimed Courtenay.

"I'm arrangin' for that," said the Caterpillar, rising and stretching himself. "Pon won't be a loser. You fellows will keep this dark for the present, of course. Let Fishy discover it from the evenin' papers."

"Ha, ha! Certainly!"

"That's why I fetched you here—to let you know Fishy's little game," the Caterpillar explained. "My idea was that the swindlin' rotter ought to be shown up."

"I should jolly well think so!" exclaimed Wharton. "We knew he was a rogue, but this is a surprise, all the same."

"Ta-ta!" said the Caterpillar. "Come on, Franky! We've got to slog at footer this afternoon, or we sha'n't beat Greyfriars when the match comes off."

The juniors parted, the Famous Five riding home, chuckling, to Greyfriars, and Courtenay and his chums walking back to Highcliffe.

"I've got to speak to Pon," remarked the Caterpillar, as they entered Highcliffe. "I'll come and watch you footballin' later, Franky."

In Ponsonby's study half a dozen of the nuts were smoking and playing cards when the Caterpillar looked in. Ponsonby regarded him rather grimly.

"Excuse my interruptin'," said the Caterpillar gracefully. "Any of you fellows care to hear a sure snip?"

"That depends," said Ponsonby.

"Fishy, at Greyfriars, is layin' the odds against Black Prince for the Greenfield. My advice to you is to go over and see him and take him on. You'll get your money back."

"How the deuce do you know?"

"Private information," said the Caterpillar calmly. "Straight from the horse's mouth, you know. I shouldn't give you this tip, only Fishy welshed you the other day, and I want you to get your money back. Please yourselves, though."

The Caterpillar lounged out of the study. That his advice was taken was soon evident, as ten minutes later Ponsonby and Gadsby and Vavasour were riding away on their bikes for Greyfriars.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Pay Up!

FISHER T. FISH was in high feather.

In his "office" in the Remove passage he had done great business.

Having secured that valuable information on the telephone, Fish had proceeded to his study at once, and at three o'clock sharp the "office" was opened.

Bets came in freely.

Fishy's clients were simply overjoyed when they found that Fishy was willing to lay against Black Prince. Of course, the unexpected might happen;

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EVERY
MONDAY

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

it was the possibility of that which enabled any bets to be laid about Black Prince at all. But if anything like good terms could be obtained Black Prince was a good horse to back. With the bookmakers the odds were so long that it was not worth while, but with Fishy it was different. Possessed of that valuable private information, Fish was willing to lay even money.

The sporting fellows jumped at it.

Vernon-Smith, who had plenty of cash, laid five pounds on Black Prince, Snoop laid five shillings, Bolsover major a pound, Skinner a half-sovereign. Several other fellows made bets, too, as well as some of the Fourth.

That Fishy would not "square" if he lost was not to be doubted—if he had any choice in the matter. All the gamblers were very careful to make him place his stakes in the hands of a trusted party. Fisher T. Fish was quite agreeable to that, as he exacted the same condition from his clients.

With his winnings from the previous week, added to his original capital, the schoolboy bookmaker was in possession of a considerable sum of money. By half-past three he had twelve pounds "out." Vernon-Smith had consented to be general stake-holder, and the money was locked up in his desk, to be distributed to the winners if Black Prince turned out to be the winning horse, and to be handed to Fishy if Black Prince was a loser.

Fishy had still six pounds left, and was waiting in his study in the hope of fresh clients coming in, when the Famous Five arrived. They looked into the "office" smiling.

"How's business?" asked Bob Cherry affably.

"Oh, fairish!" said Fish. "Seems to be a rush on Black Prince for the Greenfield."

"He's the favourite, isn't he?" asked Nugent innocently.

"Yep."

"You're not laying against the favourite?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yep! I guess I'm a sportsman," said Fish loftily. "I'm laying even money against Black Prince. Better terms than you could get on the field, I guess. If you fellows feel inclined for a little flutter, after all—"

"And you pay up if you lose?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Smithy's holding all the stakes for both sides."

"Then it's all square," chuckled Wharton. "Let us know how much you make this time, Fishy."

And the Famous Five walked away, laughing. Fish snorted. He could not see anything to laugh at, himself.

A little later Ponsonby & Co. arrived. Fisher T. Fish greeted the nuts of Highcliffe warmly as they came into his study.

"Jolly glad to see you," he remarked. "I was thinkin' of going down to the post-office and ringing you up."

"What about the Greenfield?" asked Gadsby.

"I guess I'll take you on."

"What's the odds for Black Prince?"

"Even money."

"You're ready to lay against him?"

"Sure!"

"We'll take you on, rather!" said Ponsonby. "Stakes to be held by Smithy. He's square."

"Right as rain!" said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully. "What's your figure?"

"Two quid each."

"Done!"

Fish entered the bet in his little book, and the four juniors adjourned to the Bounder's study. Two pounds each from the nuts, and six pounds from Fisher T. Fish, were duly locked up in Vernon-Smith's desk.

"How much have you got out now, Fishy?" asked the Bounder curiously.

"Eighteen pounds."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Ponsonby. "That's a big sum!"

"Oh, Fishy was scooping in the cash last week!" said the Bounder. "Fishy's rolling in money now. He won't roll much longer if Black Prince wins."

"Yep—if he wins," agreed Fish, with a glimmer in his eye. "But I calculate I'm a sportsman. I couldn't book

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

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another bet to save my life. I'm right up to the hilt now; only twopence in my pockets."

"Well, that's sporting," said Ponsonby. "Blessed if I ever knew you were such a plunger before, Fishy. But what the deuce makes you feel so sure that Black Prince will lose? He's everybody's favourite; it's almost a walk-over. You can't get anything like decent odds from the bookies."

"Nope, I know that. I'm doing it because I'm a sportsman."

"You must be, absolutely," said Vavasour. "You'll lose your tin."

"I guess we shall know about that when the evening papers come," said Fisher T. Fish carelessly.

Ponsonby & Co. departed, very much puzzled. Vernon-Smith was puzzled, too. He knew much more about racing than Fishy did, and he was convinced that the amateur bookmaker had burnt his fingers badly this time.

Harry Wharton & Co. were playing footer that afternoon. After the match, they joined the crowd of fellows who were waiting outside the gates. Fisher T. Fish was prominent among them. They were waiting for the arrival of the evening paper. Some of the juniors who had relations at the Front were always keen to see the latest paper. But on the present occasion they were actuated by a much less laudable curiosity. Black Prince and the Greenfield race were in all thoughts.

Most of the schoolboy bookmaker's "clients" were looking very eager and excited; but Fisher T. Fish himself was quite cool and calm. He was not troubled with any doubts as to the result.

The lad from the news vendor's came in sight at last, and there was a rush of the juniors to meet him.

Bolsover major grabbed the paper, and tore it open. An excited crowd surrounded him. The fellows were surprised at the total absence of excitement on the part of Fisher T. Fish. He made no movement to grab the paper.

"Easy does it, you galoots," drawled Fish. "Don't get excited!"

"See how cool Fishy is!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Perhaps Fishy will get excited soon, though."

"I guess not," said Fish disdainfully. "I calculate I'm a sportsman."

"Here it is!" exclaimed Bolsover major, getting to the "Latest Results." "Greenfield, two-thirty! Hurrah!"

"What are you chirping about, you jay?" asked Fish. "Black Prince has won! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" chorused the sportsmen.

Fisher T. Fish jumped clear of the ground.

"Won!" he yelled.

"Yes, rather!"

"Rot! Bosh! It's a mistake!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish, wildly excited now. "Lemme see that paper! It's a lie! It's a misprint! My hat! Black Prince hasn't won! I don't believe it!"

"You've got to pay up, Fishy!" chuckled Vernon-Smith.

Fisher T. Fish tore the paper away from Bolsover major. His eyes were nearly starting from his head as he scanned the racing results. The print danced before his dazzled eyes.

There it was—in black and white! The names of the first three horses in the race appeared in large print, large enough for anybody to read:

"BLACK PRINCE.
WHISTLING DICK.
'SNOOKER II.

"Also ran: Golightly, Pride of Perth, and Blue Light."

The horror and misery in Fish's face might have touched a heart of stone. To part with a shilling gave him a pain. And eighteen pounds—at one fell swoop!

"Oh, Jerusalem!" he groaned. "I—I guess it's a mistake."

"No mistake about that," said the Bounder. "Black Prince has won; everybody knew he would win. The bookies wouldn't take bets on Black Prince. Every kid knew that it was next door to a walk-over for him. You must have been a thumping fool to lay your money against him!"

"Oh, crikey!"

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"Come on, you fellows!" said the Bounder. "All of you come to my study, and see the stakes handed out."

"What-ho!"

"The—the stakes!" yelled Fish, jumping again. "I—I guess you're not handing out my money, Smithy!"

"What?"

"It—it's all off!" gasped Fish desperately. "I—I'm not having it. This bookmaking is against the law, anyway, and—and we should all be sacked if it came out. I'm sorry I ever went in for it—real sorry. It's all off. Those bets are cancelled——"

"Why, you—you thief!" said Bolsover major. "Wouldn't you have taken our money if we'd lost?"

"Didn't he take it last week when we lost?" hooted Snoop.

"Swindling cad!"

"Welsher!"

Hard words break no bones, or Fisher T. Fish would not have had a whole bone left in his body after the Removites had expressed their opinion of him. But he clung desperately to his denial. He was out to win, and not to lose—therefore the bets were "off."

There was a joyous scene in the Bounder's study as the stakes were handed out. All the cash was distributed, with the exception of the six pounds due to Ponsonby & Co., which was reserved till the Highcliffe fellows should call for it. The distribution was finished, and the desk locked again, when Fisher T. Fish crawled in. His nose was streaming red, and his left eye had a darkening circle round it, and he looked the picture of fury and woe.

"I guess I'm not having it!" he panted. "You'll give me my money, or I'll go to Mr. Quelch about it."

"You can tell him the whole story if you do," remarked Bob Cherry, in utter disgust. "Tell him that you used the Head's telephone in the library——"

"Eh!"

"And arranged with Banks to telephone you the name of the winner immediately after the race——"

"What?" shouted the Bounder.

"And then laid bets against a horse that had already lost," said Bob. "Quelch will like to hear all that."

"Do you mean to say that was how he did it?" shouted Bolsover major.

"Yes, rather!"

"But he got it wrong this time, then!" said Skinner. Bob chuckled.

"Exactly—because the Caterpillar intercepted the telephone-call, and gave him the winner as a loser!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" groaned Fish. "Done! Me! Me, raised in Noo York, done by that played-out, slackin' dude! Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So it was a swindle all along?" said the Bounder contemptuously. "You dirty thief, you ought to be in prison! Kick him out!"

"Hyer, I say— Hands off! I won't go to Quelch — Yarooop! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

With those incoherent remarks, Fisher T. Fish departed, with a dozen boots clumping behind him. He fled to his study and locked himself in, to rub his bruises, and his damaged nose, and his darkening eye, and to bemoan his losses. Truly, Fisher T. Fish's latest scheme had turned out a "fizzle," and he had "come out at the little end of the horn." Fishy prided himself on never getting "left." But he had been "left" with a vengeance this time, and his brief career as an amateur bookmaker was over.

The next time the Caterpillar came over to Greyfriars Fisher T. Fish looked at him with a look that was more than Hunnish. The Caterpillar nodded to him cheerily.

"How's the gamblin' gettin' on?" he inquired. "How's the bookmakin' still goin' in for a sportin' career?"

Fish snorted and stalked away. The Caterpillar smiled serenely. Fisher T. Fish's sporting career was at an end, and for a long time afterwards the Caterpillar chuckled gleefully over his success in dishing the Yankee.

THE END.

(Next Monday's magnificent story is entitled
"The Remove Eleven on Tour!")

THE PRINCE OF ALTENBURG!



In response to Hood's call Jack Darrell struggled violently. But it was hopeless. Almost before he grasped the danger he was lying on the floor of the car. (See page 26.)

THE FIRST INSTALMENTS.

Two boys of St. Dunstan's School, JACK DARRELL and TEDDY BURKE, fall into the hands of LEWIS MACKAY.

Mackay, under the impression that Jack Darrell is the Prince of Altenburg, kidnaps both him and his chum Burke.

The chums eventually find themselves on the Kielberg, a German cruiser, under the care of BARON ZELLING.

DERWENT HOOD, chief of the British Counter-Espionage Department, goes in search of the Kielberg on H.M.S. Chatswood. The German cruiser, being hard pressed, seeks refuge up the River Kunene, on the West Coast of Africa, where she runs aground.

Accompanied by two members of the Chatswood's crew named Dexter and Walters, Hood proceeds up the river in a motor-launch. They succeed in rescuing the two boys; but, owing to the vigilance of their German pursuers, are forced to go into hiding.

After landing on the banks of the river, and building a rough hut, Jack Darrell, who is keeping watch, hears some leaves rustling near by, and goes forward to investigate.

Burke, after having discovered his chum is missing, goes in search of Derwent Hood and Walters to tell them the news. Upon meeting his chums, Burke learns that they have seen a car in the woods, which they suspect has been placed there for the express purpose of kidnapping Jack Darrell.

The three immediately make for the spot where the car was stationed, and arrive just in time to see it start forward, with Jack inside, a prisoner of Zelling and his crew.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 404.

A Great New Serial Story
dealing with the Thrilling
Adventures of Two British Schoolboys.

By ANTHONY THOMAS.

"Darrell—Darrell!" exclaimed Hood. "Jump out—quick!"

(Now go on with the story.)

Darrell Loses a Point.

To a great extent Derwent Hood's theory of what had happened to help Baron Zelling was perfectly correct.

Zelling himself had not placed any great faith in the idea, because of the time it would take. He knew little or nothing of the country which stretched between the River Kunene and the capital of German South-West Africa, Windhoek.

But he imagined it would take weeks to accomplish the journey, and then the governor would probably be in some perplexity to know how to do anything of service.

Still, it was the right thing to do, and might eventually help the Kielberg crew to escape in safety.

For himself he meant to rely on the river, and because of that he was anxious to get the launch belonging to the little party who were on the other side of the river.

His fury at the extraordinary calamity which befell the expedition intended to wipe out four and capture a fifth can be imagined. He had made definite arrangements whereby he and another officer were to begin their journey to the coast on the morrow in the Chatswood launch, accompanied by Jack Darrell, or, as Zelling called him, the Prince of Altenburg.

They had been compelled to beat a hasty retreat when the wood took fire. Later, Zelling had sent another party, who

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

returned with the news that there was no sign of the five, and that the launch was useless.

The only thing left for Zelling was to take one of the ship's boats, with sufficient men to row him down the river. He knew the risks of being seen by the British warship, which he imagined was in waiting, but he trusted to find a way of eluding them.

On the day following the unfortunate expedition he did nothing but complete his arrangements with the officers who were to take control after he had gone.

He also learned that the little British party had encamped themselves somewhere at the top of the hill, and had posted a guard to keep watch on the river and the woods leading down to it.

Then came the really wonderful stroke of luck.

The messenger who had been sent to try and reach the governor at Windhoek came back, and his report, to put it mildly, was a joyful one to Baron Zelling.

He had made excellent progress, and reached a town called Nadas, not much more than sixty miles from where they lay on the river, but much nearer the coast.

The messenger's intention, it seemed, had never been to do the journey overland. He knew the country, and had been chosen by Zelling for that reason. His idea had been to get to the sea, and there get one of the little coast-boats to take him down to Swakopmund, from where the railway would take him to Windhoek.

But at Nadas he found the native population in an excited state. The governor was expected, and in a day or two, during which the messenger waited, he came, with half a dozen cars.

He was making a rapid tour in order to find out what forces he could gather to strengthen his own to resist a rumoured invasion by the British forces from South Africa.

On getting Zelling's message he promptly decided to send one of the cars as far as it could go, and the Baron could then meet him at Nadas.

This was admirable from Zelling's point of view. The messenger had returned fairly late in the evening, and it was decided to begin the journey as early as possible the following morning.

But the Prince of Altenburg must be a passenger with Zelling.

Von Bohn, as being the one who knew the difference between Burke and Darrell, was put in charge of this order again. Zelling did not attach any blame to the lieutenant for the failure of the last attempt, but the lieutenant was still anxious to justify himself.

Thus it came about that Von Bohn and another officer spent several hours from daybreak onwards in the woods.

They saw Burke and, later, Darrell. Not until Burke had gone away did Von Bohn make any attempt to approach Darrell; he knew better than to make the mistake of doing too much.

For a time after Burke had left him Jack Darrell sat still. Then he wandered to the edge of the wood, attracted by a faint noise.

It came again, and he went further into the wood.

Quite suddenly two men appeared in front of him. In an instant Darrell shouted out the call which was the signal to the others.

He only called once. The two young officers simply fell upon him, and he was knocked to the ground.

One of them, whom he recognised as Von Bohn, pushed a handkerchief into his mouth, and made Darrell more uncomfortable still by keeping his hand over his lips.

The other helped him to rise, but kept one arm twisted behind Jack, so that when he was forced forward resistance was impossible.

No time was lost, and from the moment when Jack gave his first and only cry to the time when he was stumbling and crashing down the hill it was not altogether more than twenty seconds.

He was half-pushed and half-lifted into the boat which was waiting, and they made off at once.

Very slowly they worked up the stream, Jack growing more uncomfortable every minute. The handkerchief in his mouth became an intolerable nuisance, and he would have taken it out, but every time he attempted to make any movement his arms were gripped more tightly than ever.

They did not seem to be in any hurry to cross the river to the Kielberg, to which Jack expected to be taken.

Apparently they were expecting some signal, and it came at last. A shrill whistle sounded, and then they pulled into the bank at once.

Zelling himself suddenly appeared from among the trees, and to Jack he seemed more spruce and smart than ever.

"Ah! All's well?" he cried.

And Von Bohn and the other officer forced Jack ashore.

"Welcome, prince!" Zelling said, and it was plain that he

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 404.

was for the time as happy as he had ever been. "Bring him along quickly, lieutenant. We must get away. But I shall remember your work to-day, never fear!"

Von Bohn raised his hand.

Jack groaned and made various noises, in the hope that Zelling would at least have the handkerchief taken out of his mouth.

"I see they have had to inconvenience you, prince," Zelling said, smiling, as Jack was forced along by his side. "Bear with it a little while, and I can promise you quite a pleasant time in the near future."

It can be imagined that the climb up the hill was anything but pleasant for Jack. A man on either side of him twisting his arms if he made the least attempt to break away or stop their progress, and the handkerchief in his mouth, made the next few minutes as miserable and uncomfortable as any he had yet experienced.

They reached the top of the hill at last, and there, to Jack's utter amazement, was a wonderful and apparently brand-new motor-car.

It seemed completely and entirely out of place in this region. And the two negroes, dressed in very light suits that were apparently their livery, stood at attention by the doors of the car, making it seem more a wild dream than ever.

Before Jack had grasped it all he was bundled into the car, and sank on the luxurious seats by the side of another officer.

Zelling joined them in a few moments. The two negroes mounted by the driver, and there was the sound of levers being pulled.

The real truth of the hopeless state in which he now found himself only came to Jack when he felt the car move forward.

A wild idea flashed through his mind. At all costs he must get out of this thing that was taking him away from his friends.

To think was to act, and he sprang to his feet and jumped on to the seat of the car before the other two grasped what he was doing.

And then as he looked back he saw Derwent Hood and Walters rush from among the trees and call to him.

"Jump, Darrell!" came the cry.

And Jack was ready.

Yet for a moment he hesitated as another figure rose before his vision. The two officers who had forced Jack along were standing a little way back, watching the car set out on its journey.

One of them raised his arm, and a shot rang out.

For one brief instant the wonder and the fear held Jack in their grip even while he climbed on to the back of the car and kicked at the hand which would have held him.

The flash from the revolver seemed to fascinate him. And then he saw Derwent Hood reel and topple to the ground.

One Man and a Boy.

Teddy Burke heard the signal which Dexter gave, and left his post at once. He found the midshipman alone in the shelter.

"Come in, youngster!" Dexter said, with a gallant attempt at cheerfulness. "Everybody seems to be doing something, but I'm a poor old cripple, who's neither use nor ornament!"

"But will anyone take my place over there?" Teddy asked, anxious that no loophole should be left unguarded. "Has Mr. Hood or Walters found anything yet?"

"You needn't worry about the sentry job now," Dexter answered. "I'm beginning to wonder whether it was a wise move. Only if we hadn't they might have come and caught us while we slept. They've got Darrell as it is, and apparently they're intending to take him for a motor tour."

"But how can they do that?" Burke asked.

Dexter told him the story Hood had related.

"And now he and Walters have gone to puncture the tyres or something," he concluded. "I hope they manage it all right. By the way, can you handle a gun at all?"

"My father taught me how to shoot," Burke said, with a touch of pride in his voice. "He's quite a good shot, and has won a good many championships."

"Good man!" Dexter cried. "I don't know whether it will be any use, but if I were you I'd take that gun in the corner and just scout round on your own. It is loaded; there are more cartridges in the box there. But don't use the thing if it isn't necessary. Only—well, you've got a head on your shoulders, and if you keep out of sight you might be useful to Hood."

Burke had already taken up the rifle.

"I'll cut along now," he said. "If there is nothing particular happening, I'll come back pretty quickly, and I won't take any risks this journey."

He went out, and barely had he left the shelter than a shot rang out. It came from the other side of the wood, and Burke made as much haste as he dared to get there.

When at last he came in sight of the open space, the only person he could see at first was Walters. He was standing in an attitude of defiance, and as Burke drew nearer he saw Derwent Hood struggle from the ground into a sitting position.

By the time he reached the edge of the wood the whole scene was clear to him, and he could see the two German officers facing Hood and Walters, but some twenty yards nearer the hill which ran down to the river.

So far as Burke could judge, the officers were undecided what course to take. They would have been quite pleased to attack the other two, but for the risk they themselves ran; and they were almost afraid to turn, lest in turn they were themselves attacked.

It seemed an ideal moment for Burke to use the head to which Dexter had referred.

He lay down, but did not take deliberate aim, for Teddy Burke had never handled a gun in the sense he had it now. Wherefore he fired towards the two officers, but well above their heads.

The bullet ripped through the leaves and branches, and the report startled the two Germans. It settled very quickly and definitely their difficulty in making up their minds.

Both of them turned quickly, and were dashing down the hill towards the river.

Burke ran out from among the trees towards Walters and Derwent Hood.

"Are you hurt, Mr. Hood?" he cried, as he saw that the Secret Service man found some difficulty in rising.

"Hallo—hallo!" Hood sank back for a moment as Teddy came up. "So you frightened them away, did you? Good man! Come and give me a hand, and I'll try and hobble along. It's only a scratch, I fancy, but it brought me down. Let's have a look at it."

The bullet had grazed the skin at the back of the knee, ripping his already torn clothing, and causing a fair amount of blood to flow. But it had not gone very deep, though it had probably injured the tendon to some extent. This accounted now for the extraordinary way in which Hood had toppled over.

But it was not a very serious wound, as Hood was glad to admit, even though he might have to join Dexter on the sick-bed for a day or two.

"We'll hobble back to old Dexter," Hood suggested. "If you two will give me a hand, I'll be glad. This thing isn't very painful, but it's knocked my leg out of action for a time."

They began their journey back to the camp, progressing somewhat slowly, for Hood could only move gently.

"You haven't seen anything of Jack Darrell, have you?" Burke asked presently.

"Yes, we have," answered Hood bitterly. "Rescue parties and all that kind of thing are hopeless now, I'm afraid. He was in the car they'd managed to bring up here. I thought he was going to jump, but—What happened exactly, Walters?"

"I'm afraid he was just too late, or they were too sharp for him," the sailor answered. "I didn't see it all very clearly myself, being too much interested in you. But I fancy someone in the car caught hold of him just as he'd got right on to the back, and they dragged him inside again."

Neither Derwent Hood nor Teddy Burke said anything. They went quietly and carefully along until they came to the shelter. Hood hobbled inside, and pretended to salute Dexter.

"Our luck is out, my captain," he announced, with forced cheerfulness. "While there's life there's hope, and that's about all we've got to live on at present."

"What's wrong with you?" Dexter asked quickly. "Not hurt, are you?"

"It's not serious," Hood answered. "A mere flesh wound from one of those beasts' revolvers. And Darrell has gone."

"In the car?" asked Dexter.

Hood nodded.

"I've covered a few thousand miles to get the best of Zelling, and this is the result! Not a particle of good fortune have I had since I left London. I guess you'll begin to regard me as a sort of Jonah presently!"

Dexter shook his head, and held his hand out to Hood. Just for a moment the two men clasped hands, and in that firm grip was a promise, a bond, that, come what might, they would stick together and do their utmost to win through.

But disaster had, indeed, overtaken them. Two of them were for the present practically out of action, leaving one man and one boy on the active list. The whole object for which Derwent Hood had set out was not only still unaccomplished, but the prospects of success were now reduced to vanishing point.

Their boat, the only means of escape they had, was damaged beyond all repair, and they were practically hemmed in on

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every side except the country behind them, through which they could not travel even had they been physically fit.

Small wonder, then, that a feeling of gloom settled on the little party. Teddy Burke shared with Hood the real depths of bitterness, for the thought that Zelling had, after all the fight they had put up, got clean away with Jack Darrell was more galling than the difficulties of their present position.

"Well"—Hood broke the silence at last, and his voice was that of a man who has resigned himself to the worst, but has still some hope—"I said I would never put foot in Britain again until I got back with young Darrell. And that stands good, whether I get out of this hole or not!"

"I shall never go back without Jack," Burke said quietly. "I'd never dare to face anyone at St. Dunstan's again. Besides, we promised to stick together."

Hood smiled. It did him good to hear this youngster talk, and he had a very warm place in his heart for Teddy Burke since that night when they had been on the Kielberg together.

And he himself was feeling very down in the mouth just now. The realisation that young Burke, with far less experience of tight corners, felt the position just as acutely as he did, brought him back to realities. Something had got to be done.

"Cheer up, youngster!" he said, determined not to add to Burke's troubles. "We'll get through somehow. This is rather like a game of chess. Let me try and think out the enemy's moves, and then we'll see what counter-moves we can make."

For a time the three lay in silence, while Walters, the ever-practical man, was outside doing his best to provide refreshment. There was no need to starve, even if the big chances were that they would all be shot eventually.

Presently Derwent Hood, having bandaged his leg, and found a comfortable position in which to rest, began to talk again.

"I think we'll have to adopt that suggestion of yours, Dexter," he said slowly. "We must patch up the poor old launch, make or steal a pair of oars, and try to get past the little crowd at the bend. I expect they'll relax to some extent now Zelling has gone."

Dexter nodded.

"I'm game," he answered. "Anything is better than lying here wondering when the other beasts are coming over to wipe us out!"

"I'm afraid Walters and Burke will have to do most of the hard work," Hood said. "Where is Walters now? Ah, here you are! Good man!"

For Walters entered, bearing on his improvised tray tea and biscuits for them. As some hours had elapsed since they had their last light meal, they were all quite ready for this.

"Squat down, Walters," Dexter suggested, "and give us your advice on the present situation. Mr. Hood agrees with me that if we can get the old launch to go along somehow—we shall have to use oars—we stand a reasonable chance of getting out of this hole!"

"And that's our only hope, Mr. Dexter," Walters said earnestly. "I'd sooner run the risks in the boat than stay here and be caught like rats in a trap. I'll go down to the boat and see what repairs are wanted; we'll make it water-tight some way. And then the oars. If Mr. Burke'll come along with me, I dare say we'll fix something up."

"That's good!" Dexter nodded in approval. "The whole job will have to be left in the hands of you and Mr. Burke. If either Mr. Hood or I can do anything to help, you will let us know, Walters."

"That's right, sir," Walters got on his feet again. "If anything goes wrong up here, you'll give the call? Can we take one of the rifles in case we need it?"

"Rather!" Dexter answered.

And Walters picked up one of the guns, and handed it to Burke.

"Then we'll start right now," the sailor announced.

And there was a certain tinge of pride in his voice which cheered Dexter. If anything could be done Walters would do it. Walters was admirable.

The two uninjured members of the party left the shelter, and went across the open space towards the wood. Dexter and Hood began to discuss the possibilities of what lay before them.

"It sounds ridiculous, I know," Derwent Hood said. "But I'm going to get even with Zelling yet. The outlook is not a bright one at present, but, all being well, you and I will have a dinner in London some time in the next few months. And we'll have both those youngsters, Darrell and Burke, with us!"

"I hope so," Dexter said presently.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Lord Bassington's Discovery.

"I regret to say, my dear Margards, that we are in an awkward fix."

Lord Bassington made the announcement as though it were the jolliest thing in the world. But that was his nature, as the head of St. Dunstan's knew. The greater the difficulty the more cheerful the elderly, red-faced peer became. Only when everything was going perfectly smoothly, and he had nothing to worry about, did he become depressed.

"We are aground?" queried Dr. Margards. "I suppose there is no possibility of getting off presently?"

"If we did we should only run aground again in five minutes," Bassington answered. "How on earth that German boat ever managed to find the channels I don't know. I am beginning to doubt very much whether they ever came up this river."

"But surely," Dr. Margards said, "there is sufficient proof of that? And, in any case, we do know that the Chatswood launch came up here. We have seen nothing of them yet."

"That is so," agreed Lord Bassington. "We can do nothing more to-night except remain here. Then in the morning I propose to get our pinnace afloat, and proceed in that. Will you come, or would you prefer to remain on the yacht until we return?"

"I am coming," Dr. Margards returned decisively. "There will be no question about that, I hope."

"Good!" Bassington nodded in approval. "I think we'll go below now; it's more comfortable in the cabins than on deck."

The Moonbeam had come to grief very quickly after entering the river. For one night they had lain at anchor, and at daylight the following morning had steamed slowly ahead again.

But within a few hours they had struck one of the many sandbanks, and the yacht was firmly wedged.

Doubtless in due time they would get the Moonbeam off again, as she had not been going at any great speed when the mishap occurred. But, as Lord Bassington had said, it would be foolishness to try and go further up the river with her, as they would only meet the same, and possibly more serious, troubles in a very short time.

The second night on the river passed happily enough, for the Moonbeam was fitted to make even the tropics bearable. And early in the morning everyone was astir, making the little steam-pinnace ready for possibly the biggest journey it had ever attempted.

Fuel and food, guns and implements, were packed into the smallest possible compass, the awning was rigged up and every detail that could make for comfort or usefulness was thoroughly done.

"We can only take one man," Lord Bassington told Dr. Margards. "If, by good luck, we have five of them to bring back, there won't be any too much room for them. Probably get fined by the County Council, if they've got one in these parts, for overcrowding. Ready? Everything right, Kirk?"

"Yessir!" the man answered.

He was not a youngster by any means, and it is doubtful if he would ever see his fiftieth birthday again. But they were all veterans aboard the Moonbeam.

Dr. Margards climbed down into the pinnace, and Lord Bassington followed him. In a few more minutes they were steaming away up the river.

"Seems to me we've got to go carefully on this job," Bassington said presently. "It won't do to go ahead too rapidly, or we shall find ourselves running right into this German crowd. I don't suppose they'd let us go in a hurry if they did get hold of us."

"Perhaps it would be better to keep to the side of the river," suggested Dr. Margards.

"That's not a bad idea. If we work slowly up along the right we should be fairly well out of sight, and yet able to see anything ahead of us. We'll do that."

For some hours they crept quietly and gently along. Then the heat of the middle of the day became too oppressive, and they tied up for a time.

Later on they went cautiously ahead once more, but nothing did they see. Hour after hour the pinnace went slowly along, both Bassington and Dr. Margards keeping watch lest they should miss the faintest sign that they were nearing other human beings.

They had left the low-lying, swampy banks, and the yellowish water of the river had changed to a healthier colour. On either side of them the banks rose steeply, and were covered with dense trees.

It was decided to lie up fairly early, as they found a comfortable-looking place some time before it was dark. And there was no good purpose to be served by covering many more miles to-night.

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"If only we could find a place from which to take observations it would be better," Lord Bassington said. "I can't imagine how on earth any big vessel ever came higher than this, and if the Kielberg really did come up the river, it cannot be much further."

The sailor-peer was beginning to get puzzled, and all that evening he pondered over the problem.

"And where on earth has the Chatswood launch gone?" he demanded. "It's a funny business, Margards, and I'm not going very much further without finding out more."

In the morning, however, they went ahead for a time, slowly and cautiously as they had done on the previous day.

Presently the peer pointed to the right bank.

"The trees are much thinner there," he announced, "and I fancy I can see the top of the hill. It might be worth while exploring."

He promptly turned the boat in to the side, and Kirk secured it. Lord Bassington jumped ashore.

"You stay here for a time, Margards, will you?" he asked. "I'll wander round, and see if there is anything to be done from the top of the hill. If there isn't, we can only push on again."

He went off, armed with an axe to cut his way through. At first he kept quite close to the river, evidently seeking the easiest place to begin the ascent.

In less than ten minutes he was back again.

"I've not been to the top," he confessed; "never left the bank, in fact. But I know where the Chatswood launch is now."

"Where?" asked Dr. Margards quickly. "Who is with it?"

"It's not twenty yards from here, lying tied up near the bank," Bassington admitted. "But there's not a soul near her, and no sign of anyone. The engine's been burnt out, and there's a couple of huge oars lying across her. It's a mystery, my dear fellow, and I think you'd better come back with me and have a look for yourself."

Dr. Margards scrambled ashore, and together the two struggled through the twisted masses of growth which barred the way along the bank.

They had been about two or three minutes on their journey, when a sudden report startled them.

A shot rang out, reverberating and echoing among the trees, and they heard the keen whistle of a bullet as it cut through the leaves only a few yards in front of them.

"Good thing we didn't hurry too much, Margards," Lord Bassington laughed. "I think we'd better take cover. Someone's seen us, and this is their cheerful welcome."

Dr. Margards was too startled to protest, and both of them took shelter behind a tree for a time.

Another shot rang out, and then quite near them they heard someone calling.

Jack Darrell Pays Back.

When Darrell heard the cry which Hood gave as he ran behind the car he meant to act instantly.

But there was just that momentary shock when he saw Hood fall. It was not that he actually hesitated so much as the fact that it lessened the speed with which he was climbing on to the back of the car.

Already he had felt someone seize him by the ankles, but he had kicked them off. In that moment when he slackened, the grip was renewed, and this time he could not shake it off.

He struggled violently, realising that to lose now would be serious defeat.

But it was hopeless. Almost before he grasped the danger he was lying on the floor of the car and Zelling and the officer were standing over him.

"I am sorry, Prince!" Zelling remarked. "Really, it is very foolish of you to try and leave us now. Believe me, you are much safer with us than you would be with your late friends. Come, let me assist you to rise again."

Jack was panting after his exertions. The gag had been taken from his mouth by Zelling just as the two younger officers had thrust him into the car, but its effect was still with him.

He was thirsty and tired. The climb up the hill under the unpleasant conditions he had experienced, followed by this brief struggle in the car, had taken more out of him than he would have cared to admit.

Now he lay back on the cushions with that hopeless feeling which comes to a man when he is feeling physically and mentally beaten. All his energy and effort had concentrated itself in that supreme attempt to get out of the car and shake off the two who sought to detain him.

And it had all been to no purpose.

The car jolted and swayed on its powerful springs. They



Jack darted forward, and with a swift upward blow directed at Zelling's wrist had sent the revolver flying harmlessly in the air. It fell to the floor with a crash, and not until then did the trigger act. (See page 28.)

were not going very rapidly, for the ground over which they were running was not exactly a motor-track. But the movement soothed Jack rather than irritated him. Nothing mattered now. He had done his best, but, after all, Zelling had won.

He hoped Teddy Burke would get away all right. Perhaps the Kielberg crowd wouldn't interfere with them now that Zelling had gone.

And Derwent Hood? He wondered whether he had been seriously hit, and whether he, too, would be able to get away.

The movement of the car, the sound of the engine, and the warmth of the day combined with the weariness that had come upon him, and presently Jack dozed.

There was no need for Baron Zelling and the naval officer to keep their grip on his coat. For a time at all events Jack Darrell would make no attempt to leave them.

He was back at St. Dunstan's again, but it was a different school in some way. Instead of the old familiar playing-fields, there were the trees and dense bushes on the banks of the River Kunene.

Teddy Burke was there, and with him Midshipman Dexter and Derwent Hood. Other people, unfamiliar at St. Dunstan's, were standing with them. Walters, in a new navy suit, and the captain of the Tronjeim, and others whom Darrell did not know.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 404.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

They were waiting expectantly for someone. And presently a figure came from the woods. Everyone ran to meet him, calling to him and cheering loudly.

Darrell could scarcely grasp it or understand it. The boy who came from the wood was himself, though he was watching the whole scene.

He ran forward to meet Teddy Burke, who was in front of the others. Then—

Everything vanished. He opened his eyes, to find that the car was at a standstill, and Zelling was trying to waken him.

"You sleep well, prince!" he laughed. "But you must eat and drink also. We shall rest for a time here."

A table was quickly erected in the car itself, and the two negroes acted as waiters and general attendants.

"You will not attempt to leave me now, prince?" Zelling asked jestingly. "We are thirty—forty miles or more from your late friends now. Rather too far to walk. And this is better fare than you have been having with them, is it not?"

As a matter of fact, the meal was an excellent one, and it was a novel experience for Jack to find himself sitting at a table covered with white linen and using bright silver knives and forks once more.

Actually he enjoyed the meal, for a schoolboy's appetite is not something which is easily lost or forgotten. And it was

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

some considerable time since Jack Darrell had touched pleasant-tasting food.

They halted for more than an hour, but presently Zelling gave the word and the car began to move once more.

Later in the afternoon they came upon a larger collection of rough structures and huts, and the car sounded a warning of its approach. As it turned, Jack saw three or four big tents in the foreground, and at the largest of these they drew up.

A tall, not unpleasant-looking man, dressed in white, came out, and he and Zelling exchanged greetings. Then Zelling called to Jack, and he got out of the car, thankful to stretch his limbs.

"The Prince of Altenburg!"

Zelling announced the title in a grandiloquent fashion, and the tall man bowed.

"It's all rot!"

Jack could not refrain from making some attempt to protest, and if it made Zelling look a fool, so much the better.

But Zelling merely smiled, and the tall man's attention was suddenly diverted by the arrival of another car. Jack noticed that there were two or three already standing under the awning which had been erected some little distance from the tents.

The car which had just arrived was built on racing lines, though there was a kind of thin cover over the heads of the two men who occupied the full seating capacity of the machine.

Both of them were dressed as the first man, who, Jack now gathered, was the Governor of German South-West Africa. One of them sprang hastily from the car and ran to the governor.

What he had to say Jack could not tell. He gabbled away at a great pace, and both the governor and Zelling seemed profoundly impressed.

There were a good many "hochs" and "achs" and wild gesticulations. Zelling joined in the general discussion, and Jack Darrell, standing back by the side of the naval officer, found it almost amusing. It pleased him especially that Zelling appeared to be far from happy.

Whatever the discussion was about, an agreement was speedily reached. The commotion then became even more remarkable.



**LOOK OUT! HERE'S
SYD CHAPLIN**

*hurrying along to keep his
appointment for fooling*

ON THE FRONT PAGE

of the world's great comic—THE

FIREFLY, 1st 1/2^d.

*Have the loudest laugh of
your life this Wednesday.*

Whistles were blown, white-dressed men came rushing out of the tents, while the governor was crying out orders and instructions with amazing rapidity. Zelling seemed anxious to supplement his efforts, but for a time he had to sink into the background, for no one took the slightest notice of him.

Both the governor and Zelling were running to and fro, now talking to the men who had brought the news, and occasionally stopping to discuss it excitedly with each other.

For a time, at all events, the baron had forgotten Jack, or else assumed that there was no need to guard him, for Darrell wandered in and out among all the commotion just as he chose.

At last all the cars had been attended to, and the tents and cases had been packed. In a short time the drivers had mounted, and Darrell was suddenly pounced upon by Zelling.

"Come along, prince!" he cried. "There is no time to lose. Another exciting ride is ahead of you, I think!"

Jack got into the car, but he now sat on the opposite side, with one of the men in white by him. The governor and Zelling had the other side to themselves.

They were off at last. Jack himself was infected by the excitement, for the whole village turned out to watch, and strange cries, whether cheering or in derision he did not know, followed them.

Darkness came, but beyond a brief pause to light the lamps it had no effect upon the journey. All through the night they bumped and jerked along, going as rapidly as they dare.

The three men who were in the car with Jack talked him to sleep at last. If Zelling had intended it as a punishment he could have devised no worse torture than this. To sit, alone and friendless, while three men rattled away in German for hour after hour, seemed to Darrell to be the worst trouble he had yet encountered.

He slept; but the car was still pounding away when he awakened, and the three men were still talking.

No one was more thankful than he was when at last they came to their journey's end.

The car drew up before a long, low white building, which looked cool and pleasant. Wonderful flowers grew about the porch, and a lady in white came running to the big open door.

Inside the house, whither Jack followed Zelling, it was wonderfully cool and pleasant. For the time, at all events, he was thankful to sit on an ordinary chair, or to wander about merely for the pleasure of stretching his legs.

He drank great glasses of lemon-water which were brought to him. Then Zelling turned and spoke to him:

"We are going to have a business meeting, prince," he said. "Perhaps you would prefer to go outside into the garden? I will come to you myself presently, so please keep very near the house."

"Right! I don't mind!" Jack answered, and wandered away.

When at last he came back to the old place the meeting had apparently broken up, for at first Jack could see no one in the room. Then he caught sight of Zelling standing in one corner with the governor.

They appeared to be arguing violently. Zelling's hands were working quickly and energetically, as they did when he was excited, and the governor was apparently waving him back, and protesting against his arguments.

Zelling's hand suddenly shot up, and in it was a revolver. He had the governor covered, and just for a moment the two stood as though they were figures in waxwork; the one man had his hands raised in protest, and they stayed there stiffly.

And in that instant Jack had made up his mind. Quite joyfully he had jumped through the open window, and was running softly towards Zelling, whose back was turned to him.

Before Zelling had heard the warning of his footsteps Jack had darted forward, and with a swift upward blow, directed at Zelling's wrist, had sent the revolver flying harmlessly in the air.

It fell to the floor with a crash, and not until then did the trigger act.

"You fool!" the baron was beside himself with rage. "Do you know what they mean to do—?"

Another interruption came, and everyone who now stood in the room turned to the door as it was flung violently open, and the man who sat next to Jack in the car burst in.

He took no heed of the strange conditions he found in the governor's private room, but gasped out his message.

"The British! The British force is here! Men are coming now!"

(Look out for next Monday's instalment of this exciting yarn. Order your "MAGNET" early!)

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS:

"THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d., COMPLETE LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 1d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR!"

By Frank Richards.

The title of next Monday's magnificent, long, complete story of the chums of Greyfriars explains itself. The star footballers of the Remove Form, under the captaincy of Harry Wharton, and in charge of George Wingate, enter upon a tour of the southern counties, in order to play a series of matches in aid of the Soldiers' Christmas Comforts Fund. The eleven, of course, does not have matters all its own way, owing to a particularly daring conspiracy on Skinner's part; but the efforts of the cad of the Remove to ruin the tour are nullified by no less a person than Billy Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. visit many places of interest, and play many extraordinary teams, and

"THE REMOVE ELEVEN ON TOUR"

comes through a series of thrilling contests with flying colours.

L.C.C. BOYS PLEASE NOTE!

Those boys who attend the London County Council schools will be particularly interested in next week's story, for it describes in vivid fashion a great match played in London between Greyfriars and a representative team of L.C.C. lads. Other matches are played against junior county elevens—such as Hampshire, Surrey, Middlesex, Kent, Sussex, and Essex; to say nothing of thrilling tussles against St. Jim's, Ben Adams' Boxing Booth, and a military team known as the Bantams. Altogether, I anticipate great things from next week's issue, which will worthily uphold the high traditions of the good old "Magnet" Library.

THE DAWNING OF THE DAY!

Magnetites, Do Your Duty!

Great was the excitement when it became known that "The Greyfriars Herald" would be published in the course of a few months. Those few months have now shortened into weeks—or, rather, days—and in a very short time the eagerly-awaited "Number One," fresh from the printing-machines, will adorn every bookstall and every newsagent's counter in the British Isles.

WANTED—ENTHUSIASM!

My chums must bear the following grave and important fact in mind: *That unless the circulation of "The Greyfriars Herald" is made to equal that of the "Magnet" Library, the paper will fail, and the bottom will be knocked out of the whole scheme.*

This doesn't sound at all nice, does it? How disappointing if, after a few magnificent numbers have appeared, "The Greyfriars Herald" shuts up shop with a snap! The outlook is too awful to contemplate. We *must* have enthusiasm, and plenty of it. Every boy and every girl must be prepared to do their bit; not merely by expending a halfpenny to secure their own copy, but by talking about the "Herald" to all their friends and acquaintances, and inducing the latter to purchase Harry Wharton's fine weekly.

HAMPERS OF TUCK!

Magnificent hampers, packed with all sorts and conditions of good things, are given away as prizes in connection with Number One. A most attractive competition will appear, which all can enter. And as for the other features—well, look out for Monday, November 15th, which, owing to the roars of laughter which "The Greyfriars Herald" will evoke, will be one of the merriest days of your life!

LIGHT AT LAST! The Great Secret Out!

The key to the amazing mystery of which mention has been made on this page for several weeks is contained in the following amusing poem, sent in by that youthful and vigorous composer of verse, Jimmy R., of Repton. Here is Jimmy's effusion:

Now then, Mr. Editor,
What's it all about—
This "amazing secret"?
Can't you let it out?
Is our friend Frank Richards
Planning a surprise?
Has he, by good fortune,
Caught some German spies?

All the chaps in Repton
With suspense are wild,
And at your long silence
Not a little riled.
Tell us, as you love me,
What is under way;
Is a Double Number
Coming soon, I pray?

Are you putting Wharton
In "The Penny Pop"?
Is your circulation
Greatly on the hop?
Is another paper
Coming out each week
To entrance your readers?
Speak, you image—speak!

There's a clue which always
Hammers at my brain;
'Tis that genial Franky
Is at work again
On another story
Which shall make us roar,
Like the threepenny book yarn
Which he wrote before.

Have I hit the secret
In this verse of mine?
If the last clue fits it,
Then it's jolly fine.
Threepenny books of Greyfriars
Are the best by far;
Speak, and reassure then,
Your chum, Jimmy R.

My poetical friend has hit the nail on the head. With our famous author's permission, I am now enabled to state that the coming treat takes the form of another threepenny book story, which will rival "The Boy Without a Name" as being a yarn par excellence.

Full details as to what the story will be about, date of publication, etc., will appear on this page next Monday. Tell all your chums to look out for the momentous announcement.

TWO CLEVER WAKEFIELD CHUMS.

At the time of going to press, I have received a letter from Frank Beaumont and J. Watson, of Wakefield, who have also fathomed the great secret. Congratulations!

See next page for acknowledgments of Readers' Letters.

MORE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FROM MY HEAVY POST-BAG.

I have to acknowledge a host of letters and suggestions from loyal readers as under:

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 "A Priory Lad."
 "A Loyal Reader."
 "A Reader" (Stepney).
 "A Bournemouth Girl Charm."
 "A Youthful Cyclist."
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 "A Loyal Girl Magazine" (Edinburgh).
 "A Bedfordshire Charm."
 "A New Reader, No. 9."
 "An Adorer of Bob Cherry" (Bermundsey).
 "A Loyal Remba" (Barrow-in-Furness).
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 "A Glasgow School Girl."
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 C. J. H. (Newport).

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 Duff, L. (Dublin).
 D. A. Y. (Ludgershall).
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Enson, B. (Higheliff).
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 E. M. (St. John's Wood).
 Ellard, Frank R. (Oban).

Ford, A. (Higheliff).
 F. M. L. C. M. (Lancaster Gate).
 French, F. G. (Poplar).
 Frearn, William T. (Swindon).
 F. M. P.

Gunner, George (Dublin).
 Goldston, W. (Birmingham).
 G. T. R. (Clifton).
 Goddard, Robert (Tarka-val, S.A.).
 Goldring, I. (Belfast).
 Gladys W. (Blackburn).
 Gosling, C. (Sheffield).
 "Glaswegian."
 Gertsli, Solly (Shadwell).

Hunt, Edward (Lower Edmonton).
 H. L. (Bradford).
 Hutchison, Mary (Morden).

H. B. (Edinburgh).
 Henwood, F. G. C. (London).
 "Hopeful" (Oxon).
 H. M. (Huddersfield).
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 H. P. (Leamington).

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(Many more
 replies to
 readers will be
 published next
 Monday.)

Your Editor

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