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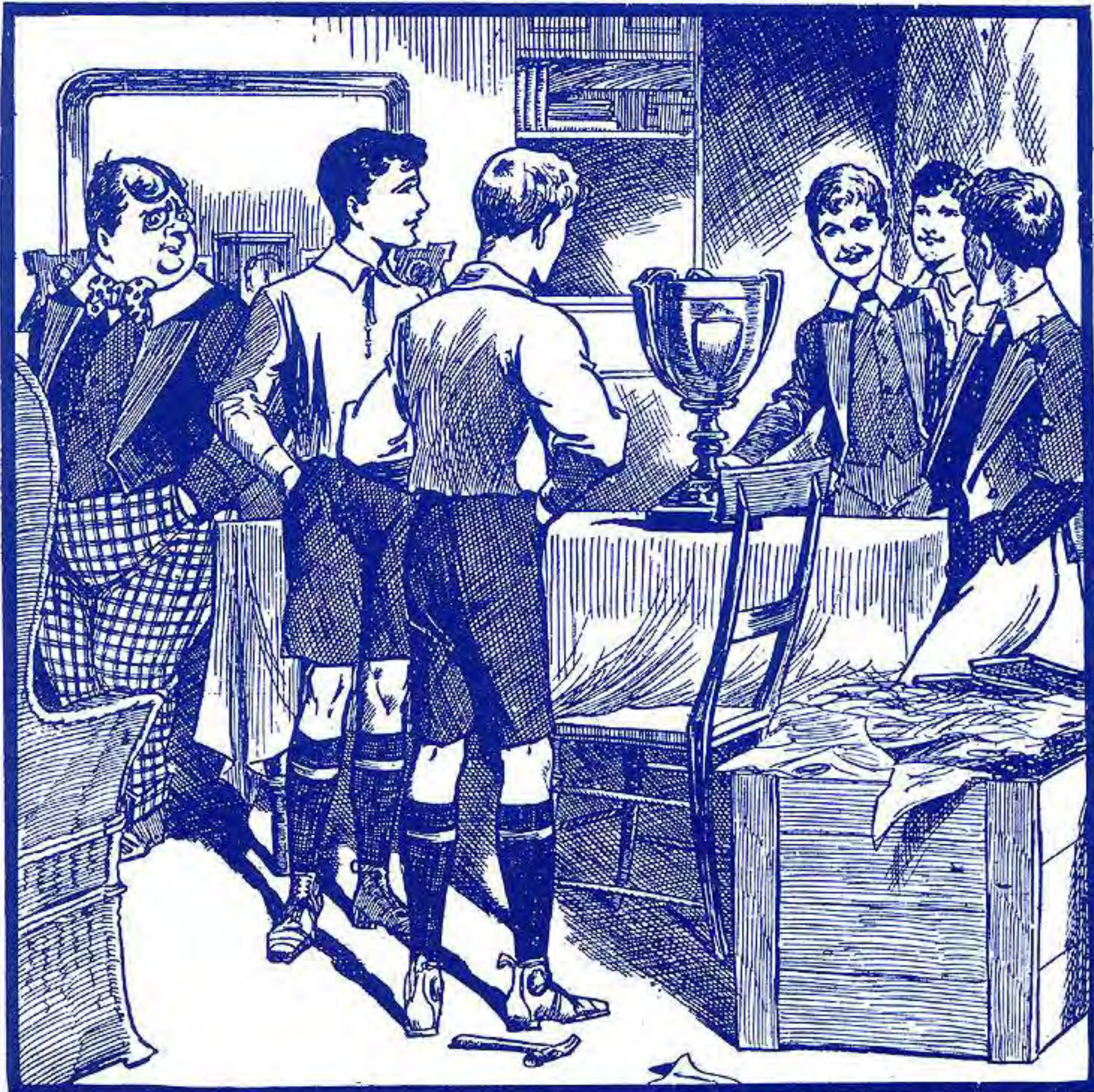
The GREYFRIARS 1²
HERALD.
No. 10.
Edited by Harry Wharfen & Co of Study 1. Greyfriars School.

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No 415. Vol. 9. January 22nd, 1910.



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THE COLONEL'S CUP!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Groogh!" panted Bunter, his fat legs going like machinery, and the perspiration pouring down his face. "Gerrrooop! Stop, you beasts! Take me in! There's room for me! I—I—groogh! Stop! Yow!" "Put your beef into it, Bunty! You've got plenty!" (See Chapter 8.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Great News!

TELEGRAM for Wharton!
 Harry Wharton, the captain of the Greyfriars Remove, was on the footer field. The Remove footballers were at practice. Billy Bunter came trotting down to Little Side, as fast as his

fat legs would carry him. He had a buff-coloured envelope in his fat fingers.

"I say, you fellows," shouted Bunter, "telegram for Wharton!"

Wharton was leading an attack upon goal, where Hazeldene was defending. He had no ears or eyes for Billy Bunter at that moment.

Bunter blinked at the players through his big spectacles, and trotted on to the field. For some reason best known to himself, Bunter was anxious to get that telegram into the hands of the captain of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Pass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Look out in goal!"

"This way, Nugent!"

"I say, Wharton," roared Bunter, "there's a telegram——"

Whizzzz!

Hazeldene, in goal, kicked fair and square as the leather came in, and cleared it out like a stone from a catapult. Harry Wharton & Co. were not placed to stop it, but it was stopped. It was Billy Bunter who stopped it—with his fat chin.

Smash!

Billy Bunter went over backwards like a clown in a circus. He sat on the damp ground and roared:

"Yaroooh! Help! Oh! Ow!"

There was a rush of the footballers after the ball, and they passed over Bunter like a tide. Billy Bunter disappeared from view for a few moments. Wharton captured the ball, and whirled it goalward again. This time it went on, beating Hazeldene to the wide.

"Goal!" chirruped Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh! Help! I'm killed—I mean, nearly killed!" roared Bunter.

The fat junior sat up and bellowed. He was covered with mud; the footer ground was not in a fit state for rolling upon. The telegram was still gripped in his podgy fingers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "I thought I trod on something soft. Was it your head, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow, yow, yow!"

"What the dickens did you get on the field for, you duffer?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, grasping the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder and jerking him to his feet.

"Yow-wow-wow!"

"Hurt, Tabby?" asked Peter Todd.

"Don't I look hurt?" roared Bunter indignantly. "My ribs are fractured, and you've broken the spinal column of my ankle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you shouldn't get in the way, fatty!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"If that's all the thanks I get, Wharton, for bringing you a telegram——"

"Telegram for me? Hand it over!" said Harry at once.

"Thanks, Bunt. But you needn't have brought it on the field."

"I thought it was very likely important," grunted Bunter. "People telegraph money sometimes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if that's a money telegram, Wharton——"

"Hand it over, fathead."

"My postal order hasn't arrived, so if that's a money telegram——"

Harry Wharton jerked the envelope from the fat fingers of the Owl of the Remove.

"Hold on a bit while I read this, you chaps. I shouldn't wonder if it's from my uncle; he was going to get his leave soon."

"Pile in," said Bob Cherry.

"If the esteemed avuncular relative is leavefully at home, I trustfully hope he will come to Greyfriars," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We will kill the fatheaded calf for him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Are you ready to die, Bunter? Inky's going to kill the fatheaded calf!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Hurrah!" shouted Wharton. He had torn open the telegram, and his eyes danced as he read the message. "Hurrah!"

"Good news?" asked Squiff.

"First-rate!"

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. Good news, to Bunter, meant a remittance. He could not see anything else to get excited about.

"How much?" he exclaimed.

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"How much what, fathead? This is from my uncle," said Wharton.

"Well, how much has he sent you?"

"Nothing."

"Isn't it a telegraphic remittance?" demanded Bunter.

"Ha, ha! No!"

"You said it was good news."

"So it is," grinned Wharton. "The very best."

Billy Bunter snorted. He had been rolled over, and trodden upon, and muddled, and there was no remittance in the telegram after all. Billy Bunter regretted that he had taken so much trouble to place it in Wharton's hands. Certainly, it had not been worth while.

"This is ripping, you fellows," went on Wharton. "My uncle's on leave from the Front, and he's coming here."

"Hurrah!"

"And Bob's father is with him; they're coming together."

"Hip-pip!" roared Bob, giving Bunter a tremendous slap on the back. "Many thanks for bringing the telegram, fatty."

"Yaroooh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter now?"

"Yurrrg! You've jolly nearly bub-bub-broken my b-b-backbone, you thundering ass. Yow-wow-wow!" wailed Bunter. "You've knocked by b-b-backbone into my chest. Wow-wow-wow!"

"Never mind. Let's give you a drive on the chest and knock it back again," said Bob, drawing back his right arm with a businesslike air.

Billy Bunter fled. Apparently he preferred his backbone to remain where it was.

"Listen to this," said Wharton.

And he read out the telegram:

"Dear Harry,—Major Cherry and I have our leave at last, and we find that we can run down to Greyfriars for a couple of hours this afternoon. What about tea in the study?—UNCLE JAMES."

"What do you think of that?" said Wharton gleefully.

"I think Colonel Wharton must have forgotten that every word costs a halfpenny," said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't it ripping?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Fancy seeing the old pater again, and I thought he was still out there killing Huns. Tea in the study—rather. The fat of the land, my sons!"

"What about the practice?" asked Tom Brown.

"Blow the practice!"

"You fellows keep on," said Harry Wharton. "We've got to get ready for the giddy visitors. They may be here any minute. Come on, you chaps!"

And the Famous Five hurried off the footer ground, and hastened to change. Colonel Wharton and Major Cherry were coming, and those two bronzed old soldiers were gentlemen whom the chums of the Remove delighted to honour. Even footer was of no account at that moment to the Famous Five of the Remove.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

"HOW'S the money market?"

Harry Wharton asked that question, rather seriously, as the Famous Five gathered in No. 1 Study.

There were dubious looks on all sides.

As a matter of fact, money was tight, as a City man would express it. Funds in No. 1 Study rose and fell with as many fluctuations as in the stock market. A few days before, No. 1 Study had been a land flowing with milk and honey. Just now, short commons was the rule.

Wharton had known that his uncle was expecting his leave from the Front, but the date of it was uncertain. It had come suddenly, as is usually the case, and when it came, it was short. The Colonel and his comrade-in-arms had a couple of hours to spare for a visit to Greyfriars, and short notice of their visit had been inevitable. And it found No. 1 Study like Egypt in one of the lean years.

Harry Wharton went through his pockets. He produced the inadequate sum of fourpence. Johnny Bull laid



Smash! Billy Bunter went over like a clown in a circus. He sat on the damp ground and roared. "Yaroooh! Help! Oh! Ow!" (See Chapter 1.)

a sixpence on the table. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added three pennies and a halfpenny. Nugent extracted a threepenny-piece from his waistcoat pocket. Bob Cherry turned all his pockets inside out. He revealed a pocket-knife, a chunk of toffee stuck to a fragment of sealing-wax, a broken pen-nib, a whistle, and a box of matches. It was a varied and interesting collection, but there was no cash among it.

"My only hat!" said Wharton, with a whistle of dismay. "Is that the lot?"

"The lotfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh sorrowfully. "To-morrowfully I shall have a renewed supply of filthy lucre."

"We want it to-dayfully!" grinned Bob.

"Dash it all, this won't do. We've got to have something decent for giddy distinguished visitors," said Harry. "My uncle likes tea in the study—he always enjoys it. We've got to do the honours somehow."

"It's a question of raising the wind—and quick!" said Nugent.

"Begfully, borrowfully, or stealfully," suggested Hurree Singh.

"Smithy and Mauleverer have a lot of tin——" began Johnny Bull.

"They've gone out together for the afternoon."

"Oh, what rotten luck!"

"Might make a raise among the other chaps," said

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MONDAY—**"FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"**

Bob thoughtfully. "But we don't want a few miserable bobs; we want a quid at least. We've got to entertain our visitors in style."

"And there's no time to lose," said Wharton anxiously. "The four train is in at Friardale, and they wouldn't be likely to come by a later one."

"Then they may be here any minute?"

"Exactly."

"Dash it all, they mustn't find us worrying over raising the wind for tea," said Nugent, wrinkling his brows.

"I say, you fellows——"

There was a roar from the worried juniors as Bunter's fat face appeared in the doorway. They had no time for Bunter just then.

"Buzz off, fatty!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Clear out!"

"Look here, if Colonel Wharton's coming, I should think you'd have a feed in the study," said Bunter firmly. "I've looked in to say that I'll do the cooking for you if you like. I've had a pressing offer from Temple—he's standing a feed in the Fourth—but I prefer to stick to my old pals."

"There isn't any feed," roared Wharton. "We're all stony."

"So you'd better accept Temple's pressing offer," said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

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"I'd be very pleased to lend you the money——"
 "What!"
 "How much do you want?"
 "A quid!"
 "Well, I'd be very glad——"
 "Come to my arms!" said Bob Cherry affectionately.
 "Hand it over, then."
 "Do let me finish. I'd be very pleased to lend you a quid——"

"Well, buck up!"
 "Only my postal-order hasn't arrived!"
 "Eh?"
 "So I'm stony too!"
 "You—you fat idiot!" gasped Wharton. "Kick him out, somebody. We haven't a minute to waste now. Jump on him!"

Billy Bunter dodged round the study table.
 "I say, you fellows, I've got an idea! Keep off, Bob Cherry, you beast. I can tell you where to raise a stunning feed."

"Where, you fathead?"
 "In Temple's study." Bunter's eyes glistened through his big glasses. "Temple's rolling in tin to-day, and he's standing a feed in the Fourth. They've got the stuff in their study now. I've seen it. The beasts kicked me out, though I offered to do the cooking for them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I offered to stand my whack in the feed when—when my postal-order comes, and Temple slung me out of his study. Look here, Temple raided your study the other day. Why shouldn't you raid his? I'll help—I mean, I'll come and give directions!"

"By Jove," said Harry Wharton, "that's an idea, anyway. Sure Temple's got the tuck, Bunt?"

"Piles of it," said Bunter impressively. "Cakes and jam—three kinds of jam—a dozen new-laid eggs, no end of ham and tongue, pots of preserves, candied fruits, and a Christmas pudding and a lot of mince pies."

"Great Scott!"
 "Corn in Egypt!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.
 Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Any of you chaps know any other way of getting hold of a feed?" he asked.

There was a general shaking of heads. Money was tight. Supplies had run out, without a prospect of renewal until the next allowances were due.

"Then it's the only way!" said Wharton. "We're really entitled to that feed. You see, in war time, mere civilians have to give way to the military in everything. As our guests are soldiers on leave, we represent the military!"

"Hear, hear!"
 "And it would be sheer rot to let a civilian keep anything that a soldier wanted."

"Hear, hear!"
 "Temple & Co. are civilians?"
 "They are—they is!"

"In war time, civilian supplies can be commandeered for the Army. Bunter, get the fire going and the table laid. We're going for supplies."

"Bravo!"

Billy Bunter chuckled, and started his preparations. Bunter was a first-class cook, but he was not much use in a raid. And—thoroughly justified as it undoubtedly was to commandeer civilian supplies for the Army—it was highly probable that the Fourth-Formers would raise emphatic objections. But Harry Wharton & Co. were great fighting-men, and they were prepared to meet Temple & Co.'s objections efficiently.

"Hallo!" called out Squiff from the stairs as the five juniors came out of No. 1 Study. "Your visitors have just come in, you chaps!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Go and meet 'em, Squiff!" said Wharton hurriedly. "Keep 'em talking for about five minutes, if you can, and then take 'em to the study. We haven't got the supplies in yet. We don't want them to hear a row."

"A row—getting in supplies?" asked Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, puzzled.

"Yes. We're getting Temple's feed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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Squiff hurried away chuckling, to keep Colonel Wharton and Major Cherry "off the grass" while the supplies were commandeered. From the passage window, the juniors caught a glimpse of the two old soldiers in the quadrangle—two bronzed, stalwart men in khaki.

"There's my pater," said Bob, "and there's nunky, Harry. Come on; we haven't a minute to lose."

And, with a rush, the Famous Five hurried to Temple's study in the Fourth-Form passage.

— — —

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Military Necessity!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE was at home.

Dabney and Fry were in the study with him.

The chums of the Fourth were looking particularly cheery. Cecil Reginald always had plenty of money, and he was accustomed to giving pleasant little feeds in his study. On the present occasion Cecil Reginald had received a hamper from home, and he was celebrating its arrival in proper style. Invitations had been sent out to a dozen fellows for tea at half-past five. It was nearly five now, and Temple, Dabney & Co. were making their little preparations.

Temple, who was unpacking a Christmas pudding, looked up as there was a sound of many footsteps in the passage.

"Can't be the fellows yet," said Fry. "We're not nearly ready. Besides, we said half-past five."

"Oh, rather!" remarked Dabney.

Tap! The door opened and five juniors presented themselves. But they were not among the list of Fourth-Form guests. They were the Famous Five of the Remove. Cecil Reginald Temple stared at them.

"Hallo! What do you fags want?" he asked.

"Shut the door, Bob."

"Right-ho!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. drew together as Bob Cherry closed the door and put his back to it. It looked like trouble. Rows and rags between the Remove and the Fourth were not infrequent.

"None of your larks, you know," said Temple warmly. "We're expecting visitors!"

"So are we!" said Wharton. "The fact is, Temple, we've come to ask a favour—ahem! We've got distinguished visitors coming, and we've got to stand them something rather decent for tea, and we're all broke to the wide."

"Sorry!" said Temple politely. "I should recommend you not to eat so much toffee when you're in funds, and not to waste your money on sugar-sticks."

"Sugar-sticks!" roared Bob Cherry wrathfully.

"Shush!" said Wharton. "Look here, Temple, we want a feed for our guests. We want you to hand that feed over to us as a favour. We'll pay for it on Saturday."

Cecil Reginald Temple looked at Wharton as if he could scarcely believe his ears. Perhaps it sounded rather a cool request, considering that Temple was expecting a choice party to tea.

"Well, of all the thumpin' cheek!" ejaculated Temple, finding his voice at last. "Our feed—hand over—my hat! You cheeky fag!"

"Will you hand it over?"

"No, I won't!" roared Temple indignantly. "I'll hand you a thick ear if I have any more of your Lower Fourth cheek. That's all I'll hand you."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I'm afraid there's no time for talk," said Wharton. "We've simply got to have that feed. It's a case of military necessity, as the Hun Chancellor said. You see, it's war-time, and civilians don't count. Now, Temple, old man, our visitors are my uncle——"

"Bless your uncle!"

"And Bob's pater."

"Blow his pater!"

"They've been out in Flanders killing Huns."

"Let 'em go and kill some more!"

"'Nuff said! Are you handing over that feed?"

"No!" bellowed Temple.

"Then I hereby declare those goods commandeered for

the use of the Army. Any civilian who objects will get a thick ear, within the meaning of the Act!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile in!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Back up!" shrieked Temple.

There was a rush. The three Fourth-Formers backed up valiantly, but the rush of the Famous Five swept them off their feet. They went down with three separate and very painful bumps on the floor.

"Rescue, Fourth!" bawled Temple. "Groooooogh!"

His last remark was caused by a cushion being jammed over his mouth. Dabney and Fry had their mouths open to yell, but Bob Cherry rapidly grabbed tarts from the table and jammed them in. Dabney and Fry did not yell; they gurgled wildly. They had intended to eat the tarts, but not whole.

"Sit on 'em!" said Wharton briskly. "Sorry, Temple, but war-time, you know—military necessity. Can't let khaki go short for the sake of measly civilians. Sit on his head if he won't keep quiet!"

"Gurrrrrgggh!"

"There's a bag in the corner, Frank. May we borrow that bag, Temple?"

"Gurrrrrgggh!"

"I suppose that means yes. Pack the tommy in, Frank!"

"What-ho!" grinned Nugent.

Temple and Dabney and Fry watched Frank Nugent packing the "tommy" into the big bag, with looks and feelings that were positively Hunnish. But they could not raise objections. Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh and Bob Cherry were sitting on them heavily.

"Now, are you going to submit to martial law quietly?" asked Wharton. "Give us your word not to make a fuss, and we'll let you up—and we'll leave you one of your own cakes. There!"

This generous offer did not appease Temple. He glared and gurgled.

"Nod your head if you mean yes."

Temple did not nod his head. He struggled to get the cushion off his mouth, so that he could make remarks.

"Well, we can't have you interrupting the feed," said Wharton. "It's your own fault. You'll have to be bound and gagged, like the chaps in the newspaper serials."

The captain of the Remove looked quickly round the study. There was no cord to be seen, but the tablecloth supplied the deficiency. The cloth was quickly torn into strips—it was no time for half measures—and Wharton proceeded to bind the three juniors hand and foot. Temple & Co. were powerless to resist.

Then Wharton extracted their handkerchiefs from their pockets and jammed them into their mouths, tying them securely in place with more strips of the unfortunate tablecloth.

Only faint mumbles proceeded from Temple & Co. now, but their looks were as expressive as words could have been. No Hun could have looked more ferocious than Temple & Co. at that moment.

"That's done!" said Wharton cheerfully. "Now we must love you and leave you, dear boys. If you're uncomfy, remember it's your own fault for resisting the military in the execution of their duty. I hope this will be a warning to you. Turn out the light. Good-bye, Temple!"

"Groooh!"

The Famous Five quitted the study, grinning. Wharton changed the key to the outside of the lock and locked the door, taking the key away with him. It did not seem probable now that Temple & Co. would be able to interrupt the entertainment in No. 1 Study.

The grinning juniors hurried back to the Remove passage, Nugent and Bob Cherry carrying the bag of plunder between them. It was heavy. Squiff met them in the passage.

"They're here. All serene?"

"Right as rain, old chap."

And the Co. marched into No. 1 Study, where two bronzed men in khaki were waiting for them.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tea in No. 1 Study!

COLONEL WHARTON and Major Cherry greeted the juniors affectionately. The kind old colonel was looking the same as ever, but across the major's bronzed cheek there was a dark scar, upon which the schoolboys' eyes involuntarily rested. A German bullet had gone very close there.

"You've been wounded, dad?" muttered Bob Cherry, all the cheerfulness fading out of his face for a moment. The major smiled.

"Only a scratch. Bob—just a pleasant little souvenir of the Huns! Fit as a fiddle, my boy, and hungry as a hunter."

"And ready for tea in the study!" chimed in the colonel.

"You fellows bagged the prog?" asked Billy Bunter anxiously. "My hat, that's ripping! Did Temple——"

"Shush!" murmured Wharton.

"But how did Temple——"

"Get on with the cooking, Tubby!"

"But did Temple cut up—— Yow-ow-ow! Who's tramping on my foot?" wailed Bunter in tones of anguish.

"We won't be two jiffies getting tea," said Wharton, glaring at Bunter with one eye and smiling at the guests with the other—a difficult performance, which gave his face quite an extraordinary expression for a moment. "Sit down, uncle, and you, major. Here you are."

Squiff had thoughtfully trundled an extra armchair into the study. The colonel and the major sat down in state.

They watched with kindly smile the busy preparations for their entertainment.

It might be doubted whether the two old soldiers really possessed keen appetites for cakes, jam tarts, and jellies, but outwardly, at least, they were very enthusiastic on the subject of tea in the study. It delighted the juniors to be hospitable to their relatives in khaki, and the colonel and the major were only too willing to afford them that delight.

Both of them were old Greyfriars boys; and, indeed, many years before—more years than he liked to remember—Colonel Wharton had been a junior school-boy in that very study. His initials—"J. W."—were still to be seen, carved on the old oak door, and Harry Wharton had found them there once, with great delight. Much water had flowed under the bridges since those old days when the grim, bronzed old colonel had been "Jim Wharton," of the Lower Fourth.

But the colonel had not forgotten, and he was still at heart almost as boyish as in those old days.

Billy Bunter turned out ham and eggs in great style.

A fragrant scent of excellent cooking pervaded the study, and spread into the passage. The guests drew their chairs to the table, and the juniors waited on them with great assiduity.

The feed was a pronounced success.

There was only one lingering anxiety in the minds of the entertainers, and that was a fear that Temple & Co. might get loose before the guests departed to catch their train.

A sudden interruption by Temple & Co., on the track of vengeance, would have spoiled the harmony of the proceedings. Neither did the juniors wish the honoured guests to learn whence that ripping feed had been derived. It was possible that they would not have approved of the "military necessity" which had compelled the Co. to commandeer civilian supplies for the Army.

"By gad, this is like old times," said the colonel, looking round him with beaming eyes. "It's close on forty years since I stood my last feed in this study."

"Was it a ripping feed, sir?" asked Billy Bunter with great interest. "Did Mrs. Mimble keep the tuckshop then?"

The colonel laughed.

"Mrs. Mimble was probably a baby then, Bunter. The tuckshop was kept by an old soldier who had been through the Crimea. He used to tell us stories of the trenches before Sebastopol and the scrap at Balaclava. I used to listen to them with my mouth and ears wide open, little thinking then that I should ever see trenches

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ANSWERS

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NEXT
MONDAY— "FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"

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Harry Wharton & Co. Order the "Magnet" in advance.

on a scale a hundred times larger, and 'scraps' every week to which Balaklava was a joke."

"Did he sell good tarts?"

"Not so good as these," said the colonel, laughing. "By gad, though, I remember that feed as if it were yesterday! There were three of us who got our remove into the Fourth at the same time, and we stood a farewell feed in the study. And a cheeky little beggar in the Third Form raided us with a gang of fags."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Major Cherry. "And licked you, too!"

"We weren't licked!" said the colonel warmly. "There were five or six of the Third, and only three of us; but we turned them out——"

"They wrecked the study," said the major.

"They did!" admitted the colonel. "But I had the leader's head in chancery, and he had a nose afterwards that ought to have taken a prize—didn't he, major?"

"He did," assented the major. "But what about your eye?"

The colonel rubbed his eye reminiscently.

"I hope you gave the cheeky little beggar a jolly good pasting!" said Bob Cherry, in great delight.

"I think I did," grinned the colonel. "Didn't I, major?"

"Well, I think you did," said the major.

"Were you there, dad?" asked Bob.

"Yes, rather! I was the cheeky little beggar in the Third!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't think Greyfriars has changed much, after all," the colonel remarked. "Of course, you young fellows are a little more orderly than we were in those rough old days. You don't raid one another's studies in that lawless way, I hope?"

"Ahem!"

Remembering the way that very feed had been commandeered from Temple & Co., the heroes of the Remove looked a little sheepish.

The colonel looked at them with twinkling eyes.

"I'm sure it was quite by accident, Harry, that you got that little bruise on your cheek—what? An accident at footer, I suppose?"

Wharton rubbed his cheek.

"Ahem! Not exactly!"

"And where did you pick up a swollen nose, Bob?" asked the major. "Accident with the punch-ball—what?"

Bob Cherry coloured.

"Nunno! Not exactly! I—I knocked my nose against something hard!"

"Well, I'm glad you are a little more law-abiding than we used to be," said the colonel. "Other times, other manners, you know. After all, you are here to study, and——"

Colonel Wharton paused, as there was a sudden rush of footsteps in the Remove passage outside.

The juniors started to their feet.

The study door was hurled open.

"Here they are!" roared Temple of the Fourth. "Go for 'em!"

"Oh, rather! Pile in!" yelled Dabney.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Temple & Co. had evidently been released at last. They had arrived, with a crowd of the Fourth after them. Temple and Dabney and Fry, Scott and Murphy and Lloyd crowded in the doorway, with a horde of Fourth-Formers behind them, whooping.

The colonel rose to his feet in astonishment.

"What the dickens does this mean?" he exclaimed.

"Looks as if times haven't changed so much, after all!" murmured the major.

The rush of the Fourth-Formers suddenly stopped, as they saw the two bronzed officers in khaki. It was only just in time. The next moment the honoured guests would have witnessed a terrific battle under their honoured noses.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Temple.

"Ahem!" stammered Dabney.

"We—we didn't know you were here, sir!" said Temple. "We—we just looked in to—to see Wharton——"

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"A little friendly talk!" stammered Fry.

"We—we'll clear off, sir!"

"Sorry to have interrupted, colonel!"

"Go for 'em!" bawled a voice from the passage. "What are you stopping for? Haven't they got our feed there?"

"Shush!"

"Rot! They've bagged our feed, and we're going to scalp 'em!"

The colonel's face was a study. Major Cherry was chuckling. Wharton turned a crimson face to his guests.

"You—you see, uncle——" he stammered. "You see, major——"

"I see!" chuckled the major.

"I don't quite see!" said Colonel Wharton. "What is the matter, Master Temple—I think your name is Temple?"

"Yes, sir," said Cecil Reginald politely. "We just looked in, sir, that's all! We've got a little matter to talk over with Wharton, but it can easily wait. No hurry at all, sir! Pray go on with your tea! Get out, you chaps!"

"Oh, my hat!" came the voice from the passage. "We've put our foot in it now!"

"Shut up! Clear off!"

"Excuse us, sir! Didn't mean to interrupt!"

And Temple of the Fourth drove his followers forth, and followed them, and the door closed. The colonel looked at the juniors, and their faces were crimson. There was a pause.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise in Store!

"WELL?" said Colonel Wharton at last.

"Ahem!"

"It seems that I complimented you a little too soon on the law-abiding modern manners and customs of Greyfriars!"

"Ahem!"

"Oh, those Fourth-Form chaps haven't any manners to speak of, sir!" said Bob Cherry disparagingly.

"I knew Temple would cut up rusty about bagging his feed!" remarked Billy Bunter. "But it's all right. We've had the feed."

"Shurrup!"

"Yow-ow! Stop treading on my foot, Johnny Bull, you fathead!"

"It seems that you have been raiding those young gentlemen!" the colonel remarked.

"Well, in a way!" admitted Wharton cautiously.

"Not exactly a raid," said Nugent; "a—a—a sort of—of—of—ahem!"

"The fact is," said Wharton, feeling that it was better to be candid, "we—we were rather stony——"

"The stoniffulness was terrific, honoured sahib!"

"Not a shot in the locker!" said Bob.

"And—and as it is war-time," proceeded Wharton, "we felt justified in commandeering civilian supplies——"

"Eh?"

"For the use of the military."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Major Cherry.

The colonel's face relaxed. He smiled at first, and the smile became a grin, and at last developed into a laugh.

"You young rascals!" he said. "We took you by surprise—eh?"

"Yes, sir. And as it is—ahem!—war-time——"

"You would not have raided Master Temple in peacetime, of course?"

The juniors looked at one another.

"Ahem!"

"Yes, exactly—a-a-ahem!"

The colonel sat down, laughing.

"Master Temple seems to have taken it in very good part," he remarked.

"Oh, he's a sportsman, sir!" said Bob. "Rather an ass, you know, and he can't play footer for toffee; but a really good sort! Of course he goes for us just the same, only he isn't quite up to our weight!"

"I see that Greyfriars manners and customs have not

changed much in forty years," said Colonel Wharton, with a smile. "I will have another cup of tea, please!"

"Right-ho!"

And, greatly relieved by the way the honoured guests had taken that unexpected development, the juniors waited upon them with great assiduity, and tea finished very cheerily in No. 1 Study.

Colonel Wharton looked at his watch.

"Time we were moving!" he remarked. "We have to catch the six-fifteen back to town. But there is something we have to say to you young fellows—eh, major?"

"Certainly," said the major.

The juniors looked properly attentive. They expected a sermon, and they were prepared to endure it with heroic fortitude.

"If it's about Temple, sir," said Bob meekly, "we—we're willing to let that matter drop, sir, if Temple does."

"We shall let the bygonefulness be gone by, honoured sahib."

"Never mind Temple!" said the colonel, laughing. "I do not intend to interfere in the internal politics of the lower school. You will settle those matters better by yourselves."

The juniors brightened up. Apparently it was not a sermon that was coming, after all.

"We have been planning a little surprise for you," continued the colonel. "Now, we shall not tell you what it is. It is going to come as a surprise to you when you receive it."

"Yes!" said Wharton, in wonder.

"On Wednesday afternoon," said the colonel, "you will receive it."

"It!" repeated Bob.

"Yes; in a box."

"In a box?"

"Yes. You may exercise your ingenuity in trying to guess what it is," said the colonel. "I won't spoil the surprise by telling you now. The major and I went out shopping this morning and arranged about it. The box will come along on Wednesday, addressed to you, Harry."

"Yes, uncle."

"By that time we shall be back in Flanders, I expect, hammering at the Germans. But you must write and tell us how you like it."

"Certainly!"

"I say, sir, that's ripping!" said Billy Bunter, rubbing his fat hands. "I think I can guess what it is, sir. And it's for all of us—what?"

"Certainly!" said the colonel. "Now we must be going."

"May we come to the station, sir?" asked Nugent.

"Certainly, if you like a quick walk."

"What-ho!"

"Then we will join you in the quad in a few minutes, after speaking to the Head."

The colonel and his comrade-in-arms quitted the study, leaving the juniors in a state of considerable astonishment.

"I say, you fellows, that's ripping!" said Billy Bunter gleefully. "It's a feed, of course—a hamper of tuck."

"The colonel said a box," remarked Squiff.

"Yes; but it must be tuck."

"I suppose it must be," said Wharton thoughtfully. "But my uncle said it was to be a surprise. Tuck wouldn't be a surprise."

"May be a surprising lot of it," suggested Bunter. "P'raps it's in a box because he couldn't get a hamper big enough."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And, mind, it's for all of us," said Bunter impressively. "It would really have been better if the colonel addressed it to me. I should have handed it out with strict impartiality."

"I don't think!" grinned Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to the quadrangle to wait for the colonel and the major. Billy Bunter did not accompany them. There were still some eatables left on the table, and Bunter remained to dispose of them to the last crumb.

When the two old soldiers came out, Harry Wharton & Co. walked with them to the station. Three juniors in Highcliffe caps were sauntering along the lane, and they paused to stare superciliously at the Removites. They

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EVERY
MONDAY

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ONE
PENNY.

were Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

"Highcliffe cads!" growled Bob Cherry.

"No rags, now," said Wharton quickly.

"Oh, all right!"

Ponsonby of Highcliffe jammed a monocle into his eye to add to the lofty superciliousness of his glance. In the presence of the two gentlemen in khaki he knew that the Greyfriars juniors would not proceed to punching. Gadsby curled his lip, and Vavasour laughed his vacant laugh. The Removites glared at them, and walked on.

At the station they took a warm leave of the colonel and the major, and waved their caps as the train bore the two old soldiers back to their duty.

They watched the train till it was out of sight along the line, and they quitted the station.

"We'll keep an eye open for Pon as we go back," remarked Bob Cherry. "We'll teach him to turn his silly glass eye on us!"

"We'll mop up the road with the cheeky cads!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The mopfulness will be terrific!"

If the Famous Five had fallen in with Ponsonby & Co. on their way back to Greyfriars, certainly there would have been trouble for the Highcliffians. But when they arrived at the spot where they had passed the trio, Ponsonby & Co. were not in sight. Bob Cherry halted and looked round him aggressively, but only the hedges and the fields were to be seen.

"They're gone," said Nugent. "Come on!"

"I'd have liked to punch Pon's head," said Bob regretfully.

"Never mind Pon's head," said Wharton. "I'm thinking about that surprise-package on Wednesday afternoon. I wonder what it will be?"

"Tuck, most likely."

"The tuckfulness will be—"

"Terrific!" grinned Bob. "The colonel's sending us a box of tuck, Harry; that's all it can be. Anyway, the carrier will bring it along on Wednesday, and then we shall know. Come on! Those Highcliffe cads are gone."

The chums of the Remove walked on towards Greyfriars.

When they were gone three figures crept out from behind the hedge, grinning. The Highcliffians were not gone, but they had prudently taken cover while the Greyfriars juniors passed.

"Sold again, dear boys," remarked Ponsonby.

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

Ponsonby looked very thoughtful.

"You heard what the young rotters were sayin'?" he observed.

"Nothin' to do with us," said Gadsby. "Somethin' about a hamper the old sport is sendin' them on Wednesday."

"Exactly! But it may be a lot to do with us."

"How?" asked Gadsby and Vavasour together.

"It's somethin' rather special, it appears," Ponsonby remarked, "and it's comin' along with the carrier on Wednesday afternoon."

"Well?"

"Well, what price relievin' the carrier of it, and savin' the poor old chap the trouble of carryin' it to Greyfriars?"

"Oh, by gad!"

Ponsonby chuckled.

"That would rather take a rise out of the Remove kids—what?"

"By gad, it would!" grinned Gadsby. "Fancy them waitin' for the hamper to come, and the dashed thing not comin'! We could send them a note instead, explainin' that we're scoffin' the tuck at Highcliffe!"

"And askin' them to come over for it if they dare!" chortled Vavasour.

"But the carrier—"

"Oh, we could handle him!" said Ponsonby. "Old Cripps ain't a fightin'-man. We'd tell him Wharton had sent us for it."

"But he wouldn't hand it over."

"Then we'd take it."

"I—I say, it would mean a row if Wharton complained about it, though," said Vavasour uneasily.

"Well, he isn't a sneak, at all events," said Ponsonby.

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"He wouldn't complain. If he couldn't get it back himself he'd take it quietly."

"Yaas, that's so."

"I rather fancy," grinned Ponsonby, "that the Greyfriars rotters will get a surprise instead of a surprise—packet next Wednesday—what?"

And the three Highcliffians, chuckling gleefully over their little scheme, sauntered away to Highcliffe.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Great Expectations!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were considerably exercised in their minds on the subject of the "surprise" planned by the colonel and the major. The most obvious theory was that the mysterious box would contain tuck, probably tuck in unusual quantities.

But, as Wharton had said, that would not be exactly a surprise, as all the fellows had had well-filled hamper from home more than once.

Wharton did not believe that it was a consignment of tuck, but he confessed that he could not guess what it was if it wasn't that.

But the chums of the Remove did not give the matter nearly so much thought as William George Bunter did.

Bunter was in his usual "stony" state, and Mrs. Mimble had declined for the fiftieth time to allow him credit on the strength of a postal-order which was expected shortly. To Bunter, the box from the colonel was a prospect of great joy. He had not the slightest doubt that it was a consignment of tuck. What else was there worth making a fuss about?

Tuck it was—tuck it was certain to be. There wasn't the slightest doubt on that point, according to Bunter.

And he looked forward to the arrival of the box on Wednesday as he might have looked forward to the coming of a long-lost brother.

Bunter was careful to explain to the Co. several times, in order that there should be no mistake, that the box, when it came, was as much his as theirs. The colonel had distinctly said that it was for all of them. Bunter was greatly relieved to find that his claim was not in the least disputed by the Famous Five. The colonel had undoubtedly said so.

Having made up his mind that it was a gigantic supply of tuck that was to arrive on Wednesday, Billy Bunter thought of it, talked of it, and dreamed of it. There was only one drawback to the glorious prospect: Wednesday hadn't arrived yet, and it was still a prospect, and not a reality.

That was all that worried Bunter. But it was a real worry. The mere thought of that coming treat made Bunter feel famished.

Like young spendthrifts who raise ready cash by pledging their expectations, Billy Bunter was ready to promise munificent shares in his coming good fortune for a little cash in hand. The day after the great visit he dropped into No. 1 Study at tea-time with that businesslike idea in his mind.

"I haven't come to tea!" snorted Bunter, as Wharton pointed a teaspoon at the door. "I know you've only got bread-and-butter, and not much butter at that—I mean, I wouldn't ask myself to tea in any fellows' study. You ought to know me better. It's about my box."

"Your box?" asked Nugent.

"Well, our box," said Bunter. "The box of tuck the colonel is sending us on Wednesday."

"How do you know it's tuck?" asked Wharton.

"Well, isn't it?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"What else could it be? I suppose your uncle isn't sending us tracts, is he?" asked Bunter, with a sniff. "Of course it's tuck, and lots of it. Well, I'm having a share in it, according to the colonel's statement. But the trouble is that I'm short of money now."

"You don't say so!" ejaculated Nugent, in great astonishment.

"Oh, really, Nugent, don't be funny, you know. I happen to be short of money. Toddy is frightfully mean in my study—we've had hardly any tea. We had only

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four sardines among the four of us, and those greedy bounders actually took one each. Luckily, I had tea in Hall as well. But the point is——"

"Oh, you're coming to the point?" said Wharton. "Get on to it a bit quicker, and shut the door after you."

"The point is I'm still hungry. Not that I care much about eating, as you know; but I'm afraid my health may suffer. Now, suppose you fellows advance me five bob, and keep five bob's worth out of my whack in the tuck?"

"My hat!"

"That's a fair offer!" urged Bunter.

"But we don't know yet that it is tuck," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Besides, we are hard up. It's N.G."

"Didn't your uncle tip you?"

"Go and eat coke."

"I suppose he forgot," said Bunter. "You should have jogged his memory. I should have."

"I dare say you would have," agreed Wharton.

"It's rather mean——"

"Do you want a thick ear?"

"Ahem! What I mean is, I can tell you how to make a raise."

"Go ahead!" said Nugent.

"Wharton can drop a line to his uncle, mentioning that he forgot to tell him when he was here that he wanted a new footer——"

"But I don't want a new footer," said Harry.

"You can say so, I suppose," growled Bunter. "That means fifteen-and-six. Well——"

Wharton rose to his feet.

"Do you prefer to go out by the door or the window, Bunter?" he asked politely.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Open the window, Franky. We'll see him bounce in the quad." Wharton made a stride towards the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter was out of the study with a jump that would have won him a prize on Sports Day. He had no desire whatever to bounce in the quad from a height of forty feet. Wharton kicked the door shut after him, and returned to his tea.

"Beast!" growled Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove rolled along to the end study. Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior, was there. Johnny Bull and Squiff were at tea with Vernon-Smith, and as there was nothing going in his own study, Fishy had had his tea in Hall. He was an economical youth. Now he was engaged upon his accounts. Fisher T. Fish spent a good deal of time on accounts. His mind loved to dwell upon money, and it was his boast that he knew to the last red cent how much cash he had expended all the time he had been at Greyfriars. Probably it was not very much.

"I say, Fishy, you've heard about our box that's coming on Wednesday," said Billy Bunter.

"Yep."

"Would you like a whack in it?"

"Sure."

"Say five bobs' worth out of my share?"

"Just a few," said Fisher T. Fish, with a stare of astonishment. "What are you getting at, Bunter? You're not giving tuck away, I'll bet a dollar'n a half."

"I mean, you lend me four bob now, and there you are. You make a bob on it," Bunter explained. "That ought to please you, you being a Yankee."

Fisher T. Fish nodded.

"Good enough. I guess I'll hand out the bobs when——"

"When?" said Bunter eagerly.

"When I see the tuck," concluded Fisher T. Fish. "A bird in hand, my infant, is worth a hull covey in the bush."

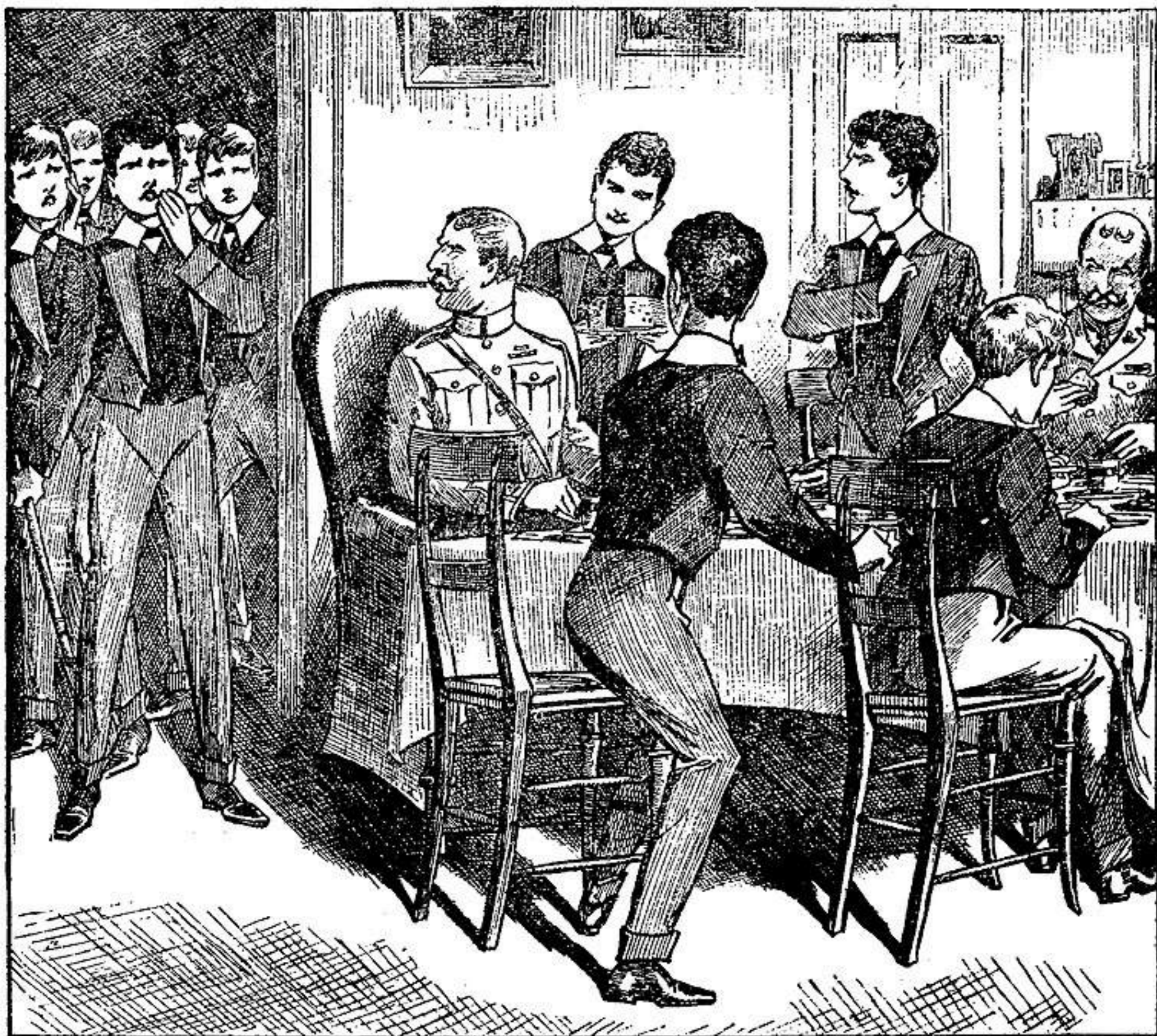
"But the colonel promised——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, Fishy, I'm hard up——"

"So should I be, I guess, if I lent you my spondulies," said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully. "But I ain't doing it. Absquatulate, do!"

Billy Bunter "absquatulated" with a snort. It



The study door was hurled open. "Here they are!" roared Temple of the Fourth. "Go for 'em!" "Oh, rather! Pile in!" yelled Dabney. (See Chapter 4.)

seemed that there was nothing to be raised on his expectations. He rolled away in a disconsolate mood. On the morrow he would be rolling in jam-tarts—metaphorically, of course—but to-day he was hungry.

"Beasts!" he murmured, as he paused on the stairs. "Rotters! To think that there's heaps of tuck coming to-morrow, and now I'm stony, and not a single beast will lend me a bob or two, though they know my postal-order's coming, too! Yarrah! Who're you thumping?"

A slap on the shoulder had interrupted Bunter's gloomy meditations. He turned round with a howl. It was Temple of the Fourth.

"You silly ass, Hobson!" roared Bunter.

"Hallo, Bunter, dear boy!"

"Oh, it's you, Temple!" The Owl blinked at the captain of the Fourth through his big glasses. "What the thunder——"

"I've been looking for you, Bunter!" said Temple affably.

"Well, now you've found me!" growled Bunter.

"I was wondering whether you'd do me the honour to come to tea in my study?" said Cecil Reginald.

Would he?

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"My dear chap," said Bunter, beaming. "I'd do anything to oblige an old pal like you. Come on!"

And he rolled away contentedly with Cecil Reginald Temple.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Cecil Reginald Is Very Deep!

"WHAT in thunder——"

"What the merry dickens——"

Those exclamations from Dabney and Fry showed that they were surprised when Cecil Reginald Temple came into his study with William George Bunter. Tea was on the table, all ready for Temple. But his study-mates were not expecting Bunter, as was very evident from their looks.

"What have you brought that oyster here for?" asked Dabney.

"Roll him out!" said Fry. "Tea's ready!"

"Bunter has honoured us by coming to tea," said Temple calmly. "Give Bunter a chair, Dab!"

"My hat!"

"Jolly glad to see you fellows!" said Bunter affably. "Bless you, I never remember Form rows; I'd be willing to feed with anybody in the Fourth."

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"I believe you!" growled Fry. "Look here, Temple

"Buck up with those muffins," said Temple, "and kindly be polite to my friend Billy. You don't mind if I call you Billy, do you, Bunter?"

"Not at all, old chap. I'll call you Cecil."

"Do!" said Temple solemnly.

Dabney and Fry almost fell down. Cecil Reginald was a fastidious youth. He was the dandy of the Fourth, and he was given to "swank." That Temple should have chummed up like this with the fat Owl of the Remove was simply amazing.

Dabney and Fry put the muffins and kidneys on the table, like fellows in a dream. They didn't even pretend to understand it.

Billy Bunter himself was astonished. As a rule, the dandy of the Fourth was as likely to ask Gosling, the porter, or Trotter, the page, to tea as Billy Bunter. It could not be merely that Bunter's fascinating manners had overcome him. Bunter was not very keen, but he guessed that Temple had an axe to grind. But he did not mind, so long as the feed was good and there was plenty of it.

"Like kidneys?" said Temple affably. "And bacon? Give Bunter a couple more rashers, Dab—Bunter's got a good appetite."

"Don't I know it?" grunted Dabney.

Temple closed one eye at his chums. Dabney and Fry understood then that he was pulling Bunter's fat leg, for reasons best known to himself. But what his motive was, was a mystery.

"This is jolly decent of you, Cecil, old chap!" said Bunter.

Temple shuddered a little. "Cecil, old chap," from Bunter, got on his nerves a little. But he bore it manfully.

"It's a pleasure to see you here, Bunter," he replied solemnly. "Another cup of tea? Don't leave Bunter's cup empty, Fry."

"Nunno!" gasped Fry. "Certainly not!"

"I hear you're on wonderful good terms with Wharton's uncle, Bunter," Temple remarked, when tea was fairly under way. "He's sending you a box—what?"

Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle. He thought he understood Temple's motives at last.

Bunter had talked of that expected box of tuck up and down the school, and, of course, it had reached the ears of the Fourth-Formers. This feed in Temple's study was a sprat to catch a whale. Temple wanted a "whack" in Bunter's box when it came.

"What are you cackling at, Fatty?" asked Fry gruffly.

"Oh, that's all right!" grinned Bunter. "One good burn deserves another. I'll stand treat when my box comes to-morrow."

"But is it really coming?" asked Temple, with interest.

"Yes, rather! Colonel Wharton's promised it."

"Rather odd for Wharton's uncle to be sending you a box of tuck?" said Temple, eyeing him.

"Well, it's really sent to the lot of us," explained Bunter. "All the fellows who were with the colonel yesterday, you know. I helped to make him feel at home. I've got rather a way of putting people at their ease, you know. The colonel rather likes me, too. My uncle, General Bunter, is one of his brother-officers."

"Oh!"

"They get on famously," said Bunter, tucking into bacon and kidneys and muffins at a great rate. "In fact, the colonel's life was saved once, at—at Neuve Chapelle, by my uncle the major."

"Not your uncle the field-marshal?" asked Fry sarcastically.

"I'll have some more of those kidneys," said Bunter, unheeding. "If you fellows don't want any more, I'll finish the lot. I hope you'll all come to my spread to-morrow."

Dabney and Fry looked at the dish of kidneys, as it was emptied upon Bunter's plate, with a sort of hypnotised stare. Bunter did not seem to notice it.

"So the colonel is sending a box of tuck to the whole party—is that it?" asked Temple. "Wharton and all the rest?"

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"That's it. It's going to be addressed to Wharton, but it's for all of us."

"Oh, it's to be addressed to Wharton?"

"Yes. Another cup of tea, please."

"Must be a good-sized box of tuck, for so many fellows," remarked Temple carelessly.

"Whacking, I should say," said Bunter. "Tremendous! Jolly generous of the colonel. Though, of course, as my uncle, Captain Bunter saved his life at Loos, it's only what one might have expected."

"Quite so," agreed Temple. "I suppose it's coming down from London?"

"Yes; the colonel said so. I say, this is jolly good cake. Don't trouble to cut it into slices, Dab, old chap; a whole cake isn't too much for me."

"Oh!" gasped Dabney.

"Then it will come by the railway," said Temple.

"Yes, to Friardale Station. They'll give it to the carrier to bring to the school. I'm jolly anxious for the carrier to get here, you bet!"

"Old Cripps, the carrier?" remarked Temple.

"That's the johnny."

"He comes along in the afternoon, doesn't he?"

"Yes; Wharton's told Gosling he expects the box by the afternoon delivery. Gossy's going to bring it in, and we're going to open it in the study."

"No doubt about its coming on Wednesday, I suppose?"

"None at all. The colonel promised."

"Then I hope you Remove kids will enjoy it when you get it," said Temple blandly.

"No doubt about that," said Bunter. "You fellows mind if I start on that other cake?"

"Yes, a little," drawled Temple. "We don't want you to burst in this study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Temple. This was quite a surprising change of tone.

"Oh, really, Cecil—"

"If you call me Cecil again, I'll brain you," said Temple, taking up an Indian-club from the corner. "In fact, I think I'll brain you, anyway. Hold him while I brain him, you fellows!"

Dabney and Fry jumped up, grinning. Billy Bunter jumped up still more quickly, and bolted for the door.

"I say, Temple— Yaroooh!" He dodged into the passage as Cecil Reginald made a lunge at him. "Oh, really, I haven't finished my tea, you silly ass! I jolly well won't ask you to my spread to-morrow! Yaroooooh!"

Bunter fled.

Temple closed the study door, grinning, and tossed the club into a corner. Dabney and Fry stared at him.

"Now we'll have tea, if that fat beast has left enough," said Temple cheerily. "I suppose you could see why I was pulling his leg—what?"

"Blessed if I could!" growled Dabney. "I know you've wasted three-parts of the feed on the guzzling porker! I thought at first you were fishing for an invitation to his spread when that blessed box comes."

Cecil Reginald sniffed disdainfully.

"I don't usually go to Remove spreads," he said loftily. "The fat boulder thought that himself, confound his cheek!"

"Then what the dickens were you driving at?" demanded Fry. "What did you bring that fat hedgehog here for?"

"Information, my boy," chuckled Temple. "I knew he'd talk if he was fed. Yesterday the Remove kids raided us to feed their blessed guests. We couldn't scrag 'em, with a giddy colonel and a major present. The cheeky little rotters have been cackling over it ever since, and we've taken it lying down. Well, this is where we get our own back!"

"Blessed if I see—"

"What's sauce for the goose, is sauce for the giddy gander," said Temple. "Wharton scoffed our feed for the giddy military. We were tied up here nearly an hour before Scott got in and let us out. Well, this time it's us that are going to scoff the feed. That box is coming along to-morrow with a cargo of tuck for Wharton & Co. It won't reach No. 1 Study."

"Eh?"

"It's going to be intercepted," said Temple coolly. "It will reach a study at Greyfriars, but not No. 1 Study. This study, my infants!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've pumped all the information out of Bunter," chuckled Temple. "That box won't be handed to the carrier at the station. It will be called for by some young gentlemen belonging to Greyfriars—in a trap."

"Us!" ejaculated Fry.

"Exactly—little us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Fourth chortled with glee at the idea. If they succeeded in raiding the mysterious box from the colonel, it would indeed be "sauce for the gander." Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe were to have rivals in their nefarious designs upon the box for No. 1 Study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

"FOOTER?"

Billy Bunter snorted rather than asked that question on the following afternoon.

During the morning of that long-anticipated day Bunter's thoughts had been wholly upon the mysterious box that was to arrive in the afternoon. He had thought of it during dinner, and he was thinking of it now. And he was surprised to see the chums of the Remove come out after dinner in football-rig, with coats and mufflers on.

Apparently their thoughts were not wholly dwelling upon the expected tuck.

"Footer!" repeated Bunter. "You're playing footer!"

"Why not?" said Wharton, in surprise. "It isn't raining—for once."

"What about the box?"

"What box?"

"What box?" roared Bunter. "The box—our box—my box—the colonel's box of tuck!"

"I don't know that it's a box of tuck," said Wharton cheerily. "But even if it is, that's no reason why we shouldn't play footer till it comes. The carrier won't be along till three or four o'clock."

"Blow the carrier!" said Bunter. "Old Cripps is always slow. My idea is that we should go down to the station and meet the train, and bring the box home ourselves. You could hire a trap—"

"Catch me wasting five bob on a trap!"

"If you're going to be mean about it, Wharton, I'd pay the five bob myself—out of my postal-order, when it comes."

"But the man would want to be paid to-day, not in the year 2000," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Besides, we could open the box in the trap, and have some of the tuck coming along."

"Well, it's worth five bob, to let Bunter gorge about half an hour earlier, I suppose," remarked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Well, you fellows could have some too," said Bunter, with a sniff. "It's no good leaving it to the carrier. The carrier's too slow. Gosling would take the trap down to the station and get it, for a good tip—say five bob. He can always get the trap out if he's tipped."

"Well, you go and tip him, and when the trap's ready, come and tell us," said Harry Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove walked off towards the footer ground grinning, leaving Billy Bunter blinking with wrath.

There was no match on that afternoon, but the Co. did not see any reason for missing their usual footer practice, simply because the box was coming. Practice would be nicely over by the time the carrier arrived. They were keen and curious about the colonel's box, but not to the extent of expending five shillings on fetching it from the station, especially as they were not quite certain which train it would come by. Billy Bunter would have risked a journey to the station for nothing, as the five shillings to be expended did not belong to him.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter. "I wonder whether Gosling would let me have the trap if I promised him five bob out of my postal order!"

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NEXT

MONDAY—**"FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"**

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ONE
PENNY.

It was exceedingly doubtful, but it was a last resource, and William George Bunter resolved to try it.

He rolled away to the porter's lodge, but Gosling was not there. He sought him next in the stables, and found him in the yard, getting the trap ready.

"Taking the trap out, Gosling?" asked Bunter, much interested.

"Yes, Master Bunter."

"Going down to Friardale?"

"Yes."

"Oh, good." Bunter blinked with satisfaction. "You'll give me a lift, Gossy, won't you? I've got to go to the station."

"Sorry, Master Bunter; it can't be done."

"If five shillings would make any difference to you, Gosling—"

"I ain't allowed to take gratuities from the young gentlemen, Master Bunter," said Gosling stolidly. "Which I 'ope I knows my dooty."

Bunter snorted. Gosling's dutiful reply meant that he did not believe that Bunter had five shillings, or would hand it to him if he had it. In which Gosling was perfectly correct. He knew Bunter.

"Look here, Gosling, you might give me a lift to the station," urged Bunter. "I'll make it half a quid."

"I ain't allowed—"

"Oh, don't talk out of your hat," said Bunter. "I'll make it a solid half-quid, as soon as my postal-order comes. I'd hand it to you now, only I happen to be rather short of ready cash."

Gosling grinned.

"I ain't allowed to take tips, Master Bunter. Please don't mention the matter any more, or it will be my dooty to report you."

"Br-r-r-r!"

The horse having been harnessed, Gosling mounted into the trap and drove out into the road. Billy Bunter toddled after him, blinking furiously. Even without a tip, Gosling might have given him a lift, instead of taking an empty trap down to the village. But Bunter soon saw Gosling's motive. Three juniors of the Fourth-Form were waiting in the road—Temple and Dabney and Fry. Gosling drew the trap to a halt by the roadside, and the three climbed in.

Billy Bunter stared at them in almost speechless wrath. Temple had evidently "tipped" Gosling for the trap that afternoon. Cecil Reginald had plenty of ready cash, and was not obliged to wait for a postal-order that never came, so Gosling had waived his objection to tips in his case.

"Look here, you make room for me!" shouted Bunter, plodding after the trap as it started. "You can give me a lift too, Gosling."

Gosling seemed to be deaf. The trap gathered speed, and Billy Bunter broke into a desperate run after it. Temple & Co. waved their hands to him encouragingly.

"Put it on, Fatty!" sang out Fry. "Race you to Friardale."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, porpoise. Roll on!"

"Groogh!" panted Bunter, his fat legs going like machinery, and the perspiration pouring down his face. "Gerrrooop! Stop, you beasts! Take me in! There's room for me. I—I—groogh! Stop! Yow!"

"Put your beef into it, Bunt. You've got plenty."

"Gosling, you rotter, stop, will you? Do you hear, Gosling? Yah! Stop!"

Gosling drove on unheeding.

The Fourth-Formers chuckled gleefully as Bunter pounded on after the trap. Bunter was not built for sprinting; he had a great deal of weight to carry. His mouth was wide open, and his glasses slid down his fat little nose, and his eyes bulged, as he pounded on heavily.

"Anybody got a pea-shooter?" yawned Temple.

"Happy thought!" ejaculated Dabney. He fished out a pea-shooter from his pocket, and dabbed peas into his mouth. "Here goes!"

Whiz! whiz! whiz!

"Yarooop! Beasts! Rotters! Yow-ow-ooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dabney of the Fourth was a good shot. Peas stung

Billy Bunter all over his fat, perspiring face. He dodged wildly, and lost his footing, and stumbled, and sat down heavily in the dusty road.

"Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The trap bowled on down the lane and disappeared, leaving Billy Bunter sitting in the road, shaking a fat fist and gasping. Bunter had lost the race.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Sauce for the Gander!

TEMPLE & CO. descended from the trap at the station, in great spirits. Gosling crossed the road into the Red Cow, to quench his thirst. Gosling had a very persistent and expensive thirst.

"Now for the giddy box!" murmured Cecil Reginald.

"I suppose they'll hand it to us!" said Dabney.

"Why not? Gosling often calls for parcels at the station, and they know the trap. The only thing is, the railway charges on the box have to be paid, if it's called for, instead of being paid through the carrier. We can stand that."

"Oh, rather."

"It will be a few bob, most likely," said Temple. "It's worth that, I should say, considering that it's stacked with tuck."

"I should jolly well say so," agreed Fry. "We'll stand equal whacks. Let's go in and see about it."

Old Peter, the porter, touched his hat very respectfully to Temple of the Fourth. Temple was generally in funds and free-handed with his cash, and old Peter had the remembrance of many tips, and the expectation of many more. He was always glad to see Cecil Reginald.

"We've called for a box, Peter," Temple explained. "I think a box came down to-day, addressed to our chum Wharton at Greyfriars."

"That's right, Master Temple. It's to be 'anded to the carrier."

"We've called for it instead. Wharton's playing footer this afternoon, and couldn't come. We're to pay on it."

"Werry good, Master Temple."

"Put it into Gosling's trap, Peter."

"Certainly, Master Temple."

Old Peter had not the ghost of a suspicion. There was nothing unusual in one fellow coming to inquire after a parcel because another fellow was engaged at the moment, and as the trap was Gosling's trap from Greyfriars, everything seemed to be in order. Temple paid four shillings on the box, and it was duly placed in the trap, and the munificent Cecil Reginald tossed old Peter a shilling for his trouble.

It had been as easy as falling off a form, as Fry remarked.

The three young rascals looked with great interest at the box as it lay in the trap.

It was a strongly-made packing-case, and very heavy. It was not so large as the juniors had expected, being about three feet long and eighteen inches wide, and as deep as it was wide. Temple & Co. had had vague ideas of a six-foot packing-case. However, it was certainly large enough to hold an enormous quantity of tuck, and it was decidedly heavy.

It was addressed to Harry Wharton at Greyfriars School.

"Well, there it is," said Temple, looking round towards the entrance of the Red Cow. "Gosling had better not see it. He's gone in there to blow his tip, and he's safe for some time."

"He'll want to take the trap back!" said Fry.

Temple shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him want! If he sees that box, he'll take jolly good care that it goes to the chap whose name is on the label. We're driving this trap home ourselves. I'll stand Gossy another half-crown if he makes a fuss."

"He jolly well will."

"Let him. My hat, here comes the carrier!" ejaculated Temple. "We've been only just in time. Tumble in!"

Old Cripps, the carrier, had driven up to the station. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 415.

Evidently he intended to call there for Master Wharton's box, as he had received instructions to do.

Temple jumped into Gosling's place and gathered up the reins. Dabney and Fry promptly clambered in after him.

The trap turned, and started down the High Street.

At that moment Gosling appeared in the doorway of the Red Cow. Gosling's face was a little ruddier; it grew more ruddy still as he beheld the Fourth-Formers making off with the trap.

"'Ere, 'old on!" shouted Gosling, running out. "'Old on, Master Temple! I ain't trusting you with that 'orse!"

Cecil Temple was as deaf to Gosling as Gosling was to Billy Bunter. He drove on regardless.

Gosling dashed after the trap excitedly.

"'Old on, I tells yer, Master Temple! 'Old on, you young limb! I got to call for a parcel with that there trap! Wot I says is this 'ere, I'll report you! Will you 'old on or won't you 'old on?"

It was evident that Temple wouldn't "'old on." He didn't. He flicked the horse with the whip, and the trap bowled down the old High Street of Friardale at a rate Gosling could not possibly equal.

Gosling paused, panting and puffing, and in a towering rage. He had not even the consolation of the prospect of reporting Temple, for, having been tipped five shillings by that lavish youth, it would scarcely have done to report the matter.

"My heye!" gasped Gosling. "The young limbs! The young himages! My heye!"

And, all hope of recapturing the trap having to be abandoned, Gosling plodded back to the Red Cow to solace his ruffled spirits with a little more strong ale.

Temple looked back with a grin as he drove out of the village into the lane. The Fourth-Formers had succeeded in first-rate style; the whole scheme had gone without a hitch. Cecil Reginald felt inclined to pat himself on the back.

"Hallo, who's that?" he remarked, as he noted that a cyclist was pedalling after the trap from the village. "Highcliffe cad, by Jove!"

Dabney and Fry followed his glance.

Gadsby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, was cycling after the trap, keeping pace with it at a little distance behind.

But the Fourth-Formers gave him only a casual glance.

They did not connect Gadsby's presence in the village with the box for No. 1 Study. So far as they knew, Highcliffe had never even heard of the box.

"I wonder what Wharton will say when the carrier don't come!" chuckled Temple. "They'll be expecting him from three to four."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy this rather makes up for their giddy commandeering. Judging by the weight of that box, it holds about three times as much as they bagged from us."

"Looks like it," said Fry. "What price opening it now?"

"It's nailed up jolly strongly. We shall have to open it with a hammer and chisel in the study. After we've emptied it, we'll fill it with rubbish, nail it up again, and deliver it in Wharton's study."

Temple & Co. chortled merrily at the idea. This time there was no doubt they had "done" their old rivals of the Remove completely.

"Hallo, here's Bunter!"

Billy Bunter came in sight. He was plodding on doggedly towards the village. Bunter was determined to get at the mysterious box, even if it cost him a walk to the village on his own legs. Gosling could scarcely refuse to bring it home in the trap, as the trap was actually there, Bunter considered. And the fat junior revelled in the thought of a gorgeous feed all to himself on the way home.

He jumped at the sight of Temple, Dabney, and Fry in the trap—without Gosling—coming back. That Gosling would never allow the trap out of his own hands if he could help it, Bunter was well aware. The Fourth-Formers had evidently bagged the trap for their own purposes. What that purpose was he very quickly

discerned, for Fry and Dabney were sitting on a large box that filled up a considerable space in the trap.

Billy Bunter's eyes almost bulged through his spectacles.

"My box!" he gasped.

He had no doubt of it.

That explained the Fourth-Formers' visit to the station, and their refusal to take Bunter in the trap. They were after the box. It came into Bunter's rather obtuse brain, at last, why Temple had entertained him to tea the previous day—to pump him for information!

Bunter jumped into the middle of the road, and threw up a fat hand.

"Stop!" he roared.

Temple cracked the whip.

"Get aside, you fat idiot!" he bawled.

"Stop, you rotter!"

"You'll get run over!"

"Stop!"

Temple drew in the horse savagely, or Bunter would really have been run over. Billy Bunter was blind to risks at that moment; his thoughts were on the tuck.

"Get out of the way!" shouted Fry.

"You've got the box!" shrieked Bunter. "You've raided my box, you beasts! Hand over my box! Hand it down! I'm going to have that box! Yah, you rotters! Gimme my box, you blessed thieves."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to have that box! Look here, I'll stand you something out of it; you can have Wharton's share, if you like! Hand it over! Yaroooh! Keep that whip away, you silly beast! Yow-ow-ow-ow! Yooooop!"

Temple did not stand upon ceremony. The long lash of Gosling's whip curled round Billy Bunter's fat legs, and he hopped, and danced, and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow! Stoppit! Chuckit! Yooooop! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter dashed away desperately, and Temple set the trap in motion again. The vehicle bowled on, leaving Bunter by the roadside brandishing a fat fist.

"Mum-mum-m-my box!" stuttered Bunter. "My tuck! My grub! The awful beasts! Oh, dear! My box! Oh, the rotters!"

A cyclist swept by him; it was Gadsby of Highcliffe. But Bunter did not look at him; Gadsby did not interest him at that moment. He darted through a gap in the hedge, and set off towards Greyfriars by the short cut across the fields, going as fast as his legs could carry him. A good runner, going by the short cut, could beat a trap going round by the road.

Bunter was not a good runner, by any means; but on that occasion he excelled himself. The tuck was at stake, and Billy Bunter, with the perspiration pouring down his fat face, fairly flew, to carry the news to No. 1 Study that the colonel's box had been raided, and to call the Famous Five to the rescue.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Raiders Raided!

"HIGHCLIFFE cad!"

"Booh!"

"Go home!"

Thus politely Temple & Co. greeted the cyclist, as Gadsby drew level with the trap.

Gadsby was riding hard now.

He paid no heed to the cheery greetings of the Fourth-Formers in the trap; he did not even turn his head when Temple flicked him gently with the whip as he passed.

He dug savagely at the pedals, riding as if on the cycle-track for a prize.

The bicycle easily beat the trap, and Gadsby shot ahead, and vanished down the bend of the winding lane.

"The Highcliffe cad seems to be in a hurry," remarked Temple. "Anybody after him?"

He looked back, but the road was clear. Billy Bunter had disappeared across the fields; but even Gadsby, funk as he was known to be, could hardly have been suspected of fleeing from Billy Bunter.

But Gadsby had reasons for his haste.

He cycled on as fast as he could ride, till he reached a spot half-way to Greyfriars from the village—a spot where thick, overhanging trees shadowed the lane.

There he jumped, panting, from his bike.

"You fellows here?" he called out.

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NEXT MONDAY—**"FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"**

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ONE
PENNY.

"Don't give the show away, fathead!" came Ponsonby's voice from behind the hedge.

"It's all right; they won't be along for some minutes yet!" gasped Gadsby.

He ran his bicycle through a gap in the hedge, and joined his comrades.

Quite a crowd of Highcliffe juniors were gathered there. Ponsonby, Monson, Vavasour, Merton, Drury, and several more of the nuts of Highcliffe—evidently on the warpath. They were in cover behind the hedge, and watching the road. They all stared at the panting Gadsby in surprise.

"What's the hurry?" demanded Ponsonby. "No need to break your neck to tell us the carrier's coming. His old horse goes like a snail."

"Tain't the carrier."

"Isn't he coming?"

"No!" gasped Gadsby.

"You silly ass, then!" exclaimed Monson warmly. "Wasn't it arranged for you to stay and watch the station, and let us know when the carrier started with the box?"

"Yes, fathead, but——"

"Well, what have you come away for?" demanded Ponsonby.

"Can't you see?" howled Gadsby. "Let a fellow speak. The carrier ain't bringin' the box at all. Some Greyfriars chaps have called for it, and they've got it in a trap."

"My hat!"

"Oh!"

"Dash it all!" growled Ponsonby. "Have Wharton and the rest gone for it? How many of them?"

"Tain't Wharton. It's Temple of the Fourth and two others!" panted Gadsby. "They went to the station with Gosling in the school trap, and I watched the box put in, from the other side of the road. Gosling went into the Red Cow to booze, and they brought the trap away without him. I wasn't sure at first it was the box we're after, you see; they might have been calling for a box of their own. But——"

"Well, how do you know they weren't?"

"Well, they hiked off with the trap, and Gosling came sprintin' after them, and they wouldn't stop for him. They've left him behind. I suppose that means they don't want him to see that it's Wharton's box."

Ponsonby nodded.

"Besides, they were grinnin' and chortlin' over it like a set of Cheshire cats!" said Gadsby. "Of course, Temple hasn't called for the box simply to oblige Wharton—he wouldn't; and we know Wharton expected it by carrier. My idea is that they've raided the box."

"Great Scott!"

"They're comin' on now, sittin' on the box and chortlin'," said Gadsby. "I'm jolly sure it's Wharton's box they've got."

Ponsonby whistled.

"Jolly lucky we've got on to it," he said. "I never thought of anythin' of the sort. We might have allowed them to pass."

"Lucky Gaddy was at the station!" grinned Vavasour. "We can handle three Fourth-Form kids easily enough. I'd rather tackle them than the carrier."

"Yes, rather!" Ponsonby grinned. "Old Cripps would have made a fuss, and there might have been a row about handlin' him. It's all serene now! We'll handle Temple & Co. all right."

"Here they come!"

The ambushed Highcliffians peered through openings in the hedge. From the direction of the village the trap came bowling merrily on. Temple was driving, and Dabney and Fry were smiling cheerfully, quite unconscious of the trap laid for them by Ponsonby & Co.

"The rope—quick!" exclaimed Ponsonby.

Monson ran across the road with one end of a stout rope. The other end was lashed to a tree.

Monson took a turn of the loose end round a tree on the opposite side of the road. The rope, stretched across at a height of two feet from the ground, effectually barred the way.

The trap was coming on at a good speed, and it was close at hand now.

"Show up!" said Ponsonby. "Some of you cut round behind the trap when it stops, in case they should try to turn."

"Right-ho, Pon!"

The Highcliffe juniors streamed out into the road. There were nine in the party altogether, and, although the Highcliffe fellows did not rank very high as fighting-men, it was evident that Temple & Co. had no chance against such odds.

Ponsonby held up his hand with a lofty gesture of command.

"Halt!" he rapped out.

Temple did not stop. He flourished his whip.

"Highcliffe cads!" exclaimed Dabney. "Run 'em down if they won't clear, Cecil! They're after a ragging!"

"Get out of the way!" shouted Temple. "I warn you that we're not going to stop! You take the risk!"

Ponsonby pointed to the rope stretched across the road.

"Better stop," he said coolly.

Temple dragged at the reins as he saw the rope. The horse could not pass an obstacle like that. It was Hobson's choice for Cecil Reginald; he simply had to stop.

But Temple, who could see that the enemy were on the warpath, did not mean to surrender. He expected a ragging from the Highcliffe fellows, as the odds were so tremendous on Ponsonby's side.

The trap slowed down, but, instead of halting, Temple dragged the horse round to turn in the road.

Once the trap had turned, the Highcliffians would have been left behind in a few minutes, and another and safer road could have been taken to Greyfriars.

But it was not so easy to turn. Ponsonby & Co. had selected the narrowest spot in the country lane for their ambush.

As the trap whirled round, the horse's forefeet clambered on the high, grassy bank beside the road, and the wheels backed close to the ditch on the other side.

Temple required a full minute to turn, and that minute was not granted him.

"Collar them!" shouted Ponsonby.

Highcliffe made a rush.

Gadsby and Monson rushed for the horse's head and seized it. Temple lashed at them with the whip fiercely, and they yelled and let go. But Ponsonby and Drury and Merton were clambering on the back of the trap, resisted heroically by Dabney and Fry. A heavy clod of earth, hurled by Vavasour, caught Temple on the side of the head, and he reeled back in his seat with a yell. Gadsby grasped the reins again, and dragged the horse down into the road.

"Go for them!" roared Ponsonby, struggling with Dabney in the trap. "Give the Greyfriars rotters jip!"

"Back up, Greyfriars!" yelled Temple.

Temple laid about him furiously with the whip, and the Highcliffians yelled and dodged wildly. But Ponsonby and Merton were in the trap now, and Drury followed them and tackled Temple from behind. Then the rest of the Highcliffians swarmed in, only Vavasour remaining to hold the horse.

Temple & Co. and the Highcliffians tumbled out of the trap in a struggling heap.

The three Greyfriars juniors had no chance against the odds, but they put up a terrific fight.

Three to one as the enemy were, they did not find it easy to overcome them. But they were down on their backs at last, with the Highcliffians swarming over them.

"Now for the box!" shouted Ponsonby. "Pin those rotters down!"

"We've got 'em!"

"Collar the box!"

"The—the box!" panted Temple. "So that's what you're after! Yow-ow! You rotters, that's Wharton's box!"

"Didn't I say so?" chortled Gadsby.

"That's why we're after it, Temple, dear boy!" chuckled Ponsonby. "Lend me a hand here, Vav. Never mind the horse."

Most of the Highcliffians were busily engaged in pinning down the Fourth-Formers of Greyfriars, who still resisted. Ponsonby and Vavasour grasped the heavy box, and swung it out bumping into the road.

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD," 1d. 2

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The juniors looked out cautiously from their cover, with gleaming eyes. Down the road a trap came bowling merrily, driven by Ponsonby, with Vavasour sitting on the big box in the trap, and Gadsby following on his bike.
(See Chapter 14.)

"It's ours!" chirruped Monson.
"Absolutely!" said Vavasour. "Ow! It's heavy! Ours, dear boys."
"What price Greyfriars now?"
"Beaten to the wide! Hooray!"
"You rotten funks!" roared Temple. "Come on, only two to one, and we'll wipe up the road with you!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"My dear man, we're going to wipe up the road with you soon!" said Monson. "We'll make an example of these cheeky cads, you fellows!"
"Hear, hear!"
"Sit on their heads!"
"Groo—hooh—goooh!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Hallo! Mind that geegee!" shouted Ponsonby.
The horse, no longer held, and scared by the uproar, was plunging wildly. The trap backed upon the juniors in the road, and the Higheliffians scrambled out of the

way, forced to release their prisoners. Temple & Co. scrambled up.

"Mind the horse!"
"Get aside!"
"Look out!"
Both parties forgot the conflict for the moment as they dodged the plunging horse. The animal bumped on the rope across the road, and the trap rocked, and the horse nearly fell. Then it plunged round, and went dashing up the road towards the village, with the reins trailing and the empty trap bumping behind.
"Oh, my hat!" gasped Temple. "Stop it! Catch it!"
"Collar those Greyfriars cads!" shouted Ponsonby, utterly reckless as to what became of the horse and trap. The Higheliffians closed on Temple & Co. again.
But the trio did not choose to come to close quarters with such odds again. The box was captured, and it was not much use getting a ragging into the bargain. Temple & Co. ran for it.

"After them!"

"Run 'em down—the funks!"

The three juniors burst through the hedge into the field beyond, and ran for their lives, with the Highcliffians whopping after them. But Ponsonby & Co. had little chance of running them down. The great Pon quickly called his followers to a halt.

"Hold on! We've got the box! Let the cads go! Never mind raggin' 'em now! We've got the giddy plunder!"

The Highcliffians hurried back to the road. They had captured the box, and their chief object now was to get safely away with it. Ponsonby gathered up the rope. The runaway horse was out of sight now, having disappeared down the lane towards Friardale.

"By gad, it's heavy!" said Ponsonby. "We've got to carry it, all the same. Get it on your shoulders!"

Monson and Drury raised the case on their shoulders. The Highcliffians marched off in triumph, Gadsby wheeling his bicycle. It was a glorious triumph for Ponsonby & Co. For once they had beaten Greyfriars hollow, if they succeeded in getting the plunder safe to Highcliffe.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Startling News!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter, red as a beetroot, and streaming with perspiration, dashed on the junior football-ground at Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co. were at practice, but Bunter did not heed. He rushed into the midst of the footballers.

He cannoned into Bob Cherry, who was kicking for goal, and Bob gave a roar and staggered back. There was another roar from the indignant footballers.

"Kick that fat idiot out!"

"Mop him up!"

"Squash him!"

"Yow-ow!" shouted Bunter, as Bob Cherry seized him by a fat ear. "Leggo! I say, you fellows—leggo!—I say, the box——"

"Blow the box!" howled Bob. "You fat duffer, get off the grass!"

"But the box——"

"Bless the box! Never mind the box! Get out!" rapped out Wharton.

"They've got it!" shrieked Bunter.

"They? Who? What? Which?"

"Temple of the Fourth," gasped Bunter, "and Dab, and Fry! They've raided it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The numerous football-boots that were ready to kick Bunter off Little Side stopped in time. The Co. gathered round him.

"Do you mean to say that the box has come?" exclaimed Wharton.

"No; it hasn't come. Temple got it at the station. I saw it in Gosling's trap—they've brought it here, unless I've beaten them on the way. I came by the short cut, and ran like—like—like lightning!" gasped Bunter. "Haven't you seen them come in?"

"Temple's raided the box!" ejaculated Frank Nugent. "Why, the awful cheek!"

"Commandeered it, perhaps!" grinned Bob Cherry. "One good turn deserves another. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't anything to cackle at!" roared Bunter. "If they got in before I did, they're wolfing our tuck now—my tuck!"

"We'll jolly soon see about that!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Come on!" roared Bob Cherry. "All hands on deck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no time to change. The juniors grabbed up their coats and mufflers, and ran—putting on the outer garments as they flew. Billy Bunter, puffing like a starting-engine, flew with them. He panted out breathless explanations as he pumped along. Wharton headed for the School House, and the crowd rushed in. Squiff and Tom Brown and Peter Todd and Vernon-Smith had joined the Famous Five—enough valiant fighting-men to

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wipe up the quad with half the Fourth Form if necessary. They headed for the Fourth-Form passage.

Bunter declared that he had run like lightning; but it was very doubtful if the fat junior could have beaten the trap to Greyfriars. Temple & Co. ought to have been in at least ten minutes, if they had come in the trap.

Bob Cherry hurled open the door of Temple's study, and the crowd rushed in.

The study was empty.

"Not here!" said Bob.

"Try the other studies!" exclaimed Wharton.

The searchers spread along the Fourth-Form passage. Most of the Fourth were out of doors; but Murphy was found in his room, and he declared that he had seen nothing of Temple since he had gone out soon after dinner.

"But phwat's the matter intirely?" Murphy inquired.

The Removites did not trouble to explain. Leaving Murphy mystified, they crowded out.

"They're feeding out of doors somewhere!" wailed Billy Bunter. "The tuck's gone—gone for good! Oh, dear!"

"Let's see if the trap's come in," suggested Johnny Bull.

"Good egg!"

There was a rush to the stables. They soon discovered that the trap had not yet come in. Temple, Dabney & Co. were still out of gates.

"Looks as if we're done!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, let's look for the beasts! They were heading for Greyfriars when I saw them!" gasped Bunter. "They've got the box open, and they're scoffing the tuck by this time!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"We've got to get it back!" he exclaimed. "Dash it all, that's my uncle's surprise-packet! And I don't believe there's tuck in it, either; it's something else. 'This is the limit! It's rotten——'"

"More rotten than commandeering a fellow's feed for the Army!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Wharton burst into a laugh.

"Well, it's tit for tat!" he agreed. "But we're not going to be done if we can help it. Come on!"

"Fall in and follow me!" sang Bob Cherry.

The juniors streamed out of gates, Billy Bunter still panting and puffing in their wake. Billy Bunter's exertions that eventful afternoon were wonderful. The thought of the box of tuck lured him on like the mirage in the desert.

Harry Wharton & Co. hurried down the lane towards the village. With their skill in scoutcraft, they hoped to pick up the trail at the spot where Billy Bunter had seen the raiders with the box.

There was a sudden shout from Squiff.

"There they are!"

"Hurrah!"

Temple & Co. had been spotted. Three dishevelled figures were tramping across the fields towards Greyfriars. In the distance, the Removites could recognise Temple & Co., though the heroes of the Fourth presented an appearance that was very different from their usual one.

"They look as if they've been through it," said Nugent.

"And they haven't got the box," remarked Tom Brown.

"They had it!" panted Bunter. "Perhaps they've hidden it. They had it in the trap, I tell you."

"Where's the trap, then?"

"Goodness knows!"

"We'll jolly soon make Temple explain where the box is," said Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

The Removites were already scrambling through the hedge. They broke into full flight across the fields, heading for the Fourth-Formers.

Temple & Co. halted as they sighted them.

In a few minutes the Removites came panting up. They surrounded the unhappy trio with excited looks.

"Where is it?"

"Where's the box?"

"Hand it over! What have you done with it, you bounders?"

"Scrag 'em!"

"Hands off!" growled Temple. "The blessed box is gone! We hadn't even opened it! We've had a time—oh, dear!"

"What's happened?" demanded Wharton.

"The Highcliffe cads have got it!"

"Ponsonby & Co.!" yelled Bob.

"Yes."

"And you let the Highcliffe funks lick you and collar the box!" shouted Sampson Quincy Iffey Field.

"There were nine of the rotters," groaned Temple. "We fought as much as we could—didn't we, Dab?"

"Oh, rather!" moaned Dabney. "Look at my eye!"

"Look at my nose!" mumbled Fry.

"And what were you doing with the box in the first place?" demanded Wharton.

Temple grinned faintly.

"Collaring it," he replied. "You owe us a feed. Sauce for the gander, you know. Go and eat coke!"

"I say, you fellows, bump the rotters!"

"Good idea! Bump 'em!"

"The esteemed Temple must learn that he must not be saucy to the gander," said Hurree Singh solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo, you asses! We haven't got the box, have we? Yaroooh! Leggo! Oh, my hat! Yah!" roared Temple.

Bump! Bump! Bump!

With three heavy bumps, and three loud roars, Temple & Co. sat down in the muddy field. Then the Removites left them. They were finished with the unfortunate raiders of the Fourth. Their business now was with the Highcliffe raiders, if they could find them.

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Temple, blinking disconsolately at his comrades. "Oh, crumbs! What a sell!"

"What an afternoon!" groaned Fry.

"What a silly ass!" grunted Dabney. "Don't you spring any more of your wheezes on us, Temple! Yow-ow-ow! Look at my clothes! Look at my eye! Ow!"

Disconsolately, the three raiders limped on to Greyfriars. The afternoon which had begun so triumphantly had not turned out a success after all. Temple & Co. felt that life was hardly worth living as they limped on.

As they reached Greyfriars the trap came rattling up, with Gosling in it. Gosling was looking furious. He jumped down, and glared at the Fourth-Formers.

"Caught it loose!" roared Gosling, purple with rage. "That's wot I say—caught this 'ere 'orse a-wanderin' loose. Might have knocked down anybody in the street, Master Temple—this 'ere 'orse. You took this 'ere 'orse without leave, and I found 'im running loose. Wot I says is this 'ere—don't you arsk me for this 'ere trap agin in a 'urry, or I'll report yer."

"Oh, report and be spifficated!" said Temple recklessly.

And the three defeated raiders limped away to the School House, leaving Gosling snorting.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

At Close Quarters!

"**W**E'VE got it—"
"Hurrah!"

"But how the merry thunder are we going to get it to Highcliffe?"

"Oh!"

That was certainly a puzzle. Ponsonby & Co. had carried the box across a field, to get out of the Greyfriars Road. In a lane at some little distance they set it down. It was heavy.

It was an awkward box to tackle, too, for fellows who were particular about their clothes. It was made of rough, heavy wood, nailed together, and it looked as if it had been dumped down in the rain several times, and it had also picked up an aroma through travelling next to a box of dried fish in the luggage-van.

"Better hire a cart or somethin'," suggested Gadsby.

"Those Greyfriars cads will be lookin' for us soon, too," remarked Monson. "Wharton will be after us when he hears."

"He won't hear yet," said Ponsonby. "Never mind Wharton. But we can't lug that blessed thing all the way to Highcliffe. Doesn't look as if we could open it here, either. Nobody got a chisel?"

"Ha, ha! No."

The elegant nuts of Highcliffe were not likely to have the Magnet Library.—No. 415.

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LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

chisels about them. And pearl-handled, elegant pen-knives were not much use for opening the nailed box.

"What about bashin' it in with a stone?" suggested Vavasour.

"We might do that," assented Pon doubtfully. "It looks pretty strong, though; it wouldn't be easy. Might damage the contents, too. Dash it all, we ought to be able to pick up a vehicle of some kind! Gaddy might buzz into Courtfield on his bike and fetch a taxi-cab."

"Greyfriars'll be after us before he can get back," said Drury.

"Hallo, here comes somethin'."

The Highcliffe nuts looked round at the sound of hoofs and wheels in the lane. A light trap was bowling merrily along the lane, with two juniors in it.

"Courtenay!"

"The Caterpillar!"

"Oh, what luck!" Ponsonby ran into the road and held up his hand. "Stop!"

De Courcy of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, otherwise known as the Caterpillar, was driving. Frank Courtenay sat beside him. The chums of the Fourth were evidently "out" for the afternoon. Ponsonby & Co. were not on good terms, certainly, with Frank Courtenay and his chum. But that did not matter to Pon at the present moment. He would have made use of his worst enemy to serve his turn at any time.

The Caterpillar drew in the horse.

"Hallo, what's the row?" he asked. "Road up, what?"

"No. Are you fellows goin' to Highcliffe now?"

"No; comin' away."

"We want a lift to the school," explained Ponsonby. "We've got a box, and it's a bit too hefty to carry. Would you mind drivin' us home with it—drivin' the box, anyway, and me. The others'll walk."

"Delighted—if we were goin' back," drawled the Caterpillar. "But as we've started out on a drive to Redclyffe, Pon, you won't ask me to turn back just to carry your old box, dear boy."

"The fact is, I'm askin' you," said Pon coolly.

"Serry it can't be did."

Ponsonby smiled, and signed to his followers. The nuts gathered round the trap. They were not averse to a scrap with Courtenay and the Caterpillar, with the odds so heavily on their side.

"Where did you get that box?" exclaimed Frank Courtenay abruptly. He was looking down at it as it lay by the roadside. "I can see 'Greyfriars' stencilled on it. Have you been raiding the Greyfriars fellows?"

"You've hit it!" grinned Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" smiled Vavasour.

"Your dear pal Wharton," drawled Ponsonby. "It's a box of tuck for him, you know; and we've taken the liberty of baggin' it."

The Caterpillar chuckled.

"I wish you luck, dear boys. What a game!"

"Then you'll lend us the trap?"

"No fear—I'm out drivin'. Don't catch the rein, Gaddy, or I shall touch you up with this whip—like that."

"Yaroooh!" roared Gadsby. "You beast, Caterpillar!"

"Hands off, dear boy. I wish you no end of luck, but I'm not takin' a hand in your burglin' enterprises. Like Franky, I am poor but honest."

"Let's get on," said Courtenay. "Stand out of the way, Ponsonby!"

"I'm keepin' here, thanks. We're goin' to have that trap."

"Stand aside."

"Rats! Pile on the cads!" shouted Ponsonby. "We'll give 'em a lesson, while we're about it, for backin' up Greyfriars cads against us!"

"By gad!" ejaculated the Caterpillar. "The bold bad Pon is becomin' a giddy Dick Turpin. Pon, you're improvin'. Sorry to swipe you, Monson—"

"Yow-wow!"

"And you, Gaddy—"

"Yaroooh!"

"But you can't have this trap. Hands off, dear boys!"

"Yow-ow! Go for the cad! Oh, my hat! Bump 'em over!"

The Caterpillar stood up, handling the whip manfully. The thong lashed round the nuts as they rushed to the attack. Frank Courtenay, frowning, had clenched his fists, prepared to defend the trap against boarders. As a rule, Ponsonby & Co. did not care to come to too close quarters with the chums of the Fourth. But they were confident in their numbers now.

They swarmed over the trap in spite of the lashing whip, and Frank Courtenay hit out from the shoulder, but he was overwhelmed.

In a few minutes the two of them were tossed into the road. Courtenay was on his feet again in a twinkling; but the Caterpillar sat in the grass and smiled.

"Come on!" shouted Frank.

De Courcy yawned.

"What's the good, dear boy? They're too many for us. Let 'em have the trap, and get on with their stealin'. I'm quite comfy here!"

Courtenay paused. It was not much use renewing the tussle, with nine against two. Vavasour and Ponsonby were lifting the box into the captured trap, and Monson held the horse. They grinned at the two chums derisively.

"Come on if you want some more, you funks!" howled Merton.

"Caterpillar——"

"Oh, rats!" said the Caterpillar. "What's the good? But I'll back you up if you like, Franky. Anythin' for a quiet life!"

And the Caterpillar rose yawning from the grass, and pushed back his cuffs in a businesslike manner. There was a sudden shout from Vavasour.

"Greyfriars cads!"

"My hat! Buck up, there!" called out Pon. "Tumble in!"

"The Greyfriars chaps!" shouted Courtenay. "Come on!"

Across the fields, from the direction of the Friardale Road, nine running figures came in sight. Harry Wharton & Co. were on the track. They had easily found the tracks of the Highcliffe raiders in the wet and muddy fields, and the marks where the box had been rested en route several times. Following that "sign"—clear enough to their eyes experienced in scoutcraft—they had caught sight of the trap in the distance, and the fight raging round it. It was not necessary to look for tracks any longer. They came on at a breakneck pace, crossing the wet fields like deer.

Ponsonby gritted his teeth as he spotted them. He had not expected pursuit to begin so soon—knowing nothing of the fact that Billy Bunter had carried the alarm to Greyfriars while he was dealing with Temple & Co. Bob Cherry's voice came booming through the winter air.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There they are!"

"Put it on!" shouted Wharton.

The Highcliffians tumbled into the trap, after the box, at top speed. They were only anxious to escape with their plunder. But they reckoned without Courtenay and the Caterpillar.

"Come on, Caterpillar!"

"I'm comin', dear boy. Now for your nose, Pon!"

"Stand back, you fools——"

"Knock 'em into the ditch!"

"Buck up!"

"There was a fierce affray round the trap. Every moment the Greyfriars juniors grew nearer.

The moment they arrived the tables would be turned upon Ponsonby & Co. with a vengeance.

Ponsonby realised that. He saw defeat ahead, and the recapture of the precious box. He sprang into the trap and gathered up the reins, while his comrades were busily engaged with the two chums. Vavasour spotted him, and leaped into the trap after him as it was set in motion.

"Stop!" yelled Gadsby, as he heard the rattle of the wheels. "Stop for us, Pon, you cad! Stop!"

"I'm savin' the loot!" yelled back Pon. "You beggars run for it!"

"Desertin' his pals, by gad!" grinned the Caterpillar.

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"Done!" muttered Courtenay.

Ponsonby, driving at a reckless speed, swept down the road in the trap. Muddy and breathless, Harry Wharton & Co. came pouring through the hedge into the road. The trap was gone—and the colonel's box in it. Ponsonby and Vavasour were gone, too. And the rest were going.

Ponsonby had told them to run for it, but they did not need telling. They were not in the least disposed for a battle royal with the hardest hitters in the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

Gadsby leaped on his bicycle, and pedalled off after the trap. The rest made a rush for the fields.

"Go it, Greyfriars!"

"Mop 'em up!" roared Bob Cherry.

There was a rush after the fleeing Highcliffians. Bob Cherry swooped down on Courtenay and the Caterpillar, who remained standing in the road.

"You in this, too?" he ejaculated. "Well, old pals, I'm going to wipe up the road with you!"

And Bob hurled himself upon the two chums, and the three of them rolled in the road together.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Floored at the Finish!

"B Y gad!"

"Leggo!"

Harry Wharton came up, panting.

"Let go, Bob—that's Courtenay, that's the Caterpillar, you ass!" he exclaimed. "They're pals! Let go!"

He dragged off his chum, and Courtenay and De Courcy sat up breathlessly.

"You silly ass!" shouted Courtenay.

"You blinkin' chump!" gasped the Caterpillar.

"Weren't you in the game?" asked Bob, realising that perhaps he had been a little too hasty.

"No, you fathead! No, you ass! That's our trap Pon has collared, after pitching us out of it!" roared Courtenay. "Didn't you see us scrapping, you silly fathead?"

"Now I come to think of it, I did," admitted Bob. "Never mind, no harm done!"

"You've rolled me in the mud, you ass!"

"Look at my clothes, you burblin' chump!"

"Well, look at mine!" said Bob cheerily. "It's all in the day's work, my sons! What did you let Pon collar your trap for? He's got our box of tuck."

"Sorry, you fellows!" said Wharton. "Bob's an ass!"

"Oh, don't mench!" smiled the Caterpillar. "I'm sorry we couldn't stop the rotters goin' away with your box. It's a goner now!"

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Perhaps not. I suppose they're heading for Highcliffe." The captain of the Remove looked after the trap; it had vanished round a bend in the road. "There's a chance yet."

A fat figure came panting up across the field, and rolled into the road. Billy Bunter, blazing with warmth, drenched in perspiration, arrived breathless and almost speechless.

"I say, you fellows! Got it?" he gasped.

"No, fatty. Pon's got it—and gone!"

"Oh, you fatheads! Oh, you asses! Oh, you duffers—you chumps—you silly cuckoos—you blithering burblers—— Yaroooooooh!"

Billy Bunter's tirade ended suddenly, as Squiff grasped him by the shoulders, and sat him down in the road. The Removites were not in a humour to be slanged by William George Bunter.

"Shut up, you fat chump!" growled Squiff.

"Grooooooh!"

"Come on!" said Wharton quickly. "Pon will have to drive round by the road, and there's just a chance of cutting him off from Highcliffe, across the fields and through the wood. Every chap who can run come after me!"

Wharton sprang through the hedge, and started. Bob Cherry and Squiff and Peter Todd were after him in a twinkling. Tom Brown and Vernon-Smith followed.

SOMETHING STUPENDOUS COMING! WATCH THE "BOYS' FRIEND." SOMETHING STUPENDOUS COMING!



Bomb-throwing is a feature of trench-warfare in which the British Tommy usually covers himself with glory. Our artist here depicts a midnight attack upon the German trenches.

Then Johnny Bull and Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh darted after them. Strung out in a line, the nine juniors of Greyfriars went speeding across the field.

The Caterpillar looked after them, and yawned.

"What terrific energy, Franky!" he remarked. "Hallo! Aren't you goin', Bunter? Pile in, dear boy; you're built for a runner, you know! You'll beat 'em!"

Billy Bunter picked himself up, gasping.

"Groogh! I'm fagged! Groogh! Beasts! They've got our tuck, beasts! I shall jolly well expect to be paid for my whack in it! Groogh! I hold Wharton responsible— Oh, dear! Groogh!"

"Come on, Franky; we'd better get into Courtfield! We can get a wash an' brush-up there; we need it," said the Caterpillar. "We'll hire another trap. I wonder if Pon will get clear. I wish him luck!"

"And I wish the Greyfriars fellows luck!" growled Courtenay.

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The Caterpillar nodded amicably.

"So do I," he said. "I wish 'em both luck! I hope Pon'll get away, and I hope Wharton'll catch him, and give him beans! There, I can't say fairer than that! Come on, I want a wash, and I sha'n't be happy till I get it!"

The Caterpillar and Frank Courtenay walked away by the footpath to Courtfield. Billy Bunter blinked after them, and then started for Greyfriars, limping and groaning. Billy Bunter had done more sprinting that afternoon than he had done in the whole term previously, and it had told on him. He was feeling a complete wreck by the time he reached Greyfriars.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. were running their hardest.

Their scout runs round about Greyfriars had made them thoroughly acquainted with the lie of the land,

Another Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. Order the "Magnet" in advance.

and they knew every field and wood, lane and by-path. Wharton had not a moment's hesitation before starting, he knew exactly where to head for. The road Ponsonby was following was like a bow, and a short cut through the fields and woods represented the string. Though the horse, of course, could go faster than the fastest runner, the juniors had a much smaller distance to cover, and there was a sporting chance that they could reach Highcliffe first. And if they could head off Ponsonby from Highcliffe, it would be easy to deal with him.

They ran on hard and fast, leaping ditches, plunging through hedges, tearing through thickets, reckless of thorn and bramble.

The pace was hot, and could only be stayed by the stoutest runners. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh was the first to crack up under the strain, when a mile had been covered.

"My esteemed chums," he panted, "I am donefully finished!"

"Hang on, Inky!" called back Wharton. "Take it easily, old chap; you'll be in at the death!"

"If you leave your esteemed coat with me, my worthy chum, you will run more fastfully."

"Good egg!"

"That's right; chuck 'em off!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

It was a happy thought. Without stopping, the juniors tore off their coats, and threw them down for Inky to gather up. They were now in their football clothes, just as when they left Little Side, and in good trim for running.

Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh gathered up eight coats, and carried them on in a big bundle on his shoulder, proceeding at a walk. The rest of the party ran on more freely, and were soon out of sight.

Tom Brown was the next to come to grief, rolling into a ditch, and emerging from it in a shocking state. By the time he was clear, the rest were far ahead, and Tom dropped out, and headed for Greyfriars.

Seven juniors were still running hard—Wharton and Bob Cherry and Squiff in the lead, the rest strung out behind. Frank Nugent gave it up in the next mile, and then Johnny Bull tailed off, quite winded. Then, as they crossed a corner of Courtfield Heath, Vernon-Smith put his foot in a rabbit-hole, and hurt his ankle. He limped away, making emphatic remarks to himself. Peter Todd was the next victim, catching his foot on a fence he intended to clear at a bound, and coming a terrific "cropper." Toddy limped away mumbling.

But the race was nearly run now. Wharton and Bob Cherry and Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, shoulder to shoulder, were running tirelessly. They came out into the Highcliffe road neck and neck.

Ahead of them, in full sight, was Highcliffe School. The road was bare. A motor-car hooted by, and that was all.

The three juniors halted, their breath coming and going in great throbs.

"Have we done it?" gasped Bob.

"No sign of the trap!" gasped Squiff. "I think we've done it, unless Pon drove at a record speed all the time."

Wharton did not speak; he ran into the road, and bent, and examined it. There was thick mud in the road, and it was cut up by wheel-tracks. But Wharton had not practised as a scout for nothing.

"There's not been a trap by here for some time," he said, as he rose. "Those wide tracks are a market-cart's, and, you see, they've gone over the other tracks, excepting those of the motor that just passed. A market-cart was the last thing on the road. We can see half a mile of the road, and there's no market-cart in sight, so it's at least a quarter of an hour since it passed here. So no trap has passed here for a quarter of an hour, at least. Ponsonby couldn't have done it fast enough to get here a quarter of an hour ago. So he hasn't passed yet."

"Bravo!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "That's what scout-craft does for you."

"That's right enough!" said Squiff. The Australian junior examined the muddy road, and nodded. "Right as rain! We're ahead of Pon."

"Take cover, and wait!" said Harry. "We don't want to give him a chance of dodging us."

"What-ho!"

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The three juniors hurried into a clump of trees by the roadside. From that cover, they watched the road, unseen themselves. They were still panting; but it did not take them long to recover from the effects of the hard run. They were sound in wind and limb. But as they waited they went through exercises with imaginary dumb-bells, to keep a chill from stealing upon them. Now that they were not running, their scanty garb was but a poor protection against the wind.

But they had not long to wait.

Five minutes after they had taken cover, there was a rattle of wheels on the road, a jingle of harness.

They looked out cautiously from cover, with gleaming eyes.

Down the road a trap came bowling merrily, driven by Ponsonby, with Vavasour sitting on the big box in the trap, and Gadsby following on his bike. The three Highcliffians were grinning, evidently without the slightest suspicion that their retreat had been cut off. Ponsonby & Co. could not have made that hard run across country to save their lives, and they did not dream that the chums of Greyfriars had done it, or, indeed, were capable of it.

But they were soon to make the discovery. As the trap came abreast of the clump of trees, three active figures leaped out into the road.

Before Ponsonby knew what was happening, Squiff was at the horse's head, and had dragged the animal to a halt.

Wharton and Bob Cherry rushed at the trap.

"By gad!" gasped Vavasour, his eyes almost starting from his head. "Those Greyfriars rotters! It's—it's m-magic!"

Ponsonby, gritting his teeth, lashed out savagely with the whip at Squiff. But the Australian junior held on grimly to the horse.

And Ponsonby had no time for more than a couple of cuts. Wharton and Bob were clambering into the trap.

Vavasour put up a very feeble resistance, and was pitched out, neck and crop, into the road. Ponsonby clubbed the whip, and struck out fiercely, but Bob Cherry's knuckles caught him on the point of the chin, and he went backwards into the trap, sprawling over the box, yelling.

"Yah! Oh!" roared Ponsonby. "Back up, Gaddy! Back up, Vav!"

But the chief of the nuts called in vain. Gadsby was speeding on towards Highcliffe on his bike, and Vavasour was following as fast as his legs could carry him. Ponsonby was deserted, even as he had deserted Monson and the rest an hour before. In the grasp of two pairs of hands, he was whirled out of the trap, and dumped down in a puddle.

"Looks like a Greyfriars win, after all," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Hang you!" stuttered Ponsonby. "How did you get here, you rotters?"

"Trotted!" chuckled Bob. "Shanks' pony, old man! We'll borrow this trap for a bit, if you don't mind. Do you mind?"

"Hang you!"

"Gimme that whip," said Squiff. "He was very liberal with it; I should imagine he would like a taste of it himself."

"Yaroooh!" roared Ponsonby, jumping clear into the air as the lash curled round his legs. "Yow-ow-ow! You beast—yaroooh—stop it!"

"Run, you beggar—run!" chuckled Squiff, lashing away. "It's all right; this is only what you were giving me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby dodged the lash and ran for Highcliffe. Squiff pursued him a dozen yards, cracking the whip. Then he returned, grinning, to the trap.

"We'd better clear off," he remarked. "Pon will be back with a horde of the rotters if we stay here."

"The others don't seem to be coming on," remarked Bob, with a glance back across the heath. "Anyway, they'll come to the school. Let's get going. We can't scrap with twenty Highcliffe rotters!"

"Right-ho!"

The three juniors climbed into the trap, and Wharton took the reins. The vehicle bowled away cheerily for Greyfriars.

"And here's the giddy box of mystery!" said Bob Cherry, thumping the nailed-up case. "Here it is, safe and sound! We'll have a feed to celebrate our victory when we get it open!"

And in great spirits the victorious Removites drove up to the school gates.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Secret Out at Last!

"I SAY, you fellows!" It was Billy Bunter again. The fat junior was at the gates, waiting and watching like Sister Anne. "Got it?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, good!" Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. "Ripping! Hadn't the rotters opened it? Hurrah!"

"Have the other fellows come in?" asked Harry.

"Yes; they're all in. Toddy's limping, and Brown was smothered with mud," grinned Bunter. "Smithy had hurt his ankle, and he crawled home. He seems to be rather in a temper. He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Franky!" Nugent came hurrying down to the gates. "Lend a hand with this box, Frank."

"Hurrah!" chortled Nugent.

The colonel's box was lifted out of the trap. Wharton called Gosling out of his lodge. The trap was handed over to the porter, to be sent back to the livery stables in Courtfield, where the Caterpillar had hired it; Gosling cheerfully undertaking the task in consideration of certain coins of the realm—conveniently putting aside his principles on the subject for the nonce.

Then the chums of the Remove joyously bore the box across the quadrangle to the School House. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Johnny Bull came to lend a hand at carrying it in. As the Famous Five bore it up to the landing, Temple and Dabney and Fry met them. Temple & Co. looked at the box, and looked at the Famous Five, with feelings too deep for words.

"So you've got it?" gasped Temple at last.

"The gotfulness is terrific, my esteemed Temple."

"Looks like it!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Let Temple have it, you fellows—"

"What?"

"On the waistcoat!" explained Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yoop!" roared Temple, as the Famous Five marched on, and the end of the box came into violent contact with his chest. "You silly asses— Oh, my hat!"

Temple sat down suddenly, and the chums of the Remove marched cheerily on. The box was borne triumphantly into No. 1 Study, and planked down on the table.

Billy Bunter bustled in after the Famous Five, his eyes glistening, his very spectacles seeming to glitter with excitement.

"Got a chisel?" he chirruped. "Got a hammer! Try the poker! Get it open! I'm hungry—fearfully hungry—famished, in fact! What are you fellows wasting time for? Smash it open, I tell you!"

But the juniors did not heed Bunter. The Owl of the Remove chafed with impatience as Bob Cherry fetched a chisel and a hammer from the tool-chest in his study. Then the box was started upon. Bang! Bang! Bang!

Crack! Crack! Creak!

The strongly-nailed lid was prised up at last. The juniors dragged the wooden slips away. Straw packing was revealed inside.

"What the merry dickens!" ejaculated Bob in surprise. "They don't generally pack tuck in straw, do they?"

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"Perhaps it isn't tuck!" smiled Wharton.

"Oh, my hat! Fancy Temple and those Highcliffe bounders fagging themselves after this box if there's no tuck in it!"

"It is tuck!" roared Bunter. "It must be tuck! I know it's tuck! It simply must be tuck! I'm hungry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton dragged out the straw packing. It was very thick and close, and there was a great deal of it. Then there was thick tissue-paper packing. With growing surprise, the juniors dragged it out. Then Wharton's hand came in contact with something hard.

"What the dickens—"

He dragged it out. The remnants of the packing fell away from it, and it was revealed.

"A—a—a kik-kik-kik-cup!" stammered Bob Cherry.

It was a tall, handsome silver cup, evidently a football cup. The chums of the Remove gazed at it blankly. Wharton had wondered what might be in the box, but he had never dreamed of this.

"A footer cup!" he gasped.

"A footer cup! Oh, my only sainted aunt!"

There was a yell of wrath from William George Bunter. It was only too clear now that there was no "tuck" in the precious box.

"Yah! It's a swindle! Yah!"

"There's a note tied on it," said Nugent.

Harry Wharton opened the letter. It was written in his uncle's hand.

"Dear Harry,—This is the little surprise I mentioned to you. I wish the cup to be put up for competition among the junior Forms of Greyfriars—Shell, Fourth, Remove, and Third. I have already consulted the Head on the matter, and he has kindly consented to present the cup to the winning team.—Your affectionate uncle,

"JAMES WHARTON."

Harry Wharton's eyes glistened.

"Isn't he a brick?" he exclaimed. "Isn't it stunning? Fancy his thinking of us like that while he was only home for a few days from the Front! Isn't he a brick?"

"The brickfulness is terrific!"

"Hooray!"

No. 1 Study rang with the cheer the Famous Five gave. The chums of the Remove gazed upon the handsome cup in great delight. That the Remove team would win it in the competition they had little doubt—or, rather, no doubt at all. That remained to be seen, however. It was certain that Hobson & Co. of the Shell, at least, would give them a severe tussle for it. But there was the cup—the Colonel's Cup—as handsome a trophy as any within the walls of Greyfriars! No wonder the juniors cheered the kind old soldier who had planned that surprise for them.

There was one discontented voice. Football cups and football competitions did not appeal to Billy Bunter in the least. He blinked at the cup in speechless wrath for some moments.

"Oh, isn't it rotten?" he gasped at last. "I say, you fellows, I'm going to have my whack, all the same. Look here, it's all rot about competing for that cup! The best thing, under the circumstances, is to sell it at once, and whack out what we get for it. What do you say?"

Harry Wharton & Co. said nothing. They acted. Billy Bunter departed from No. 1 Study with five boots behind him, and his voice was heard no more. Then the Famous Five sat down to a merry tea, and to plan the rules of the forthcoming competition for the Colonel's Cup.

THE END.

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The Rubies of Sheba.

- - By - -

EDWIN WOOTON

THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF A GREAT NEW SERIAL STORY OF MYSTERY AND ADVENTURE.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

MR. DELAVILLE, formerly chief cashier at the GREAT SOUTHERN BANK, is under suspicion, owing to the fact that the RUBIES OF SHEBA, gems of immense value, which were placed in the bank's keeping, are missing.

TOM HERWARD, a junior clerk at the bank—to whom, with his sister Dora, Delaville is acting as guardian—determines to sift the matter out to save his guardian from disgrace.

A chart is discovered showing the whereabouts of a treasure, of which the missing rubies originally formed a part.

Tom and his chum, Will Sallowby, set out on a ship in charge of Captain Boyton to find the treasure.

They reach the island where the treasure is hidden, and, after an interview with the natives thereon, decide to run their ship up a river leading to the treasure-trove.

(Now go on with the story.)

The River of Mystery.

The sun had been blazing mercilessly from a cloudless sky. Now from the horizon there crept upwards faint cloudy hazes, growing more darkly grey, then coppery, and piling themselves soon into masses that in places were black. A breeze, fitful, warm, stifling rather than refreshing, ruffled the sea. Boyton cast more than one anxious look at the sky.

"I doubt if we shall round the bluff in time to escape it," he said.

"Escape what?" questioned Blake.

"The storm. Anyway, we must try. This is the weather side of the island, and if the storm breaks we shall be driven ashore. Oh, you landmen! How can I tell you the way to trim those sails? Here, Tom, take the helm, and keep it just so."

By the time the brig was off the bluff, the waves were running high. The breeze, no longer fitful, had become a shrieking gale. Then, almost as suddenly as the brig put her nose past the bluff, the storm seemed to have passed.

Cliffs, cliffs, cliffs! Always lofty, always as if smoothly chiselled. Cliffs rising from out the water; cliffs overhanging, yet not a fragment of which appeared to have ever fallen. Hard, repellent-looking cliffs, gloomy always, terrifying now in the gathering blackness of the sky.

"We must anchor," said Boyton. "This little weather disturbance will not be over before moonrise. I wish there were an inlet, or piece of shallow water. Practically, we are on a mountain side here."

"Look yonder!" said Tom, pointing.

Boyton peered.

"It is an inlet," he said.

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The brig was nearing it rapidly—a creek some hundred yards wide, between rocks, mountainous on the one side, and on the other but a few feet in height, and these passing in turn to low-lying land.

"It must be the creek!" said Tom.

Skilfully and neatly, as if handling a yacht on the Thames, the sailor brought the brig between the threatening rocky sentinels, and so into the channel of the creek; but even as he did so, and the little anchor was cast, he uttered an exclamation of dismay, for the hawser snapped, and the brig bore rapidly onwards past threatening bluffs to what appeared a sheer mass of rock, but which at a turn in the stream revealed itself as a huge cavernous opening, black as night.

Something in the appearance of that huge rocky opening struck cold horror to the hearts of those who saw it. What terrific forces of Nature had so ripped the towering granite hills? Grotesquely enough, it had somewhat the shape of a mouth. From the arched upper border there projected jagged masses that one could imagine to be teeth. It was as if some titanic monster were swallowing the waters of the ocean.

Instinctively the adventurers sought to bring the brig to, but she was carried like a cork on a swift rivulet. The small anchor of the brig had been only half hauled; it lay over the bows. Boyton slipped the cable, and it ran out. The brig went on, the cable came taut, held for an instant, then snapped like a piece of string, and the brig sped forward into the yawning blackness.

So lofty was the opening that the masts did not touch the arch. Tom made a frantic effort with a boathook to clutch the rocky side near where he stood, and nearly went overboard for his pains. Before they could do anything, or think of anything likely to stay their course, the adventurers were in total darkness.

And now to the horror of this was added a rumbling roar that held a terrifying threat of something worse. Boyton stood by the wheel, although he had no possibility of steering. The noises became louder with each passing second. And now upon darkness and roar there came heat, a clammy, bath-like heat that opened every pore. The air was like steam.

Tom groped his way to where the lantern had been placed. His hands were wet; his clothing was soaked; but his box of matches was in a weathertight rubber pouch, and, using infinite care, he managed to light the lantern. As its rays flashed to the one side and the other, above and below, the adventurers positively gasped.

Walls and roof were black and red, as if charred. Below, the waters ran like a mill-race. Rocky masses were viewable in one instant, and thirty yards behind in the next. The

SOMETHING STUPENDOUS COMING! WATCH THE "BOYS' FRIEND." SOMETHING STUPENDOUS COMING!

roof ran straight, but the walls increased in height, and as the explanation flashed on Tom, he said hoarsely:

"We are descending!"

Descending to what? Descending to the world's interior? It seemed so, for as at one moment the craft came near one side of the passage Tom's hand touched the rock, and he withdrew it with a cry of pain. The rock was hot.

And then for one brief moment, as the channel made a curve, the black night of the tunnel was illuminated by a dull-red glow, and the air became charged with sulphurous vapours. And from now on, during some ten seconds, there came a din, compared with which the roar and rumble of a hundred traction-engines would be as silence. The rocks seemed to quiver under huge blows, and some glimmering sense of the awful reality came upon the adventurers when through a gap in one wall they saw, amid the red light of the interior, a mighty mass of rock cast upwards and fall as a ball that is thrown in the air.

And now there came another noise—a hissing, yet not like that of steam. The air cooled suddenly. The craft was speeding like an arrow. Only one cry came from Tom—a warning, instinctive cry—"Grip!" And with the word he flung himself on the deck, with his feet braced against the bulwarks, and his fingers clutching an iron ring.

Down, down, down! An avalanche of water beating down upon the frail timbers, the quivering bodies, and smashing like matchwood the deckhouse and mast. Down, down, down, with the knowledge that the thing to which they clung was being hurled one way, and another, turned over and over, far in the depths of some world of battling waters. Then light, air, warmth, and silence, save for the carolling of a bird.

The adventurers opened their eyes.

Had they passed through the gates of death? Such half-formed delusions sped as they took in the material character of their surroundings. The brig's deck had been swept of everything save its living occupants. The craft was water-logged, but it floated on a placid stream, with its bows cosily wedged into a bank of soft earth, and its port side so close to another bank, smooth, mossy, flower-spangled, that Tom stepped ashore.

"So one is alive!" gasped Blake.

"I should imagine that two are, unless you prefer being called dead. I'll go better, and say that four are." This as Will and Boyton began to disentangle themselves.

"The craft isn't moving," said Will, as if making a discovery.

"Where are we?" came from Blake wonderingly.

"Heaven only knows where we are now. Five minutes ago I thought we had arrived in Hades," said Boyton.

"But this isn't daylight, nor moonlight. What is it?" broke out Tom excitedly. "Look—look!" And he pointed upwards.

Truly, it was enough to stupefy.

Imagine, in place of a sky, a roof distant some hundreds of yards, thrice loftier than the world's loftiest cathedral; a roof with down-hanging points of crystal, and dark cavernous hollows, and masses of rock—or whatever it was—like giant carvings; a roof without one suggestion of a world lying outside; and then, between this roof and the floor on which they stood, a faintly greyish atmosphere, as if thrown by tinted globes; and then, lower still, an undulating stretch of land, through which ran a sinuous streak, and in the far distance a mass of purple-greyish light, like some glorious setting sun.

"Where are we?" repeated Blake. Then, exultingly: "Oh, that we should live to see it! We are in the Underworld—the Underworld that men think a myth! Why, this is grander than any emperor's domain on the broad earth!"

Boyton swung round upon the speaker.

"You are not telling me seriously that we are in the earth's interior?"

"We certainly are there. We can be nowhere else. Ask Tom and Will."

Will had moved away. Now he turned and pointed.

"We came from there, where you see those swirling eddies," he said.

"And where are we going?"

The question was put by Tom. His face was thoughtful.

"Forward," answered Blake. "What! Would you wish yourself away from what the scientists of the world would give their lives to find?"

"Yes, we will go forward," put in Tom. "What do you say, Will?"

"We can't very well go backward, so far as I can see."

Their way led almost parallel with the bank of the stream. The latter was of considerable width, for in places the further shore almost passed out of sight. Here and there obstacles in the form of rock or bushes made them come right down upon the stream margin. On one such occasion Tom cried:

"Halt!"

"What is it?" asked Boyton.

Tom pointed to the stones near the water. Lying there, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 415.

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bleached and broken, but still recognisable, were human bones.

Blake went forward and picked up a skull.

"A man's!" he said, with the confidence of one who knows. "It is the skull of a man of middle age and fairly high intelligence."

"Then the place has been visited before!" said Tom.

"Visited! If the visitors took return tickets, they didn't use them. Look yonder! Why, the river shore is covered with bones."

"The place must be inhabited," said Tom.

"I don't see any 'must' about it," Will remarked. "It's just as likely that those bones belonged to some poor sailors who got swept into the creek and came out less fortunately than ourselves."

Barely had the words been said than Tom's voice came commandingly:

"Down! Flat as you can make yourselves; and creep behind those bushes. I hear paddles!"

There was not one heart among the four that did not throb a little more forcefully in those moments of watching and waiting. What were these beings moving upon the solemn waters of mystery? Were they indeed human?

And now the sound of the paddles became audible to all, and with it a weird, plaintive, semi-musical sound, as of voices mourning.

Had their lives depended on their not doing so, the companions would have raised their heads to gaze. They felt they must see what there was to be seen. They must look upon this unknown people. And then, in a moment, they saw.

Coming slowly round a bend in the river was a craft shaped like the body of a swan, some thirty feet in length, with the neck and head perfectly proportioned to the body, the neck being curved in the manner of a swan's when swimming.

The boat was deckless, and had cross seats, upon which sat rowers, whose long oars protruded through openings in the sides of the craft. Above this part of the boat was a kind of platform on high supports, and on the platform lay something that seemed to have been draped in purple cloth.

On either side of it two people knelt, whether men or women our friends could only guess. They were dark as Southern Europeans, and had long hair, jet-black in hue. They were clad in flowing garments, also of purple, and every now and again as they broke into a plaintive wailing they rent their garments, as if in real or simulated grief.

Behind the group stood a tall man, clad in pure white, with a yellow, metallic circlet round his brow.

The boat came nearer and yet nearer. Now it was opposite the hiding-place of our friends. Tom craned forward. He was a true student, and he knew that he was seeing just what had been seen in old Egypt when Moses was a babe. And then, just as the eager lad was gently pressing aside a branch to get a clearer view, his knee slipped, and the revolver he held exploded.

On the instant every rower seemed paralysed. The report had rung out just as the long oars had been raised from the water. They remained suspended. The mourners ceased their wailing. Every face on the boat, including that of the white-robed man, expressed intense astonishment. And now, as a mourner pointed to where the faint vapour from the discharged revolver still drifted, every head was bowed.

Not a word had been said by Tom's companions. Angry reproof would have done no good; words of regret would not have remedied matters. Each one of the four felt that the mishap had brought things to a climax. Something would happen; what it might be they could not guess.

But the almost uniform behaviour of these people enlightened them.

"They take it as supernatural," said Blake, in a whisper.

The white-robed man raised one hand and seemed to speak. The rowers turned the prow of the boat to the shore. As it touched land the man descended, first to the boat interior, and then by way of the prow to the ground.

Now he prostrated himself.

"What, in the name of Gemini, are we to do?" gasped Will.

"Obey orders!" flashed back Tom. "Follow me in single file, and then stand ready for action, in line, while I interview that gentleman."

Holding his revolver, Tom strode forward. When some twenty feet from the prostrate man, he stopped, raised his cap, and smiled. Until that moment he had not been aware whether the cap, a tightly-fitting one of flannel, was still on his head or had been lost in that awful experience in the waters.

Tom's good sense told him that it would not pay in the

long run to assume the character of supernatural visitants, and that any dramatic assumption of majesty would be mischievous.

Possibly it was the smile that did the trick. It was an honest smile, for the idea of any rational being prostrating himself before Blake, Boyton, and company struck Tom as comical.

Tom bent forward. The prostrate man momentarily raised his head, and then seemed to bury his face in the earth.

Tom went to his side, stooped, took one hand of the stranger, and gently motioned him to rise.

The other obeyed.

And the two stood there, looking at one another; one of them a man who might have stepped out of a street in old Thebes some four thousand years ago, the other a twentieth century Englishman.

Again good sense guided Tom.

He pointed to his companions, and then at the far part of the river, trying to convey by signs that they had come from the upper world by that way.

The eyes of the white-clad man no longer expressed fear. They suddenly blazed with excitement. He ran one hand gently over Tom's cloth-clad form, looked into his eyes, and then touched wonderingly the barrel of the revolver. Then he pointed eagerly to Blake, Boyton, Will, and Tom himself, touched his own breast, and looked a question.

Tom nodded.

"He asks whether we are beings like themselves, and I have told him yes," he explained.

"Then I call it a confounded piece of cheek on your part," said Will. "I don't know but what I'll bring an action for libel."

Tom touched his own chest, and spoke his name. Then he did the same by his companions. Lastly he touched the stranger.

"Menathon," responded the other.

"That's strange, to begin with," said Blake. "The name has a Greek sound."

"Ask him why they're having this little beanfeast," suggested Will.

Menathon understood the signs made by Tom. The answer came dramatically enough. First, the man pointed to the purple-draped, recumbent figure, and then to the bones on the river-shore.

"A funeral," said Tom.

"Oh, I guessed that!" said Blake. "But why here, I wonder?"

Now Menathon pointed to the far distance where the purple light rayed out.

"He asks whether we wish to go there," said Tom. "But at this rate we shall not acquire a knowledge of the language very quickly. I want to learn all about this terra incognita."

As the Latin phrase known to every schoolboy was spoken. Menathon started. Then he broke into speech.

"What language is that—Esperanto or double Dutch?" Will asked, without addressing anyone in particular.

No one replied. Tom seemed to think for a second or two; then stumbly, and with a relentless murder of grammar that would have broken a classical master's heart, he spoke a sentence in Latin.

Menathon's brows narrowed. He seemed puzzled. Then he smiled, nodded, and replied, picking his words, and speaking slowly, as when one speaks English to a foreigner who is weak in the tongue.

Tom clapped his hands.

"Splendid!" he cried. "I can understand quite a lot of what he says. The name of the country is Kamathon. That mass of purple light yonder is Kamurba. It isn't pure Latin that he talks, but a sort of mixture."

All four of the friends were at it now, jabbering their mutilated, half-forgotten Latin, puzzling their interlocutor, and getting puzzled in turn, but learning much; and this—chief of all other things—the place was indeed the Underworld, for the very existence of the upper world was a matter of controversy.

"Indeed, of the most bitter controversy," said Menathon, with emphasis.

"But surely you as a race have a history, and that must tell you that people live on the earth's surface?" said Blake.

"Strangers," returned Menathon, "there is an old tradition that, about sixty lives ago, there reigned in a far land a cruel king named Nero. At that time there were many who worshipped a divine being, known as the Christus, and Nero caught these people, and put them to torture, and the death, where they were torn by wild beasts. And certain of these worshippers of the Christus became wrath, and planned to escape from where Nero held sway.

"Now, one of them was a man who sailed the waters, and

had his vessel at Alexandria. He was an Egyptian—so the name runs—doubtless an invented name; he was joined by others who had come from a holy city, and these brought with them what they deemed to be wondrous riches—stones of blue, and red, and green—given by a queen to a king many lives before. And others they brought—even from Nero's own city.

"And the ship sailed, and sailed far over many waters, until a great violence arose—something strange to us—that destroyed the ship. And thereafter they who had sailed were cast upon a rock, and, venturing again upon waters, were brought hither by the way you say you have come."

Tom turned to his companions.

"Did you follow his words?" he asked feverishly. "He has given the history of the fugitives' expedition almost as told on the parchment."

Menathon went on:

"Those who believe this story point to the blue, and green, and red stones—for such we have—and to things wrought in metal, as proofs. Others there are—and these are the most learned—who laugh such teaching to scorn. Well, men have many gods, and many creeds, and it would ill become me to say what was true and what false."

"I see light," said Will. "The ancestors of these people were Romans and Egyptians and Jews by blood, and the old national faiths have gained strength, and formed a mongrel-mixture. We shall have to tread warily, or we shall be upon someone's corns."

"Always we pay tribute of the dead," continued Menathon. "Often, also, of the living. We were taking the body of a priest of Paulus to near the unsearchable way"—pointing whence the companions had come. "Our task is no longer needed. We return to Kamurba. Will you deign to be my guests?"

Tom was on the point of accepting, for no other course seemed open, when Will put in:

"I don't want to spoil anyone's enjoyment of this picnic, but between ourselves I wouldn't trust our friend here with sixpence while he went round the corner to get change. He is some sort of mongrel priest. Did you twig about the 'priest of Paulus'? They have made the apostles into pagan gods. Take my word for it, if we stand in his light, he'll snuff ours out!"

"Yet we must go," said Boyton, with emphasis. "We need food. Why, in this place, and until we get to know it, we are helpless."

"That's so," said Blake. "It must be 'Forward all!' Keep our powder dry. Let 'em believe what silly rot they like. Look peaceful, act peaceably, learn whatever we can, and set before us the great aim of getting back to the upper world with whatever we can lay our hands on. Those confounded Byzantine gems got us into this hole; we are not going out of it unless we take a few like 'em."

"Right!" shouted the others, in chorus, for they all knew the words to have vital import.

As the boat bore the companions nearer and nearer to the distant purple haze, the latter revealed itself in all the glory of lofty towers and huge, palace-like buildings; others were more delicately structured. In fact, the city seemed, as Will put it, to be a mixture of old Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, and Thebes. Yet it was a glorious whole, for the buildings were of a pale pinkish stone.

And now, too, they saw why the city had seemed alight. It was because from towers innumerable there rayed out a subdued, steady glow. Menathon explained that these were called the "Light Towers," and that each carried a huge lamp which burned a kind of vapour taken from the earth.

More than once during the journey, which lasted about four hours, the white-robed man seemed on the point of saying something that he had been mentally debating. Now he turned to Tom, as being the best Latin scholar present, and remarked meaningly:

"Knowledge gives great power!"

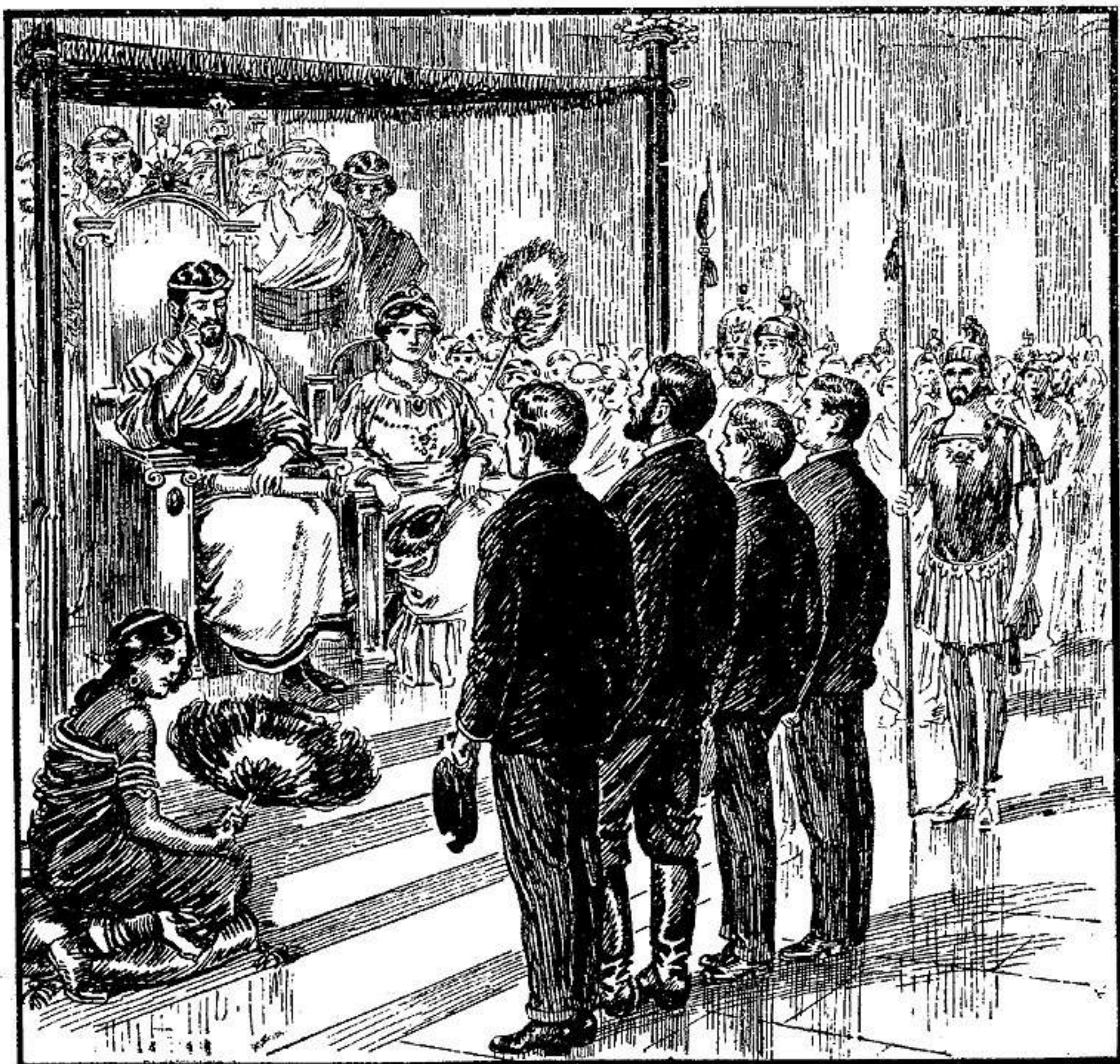
Tom merely nodded. He did not care for truisms.

"And power is not good for the masses," went on the other. "I who speak to you am a priest of two gods—Paulus and Adonis—most respectable gods both of them. As you see, a city has been builded. Well, they were priests who designed it, priests who designed the engines that raised the stones.

"Whatever laws, and whatever learning we have here, are due to priests. Of your world I have no knowledge, but if you go to the king yonder, and to his people, and tell them that you are merely men, and give them of your knowledge, you will undermine all our priestly power. Above all, do not sneer at our gods."

"How many have you?" asked Tom solemnly.

"Let me see"—and Menathon began to tick them off on his fingers—"Juno, Solomon, Adam, Enoch, Paulus, Apollo, Ananias—"



"Tell me," said the king, in a drawling but not unpleasant voice, "what ye are, whence ye come, and why ye are garbed thus?" "You had better be spokesman, Tom," said Boyton. (See page 27.)

Tom stifled a laugh.

"Oh, about forty of them altogether. There'll be forty-four now that you have arrived."

"If you add Ally Sloper, Charlie Chaplin, and 'the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo,' the list will be complete," said Will, in his native tongue.

Now the boat was almost at the landing-stage. Marble steps could be seen running down to the level of the water. Upon what seemed to be a jetty built of pinkish stone, a crowd had gathered. It was added to moment by moment; then some seemed to wave excitedly to others, and presently there sounded a loud blare as of trumpets, the crowd was parted by the swishing wands of two men robed in scarlet, behind whom appeared a third man, holding aloft a sort of standard wrought in gold-coloured metal; behind whom again came a fourth man, clad in garments of jet-black, with deep amber yellow sweeping from the right shoulder to the left hip, in manner of a sash.

"Is that his Sunday get-up?" questioned Will.

"A great man," went on Menathon. "Not a priest, but still a great man. He has wonderful influence over the king. It may be that through him you will be accorded an interview with the chief butler, and that you may be even allowed to see the king himself."

"Is there anything peculiar about him?" asked Will.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 415.

NEXT
MONDAY— "FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"

"He is the king."

"Oh, I see! Is that all? I thought there might be something more serious the matter with him."

"Who and what are the captives? They appear in strange guise," said the cup-bearer.

The boat had now touched the jetty steps. Menathon sprang ashore. He whispered eagerly to the man robed in black and amber, who, in turn, stared at the new-comers incredulously.

"Be you from far or near," broke out the cup-bearer presently, "I will warrant that the mighty King Pontius will be pleased to see you. Nay, I will take it on myself to find you resting-places in the royal palace itself. Ho, there, beat back these cattle!"

The command was to the carriers of the swishing wands.

Pontius the King.

And now an incident occurred that largely determined the fate of our friends.

On the journey up the river they had more than once seen the protruding snouts of giant saurians among the weed-covered river margins.

Another Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. Order the "Magnet" in advance.

And during the past few minutes they had noticed more than one of these repulsive reptiles in the ooze of the bank.

As may be supposed, the crowd had by this time thickened. As its members were driven back under the whirling blows given by the wand-carriers, a woman stumbled, and in doing so trod on the foot of a savage-looking giant, clad in armour.

The man roared something at the unfortunate creature, dragged from her arms an infant she was carrying, and hurled it to where two crocodiles lay. Tom's blood went cold, and then it boiled. Not thinking of ultimate consequences, he flung his revolver full at the giant, causing him to stagger backwards.

While this incident was taking place other actors in the tragedy were playing their parts. The woman had leaped into the water, the crocodiles had turned to seize their prey. Will's revolver had gone up. There rang out two closely-following reports. The reptiles, struck in the most tender part of their almost bullet-proof bodies—the snout—darted away, and the mother having scrambled and floundered to where her child lay, seized it, and waded to the shore.

For some seconds there was an almost breath-suspended silence. Then from some scores of throats broke out the exultant cry: "Gods! Gods! The true gods have come to us, to confound the false ones!" But from another section of the crowd there rose a shout of rage and execration—and there came shrieks of "Demons! Demons! They have slain the sacred ministers of Nilo!"

Taking from his girdle a quaintly-shaped whistle of yellow metal, Menathon blew on it thrice. Not one soul present save these four strangers had ever heard that thrice-made command without obeying it. Would it serve now?

The crowd became sullenly passive.

Then the voice of Menathon rang out:

"Citizens of Kamurba. All of you have been taught how of old our people came from above the firmament of heaven. It is from there also these great beings have come. They are here by my wish, and as my guests. They have no desire to destroy our gods. Be at peace! The gods themselves have sent them. The knowledge of these beings is very great, and their power is very mighty; but it is only through me that they will speak to you, for I alone can understand them. I, Menathon, priest of the dead, say this to you."

With this the speaker made a gesture of command, and the crowd drew back in awe.

"Did you ever know such cheek!" voiced Will, who, like his friends, had roughly gathered the meaning of Menathon's words.

"I see his drift," said Blake. "He wants us to be dependent on him for the goodwill of the people, and the people to be dependent on him for whatever we have to convey. Everything must pass through him, as a sort of human exchange. In other words, he means to exploit us for the increase of his personal greatness."

Menathon beckoned the companions.

"Single file, and I lead!" said Tom. With these words he stepped from the boat.

At the moment of his doing so there came from somewhere in the throng a man with a stature of a dwarf, and a head large enough for a giant. He was clad in a kind of burlesque of military, court, and priestly costume. A wooden sword was thrust into a loop of his girdle.

This strange creature stepped directly in front of Tom, and addressed him:

"How now? What is it they say you and your companions are? Gods! Poor wretches! Poor wretches! Then ye must be made of stone, or wood, or clay, like all the other gods. They stand in a row in the temple yonder, and never a wink or a word from any one of them from generation to generation. But appetites! Oh, their appetites! They are eating up the land. Yet they grow no fatter; 'tis their priests do that."

All this was said in a jeering tone, while the huge head swayed from side to side.

"Silence there, Patho! Play the buffoon, if you will; but leave sacred things alone."

The words came from Menathon sharply.

As the dwarf fell back, with a shrill, derisive laugh, a woman pushed her way forward. She was wet, and mud-stained; in her arms she held a young infant. Not a word passed her lips, but she fixed her eyes on the two boys for some seconds, then moved again into the throng.

There now came suddenly a loud clang, as of cymbals, followed by a blare of trumpets, and a burst of martial music. Away in the near distance could be seen glittering helmets, spears, and breastplates. Will looked on with parted lips as the warriors came on. Old Egypt, and Greece, and all-conquering Rome seemed to have met here. At the head of the marching soldiers strode a tall, armoured figure, with the skin of some wild beast depending from his left shoulder.

Menathon went forward, and bowed gravely.

"Greeting, captain of the guard!" he said.

"Greeting, priest of Paulus, and Adonis. The ever-glorious Pontius, ruler of the heavens and earth, commands that the men who have arrived shall be brought before him."

Menathon's eyes became cunningly thoughtful.

"I will convey the messengers of Heaven to the palace as soon as I have had them suitably arrayed!" he returned.

"Not so, priest. They are coming now. So these be the fellows! What be they—warriors? Well, their like I never saw!"

Half in derision, half in real wonder, the soldier stood with a grin upon his face. Then as his eyes wandered over one and then another of the companions, they lighted on something suspended from Tom's neck, and visible through his now opened shirt. The grin passed, and with a gasp of incredulity, the soldier stepped nearer.

That which had attracted his attention was a small silver crucifix, exquisitely carved, that had been given our hero by his mother on a day long since past.

So quickly that the priest did not see the movement, the captain of the guard made a sign, and Tom, understanding it, fastened his shirt-front.

Not a word passed the soldier's lips. With the stony air of one who merely fulfils a duty, he motioned the companions forward. The ranks opened; then they closed. In front, behind, and on either side were armed men. To all intents and purposes, the companions were prisoners.

It may be asked why they did not at this stage of their adventures refuse to go to the palace. Why they did not take their stand, and fight for liberty. Had they done so, it would have been only a question of time before they were conquered.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Wondering looks askance from the dark-skinned warriors at these fair strangers; shouts of surprise from citizens gathered on flat house-roofs; then a broad roadway with massive buildings on either side; and now a huge gateway, a great courtyard, with a pavement of many colours, a lofty and wide flight of steps, a mighty doorway guarded by giant warriors; and then—a vision!

Yes, it seemed a vision. Pillars of various coloured marbles were on every hand. From above, where a lofty roof showed fantastic carvings, there hung many globes, each raying out its

The School Bell.



Arthur Selby. Long Jacks. Elsie Whittle. Edna Selby. Joe Peters. Harold Pettibone.

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CHIPS

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 415.

SOMETHING STUPENDOUS COMING! WATCH THE "BOYS' FRIEND." SOMETHING STUPENDOUS COMING!

light of delicate purple. The walls were of carved stone, the carvings representing real or legendary battle scenes.

Standing about this vast chamber were resplendently-dressed soldiers, and priests, and court officials. But that which magnetized the gaze of our friends lay directly facing them—a canopied throne, seemingly of gold, set upon a platform, or dais, of lapis lazuli, and reached by a flight of steps encrusted with flashing gem-like stones; and upon the throne, reclining at ease, with his head resting on one hand, a swarthy man, clad in scarlet, and amber, and purple, and having about his brow what appeared to be a twisted snake, wrought of gold.

This was Pontius.

Behind him, and on either side of him, stood his great officers of state. Somewhat lower, sat a woman. She, too, wore the singular snake coronet. From neck to feet she was draped in blue. This was Preerphon, the queen.

All these facts were either gathered quickly by eyes used to observe, or were whispered by the captain of the guard as he brought our friends to the steps of the throne.

"Tell me," said the king, in a drawling but not unpleasant voice, "what ye are, whence ye come, and why ye are garbed thus?"

"You had better be spokesman, Tom," said Boyton.

Tom nodded.

"Greeting, Pontius!" he began. "I will say first whence we are, that ye may know why we are here. We are from the surface of the world; the surface lit by the sun in the heavens, and the moon, and the stars, where they have night and day. We came hither, great king, by mere accident, being borne against our will along the river creek that passes from the sea; and we are garbed thus because it is the fashion of our land."

"And what carry ye in your hands?"

"Weapons of war, great king, but brought hither in peace."

Lazily Pontius extended one hand. A court official understood, stepped forward, and courteously enough took hold of the comrades' weapons.

The movements were so pacific that our friends let the weapons go. Pontius looked at the revolver curiously. The queen merely glanced at the one brought her. And now, as the attendants were about to return the weapons to their owners, the king made a sign, and, instead, both weapons were handed to one of the guards.

At another sign all the officials retired out of earshot, the king beckoned the adventurers to approach nearer, and at the same instant several archers ranged near the walls fitted arrows to their bows.

"Have you any further wonder to tell?" asked Pontius lazily.

Something in the tone irritated Tom.

"There is much that might be told, great king," he returned. "Thus, I might tell you of our people—how they travel below the waters, and fly in the air; how our weapons can pierce walls of iron, and our ships can carry more than a thousand men; how we can speak from one end of the world to the other in a few seconds of time; but all this shall come."

Pontius laughed softly.

"You mistake me," he said. "I really wanted truth, not a tale for little children. I suppose you are some sort of buffoon. These tales of an upper world are only for children and the ignorant people. They are priests' tales, meant—and very rightly meant—to prevent their followers' curiosity working mischief. There is no upper world. The sun and the moon are myths—the names of dead gods. Men do not fly, and when below the water they die. We are overburdened with myths. One speaks of our ancestry as coming from a place where red and blue and green stones were so valuable that they were regarded as treasures, and so were brought here."

"Treasures! One can dig them out of the land, and make roads with them. And, as for coming from the fabled creek,

you have your choice. If there is such a creek, then ye have come from a land of half-beasts, who eat one another; and if ye have not, then ye never saw the creek. It is all rude and crude tradition. But I can tell ye whence ye are. Five lives since the land was troubled with a rebellion. Many of the defeated rebels fled through the pass. Ye are descendants of these men; and ye have come here to spy out the land, and help your people to make war."

Tom turned to his friends in disgust.

"Did you ever hear such a wooden-headed sceptic?" he exclaimed. "He thinks we are liars, and were born somewhere in the district!"

"Tell him," said Boyton, "that in two or three days I shall hold in my hands the means of slaying a man at twice the distance of the longest bow. There are some rifles in that brig."

Tom complied.

Pontius yawned.

"Oh, magicians, are you?" he said scoffingly. "Something was said to me of your sending a fireball at the sacred crocodiles. Some of the ignorant rabble were annoyed, I believe, and others rejoiced. You see, they follow different gods. Keep your tales of magic for such cattle!"

"Menathon!" shouted Tom.

He looked for the priest, and saw him near the great doorway.

Menathon approached. He saw things had not turned out well, so he took a bold step.

"Great king," he said, "I crave a boon! Let these men be in my watch and ward!"

Pontius sat erect. Gone was his drawling; gone all the lazy boredom of his manner.

"What!" he cried. "Do you think I would trust you with spies? You, who would upset my throne, if you could, to place on it one of yourselves! To the prison-house with the strangers! Ho! Captain of the guard, Boreus, see you to it! We will question them further some other day—before they die!"

As the command left the king's lips, a score of hands were upon each of the adventurers. Any struggle would have been useless; but had they contemplated making one, the three words whispered by Boreus to Tom, and spoken in English by the latter in turn, would have made them desist:

"Safety in peace!"

It was all they had to depend on for guidance. Tom, more than any of the others, felt their force. He, more than any of the others, wondered. He was thinking of that moment in which the soldier had peered at his bared neck and the sacred symbol.

As, presently, the companions passed through the dark gateway of a massive building, a woman, issuing from a sort of lodge behind a tall, sombrely-clad man jingling a bunch of keys, and holding an infant in her arms, met the gaze of Tom and Will. Now, tiptoeing, she whispered something to the man with the keys.

It was this man who, five minutes later, threw wide the door of a stone-built chamber, and, in a voice like rolling thunder, bade the four friends enter; and it was he who, when the last of the soldiers had disappeared, opened the door again, and said gently:

"There is a debt, strangers. It shall be paid. You avenged the wife of Tra. You saved the infant babe of Tra. It is well!"

(Another long instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy early.)

ON SALE NEXT MONDAY!

**THE GREAT SURPRISE NUMBER
OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d.**

ORDER YOUR COPY TO-DAY!

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:

"FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"

By Frank Richards.

Next Monday's grand long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars describes in vivid fashion how the junior Forms of that famous school do battle for Colonel Wharton's Football Cup. The interference of Mr. Hacker, the unpopular master of the Shell, bids fair to mar the forthcoming contests; and many exciting scenes and many breathless escapades are enacted among the juniors ere the Cup presented by the old Grey Friar is

"FOUGHT FOR AND WON!"

THE BARD OF REPTON BURSTS FORTH!

Jimmy R., of Repton, whose amusing ditties have long delighted the hearts of "Magnet" readers, now warbles forth with the following:

"Thank you, Mr. Editor,
For your ripping treat;
'School and Sport' was 'some' book—
Jolly hard to beat!
Right from start to finish
It was just divine!
Here's to famous Franky—
May he ever shine!

"When I saw that Greyfriars
Won the giddy Cup,
Then I capered wildly,
Like a lively pup!
Mater said, 'He's crazy!'
Pater, 'What's the game?'
If they'd read the story
They'd have done the same!

"As for Phyllis Howell,
She's a charming girl!
When I read her doings
I was in a whirl!
Bring her in the limelight
Often as you can
Don't forget to do so,
Ed., you lazy man!
(Here, steady on! That's libel.—Ed.)

"Yes; the book was topping!
Simply great, I guess!
Do we want another?
Echo answers 'Yes!'
Franky's such a Trojan,
Such a shining star,
Make him write another,
Just for Jimmy R.!"

By the same post that brought Jimmy R.'s effusion to my sanctum, congratulatory letters concerning "School and Sport" were received from the following:

Frank Carney (Glasgow), William Mason (Walsall), "A Thornton Heath Reader," W. Cecil Reid (Belfast), and John McG. (Glasgow), to each of whom I send my sincere thanks.

Regarding my Repton chum's poetic appeal for another threepenny book by the same author, I should like to remind him that Mr. Frank Richards is already considerably overworked, and that he wrote "School and Sport" at a time when he might have been inhaling sea breezes on the coast of Cornwall. It is only fair, therefore, that when Mr. Richards has another week on his hands he should take a

much-needed spell. He has already made many splendid sacrifices in order to entertain my chums, and we mustn't let him have a breakdown in health, or what would become of the "Magnet" Library?

However, I think it is safe to say that another threepenny book story by our famous author will appear in the summer.



A FEAST OF FICTION FOR ALL!

On Monday next the "Boys' Friend" comes of age—that is to say, it celebrates its twenty-first birthday, and, as is only fitting, I have arranged for the appearance of a

GIGANTIC PENNY BUMPER NUMBER,

which every boy in the country should make a special point of purchasing, to show his enthusiasm for a journal which has resolutely weathered the storm since 1895.

First and foremost in the bill of fare is

A SPLENDID COLOURED COVER,

beautifully executed by the famous "Gem" artist, R. J. Macdonald. Then there will be a magnificent Free Plato, entitled

"HIS DEED FOR THE DAY!"

which will appeal to all in general, and British Boy Scouts in particular.

Especially thrilling is the long complete scouting story, entitled

"THE SCOUTMASTER'S HONOUR!"

which deals with the adventures of the Panther Patrol and their rivals of the Cat Patrol.

A new serial story will also commence in this great number. It will be called

"THE SECRET OF THE SEAS!"

By Duncan Storm,

and that it will make a tremendous hit is assured in advance.

There will be many other great features, but I have not sufficient space to enumerate them here in full. "A Tale of Twelve Cities," by Maurice Everard, will be enjoyed by all, and no MAGNET reader can afford to miss Owen Conquest's grand long complete school tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood. The Tom Belcher story, by Arthur S. Hardy, is superb, as is "The Renegade," a story of the three famous comrades, Dan, Bob, and Darkey, by S. Clarke Hook. A special page of Chat by the Editor, and a large selection of Tales to Tell, will go to make up an issue which will astonish the world. Never has such a magnificent pennyworth been offered to the public.

There will be a terrific demand for next week's Bumper Number, and every Magnetite is earnestly advised to

ORDER AT ONCE!

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

L. Smith (Edinburgh).—Many thanks for pointing out error. I intended to say "Rugby Fifteen," of course.

Private A. Smith (Recruiting Staff, Mill Hill).—I am sorry I cannot oblige you with the addresses of those cads who have

(Continued on page iv of Cover.)



JOSEPH QUINN,
Belfast.



"A LOYAL JEWISH CHUM,"
London.



GEORGE SELLARS,
Sheffield.



A KEEN "MAGNET"
READER.



V. DAY,
New Malden.



E. P. GEERE,
Sutton.



THREE STAUNCH "GEMITES."



GORDON BULLOCK,
Cannock.



E. STANLEY,
Pitsmoor, Sheffield.



STANLEY HOOPER,
Notting Hill.



H. PATTERSON,
Islington, London.



FRED THOMAS,
Chiswick, London.



J. E. MINTO,
Cardiff.



E. MORRIS,
Dover.



MISS BERTHA WELLS,
Northfleet.



A. LEFCOVITCH,
London.

REPLIES IN BRIEF (*continued*).

seen fit to slander the companion papers from time to time. Like the Huns, they prefer to do their nefarious work in the dark. Nearly everybody knows that the old, old story about the MAGNET being a "penny blood" is false and ill-founded. Your request that we should publish a boxing story was gratified a fortnight ago, and I hope you enjoyed "Bob Cherry's Challenge."

G. L. (Whitfield).—I think the Herlock Sholmes stories in the "Greyfriars Herald" are too popular to justify my discontinuing them.

James Robson (near Gateshead).—I do not feel disposed to run another Story Competition for some time. I have not yet been able to adjudicate all those submitted in connection with the last contest.

Eddie R. (Montreal).—I have handed your kind suggestions to Mr. Frank Richards, who will doubtless be able to knock them into shape. Many thanks and best wishes.

S. Cowlam (Hartlepool).—I fear it would be quite impossible for me to publish the MAGNET Library twice a week, as you suggest. Do you not read the rest of the companion papers?

James Wright, George Wright, and Walter Bell (Kincardineshire).—Despite the disparity in age, height, and weight, I should say that Bob Cherry is a better boxer than Temple of the Fourth.

H. B. (Walsall).—Levison, having been expelled from Greyfriars, was given another chance, and sent to St. Jim's. The characters mentioned in your letter are fictitious.

O. J. T. (Taunton).—Loder has loomed largely in several stories of late, so I do not think you can accuse Mr. Frank Richards of neglect in this direction. Glad you enjoyed "Bunter the Mashie."

P. G. (Sutton).—I am sorry I cannot give you the information you require. You must use your own discretion.

A. T. (Tufnell Park).—I quite agree that we have had a glut of sporting stories of late, but these are the sort that appeal to the hearts of boys, or I'm a poor Editor. However, I will instruct the "Magnet" and "Gem" authors to moderate their transports for a bit. Good luck to you!

Harold M. (Southsea).—Thank you for your complimentary remarks concerning "School and Sport." With regard to your suggestion, I will do my best for you, but can make no definite promise in the matter. By the way, you never told me what you thought of "The Remove Eleven on Tour," published a few months ago, a chapter of which dealt with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. in Sunny Southsea.

"A Leicester Lad." (Thrushington).—Many thanks for your letter. Now that Tom Merry has knocked out Bob Cherry in the boxing-ring, and vice versa, I trust all my chums are satisfied.

Mark T. (Oxford Street, W.).—Thank you for the splendid work you are doing in popularising the "Greyfriars Herald."

"Some" Magetite" (Bow).—Glad your soldier-brother appreciates the companion papers.

Harry B. (Bethnal Green).—Any bookbinder will be pleased to bind your copies of the "Greyfriars Herald" for you inexpensively.

R. B. (Brentwood).—I certainly do not agree with the action of your landlord, but am afraid you must take it smiling.

A. T. (near Petersfield).—I am not exactly enraptured by your poem, "The Bells." It too closely resembles Edgar Allan Poe's verses of the same name.

"A Loyal Reader" (Barrow-in-Furness).—Many thanks for your letter. Hope your soldier-brother is well on the way to recovery.

A. Careswell (Carshalton).—Thank you very much for your loyalty to my papers. I shall be glad to hear from you at any time.

Joseph W. (Warrington).—Many thanks for the excellent work you are doing on behalf of the "Greyfriars Herald."

"Gaelic" (Scotland).—Sorry, but I have no knowledge of the book you mention.

Harold P. (Canklow).—Quite a lot of my chums seem to like Mark Emlay's story, "The Pride of the Ring." It will become more exciting still as time goes on. Best wishes to your sister Doris and yourself.

"A Delighted Reader" (Middlesbrough).—There is no "Magnet" League in your town. Why not form one yourself?

William Clark (Uddingston).—I hope to reproduce your photograph shortly in the "Magnet" Library.

C. Oliver (Newtown).—Thank you for writing to me again. I hope to announce the result of the Story Competition very shortly. The work of adjudication requires very careful handling.

F. G. Stevens (Wolverhampton).—I hope to use your photograph shortly. Many thanks for your interesting letter.

"Nance" (near Hailsham).—Sorry to hear you failed to receive a supplement with your last Double Number. It must have been detached by some person unknown with malice aforethought. Thanks for your appreciative remarks on the subject of the "Greyfriars Herald."

A. Willins and Chums (Brighton).—Thanks very much for the photograph. I hope to reproduce same shortly.

H. King (Ayr).—Glad you enjoyed "School and Sport." It seems that everybody did. I agree with you that boxing is a splendid recreation.

A. L. R. (Leicester).—The three finest athletes in the Remove Form are, in my opinion, Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Herbert Vernon-Smith. The three richest fellows are Lord Mauleverer, Vernon-Smith, and Johnny Ball.

A. S. (St. George's, E.).—I hope to reproduce the photographs you very kindly sent me. They will appear a few weeks hence.

Maurice S. and Fred C. (Gosport).—Your wisest plan would be to consult your parents.

Sydney G. Fletcher (Cardiff).—I will endeavour to do as you suggest. Best wishes!

Private R. G. M. (Suvla Bay).—Thank you very much indeed for your fine message of appreciation. Glad you enjoyed the "Sunday Crusaders," and hope you will come through your campaign with flying colours.

"A Loyal Magnetite" (Carlisle).—Skinner's reforms seem, in every case, to be a "flash in the pan." I doubt if he will ever become as decent a fellow as Vernon-Smith.

Robert Ashworth.—Your criticisms are duly noted, and I must congratulate you upon the sportsmanlike spirit you have shown. I agree with your request, but it is not fair to the girl readers to introduce too many football tales. Their interest is apt to flag. Very best wishes!

H. L. (Norwich).—You will doubtless have seen by now the result of the competition in question.

Dick F. (Forest Hill).—Your list of the Remove characters is perfectly correct, and I must commend you upon your good memory. Thanks for your praise of "School and Sport." My chums backed it up right royally.

James N. (Preston).—I am glad to hear you got out of your little difficulty all right. Many thanks for your good wishes.

"A Carlisle Lad."—Many thanks for sending me your photograph, which I hope to use shortly.

"Bum" (Birmingham).—Thanks for your letter. I cannot vouch for the genuineness of the advertisements in question.

"A Schoolboy" (co. Antrim).—I am sorry, but I think it will be impossible to continue Squiff's serial, "Exiled from School," which appeared in a supplementary copy of the "Greyfriars Herald."

Donald Carter and Albert Prior (Islington).—The names of British Tommies requiring books appear from time to time on my Weekly Chat page.

Harry J. (Cape Colony).—I shall be happy to do as you suggest.

"A Girl Lover of the Famous Five" (Johannesburg).—Thank you very much for your delightful letter.

Philip M. (Kensington).—The Greyfriars boys won the event you name.

"Pro Italia" (Norwich).—You will hear more of the character you mention before very long.

C. R. (Jersey).—Thank you for your eloquent tribute to "School and Sport." I am glad the companion papers are to your entire satisfaction.

F. T. (Forest Gate).—I shall be pleased to consider your kind suggestion.

J. P. (Walthamstow).—I hope the advisability of ordering in advance has now been fully brought home to you.

"Magnetite" (Failsworth, near Manchester).—Our chapters are not decreasing in length, as you say. Have another look.

"Robin Hood" (Dundee).—A Storyette Competition is having a more or less permanent run in the "Gem" Library.

W. N. C. S. G. (Exeter).—Many thanks for your letter. Glad you enjoyed Mr. Frank Richards' latest threepenny book story.

J. H. Inglis (Leicester).—Thank you for your kind tribute to our stories. The result of the "Magnet" Story Competition will appear very shortly.

Nan J. P. F. and Janie N. D. H. (Kilmarnock).—Many thanks for your most interesting letter.

"Telegraph" (Manchester).—I am afraid it will be impossible for me to do as you suggest, owing to the war.

Amy W. (Sydenham).—Thank you very much indeed for your nice letter and loyal sentiments.

"The Editor, 'The Chums' Weekly'" (Glasgow).—I was very interested in your new venture, and wish it every possible success.

John R. (Port Elizabeth).—Bob Cherry is the finest exponent of fisticuffs in the Famous Five.

Your Editor