

WHEN FRIENDS FALL OUT!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete Tale of School Life at Greyfriars.



AN AWKWARD SURPRISE FOR THE FIGHTERS!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale in this Issue.)

8/6 each



The "LORD ROBERTS" TARGET PISTOL.

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

IF YOU WANT Good Cheap Photographic Material or Cameras, send postcard for Samples and Catalogue FREE.—Works: JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

BLUSHING.

FREE, to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to Mr. D. TEMPLE (Specialist), 39, Maddox Street, Hanover Square, London, W.

100 CONJURING TRICKS. 57 Joke Tricks, 60 Puzzles, 60 Games, 12 Love-Letters, 400 Jokes, 10 Magic Pranks, 52 Money-making Secrets (worth £20) and 1001 more stupendous Attractions. 8d. P.O. the lot.—HUGHES & Co. Station Road, Harborne, Birmingham. Snuffing Powder, 6d. Pkt.

80 MAGIC TRICKS, Illusions, etc., with illustrations and Instructions. Also 40 Tricks with Cards. The lot post free 1/-.—T. W. HARRISON, 239, Pentonville Rd., London, N.

VENTRILOQUISM. Learn this wonderful and laughable art. Failure impossible with our new book of easy instructions and amusing dialogues. Only 7d. (P.O.). Valuable Book on Conjuring (illus.) given free with all our books, for short time.—Ideal Publishing Dept., Clevedon, Som.

RED NOSES permanently and quickly cured. Free advice and particulars of my medically approved treatment to those enclosing stamped envelope. Many testimonials.—H. R. George (Specialist), Old Church Road, Clevedon.

ARE YOU SHORT?

If so, let me help you to increase your height. Mr. Briggs reports an increase of 5 inches; Mr. Hay 2 1/2 inches; Miss Davis 3 1/2 inches; Mr. Lindon 3 inches; Mr. Heck 3 inches; Miss Leedell 1 inch. My system requires only ten minutes morning and evening, and greatly improves the health, physique, and carriage. No appliances or drugs. Send three penny stamps for further particulars and my £100 Guarantee.—ARTHUR GERVAN, Specialist in the Increase of Height, Dept. A.M.P., 17, Stroud Green Rd., London, N.



Real Swiss Lever

WATCHES FREE

Guaranteed 5 years.



A straightforward generous offer from an established firm. We are giving away Watches to thousands of people all over the world as a huge advertisement. Now is your chance to obtain one. Write now, enclosing P.O. 6d. and 4d. stamps for posting expenses, for one of our fashionable Ladies' Long Guards, or Gents' Alberts, to wear with the Watch, which will be given Free should you take advantage of our marvellous offer. We expect you to tell your friends about us and show them the beautiful Watch. Don't think this offer too good to be true, but send 10d. to-day, fulfil simple conditions, and gain a Free Watch. You will be amazed. Colonial Orders 1s.

WILLIAMS & LLOYD, Wholesale Jewellers, Dept. 7, 89, Cornwallis Road, London, N. England.

INCREASE YOUR HEIGHT 3 to 5 inches 7/6

Boys system never fails. Price 7/6 complete. Particulars 1d. stamp. H. ROSS, 73, Church Rd., HENDON, LONDON, N.W.

NEW 3d. STORY-BOOKS NOW ON SALE NEW ADDITIONS TO THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. LIBRARY.

Insist Upon Having
The "Boys' Friend" 3d.
Complete Library.
None Better!

No. 328.

"RIVALS AND CHUMS!"

A Grand New School Story of Greyfriars.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

No. 329.

"THE FIGHTING STRAIN!"

A Great Sporting Tale.
By T. C. WIGNALL.

No. 330.

"KING OF THE FAGS!"

A Complete Tale of School Life.
By GEOFFREY MURRAY.

No. 331.

"THE SPORTING JOURNALIST!"

A Splendid Adventure Story.
By GEOFFREY GORDON.

 *A Complete School-
 *Story Book, attrac-
 *tive to all readers.

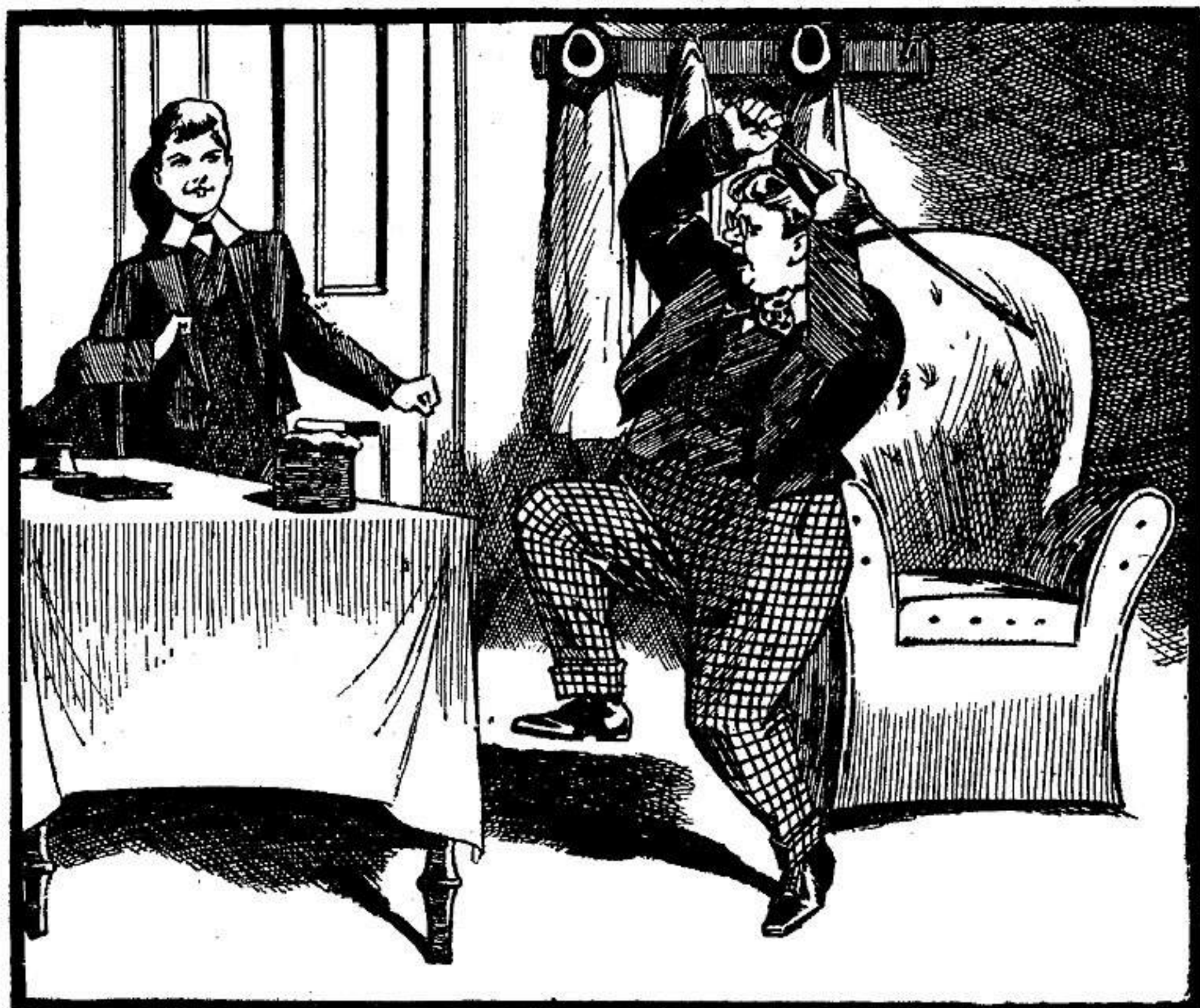


 *The Editor will be
 *obliged if you will
 *hand this book,
 *when finished with,
 *to a friend. . . .

WHEN FRIENDS FALL OUT!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Gimme the poker, Bob!" said Billy Bunter. Bob Cherry handed over the poker, and Bunter took a swipe at the cake. (See Chapter 4.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

What's the Matter with Bob?

"ALL ready except Bob," said Harry Wharton.
 "Where the dickens is the duffer?" said
 Hazeldene. "We don't want to be late for
 tea."
 "Give him a howl!" suggested Frank Nugent.
 And five juniors raised their voices in a melodious yell:
 "Bob!"

Then again, louder:

"Bob!"

And still Bob Cherry did not appear.

Which was remarkable. For Harry Wharton & Co.
 were about to start on their bicycles to Cliff House
 School. They were going to have tea at Cliff House
 School, with Marjorie and Clara and Phyllis and their
 friends, and on such an occasion Bob Cherry was
 generally ready long before the time to start. Generally

it was Bob who hurried up the others, lest they should be a minute late.

Now all the others were ready, and Bob was not on the scene. They had wheeled out their bicycles, Johnny Bull wheeling Bob's as well as his own. They stood outside the School House in a group, waiting for Bob and wondering.

"Bob! Bobby! Boblets! Bob!" howled the juniors in chorus.

A fat junior rolled out of the House, and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Seen Bob Cherry, Bunter?" exclaimed Wharton.

"No. I dare say he doesn't want to come," said Billy Bunter. "I'll come instead, if you like."

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, Wharton, you know Marjorie would rather see me," urged Billy Bunter. "Besides, Bob doesn't want to come. I think he's ill. In fact, now I come to think of it, I think he's fallen downstairs and broken his leg; so he can't come. I'd better come instead."

"Fathead!" said Wharton. "Where the merry dickens is Bob? Bob! Bob!"

"Bob!" yelled the whole party.

Wingate of the Sixth looked out of his study window with a ferocious expression.

"Stop that row!" he roared.

"We're only calling a chap," said Nugent.

"I'll come out if you call again!"

"But we don't want you; we want Bob Cherry," said Nugent innocently.

The juniors chuckled, and Wingate slammed his window. But they did not call Bob any more.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter! Hallo, here's Rattenstein! Have you seen Bob Cherry, Rattenstein?"

Rattenstein paused on the steps.

There was a peculiar expression on his sallow Teutonic face, a gleam in his pale-blue eyes.

"Bob Cherry?" he repeated. "Yes; I saw him——"

"Where?"

"At dinner."

"Oh, don't be a funny Hun!" growled Johnny Bull. "We all saw him at dinner. Have you seen him since, fathead?"

"We mustn't call Ratty a fathead!" grinned Nugent. "Has your Highness seen Bob Cherry with your princely eyes?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The German schoolboy scowled. Prince Rupprecht von Rattenstein prided himself upon being British, as he had been born in England of naturalised parents. But he had a tremendous opinion of the value of a German title, and he had come to Greyfriars expecting to see fellows bow down and worship, as it were. He had had some very painful eye-openers on that subject since. So far from being monarch of all he surveyed in the Remove Form, as he had confidently expected, the German prince discovered that he was of no account whatever. His German origin was against him; his cheap German princedom was rather a matter for smiles than for admiration, and the fact that he was a good deal of a sneak, a good deal of a funk, and a good deal of a "rotter" generally, had caused him to become a more insignificant person in the Lower Fourth than Billy Bunter himself.

Rattenstein opened his thick lips to make an angry reply to Nugent's remark; but he checked himself and walked away, his eyes gleaming. The disappointments and the contempt he had met with in the Remove at Greyfriars had filled his heart with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. A bitter dislike of nearly every fellow in the Form was his ruling passion, though prudence caused him to adopt usually an obsequious manner, which earned him a contemptuous toleration.

"His Highness is ratty!" remarked Johnny Bull, with a laugh. "But where the merry dickens is Bob? And why doesn't he come?"

"Hold my bike, and I'll go in and look for him," said Wharton.

The captain of the Remove hurried into the House. It was high time to start for Cliff House School, unless the guests were to be late for tea.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

Harry Wharton ran up to the Remove passage, and looked into No. 13 Study, Bob Cherry's quarters. It was possible that Bob had lingered to give his hair an extra brush, or to change his necktie, as he was going to see Marjorie Hazeldene. Bob was in the study, but he was not changing his necktie, and he was not brushing his somewhat unruly hair.

He was seated, or, rather, sprawled, in the armchair, with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and his long legs stretched out. There was an expression of gloomy thought on his face that made Wharton stare. Bob was not much given to deep thought, and it was rare for him to be glum.

"Bob, old man!"

Bob Cherry looked up.

"Haven't had bad news?" asked Wharton anxiously. "Your pater's getting on all right at the Front, isn't he?"

Bob nodded.

"Then what's the matter? Do you know we're waiting to start for Cliff House?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Oh! Are you?"

"Yes; come on! We've been yelling for you."

"Oh, I didn't hear!"

"You must be getting deaf, I should say. I imagine everybody else in Greyfriars could hear!" said Wharton, laughing. "Get a move on, old chap! We shall be late to tea; and you know Clara says boys are always late."

"I'm not coming!"

"Not coming, Bob?"

"No," said Bob, the colour deepening in his handsome face. "Go without me this time, Harry. I'd rather not come."

"Seedy?" asked Wharton, greatly puzzled.

"I'm never seedy, am I?" growled Bob.

"Then why the dickens don't you want to come? Marjorie will be disappointed if you don't come."

To Wharton's amazement, a bitter look came over Bob's face.

"Marjorie won't be disappointed," he said. "No fear of that."

"What do you mean, Bob? It isn't possible that you've disagreed with Marjorie in any way?" ejaculated Wharton. "Why, nobody could quarrel with Marjorie—the best-tempered girl in the world!"

"Of course I haven't, fathead! Marjorie's an angel!" said Bob. "But—but a fellow doesn't want to be always bothering her because he thinks a lot of her. I'd rather not come this time. I've been going over to Cliff House too much."

"What utter rot!"

"You fellows get off," said Bob. "Marky's swotting, and I'm going to help him with his—his Greek."

"Why, you ass, you don't know the difference between Alpha and Omega!" said Wharton, laughing.

"I know I'm not clever," said Bob moodily. "I couldn't tackle Greek like you and Marky. I suppose a chap can't help being born an ass. You needn't rub it in, though."

Wharton's face became serious at once.

"Don't be touchy, Bob. You know I didn't mean that. What the dickens! You used to jaw me for being touchy, and now you're starting it yourself worse than I ever had it, and it's not like you."

"Sometimes a fellow can't help being touchy," said Bob. "Sometimes he can't help realising he's a duffer, and not clever like other chaps."

"But you're clever enough for the Remove, Bob," said Wharton, mystified. "You never cared for Greek till this afternoon."

"Blow Greek!"

"Then what's the matter?"

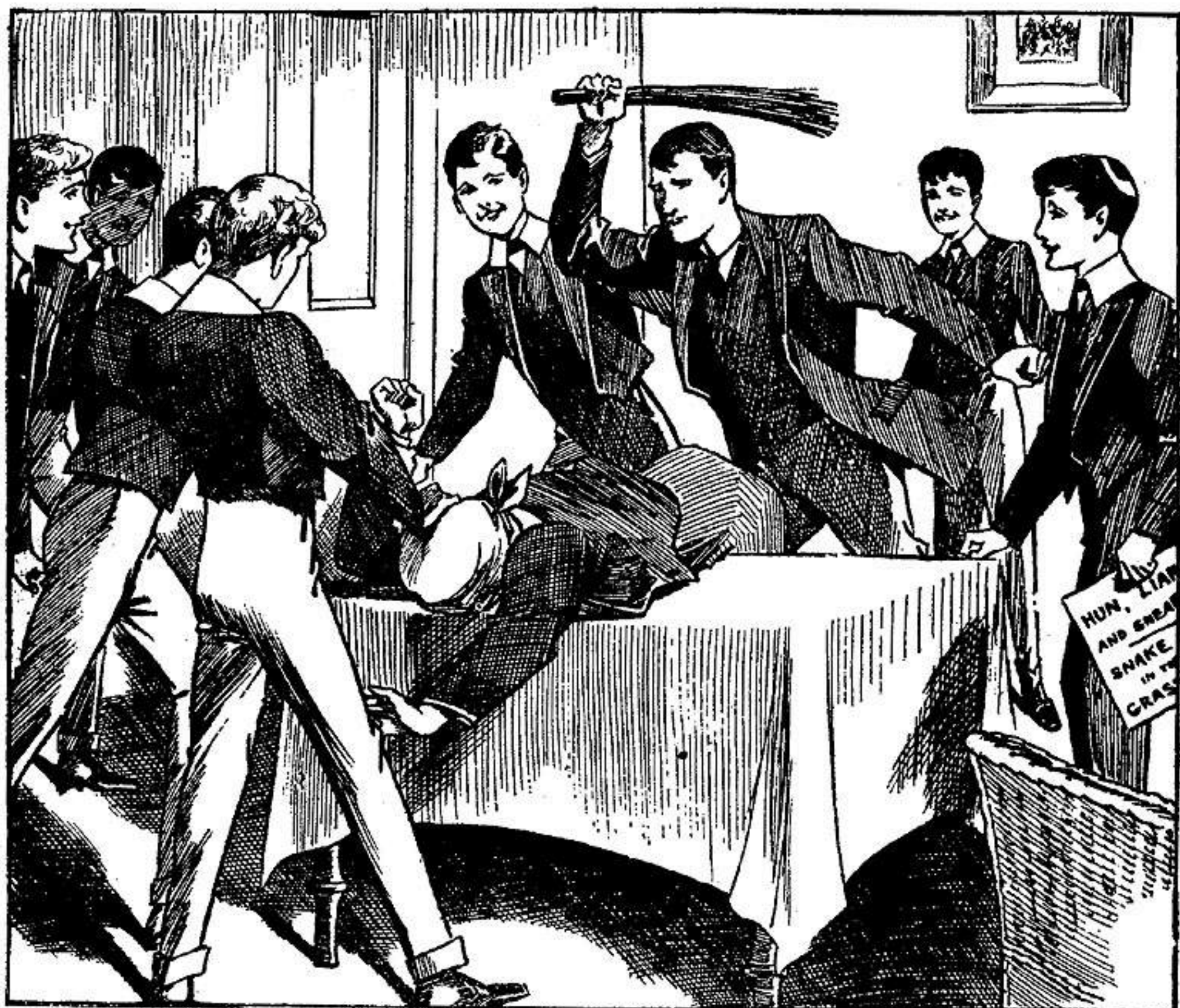
"Nothing!"

"There is something the matter," said Harry quietly. "You're the last chap in the world to be touchy and unreasonable if nothing was the matter. I wish you'd tell me what it was. Perhaps I can set it right."

"Because you're cleverer than I am," said Bob.

"Great Scott! How you do catch a fellow up!" said Harry, in amazement. "Look here, Bob! Get a move on! It will do you good to have a run out!"

Bob shook his head.



Bump went the run across the table, and his princely nose came into painful contact with the wood. Skinner thoughtfully drew a duster round his head to muffle his howls. It was needed, for B isover major laid on the twelve strokes with the Head's birch as if he were beating a carpet. "Ach! Mein Gott! Help! Help!" yelled Rattenstein. (See Chapter 14.)

"We shall be late for tea," said Wharton. "It isn't very civil to keep the girls waiting, Bob."

"I tell you I'm not coming. You fellows go," said Bob. "No good talking—I'm not coming! Buzz off, there's a good chap!"

"I don't like going without you."

"Rot! I won't come!"

"Well, if you won't come, you won't!" said Harry. "We shall have to start now. I wish you'd come, Bob."

"Well, I won't!"

"Ta-ta, then!"

Harry Wharton left the study, leaving Bob Cherry, usually the sunniest junior in the Remove, looking as if he were going to the funeral of his best chum.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not a Fighting-Man!

"WHERE'S the frabjous ass?"

It was quite a chorus that greeted Harry Wharton as he joined the group of cyclists waiting outside the School House.

"He's not coming," said Harry.

"Not coming! Why not?"

"I think he must be feeling seedy, though he says he isn't."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

"Well, he might have told us he wasn't coming," said Hazeldene crossly. "I don't see why my sister should be kept waiting because he couldn't give us a word. Let's get off, then."

"Hold on while I run Bob's jigger back," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, Rattenstein will do that! Here, Rattenstein!" The German junior was leaning on the wall, looking curiously at the party of juniors. He came forward as Hazeldene called to him.

"Take this bike back to the shed, will you?" said Hazel. "Certainly!" said Rattenstein, in his oily way. "But—excuse me—you are going to Cliff House?"

"Yes," said Hazel.

"Would you care for me to come with you? I have never seen Cliff House," said the German junior.

Hazel hesitated. He was a good-natured fellow, and disliked saying "No" to anybody—even a German. And Rattenstein had done him several little services lately. The German was clever with his lessons, and Hazel was rather slack, and Rattenstein had helped him, a good deal with his work—for what reason Hazel could not guess, as he was far from being a kind-hearted fellow. Hazel thought he could guess now, however.

"What do you fellows say?" asked Hazel, looking at

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

his companions. "Clara said once she'd like to see our giddy prince."

"Oh, he may as well come," said Wharton shortly.

It was Hazeldene who was taking the party to tea with his sister at Cliff House, so he really had the right to decide. Harry Wharton & Co. certainly did not like the addition to the party, but they felt they could not very well say so. Johnny Bull gave an expressive grunt, and that was all.

"Oh, come on, if you like," said Hazel. "Jump on Bob's jigger—he won't mind. Let's get off, for goodness' sake! We've waited long enough!"

"Thank you!"

The cyclists wheeled the machines down to the gates. From the study window of No. 13 a glum face watched them go, and Bob Cherry heaved a sigh when they disappeared out of the gates.

The juniors mounted in the road, and pedalled away by the short cut to Cliff House, which stood on the shore, fronting the sea, not far from Pegg. They rode rapidly, as they were already very nearly late. There was a sudden shout from a group of fellows in Highcliffe caps who were lounging by a fence beside the path. They were Ponsonby & Co., the Famous Five's old enemies. Ponsonby & Co.—there were eight of them—were smoking cigarettes.

"Hallo, Greyfriars cads!" shouted Ponsonby.

"Pelt 'em!" said Gadsby.

A heavy turf whizzed through the air and smashed on Harry Wharton's shoulder. The captain of the Remove jammed on his brake as his machine staggered and jumped down.

The Highcliffians were on the other side of the fence, and they were clutching up chunks of turf, laughing loudly. The cyclists had to run the gauntlet, or else dislodge the enemy before they passed, and they chose the latter alternative. They were only six against eight, but the Removes did not count odds.

"Mop 'em up!" shouted Johnny Bull.

But only five juniors dismounted to rush at the Highcliffians. The sixth—Prince Rupprecht von Rattenstein—rode on, harder than ever. He vanished down the narrow lane at top speed.

Harry Wharton & Co., in the excitement of the moment, hardly noticed him. They rushed at the fence, and clambered over to the attack.

There was a brief scuffle, and Hurree Singh was pitched back into the lane, and Hazeldene after him. But Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull whipped over the fence, and hit out straight from the shoulder. They engaged the whole of the enemy, and in a few seconds Hurree Singh and Hazel were scrambling again to their aid.

It was five against eight; but the Highcliffians were not fighting-men. They retreated from the hot attack, and in a few minutes took to their heels across the field.

"Hold on!" called out Wharton, as his followers were breaking into pursuit. "Come back! No time to waste on those rotters!"

"Wait a minute for me!" panted Johnny Bull, who had caught Ponsonby.

"Yarrah! Leggo!" roared Ponsonby.

"Buck up, Johnny!"

Johnny Bull's strong arms had closed round Ponsonby, and the slim and elegant dandy of Highcliffe was like an infant in his grasp. He was swept off his feet, and tossed bodily away—to fall with a resounding splash into a ditch!

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was little water in the ditch, but there were several inches of mud. The dandy of Highcliffe presented a shocking spectacle as he scrambled up.

"Now I'm ready!" grinned Johnny Bull.

The Greyfriars juniors, laughing, vaulted over the fence again into the lane. Ponsonby stood and shook his fist after them—a very muddy fist. His comrades had already disappeared across the next field.

"Yow-ow-ow! Groogh!" gurgled Ponsonby. "Yow, you rotters! Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

Harry Wharton & Co. remounted, and rode on. Then they discovered that there were only five of them.

"Where's that German?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Bunked, by gum! The rotten funk!"

"He's not much good in a scrap," said Wharton, laughing. "Let's hope he's bunked for good!"

But Rattenstein had not "bunked" for good. As the juniors came out into the Pegg Road, they found the prince waiting for them, holding his bicycle. He flushed as they came up, and jumped into the saddle and rode on with them.

"You rotten funk!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, who was an exceedingly plain speaker. "Why didn't you help us?"

"I—I—I—"

"They were eight against us!" said Hazel wrathfully.

"Why didn't you stop and lend a hand?"

"I—I thought—that—you were coming on!" stammered Rattenstein. "I—I did not see you had stopped—till—"

"Oh, don't give us any Prussian whoppers!" growled Johnny Bull.

Rattenstein's eyes blazed, but he made no rejoinder, and he rode on in silence. Rattenstein was looking the tidiest of the party when they arrived at Cliff House. Harry Wharton & Co. showed rather visible signs of the "scrap" in the field. The German was spick and span as a new pin.

Marjorie and Clara were at the gate, and Miss Clara shook her finger at the Removes as they dismounted.

"Late," she said.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, honoured miss," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh penitently. "The delayfulness was great."

"And you're muddy," said Miss Clara. "You have been fighting."

"Nunno," said Wharton—"not exactly fighting!"

"Then what is the matter with your nose?"

"Oh, Clara!" murmured Marjorie.

Wharton rubbed his nose.

"I—I knocked it against something," he said.

"And what's the matter with your knuckles?" asked Miss Clara severely.

"I—I knocked them against something, too!"

"The only tidy boy here is Rattenstein," said Miss Clara, with a glance of approval at the German junior.

Rattenstein bowed and smiled. He had made the acquaintance of the Cliff House girls during a visit they had paid to Greyfriars.

The Removes looked rather grim. Rattenstein looked clean and neat because he had deserted his comrades in the tussle with the Highcliffians. But they could not very well explain that to the severe Miss Clara.

"Clara, don't be such a tease!" said Marjorie, laughing. "You can get a brush in the porter's lodge, Harry, if you like."

"Thank you, Marjorie!"

The chums of the Remove were glad enough to brush the mud off. Rattenstein, who did not need brushing, walked up the garden-path with the girls.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Snake in the Grass!

MISS CLARA ran ahead, and disappeared into the House. In the school-room tea was prepared, and Phyllis Howell was ready to make the tea as soon as the guests arrived.

Marjorie followed at a more sedate pace, with Rattenstein. Marjorie did not like the German junior, from the little she had seen of him, but she was very kind in her manner. It seemed to her that a German in an English school must feel decidedly lonely and "down," and she had already observed that he was not liked in his Form. That was the reason why she showed him kindness; but it was not a reason likely to be understood by a Hun. Rattenstein attributed her kindness to the fact that he was a prince, for, although he had ceased to "swank" in the Remove on that topic, his petty princedom still loomed very large in his own eyes.

"Bob has not come," Marjorie remarked. "I suppose he is very busy with football this afternoon?"

"No, I do not think he is playing," said Rattenstein, with a sidelong glance at the girl. "Wharton urged him to come, but he would not."

"Oh!" said Marjorie.

"He told me——" Rattenstein paused suddenly and bit his lip, as if he had been about to say too much.

Marjorie looked at him with her clear, frank eyes—eyes that were keen enough, but not keen enough to see the treachery that was hidden under the suave and silky manner of the German.

"Perhaps I had better not say what he told me," said Rattenstein. "I beg your pardon! You will excuse me!"

"Certainly. You should not say it if Bob Cherry would not wish you to tell me," said Marjorie, in wonder.

"There is a new pupil here, isn't it?" said Rattenstein, as if changing the subject. "A pretty Miss Phyllis?"

"Phyllis Howell? Yes."

"She is a friend of yours?"

"A very dear friend; yes."

"Bob Cherry also admires her very much?"

"I dare say he does," said Marjorie.

"He speaks of her very much," said Rattenstein, with a smile. "He is a great admirer of Miss Phyllis. He is never so happy as when he is able to speak to her without others interfering."

"Indeed! I had not noticed that!" said Marjorie coldly.

"But Bob is so honourable," said Rattenstein. "He is the soul of honour. He would not appear to be throwing over an old friend for the sake of a new one. There is a young lady here—I do not know whom—to whom Bob was greatly attached before Miss Phyllis came, and he is afraid to hurt her feelings. That is why he did not come this afternoon, because he would not make jealousy. He has very fine and sensitive feelings, the good Cherry."

Marjorie drew a deep breath.

The German's words were uttered with a quiet and earnest manner, and coupled with generous praise of Bob, so that it was hard to find fault with them; and, as a new-comer, Rattenstein might be supposed not to know that it was Marjorie Hazeldene to whom Bob had always been devoted.

But every word had a bitter sting in it.

Bob's devotion to Marjorie had often made the girl smile good-humouredly, but naturally it had pleased her. The admiration of an honest, frank, good-hearted fellow like Bob Cherry was a compliment to any girl. And Bob was so loyal by nature that he could not change—or if a change came it would make him feel a bitter self-contempt. Was it possible that Phyllis, with her bright eyes and lively ways, had made such an impression upon Bob that he had changed? Marjorie would only have smiled if she had seen such a change—left to herself in the matter. But the bare thought that Bob could suppose there would be "jealousy" jarred on every nerve.

He had stayed away because he thought she would be hurt at seeing him transfer his attentions to the bright-eyed Phyllis.

"There was a bitter humiliation in that thought, and for the first time since she had known Bob Cherry Marjorie was angry with him."

The colour stole into her cheeks, and an unusual brightness into her eyes. They had reached the House now, and the German said no more.

They entered the school-room, where, by the kind permission of Miss Penelope Primrose, the girls were allowed to have their boy friends to tea. Miss Phyllis, who was making the tea, gave Rattenstein a careless nod. She did not like Rattenstein, and was surprised to see him there, and she was not quite so urbane as Marjorie to persons she did not like.

Harry Wharton & Co. came in in a few minutes, looking much less dusty and muddy. Miss Phyllis bestowed a charming smile upon all of them.

"Where's Bob?" she asked.

"Bob hasn't come," said Hazeldene.

"Playing footer, I suppose?"

"Oh, no!"

"Slacking?" asked Miss Clara.

"Oh, come!" exclaimed Wharton. "Bob never slacks. He's rather too much the other way, if anything."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY.

ONE PENNY.

"Then why hasn't he come, when I've made a cake specially for him?" said Miss Phyllis.

Marjorie felt her colour deepen. She knew why Bob hadn't come—or, at least, she thought she knew.

"I think he's seedy," said Wharton, a trifle awkwardly. It was hard to explain that Bob hadn't come because he wouldn't come.

"Bob seedy?" exclaimed Phyllis, in astonishment. "Then it's lucky he hasn't come. For I'm not quite sure that my cake is a success. I was going to try it on Bob because he can stand anything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I hope Bob isn't ill," said Miss Clara, with real concern.

"Oh, no; not at all!"

"He's jolly well not ill," said Hazeldene. "You should have seen him scoffing dinner. He didn't look ill."

"Then why is he seedy?"

"Blessed if I know! I saw him talking to Rattenstein after dinner. Perhaps it's that."

Rattenstein laughed at that extremely personal joke.

"I hope my conversation does not have that effect," he remarked. "But I did not think Bob was seedy at all."

"Hazel, you must keep your bad jokes for the 'Herald,'" said Marjorie, thinking that the foreigner was wounded by Hazel's thoughtless remark. "I dare say Bob has his own reasons for staying away, and it is not an important matter at all."

"Oh, isn't it?" said Phyllis. "What about my cake? I sha'n't know now whether it is eatable."

"We'll take it home to him, if you like," said Nugent.

"We'll keep it till he's at the top of his form."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall make you eat it yourself if you are so funny," said Phyllis.

Nugent became preternaturally serious on the spot.

The juniors sat down to tea in merry spirits, but Wharton noted that Marjorie Hazeldene was unusually quiet and thoughtful. The girl could not help thinking of what Rattenstein had said, and the sting of the words still rankled. The German chatted with Miss Phyllis, assuming his most graceful manners, and he could make himself agreeable when he liked. Phyllis, however, read Rattenstein much more keenly than Marjorie did. Under cover of a buzz of merry talk from the others the German referred again to Bob Cherry.

"He is such a splendid fellow," he remarked.

"Quite right, he is," assented Phyllis, wondering what on earth Rattenstein was singing Bob's praises for. She was quite sure that they could not be chummy.

"He has a great admiration for Miss Marjorie," said Rattenstein, with a smile.

Phyllis laughed.

"Yes; he follows her about like a Newfoundland dog," she said. "Bob looks on Marjorie as perfection. He isn't far wrong, either. Marjorie is the best of us."

"He never seems to have eyes for anyone else, does he?" said Rattenstein, still smiling.

"I don't know about that. Bob is nice to all girls," said Phyllis, looking hard at the German. "Don't talk like that any more."

"Eh? What have I said?"

Miss Phyllis did not seem to hear, and she turned away to speak to Johnny Bull, and ignored the German after that. Rattenstein's eyes glittered for a moment. He could see that the girl had seen through his treacherous desire to make mischief, and that he would not have a victim in Phyllis Howell, at least.

"What about Wednesday afternoon?" Harry Wharton was saying. "The weather looks like being fine, and if you cared to see a footer match——"

"And tea in the study after," said Nugent.

"Ripping!" said Phyllis.

"Topping!" said Miss Clara. "And tell Bob Cherry to buck up, because we want to see him eat Phyllis' cake. Warn him it's as hard as nails!"

"It isn't!" said Phyllis warmly. "It only needs to be cut into very small pieces——"

"Chopped, you mean, dear."

NEXT MONDAY—

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will come, Marjorie?"

Marjorie hesitated, and flushed a little.

"I—I think I shall be going for a walk with Miss Primrose on Wednesday," she said.

"Bring Miss Primrose," said Hazel. "She would like tea in the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of Miss Penelope Primrose, the Head of Cliff House, having tea in the study at Greyfriars struck the tea-party as comic.

"What bosh!" said Miss Clara. "You're not going with Miss Primrose, Marjorie. I won't let you. Don't you want to see Bob kick goals and things?"

"Marjorie's coming," said Phyllis decidedly.

"If you could, Marjorie!" said Wharton persuasively. Marjorie's colour deepened. But she nodded quickly, as most eyes turned upon her.

"Thank you, Harry. I will come."

"Hooray!"

Marjorie laughed, and it was settled. When the Greyfriars juniors took their leave, Phyllis brought a little parcel, nicely wrapped and tied, and handed it to Wharton.

"For Bob Cherry!" she said.

"Right-ho!" said Harry, with a smile.

"Tell him to see that his insurance is paid up first," called out Miss Clara.

And the cyclists departed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Minor Takes the Cake!

BOB CHERRY was hanging moodily about the gates when the party from Cliff House arrived. He had not had a happy afternoon. The juniors wheeled in their machines merrily enough. Their afternoon had been, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh described it, ripful and topful.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob, as they came in. It was not his usual cheery tone, however. "So you've got back?"

"Yes. What have you been doing all the time, you slacker?"

"Well, I've punted a ball about a bit," said Bob. "I had tea with Ogilvy. What have you got there, Harry?"

The captain of the Remove was unfastening a little parcel from his handlebars.

"Present for you," he said.

"For me!" repeated Bob.

"Yes—a cake from Cliff House."

Bob's face brightened up wonderfully.

"Marjorie—" he began.

"No. Phyllis."

"Oh!" said Bob. "It was very kind of her."

"And Clara says you're to see to your insurance before you eat it!"

Bob laughed.

He took the cake and strolled away to the School House, while the juniors put up their bikes. Billy Bunter met him in the doorway, and his eyes fixed on the parcel at once.

"I say, Bob, old man, what have you got there?"

"Cake," said Bob.

"Halves!" said Bunter promptly.

Bob Cherry grinned and nodded.

"Halves if you like, tubby," he said. "Come up to the study and I'll cut it."

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed as he followed Bob Cherry to No. 13. Funds were low with the fat junior, as usual, and half a cake was not to be despised. Mark Linley was at work in the study when they came in, and Bob slammed his parcel on the table and proceeded to open it.

"Here's a knife, Cherry, old chap!"

"You can cut it, Bunter."

"Certainly," said Bunter, eyeing the cake hungrily. "I suppose it doesn't matter if I don't cut it exactly in the centre."

"Not at all."

Billy Bunter made a cut at the cake. The knife slipped off the top, and Bunter gave a terrific howl.

"Cut your fingers?" exclaimed Mark in alarm.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"Yow-ow! No! But I might have!"

"You fat duffer!" said Mark in disgust. "You made row enough for a whole paw chopped off!"

"Oh, really, Linley! I say, this cake is jolly hard," said Bunter. "If this is one of your little jokes, Bob Cherry—"

"It may be a joke," said Bob, laughing, "but it's not my joke. Try again."

Bunter tried again. The cake looked very nice, and smelled very nice, and was crammed with fruit. Perhaps it was a little over-done. Certainly it had been baked to a consistency resembling that of a brick.

"I—I say, you fellows, the blessed knife won't go into it," gasped Bunter. "Have you got a chopper in the study?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better bolt it whole!" suggested Mark Linley.

"Oh, really, Linley! Gimme the poker, Bob."

Bob Cherry handed over the poker, and Bunter took a swipe at the cake. The table creaked and groaned.

"Look out, you ass," exclaimed Mark. "You just missed the inkpot."

"Well, I meant to miss it," said Bunter. "My hat! The cake isn't even bent!"

"But the poker is," roared Mark. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter gave a snort of disgust, and hurled the poker into the grate.

"If this is your idea of a joke, Bob Cherry, I don't see the point," he growled. "I'm fearfully hungry, too. The least you can do now is to lend me a bob till my postal-order comes."

Bob Cherry grinned, and tossed a "bob" to the Owl of the Remove, who departed, with a final sniff of contempt at the cake.

"We'll have this for supper, Marky," said Bob.

"You can if you like," said Linley, laughing. "I don't think my teeth would be equal to it. Who on earth made it?"

"Phyllis Howell. She's in the cookery class at Cliff House, you know."

"Then Miss Howell has a good deal to learn in the way of cooking," said Mark. "I—I suppose it was meant to be eaten!"

"I—I suppose so!" said Bob.

"Miss Howell has rather a sense of humour," said Mark, smiling. "One is never quite sure."

A fat face, very like Billy Bunter's, but younger and rounder, looked into the study. It belonged to Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, wasn't that a—a cake my major had?" asked Sammy, blinking in through his big spectacles. "Oh, there it is! All serene, I thought it was Billy's."

And the fat fag scuttled away.

Bob Cherry grinned at his study-mate.

"Come along to Fishy's study," he murmured.

"What on earth—"

"Come on, I tell you!"

The Lancashire lad complied. They went along the Remove passage to the next study, and went in. Fisher T. Fish was having his tea, and he looked at them in surprise, and stared blankly as Bob kept the door ajar and watched the passage.

"Hyer, what's the stunt?" asked Fish.

"Quiet! I'm watching for a burglar!" said Bob.

He did not have to watch long. Almost as soon as the two juniors were in the study, Sammy Bunter came whisking along to No. 13, his round eyes glittering behind his spectacles. He whipped into No. 13, and reappeared in a moment with the cake, and scuttled down the passage with his prize.

"All serene, Fishy," said Bob, and he left the study, followed by Mark.

"That guy must be off his onion, I guess," said Fish.

"Sammy's stolen the cake," grinned Bob. "I knew he would. I hope he will enjoy it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry threw himself into the armchair, still smiling. The smile soon died off his face. Mark was working at Greek, which had always been a dreadful puzzle to Bob Cherry. Greek was an extra at Greyfriars,



"Bob has not come," Marjorie remarked; "I suppose he is very busy with football this afternoon." "No, I do not think he is playing," said Rattenstein, with a sidelong glance at the girl. "Wharton urged him to come, but he would not." "Oh!" said Marjorie. (See Chapter 3)

and Bob did not take it; but the Lancashire junior seemed to thrive on it.

"How the merry dickens do you do it, Marky?" asked Bob at last.

Linley looked up with a smile.

"I'm built that way," he said.

"I can't do it!"

"Well, I can't kick a goal like you, Bob. We can't all do the same things."

"Rot!" said Bob moodily. "You can kick a goal as well as I can. I wish I were a clever chap."

"Well, so you are, Bob."

"Rot!"

"Didn't you chum up with me almost the first week I was here?" said Mark, with a smile.

"Yes. What about that?"

"Well, that shows a lot of judgment."

Bob laughed, which was what Mark wanted him to do. But his rugged face clouded over again.

"Suppose there were somebody you thought a lot of and she—I mean somebody—was bored to death because you were a silly ass and couldn't talk about anything but footer," said Bob.

Mark stared at him.

"I suppose I should find something else to talk about

then," he said. "What on earth are you driving at, Bob?"

"Nothing."

"Look here," said Mark seriously, "you told me you were going over to Cliff House this afternoon, and you never went. What have you got on your mind? Why didn't you go?"

"I didn't want to."

"Bob!"

"Well, I did want to, but I didn't go," said Bob.

"Have you got a fatheaded idea in your noddle that you've been boring Marjorie with football talk?" said Mark.

"Tain't a fatheaded idea," said Bob miserably, "it's a fact. I never meant to, only, you see, footer's a thing I understand and can talk about. Of course, I ought to have had sense enough to see that a girl wouldn't care for so much jaw about it. Only Marjorie always seemed jolly interested in our games, didn't she?"

"She did—and she is," said Mark. "Dash it all, Bob, what are you saying? Miss Hazeldene wouldn't pretend to like seeing our matches if she didn't really."

"Girls are so jolly polite," said Bob; "they ain't like us. If a fellow jawed me about something that made me tired I'd tell him so. But a girl wouldn't."

"That depends," said Mark. "You're not usually a

suspicious chap, Bob. So you've suddenly got an idea that Marjorie has been bored with you?"

"I didn't get the idea," said Bob hastily, "but I know it now."

"And how do you know, you ass?"

"She said so."

"Not to you?" exclaimed Mark, in astonishment.

"Nunno; it was just a remark to Clara when they were here the other day, and it's come to my ears," said Bob. "Of course, I can't wonder at it; I ought to have more sense. I dare say I've plagued her often when she'd have rather been talking to Wharton. A fellow can't help being an ass. I—I say, Marky, I didn't mean to speak about it. For goodness' sake, don't you jaw!"

"Of course not," said Mark, looking deeply troubled. "But I can't believe Miss Hazeldene ever said anything slighting about you, Bob, even in a careless way. It wouldn't be like her."

"It's nothing," said Bob, affecting to laugh. "I shall forget all about it in an hour or two. Ta-ta! I'll take a turn in the quad."

And he left the study, leaving his chum looking seriously worried, and no longer bestowing undivided attention upon Xenophon and the Retreat of the celebrated Ten Thousand.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Disappointing Prize!

"HALLO, young Bunter!"

"What have you got there?"

"Show up!"

Sammy Bunter had burst excitedly into the Second Form-room.

Dicky Nugent and Gatty and Myers and several other heroes of the Second Form were there, debating earnestly how a Form-room feed could possibly be raised for the sum of threepence-halfpenny—that being the limit of the present financial resources of the honourable and inky company.

Sammy did not reply for a moment. He blinked back into the passage behind him and breathed freely when he saw that he was not pursued. Then he slammed the door and turned to the expectant fags with a fat grin of triumph.

"Got it!" he said.

"My hat! A cake!" said Nugent minor.

"Where did you get it, Sammy?"

"Scoffed it," said Sammy. "Bob Cherry brought it in, and my major was after it like a shot. Blessed if I know how my major came to miss getting it; he usually manages better. I thought I ought to take it as we're so hard up for tea."

"Certainly!" said Nugent minor promptly. "All's fair in love and war. That's our cake now. Bob Cherry can go and eat coke, and so can your major."

"It smells nice," said Gatty, sniffing at it. "Looks a bit tough, though, if you ask me."

"I don't ask you, for one," said Sammy disdainfully.

"If you don't want any of that cake, Gatty——"

"But I do—I does!" said Gatty. "Whack it out! It'll cut up rippingly into six."

"You chaps can have half," said Sammy in alarm.

Nugent minor shook his head.

"Equal whacks," he said; "that's fair. If Bunter minor objects we'll shove his head into the coal-box. Do you object, Bunter minor?"

"Nunno!"

"Anybody got a pocket-knife?"

"Here you are," said Gatty, "I'll cut it."

Gatty made a drive at the cake. Then he uttered a howl.

Snap!

"What the thunder——"

"My pocket-knife!" howled Gatty. "The blade's gone!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You fat boulder, you've planted this on us!" roared Gatty. "You'll have to pay for that blade."

"It—it seems rather hard," said Sammy in dismay.

"Let me try the other blade."

"No jolly fear! Better try a pick-axe."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"Here's a ruler," said Nugent minor. "Stand clear and I'll break it into bits."

"You'll break the ruler!"

"Rats! Get a move on!"

The fags stood aside, and Nugent minor made a terrific swipe at the cake with the heavy wooden ruler. There was a thundering crash.

"Done it!" gasped Nugent minor.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Myers.

"What's the matter?"

"Look at me!" shrieked Myers. Myers was streaming with ink. "You silly ass, you've busted the inkpot—yaroooh!—and smothered me! Grooooh!"

"Oh, crumbs! But I hit the cake, too," said Dicky Nugent. "My word! That can't be a real cake. 'Tain't showing even a bruise! Shut up that row, Myers!"

"You silly idiot, I'm all inky!"

"Well, shut up, all the same!"

"There'll be a row about that inkpot," said Gatty. "We'd better clear out and let somebody else find it broken."

"That duffer has been pulling our leg," growled Dicky Nugent. "We'll teach him to plant gutta-percha cakes on to us!"

"'Tain't gutta-percha, you ass!" howled Sammy. "It's a cake. Lend me your knife—yaroooh!"

Bump!

"Leggo! Yoooop!"

"Give him another," said Myers. "Give him half a dozen, the fat, cheeky ass!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! I didn't—I wasn't—I thought—yarooop!"

Sammy Bunter tore himself away and bolted from the Form-room. Myers, growling ferociously, followed him, to seek a bath-room. Dicky Nugent hurled the famous cake to the floor. There was a crash, but the cake did not break.

"Pulling our leg, by gum—ours!" said Gatty, indignantly, fully convinced that it was an untimely joke of Bunter minor's. "Serve him right to make him eat it! Jump on it, Dicky! If it gets broken we might screw some of the middle out—it might be softer there."

"Good egg!"

Dicky Nugent proceeded to jump on the cake with both feet.

Meanwhile, Sammy Bunter, fleeing from the Form-room, ran into Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor of the Third at the corner. The three Third-Formers grinned and linked arms, and Sammy hurtled into them.

"Yow-ow!" gasped Sammy. "Gerrout of the way!"

"Where are you running to?" exclaimed Tubb severely, saving himself by clutching at Sammy's fat ears. "Just like you fags, bolting about the passages like wild Huns."

"Leggo my ears, you beast! They've got my cake!"

"Cake?" said Tubb. "Where?"

"Yow-ow-ow! In the Form-room. It's my cake! Yow-ow-ow!"

"We can't allow this," said Tubb, winking at his chums. "We must rescue that cake. Come with me!"

Paget and Bolsover minor grinned and followed him. Tubb pitched the door open, and the three fags rushed in. Nugent minor was jumping on the cake, but the rush of the Third-Formers drove him off, and Tubb caught up the cake, and the trio bolted out of the Form-room.

"My hat!" gasped Nugent minor. "The cheeky beasts! After them!"

Dicky Nugent & Co. rushed in hot pursuit. The trio were fleeing down the passage, but the Second-Formers overtook them at the corner and grasped them, and there was a terrific struggle. Tubb, realising that the odds were against him, and not to be robbed of his prize, took a tremendous bite at it, to make sure of that much, at least.

The next moment the cake thudded on the floor and

ANSWERS

AN IMPORTANT EDITORIAL NOTICE IN THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD," ½D. DON'T MISS IT!

Tubb was dancing in anguish, holding his mouth with both hands.

"Gerrrrrrrr!"

"What's up?" gasped Paget.

"I—I—Yah! Ow-wow! I—I believe I've broken all my teeth!" wailed Tubb. "I've fractured my jaw! Ow-wow!"

The Second-Formers burst into a yell of laughter.

"Serve you right for collaring our cake! Bump 'em!"

"Yow-wow-ow-wow! Grrrr!"

"Now, then, what's this row?" exclaimed Loder of the Sixth, coming along the passage with a cane. "You noisy young rascals!"

The fags vanished as if by magic. Loder chuckled, and then as his eyes fell on the cake he picked it up.

"Good!" murmured Loder. "Fags who quarrel over tuck get their tuck confiscated! That's good law. Looks a nice cake, too. Bit leathery, perhaps."

And Loder of the Sixth walked away with the cake, which was to be confiscated—or, in other words, to grace Loder's supper-table that evening. But whether Loder of the Sixth would enjoy the cake was another matter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

What's the Matter with Hazel?

"**R**IPPING weather for footer!" said Harry Wharton, as the Remove came out of their Form-room the next day after morning lessons. "We can get some practice before dinner. We've got to beat St. Jude's on Wednesday."

"Oh, we'll beat them!" said Squiff. "Who's going into goal—Bulstrode or Hazel?"

"Hazel, I think, though there isn't much to choose between them," said Harry. "As we're blessed with two goalkeepers equally good, it's best to play them in turns. Bulstrode played in the last match."

"All serene!" said Bulstrode.

"Come along, Hazel!" called out Wharton.

Hazel was going towards the big doorway by himself, with his hands in his pockets, and a frown on his face.

"I'm not coming!" he called back, without looking round.

"You don't want to cut practice," said Bob Cherry.

"I'm not coming."

And Hazel went out into the Close to avoid further argument. Harry Wharton's brows knitted slightly. Hazel's uncertain temper and sulky moods were a trial to all Hazel's friends, and especially a trial to the football skipper of the Remove. It was evident that Hazel had his "back up" over some real or imagined cause of offence, and meant to cut the practice.

"What's the matter with him?" said Bob, in wonder.

"Sulks again, I suppose!" said Wharton, rather savagely. "There's always something the matter with his cranky temper! Let's get out! Will you come down and keep goal, Bulstrode?"

"Of course I will! But you ought to have Hazel if he's playing on Wednesday."

"I don't want to drive him hard. But, of course, he won't play on Wednesday if he doesn't stick to practice."

The juniors went down to Little Side, and soon forgot all about Hazel and his "cranky" temper. But when they came in to dinner Wharton remembered him, and he glanced at him across the dinner-table. Hazel was looking sulky—one of the old fits of sulkiness which Wharton knew very well.

After dinner the captain of the Remove joined Hazel as they came out.

"What's the matter with you, Hazel?" he asked directly.

"Nothing!" said Hazel sullenly.

"Well, you're looking pretty grumpy over nothing."

"I suppose I can look as I like, without asking your permission?"

Wharton's eyes gleamed. He had done nothing, so far as he was aware, to call for such abrupt rudeness from Hazel; and only the previous day, at Cliff House, they had been on the best of terms. Wharton had resolved that he never would quarrel with Marjorie's brother, but he came very near it then. But he checked the hot reply that rose to his lips.

"I don't quite understand this, Hazel," he said quietly. "Don't you want to play in the match on Wednesday?"

"I don't care much either way!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Very well; I'll fill your place," said Wharton, still very quietly.

"Do!" said Hazel. "The less I have to do with you, Harry Wharton, the better I shall like it! So long as you're the great panjandrum in the Remove, and have the footer in your hands, I don't know that I care to play for the Form at all! Leave me out—for good, if you like!"

"Will you explain what you're driving at, Hazel? I know you're always taking offence where none is meant. What's happened now?"

"Nothing!"

"Marjorie will be disappointed if you don't play," said Harry.

Hazel's eyes gleamed.

"Oh, rub it in!" he said. "I suppose I ought to have known that you put me in the team because you've got the rotten cheek to chum with my sister! Well, I'm not the kind of fellow to be used like that! I dare say you thought I was a worm to be walked on! I'm not, you see!"

Wharton stared at him.

"You've got it wrong, Hazel," he said patiently. "I was glad to please Marjorie by putting you in the team, and I don't see any harm in it. But I shouldn't play you if you weren't up to the mark, to please Marjorie or anybody else."

Hazel shrugged his shoulders.

"As we're on the subject," said Harry, "I may say that I've been a bit patient with you for the reason you name. You are enough to try any fellow's temper, Hazel!"

"Your own temper isn't exactly angelic!" sneered Hazel. "I remember what you were like when you first came here! I think I remember you fighting Bob Cherry the day he came!"

Wharton flushed hotly.

"It's pretty mean to drag all that up now, Hazel!" he exclaimed. "And I don't see what it's got to do with the matter!"

"So you've been patient with me!" sneered Hazel. "Very kind of you, I must say! I won't abuse your patience any further, especially as you make a song of it all over the school!"

"That's not true," said Harry.

Another shrug of the shoulders, which very nearly earned Hazel a drive between the eyes. But Wharton held in his temper.

"I've not talked about you at all, if that's what you mean, Hazel," he said, as quietly as he could. "When you've been playing the giddy ox, and had to be got out of a scrape, you've been talked over, certainly. I don't know what you've got into your silly head now, and I don't much care! If you don't want to keep goal on Wednesday, you've only got to say so!"

"Well, I do say so!" snapped Hazel. "If I can't be played on my own merits, without sneers behind my back, I don't want to be played at all!"

"Do you mean to say that I—"

"I don't mean to say anything! I don't want to talk to you at all!"

Hazel turned away. Wharton made a fierce movement forward, but he remembered Marjorie and paused. Hazel walked out into the quadrangle, where he joined Rattenstein.

"What's the row, Harry?" asked Nugent, coming up.

"I hardly know. Hazel's in a tantrum, and he's resigned his place in the team. He says, or hints, that I've been sneering at him behind his back."

"Only his touchy temper," said Frank. "Some of the fellows may have been making jokes. Bolsover major makes out that you play Hazel on account of Marjorie."

"He seems to think that I've said something or other."

"Well, you haven't."

"Of course not. It will be a disappointment to Marjorie if he doesn't play. It won't hurt the team. Bulstrode's quite as good."

"Yes; it's lucky we don't have to rely on the sulky beggar."

"I thought all this rot was over," said Wharton angrily, "but you never know how to take Hazel. He spreads his blessed feelers out on all sides, and expects—"

people to be watchful they don't hurt them. I'm getting fed up with him!"

Bob Cherry was coming along the passage, and he heard that remark, Wharton's voice being raised a little. Wharton went out into the quadrangle without seeing Bob. He was worried and angry about Hazeldene. It seemed to him that Hazel had gone deliberately out of his way to pick a quarrel with him.

Bob glanced after him curiously. Rattenstein had just come in, and he looked at Bob.

"Don't mind him," he said. "He's a bit upset."

"Why should I mind?" said Bob.

"Oh, I thought you heard what he was saying!"

"I heard a few words," said Bob. "He said he was fed up with somebody. He wasn't speaking of me, I suppose?"

"No, perhaps not," said Rattenstein, with a manner that indicated that he believed otherwise.

Bob Cherry flushed.

"Look here, Rattenstein, what do you mean? Was he speaking of me?"

"I'd rather not say anything about it," said Rattenstein curtly. "I wouldn't have spoken, only I thought you knew."

"That means that you heard him mention my name?"

Rattenstein was silent.

"He couldn't have been speaking of me!" said Bob angrily. "Why should he speak of a pal like that?"

"Don't mind him," said Rattenstein. "We all get ratty sometimes; and, to be quite candid, Cherry, you have been rather trying to your friends the last day or so!"

Bob Cherry started.

He could not deny it.

The miserable thought he had confided to Mark would not leave his mind, and he had been feeling sore and depressed since the previous afternoon. He had tried to throw it aside, but he had not been able to. In spite of himself, the thought that Marjorie despised his clumsy attempts to please her, and that she had spoken of him slightly, rankled in his breast with ceaseless bitterness. He had been so moody and despondent that it was not surprising if his chums had become a little "fed up."

A flush came into Bob's honest face. Even if he had been a little trying, there was no reason why his pals could not have borne with him a little. At any rate, there was no excuse for having spoken of him in that way. He turned away from the German, and walked into the quad, his hands driven deep into his pockets.

Rattenstein looked after him with a smile—a smile that was not pleasant to see. The snake in the grass saw things going his way!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Among Friends!

"COME on, Bob!"

Preparation was finished in Study No. 13, and Mark Linley rose from the table. Bob Cherry was the last to finish—as usual. Latin was generally a worry to poor Bob, and in his present disturbed frame of mind it worried him more than ever. He did not rise as his Lancashire chum spoke.

"The esteemed chestnuts are readyful in the honourable Wharton's study," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let us departfully hurry, my dear Bob!"

Bob shook his head.

"I'll stay here, thanks! I don't want any chestnuts."

"Well, we might have a jaw before bed," said Mark Linley. "Don't be downhearted, old son! Come and jaw a jaw!"

"Bob Chelly comee!" murmured Wun Lung, the Chinese junior. "Nicee chestnuts, velly goodee eattee!"

"Thanks! I won't! I'm going to read."

"Oh, come along!" urged Mark. "You've hardly opened your mouth to-day, Bob. A jaw will do you good!"

"Well, I talk too much sometimes," said Bob. "It's a change for the better."

"Handsome Bob Chellee nevee talkee too muchee," said Wun Lung.

Bob smiled.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"Cut off, Marky! I don't want to give you the blues, or you'll be getting fed up, too!"

"I don't quite catch on, Bob. Who's been fed up?"

"A fellow in the blues is enough to make anybody fed up, though they needn't always shout it out for everybody to hear!" said Bob glumly.

"That sounds to me like a riddle."

"The riddlefulness is terrific!"

"Look here! I'm not coming to Wharton's study!" said Bob bluntly. "You fellows can go and scoff the chestnuts. To tell you the exact truth, I'm rather fed up with Wharton!"

"Bob!"

"And you can tell him so, if you like."

"I certainly sha'n't tell him anything of the sort!" said the Lancashire junior quietly. "And I think you'll be sorry for saying that, Bob, when you think about it. Come on, Inky!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh cast a curious glance at Bob, and followed Mark from the study.

"You coming, Wun Lung?"

"Me stay with handsome Bob Chelly."

"Oh, go and help mop up the chestnuts, kid!" said Bob.

"No savvy."

And Wun Lung curled up in the armchair and remained.

"Of course, you won't mention what Bob just said?" muttered Mark, as he went down the passage with the nabob. "He's upset, or he wouldn't have said a thing like that!"

"Not a whisperful word," said Hurree Singh. "The still tongue goes longest to the well, and saves a stitch in time, as your English proverb says."

"Where's Bob?" asked Wharton, as the chums entered No. 1 Study.

Nugent and Johnny Bull and Squiff and Vernon-Smith were there, and there was a royal supply of baked chestnuts.

"He's going to read," said Mark.

"Seems to be taking to moping in his old age," said Squiff. "What's old Bob been looking so glum about?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Wharton. "I've asked him, and he won't tell me. It seems to be catching."

The juniors disposed of the chestnuts, which occupied them till bed-time. In the Remove dormitory Bob Cherry's face was clouded, and he did not answer when Harry called good-night to him from his bed.

"Bob, old man, getting deaf?" exclaimed Wharton, in surprise. "Good-night!"

"Oh, good-night!" said Bob.

Wingate turned the lights out. Bob Cherry's voice was not heard again that night.

He turned out as usual when the rising-bell clanged out in the morning, but not with his usual sunny look.

It was not like Bob Cherry to nourish a sense of injury, and it was not exactly that now. But he felt sore. Even if he had been in the "blues," and a little trying, it was not agreeable to be spoken of contemptuously in a raised voice by a chum, and he could not feel the same towards either Wharton or Nugent. It did not even cross his honest, simple mind for a moment that Rattenstein had been intentionally deceiving him. Bob would have found it difficult to see a motive for such deceit. His honest heart had no conception of the hatred and spite and treachery that ran riot in the German's breast.

"Jolly cold!" said Nugent, as the Removites looked out of the big door into the Close. "Who's got a footer?"

Ogilvy ran to his study for a football.

"Come on, kids! Roll Bunter out!"

"Oh, I say, you fellows—"

"Take his other ear, Bob!" grinned Nugent.

"Yow-ow! Leggo!"

Bob Cherry did not seem to hear Nugent. He went out into the quadrangle by himself, and did not join in punting about the ball. Neither did Hazeldene. Hazel joined Bob, who nodded to him.

"I hear you're standing out on Wednesday," he remarked.

Hazel smiled sneeringly.

"Yes. The high-and-mighty Wharton can play Bulstrode, or go and eat coke! I'm going to chuck footer!"

Bob started.

"You haven't quarrelled with Wharton?" he asked.

"Not exactly. But he can't speak of me about the school as he likes!"

Bob Cherry looked grim. Had Hazel made that remark the day before, Bob would have asked him what he meant, probably in no gentle tone. But he had had his own experience since then.

"So he's been talking of you, too?" was what Bob said.

Hazel gave him a sharp look.

"Has he been giving you some of it?" he asked.

Bob was silent.

"Well, you needn't answer," said Hazel; "I can see he has. I remember he always had a bitter tongue from the day he came here."

"I remember that," said Bob.

"I don't complain of that, so far as that goes, but to jaw about a chap while he's keeping on friendly terms with him to his face—that beats me!" said Hazel, with darkening brows. "If he doesn't like a chap, why can't he say so?"

"Why not?" muttered Bob.

"It's sickening!" went on Hazel. "You believe a chap's chummy with you, because he seems to be, and then quite by chance you hear something. It makes a fellow feel rotten."

"It does," agreed Bob. "Better not think about it at all. After all, it's a trifle!"

"I don't call it a trifle. I call it beastly treachery!" growled Hazel. "If I could stand up to him with my fists, I'd ask him to meet me in the gym. But I can't. Of course, he knows that."

Bob stood silent. It was evident that Hazel had some cause of deep bitterness, somewhat akin to his own. But a horrible feeling was coming over him that he was, in fact, talking about a fellow disparagingly behind his back, and he turned away from Hazel.

Rattenstein was sauntering in the quad, and his eyes were turned very curiously on the two juniors. Bob, wishing to be alone, went into the Cloisters. The German sauntered away to the House. The punting was over, and Wharton and Nugent were looking for Bob.

"Looking for somebody?" asked Rattenstein, as he came up.

"Yes—it's just on brekker. Have you seen Cherry?"

"He's talking to Hazeldene."

"Well, but where?"

Rattenstein hesitated.

"Better let me run and call him," he said.

"Eh? Why shouldn't I call him myself?"

"Well, he's talking to Hazel," said Rattenstein.

"Mustn't a talk with Hazel be interrupted when it's just on brekker?" demanded Nugent. "What the dickens are you driving at, Rattenstein?"

"I'd rather not say, but—but you'd better not go. I shouldn't like to see friends like you fall out," said Rattenstein.

"Are you dotty?" asked Wharton. "If you're not, what do you mean, Rattenstein?"

"Well, to be quite plain, you wouldn't care to hear what they're saying about you, and you might, if you go to call them," said the German, with an appearance of great frankness.

Wharton's brow darkened.

"Rats!" said Nugent. "I don't believe a word of it. If Hazel's pouring a tale of woe into Bob's ears, I expect Bob will shut him up fast enough."

"Do you mean to say that you doubt my word?" exclaimed Rattenstein.

"Yes, I jolly well do!"

"Then I will tell you what they said."

"You can't tell us anything Bob Cherry said that he wouldn't care for us to hear," said Wharton disdainfully. "You can say what you like, but I warn you I'll repeat your words to Bob."

"You can do as you choose. I will speak out, because you doubt my word. You have no right to call me a liar," said Rattenstein angrily. "They are talking of you, and saying that you are treacherous, and a false friend."

"Liar!"

"Ask Bob Cherry. He is too honourable to deny it. But tell him also that you forced me to tell you!"

"I did not force you," said Harry, his eyes gleaming. "I will ask Bob Cherry, and when he has denied it I'll

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

give you a hiding, you German hound, for telling lies about him!"

"If Bob Cherry denies it, you can give me what you like, and I will not raise a finger to resist!" said Rattenstein.

And he walked into the House.

Wharton and Nugent looked at one another.

"It's lies," said Nugent at once. "Don't scowl, old chap. You know what Germans are—liars from the cradle to the grave."

"I know," said Harry. "Still, it's queer that Rattenstein should tell a lie he knows can be put to the test in a couple of minutes. He knows he's booked for a thrashing if he's lying."

"A German can't help lying. Come and let's find Bob."

The two juniors crossed the Close, and almost ran into Hazeldene. Hazel turned away to avoid them, but Wharton called to him, with an unconscious sharpness in his voice.

"Hazel! Stop!"

"Thanks! I don't care to!" said Hazel, walking on.

Wharton ran into his path.

"Stop!" he said grimly.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Old Friends Fall Out!

Hazel stopped.

He had no choice about that. But his eyes gleamed under his knitted brows, and his hands clenched almost convulsively.

"What do you want?" he said between his teeth. "Are you beginning to play the bully, Wharton? I warn you that I won't stand it."

"Easy does it, Hazel," said Nugent, the peacemaker. "Don't get ratty about nothing. Wharton only wants a word with you."

"I don't want a word with him."

"I only want to ask you a question," said Harry. "A chap has just told me a rotten lie, and I only want you to say it's a lie before I hammer him for it. That isn't much to ask."

"Well, you can go ahead," said Hazel, shrugging his shoulders. "You know I can't knock you down, or you wouldn't be standing in my way!"

"No need to come to knocking down that I can see. You seem to want to quarrel with me, but the want is all on your side," said Harry quietly. "I've just been told that you and Bob Cherry were saying rotten things about me, and I don't believe it. I'm going to lick the cad for saying it, but it's only fair to speak to you and Bob first."

Hazel sneered.

"Better make sure before you lick him," he said. "I suppose you're not such a tremendous person that you mustn't be discussed. Is it against the law to speak of you, as if you were the Kaiser?"

"Rattenstein said——"

"I don't care twopence what Rattenstein said. Have you been bullying him too? He's a poor devil of a German funk, and just the chap to bully!"

Wharton's temper was rising.

"Will you tell me that what Rattenstein said was false?" he said.

"I won't tell you anything."

"Am I to take it that it was true?"

"Take it as you like."

Hazel's manner was very hard to bear. Even Nugent, pacific as he was, felt his anger rising.

"Don't talk to him, Harry," he said sharply. "I dare say he has been talking like a cad, just as Rattenstein said. He's always got something up against somebody. I know Bob wouldn't listen to him."

Hazel laughed.

"Better ask Bob," he said. "Bob thinks about as much of you as I do. I don't see why he shouldn't say what he thinks, either. Fellows who do rotten things must expect to hear them called by their right names."

"So I've done rotten things?" said Harry.

"You ought to know best."

"Well, I don't know," said Wharton. "I haven't the

11

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

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

faintest idea what you're driving at. You might have said it all to me instead of Bob. Not that I believe Bob would let you run down a fellow to him. I suppose you were pestering him with your rotten complaints."

"I think you'll find Bob agrees with my rotten complaints," said Hazel, "and, since you've screwed something out of Rattenstein, I don't mind telling you that you've got quite correct information. Did you set that German to listen?"

"You know I didn't."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Hazel coolly. "If you did, you've got some plain facts to chew on. Listeners never hear any good of themselves, you know, even when they do their listening by a second party. If you tell me what Rattenstein said, I'll tell you whether your spy got it right."

Wharton breathed hard.

"He said you and Bob were calling me treacherous, and a false friend."

Hazel nodded.

"Yes, it was something like that," he said. "Not the exact words, perhaps, but that's what it amounts to."

"You dared—"

"Why shouldn't I dare?" sneered Hazel. "Are you set up on a pedestal, above criticism? Mustn't a chap mention Master Magnificent Wharton without bending the knee?"

"You miserable cad," exclaimed Wharton, his temper flaring out at last. "What reason have I given for you speaking of me like that?"

"You ought to know."

"It's only his rotten sulky temper, Harry," said Nugent, catching his chum by the arm. "Let it drop!"

"And Bob's sulky temper, too?" jeered Hazel. "I've never heard that Cherry had a sulky temper before?"

"You are a lying cad!" broke out Wharton. "You may have talked like that, but I know Bob would have shut you up."

"Better ask him what he thinks," drawled Hazel. "Your spying friend can tell you whether he shut me up or not."

"You are trying to make me believe that my pal joined you in backbiting," said Harry.

"I don't call it backbiting to talk over a rotten thing done by a fellow who backbites," said Hazel. "If you're double-faced, you must expect to be called double-faced. Either Bob or I would have said the same thing to your face. I'm saying it now, and Bob would say it if he were here."

"Liar!" said Wharton.

Smack!

Hazel struck out suddenly, and the captain of the Remove, off his guard, received the blow full in the face.

"That's my answer," said Hazel savagely. "Now pile in. You know you can lick me, or you wouldn't be bullying, but I'll give you a tussle for it!"

Wharton staggered back for a moment.

Then he leaped forward, and in a few moments more the two juniors were fighting hammer and tongs.

Nugent stood looking on helplessly; utterly dismayed by the turn matters had taken.

Hazel was savagely angry, and he fought with more determination than he usually showed, but he was nothing like a match for the captain of the Remove. He was knocked right and left.

Bob Cherry came out of the Cloisters just as Hazel went to the ground with a heavy crash.

He started as he saw it, and came running towards the spot.

Hazel staggered up.

His face was white with rage, his eyes burning. He was not beaten yet.

"Come on!" he muttered thickly. "You rotten bully, come on!"

Wharton dropped his hands.

"Come on!" shrieked Hazel. "I say it over again—treacherous hound, double-faced rotter! Is that enough for you?"

And he rushed at Wharton, hitting out furiously. Wharton had no choice about hitting out in return, and Hazel was stretched upon his back again. Bob Cherry reached the spot as Hazel staggered up a second time.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"Hold on, Hazel!" he said, catching the junior's arm. "Hold on! You're no match for him!"

"I know I'm not; but I'm keeping on! Let me go!"

"Hold on, old chap! Wharton, keep your hands off! You might pick a fellow who's a match for you, before you begin this!" exclaimed Bob.

Wharton started as if he had been stung. Was this Bob, his own pal, who was talking to him like this?

"Bob!" he exclaimed.

"Let him alone, confound you! Keep back, Hazel!"

"Bob, you heard what he called me?"

"Yes, I heard!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "And you can keep your paws off Hazel, Harry Wharton! Leave this to me, Hazel!"

Hazel panted.

"I'll leave it to you," he said. "You can handle the cad!"

"Bob!" Wharton's face had gone quite white. "Bob, are you mad? Do you mean to say that you side with Hazel, when you heard what he said?"

"I heard what he said; yes!"

"He called me double-faced!"

"Why shouldn't he?"

"Why shouldn't he?" shouted Wharton, his eyes blazing. "So you agree with him?"

"I shouldn't have said anything," said Bob, his own eyes gleaming; "but if you want it out, I do agree with him!"

"Bob," ejaculated Nugent, "have you gone dotty?"

"No, I haven't gone dotty! I'm not a clever chap!" said Bob bitterly. "I don't see things very quickly—not so quickly as Hazel does. It doesn't occur to me to suspect that chaps who seem friendly may be talking about a fellow behind his back, and making a mock of him. But when I find it out you can't expect me to be pleased. And you needn't jaw me, Frank Nugent! There's a pair of you, and I want nothing more to do with either!"

"I think you must be mad!" said Nugent.

"You can think what you like! Come on, Hazel! If Wharton doesn't want this to go any further——"

Wharton strode forward.

"After what you've said, it's got to go further!" he said, between his teeth. "You've been my chum, but you've just talked like a rotten lying hound! That's plain English!"

"Good!" said Bob, very quietly, but with a deadly gleam in his eyes. "After that there's no need of any more talk! Put up your hands!"

In another moment a fight would have been in progress, but Hurree Jamset Ram Singh ran up from the direction of the House. He stared in amazement at the warlike attitude of his two chums, and ran between.

"Buzz off, Inky!"

"Stand aside, old fellow!"

"The esteemed brekker bell has rung!" said the nabob.

"I have come fully arrived to call you to brekker!"

"Hang brekker!"

"But you cannot hang the esteemed Quelchy," urged the nabob. "Betterfully come in to brekker before the august Quelchy gets his noble rag out."

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh.

"All right, Inky! This will do after morning lessons, Wharton."

"As you like!" said Harry shortly.

He walked away with Nugent.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Peacemakers!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH blinked at Bob Cherry in bewilderment. The scene had taken him utterly by surprise.

"What is the matterfulness?" he inquired.

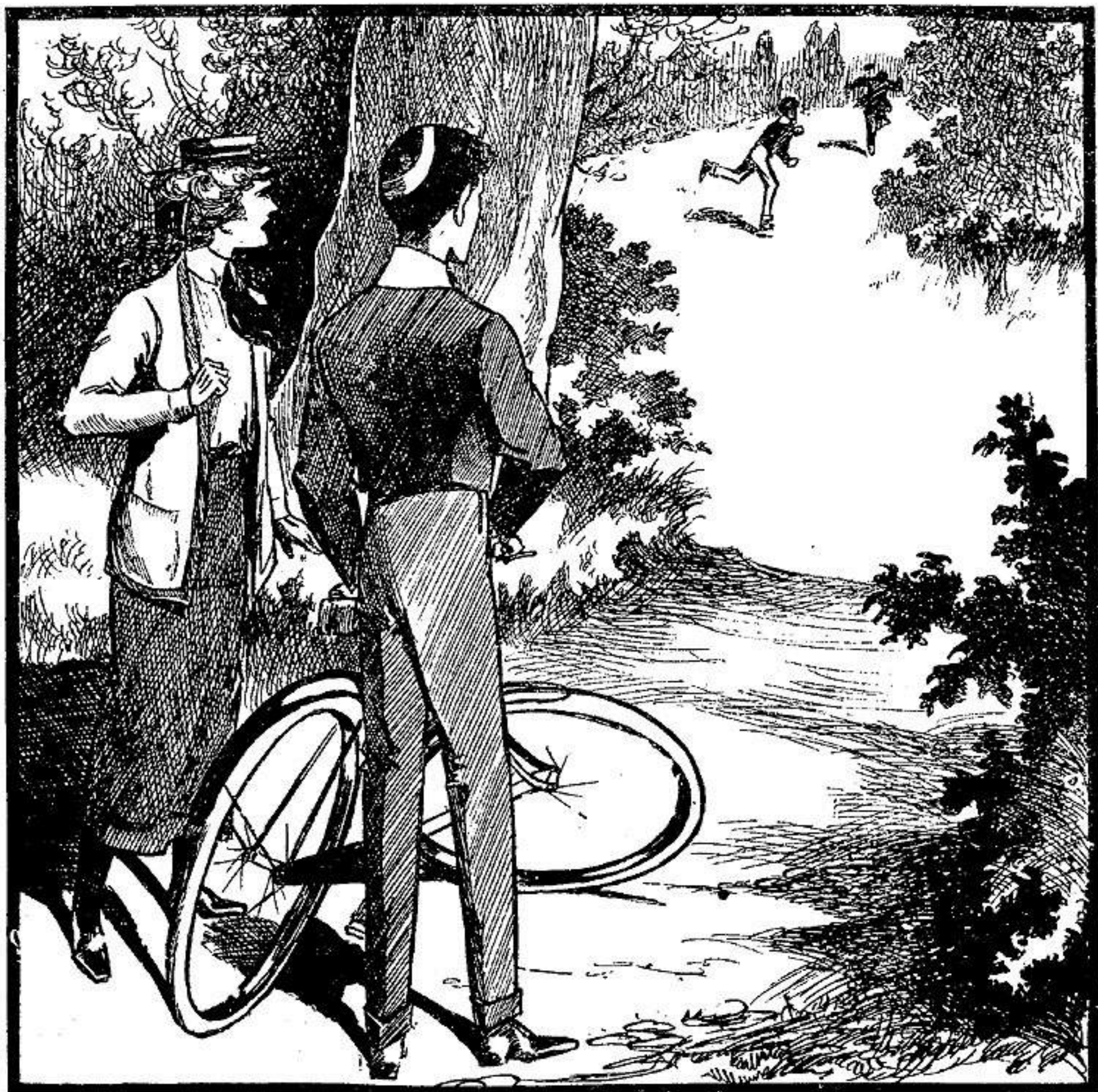
"Only a row, said Bob. "Let's get in to brekker. Better bathe your nose in the fountain, Hazel; you don't want Quelchy to spot it."

"You have quarrellfully rowed with the esteemed Wharton?"

"Yes."

"But whyfully?"

"Because I've found him out!" growled Bob.



The terrified Monson was running for his life, and Bob Cherry was racing in pursuit. Harry Wharton laughed. "He won't be back for some time. Look at him!" Phyllis smiled as she looked. (See Chapter 11.)

"My august chum is an esteemed ass!" said Hurree Singh, shaking his head. "This is a terrific mistakefulness!"

"It's all right, Inky; don't worry! How's your nose, Hazel?"

"Groogh!" said Hazel.

He was bathing his nose in the fountain, reddening the water there. He mopped it dry with his handkerchief, but it looked very red and swollen. The juniors started for the House, the nabob still looking bewildered and concerned. As he was a pal of both parties the sudden, bitter quarrel put him into a decidedly awkward position.

The Remove were at the breakfast-table when they came in, a few minutes late. During breakfast there was some excitement among the Removites. Wharton's lowered brows, Bob's grim expression, and Hazel's swollen nose did not escape notice.

After breakfast many inquiring youths wanted to know what was the matter. Wharton refused to say a word, and Bob Cherry only grunted in response to in-

quiries. But Hazel talked freely enough, and all the Lower Fourth were soon aware that there was a fight to come off after morning lessons.

Fights were not uncommon in the Remove by any means; but a fight between two such chums as Wharton and Bob Cherry was remarkable, and the whole Form buzzed with excitement over it.

The Famous Five sometimes had their little difficulties, as all human beings will; but a fight between two members of that celebrated Co. was a thing before unheard of.

Johnny Bull shared Hurree Singh's dismay. It looked like the breaking-up of the firm friendship that had stood many a test. Squiff and Tom Brown and Vennon-Smith, and other friends of both parties, heard the news with dismay. They agreed that peace had to be made, and decided among themselves that the fight should not come off if they could prevent it.

During morning lessons it is to be feared that many of the Removites thought more of the coming tussle

than of the war between Rome and Carthage. Mr. Quelch noticed an unusual restlessness in his Form, and was somewhat severe. Wharton, who was generally a most satisfactory pupil, made mistakes in construing which surprised the Form-master, and Bob Cherry blundered hopelessly. Both of them were the richer by a hundred lines when lessons came to an end for the morning.

When the Remove poured out of the class-room Harry Wharton suddenly found himself surrounded by a little crowd in the passage. Bob Cherry had gone out into the Close with Hazel, and Wharton was about to follow, when he was stopped.

Hurree Singh, Johnny Bull, Squiff, Tom Brown, Vernon-Smith, and Dick Rake gathered round him, looking very determined.

"Hallo! What's the game?" asked Wharton.

"We want to know what all this rot is about?" growled Johnny Bull. "What the thunder do you mean by quarrelling with Bob?"

"He's a slandering cad!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"What the merry dickens!" said Rake. "Are you off your rocker?"

"The esteemed Wharton is dreamfully burbling!"

"For goodness' sake, don't be such an ass, Wharton!" said Squiff sharply. "You know jolly well that Bob's nothing of the sort!"

"That's all I've got to say!" said Wharton coldly. "And now, if you'll let me pass, I'll get out!"

"Yes, cheese it, you fellows!" said Nugent. "It can't be helped! Wharton's quite right!"

"So you're in it, too?" said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes."

"Blessed if I can understand it!" said Tom Brown. "Look here, you can tell us what Bob's done!"

"You can ask him if you like!" said Harry. "I've got nothing to say about it, except that I want to pass!"

"Well, hold on till we've seen Bob," said the Bounder.

"It's no good!"

"Rats! There's some mistake!"

"The mistakefulness is terrific!"

"Come on!" said Johnny Bull. And the whole party hurried away in search of Bob Cherry, to seek an explanation of the strange mystery.

Bob was already in the gym, getting out the gloves. He grinned slightly as Johnny Bull and company came up. He could guess their mission.

"Now, what's all this rot?" asked the Bounder.

"Which?" asked Bob.

"What are you rowing with Wharton for?"

"He can tell you."

"We want you to tell us," said Johnny Bull.

"It must be some mistake," said Rattenstein, who had joined the party of peacemakers, though with no peace-making intent. "You are such an old friend of Wharton's, Cherry, that it is certainly a mistake, and everyone knows that you are incapable of slandering."

Bob Cherry's blue eyes sparkled.

"Slandering?" he said. "Is that from Wharton?"

"Hold your tongue, Rattenstein, you fool!" growled Johnny Bull. Several of the juniors shoved Rattenstein unceremoniously back. His apparently tactless reference to Wharton's words only made matters worse, though his manner was so earnest and friendly that it was hard to guess that such was his intention.

"Slandering, by Jove!" said Bob. "So Wharton accuses me of slandering! I like that—from him!"

"There is terrific mistakefulness!"

"It's some silly mistake!" said Squiff. "For goodness' sake, let's have some common sense, Bob! What have you got against Wharton?"

"Nothing."

"What are you going to fight him for, then?"

"Because he doesn't like my opinion of him."

"Why shouldn't he?"

"Well, it isn't a flattering opinion, you see," explained Bob. "I think he's a good bit of a rotter, and rather a cad! I'm not unreasonable enough to expect that to please him!"

"Why, you silly ass!" exclaimed Johnny Bull wrath-

fully. "If you talk like that about Wharton, you'll have a fight on with me next!"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Has he said nice things about me?" he asked.

"No; I'd have punched his nose for what he said, only I know there's some mistake!"

"Well, there's a mistake on both sides, then, and we're going to settle it with the gloves on!" said Bob. "Better let it alone, you chaps! Peacemakers generally end by rowing with both sides, you know!"

"But look here—"

"I see!" said Bob. "This is a sort of Ford peace-party! Well, Ford, the peacemaker, is an advertising money-grubber, and his peace-party are duffers and cranks. I don't think much of peace-parties! Run away and leave us to fight it out, and don't be Fords!"

Harry Wharton entered the gym with Nugent. The peace-party looked at one another. Truly, their fate resembled that of the egregious Ford—more kicks than halfpence from both sides.

"I'll tell you what!" said Johnny Bull. "It's six of one, and half a dozen of the other! Let's knock their heads together!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That is a wheezy good idea, my esteemed Johnny."

Harry Wharton strode up to the group.

"I'm ready!" he said.

"Same here!" said Bob, at once.

"Then we needn't waste time!"

The two juniors put on the gloves. Nugent was Wharton's second, and Hazel was Bob's. Their worried friends formed a ring round them—a ring that was soon thickly crowded. Rattenstein stood looking on with a smile on his sallow face. The traitor and mischief-maker was triumphing.

"Anybody going to keep time?" asked Bob Cherry carelessly.

"Oh, I'll keep time!" said the Bounder. "I think you're a pair of silly asses!"

"Thanks!" said Bob imperturbably.

Vernon-Smith took out his watch.

"Seconds out of the ring——"

"Good-morning!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Phyllis Chips In!

"GOOD-MORNING!"

The juniors jumped, as that friendly greeting fell upon their ears, in a voice they knew well.

Phyllis Howell was looking in at the open doorway.

Bob and Wharton dropped their hands at once, their faces flushing red.

"My hat!" murmured Johnny Bull, and the nabob murmured that the hatfulness was terrific.

Phyllis nodded and smiled to the Removites.

"I've just come over on my bike," she said. "Don't stop for me—I like watching boxing—if you don't mind."

"Ahem!" mumbled Bob.

"May I come in?" asked Phyllis.

"Ye-es, of—of course," stammered Wharton.

"Top of the mornin' to yez!" said Micky Desmond. "Plaze come in, and—and watch the boxing."

Some of the juniors grinned. Wharton and Bob Cherry had their jackets off, and the boxing-gloves on. Miss Howell, as yet, supposed that it was a friendly bout with the gloves that her arrival had interrupted.

The girl came smiling into the gym.

"I came over to speak to you about to-morrow afternoon," she said. "But don't let me interrupt. Go ahead!"

Considering what was in hand, neither of the intended combatants felt inclined to go ahead. They looked extremely sheepish and uncertain.

"I—I think we'll chuck it," stammered Bob. "No importance, you know. We—we can have a round or two any time."

"Certainly!" said Wharton, beginning to take off the gloves.

Miss Phyllis shook her head.

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed. "Go ahead! I don't want to interrupt, and I've lots of time to get back to Cliff House for dinner. Go ahead!"

"Ahem!"

"Better go ahead," whispered Squiff. "Don't let her guess you were going to fight, you duffers!"

"I—I suppose so."

The two combatants were feeling uncomfortable. They were not in a humour for a friendly spar, and a fight was out of the question in the girl's presence. But appearances had to be kept up, so they advanced, and began to box.

Rattenstein sidled towards Miss Howell, and bowed to her in his exaggerated, foreign way. The girl was looking on with interest as the two juniors sparred. Both Wharton and Bob were first-rate boxers, and the contest was well worth watching. Under Miss Phyllis' bright eyes, they did not intend to hit hard; but, in spite of themselves, they found that they were doing so. Vernon-Smith was keeping time, half laughing. In less than a minute the two juniors were warming to their work, in spite of their resolves, and Bob Cherry, breaking through, brought home his right on Wharton's chin, and the captain of the Remove staggered back, his head singing. He huddled himself forward the next moment, and his right and left hammered in Bob's face. Bob Cherry went down with a crash.

Miss Phyllis' face became very grave. This did not look much like a friendly spar.

"Surely that is very rough!" she muttered.

"My dear young lady," murmured Rattenstein, "perhaps you will let me take you somewhere else for a while—while you wait. It is not nice for you to see such a fight."

"It is not a fight, surely?" said Phyllis, starting.

Rattenstein nodded.

"But Wharton and Bob are such friends——"

"The best of friends fall out," said Rattenstein, with a smile. "Perhaps you would like to walk in the quad."

Phyllis shook her head.

Bob was on his feet again in a twinkling, attacking hotly, forgetful of the girl and everything else. Wharton had to give ground, when the call of time came, and they separated.

Phyllis' lips were set hard now. She could see that Rattenstein had told her the truth, and that it was a fight. Her first impulse was to get away from the scene at once, but she paused. Then, with the colour flushing into her cheeks, she came forward.

The ring of juniors made room for her, wondering what was going to happen.

"Bob!" said Phyllis. "Harry!"

Bob Cherry grinned uneasily.

"It's all right, Miss Howell! Chaps get excited a bit in boxing. We're not hurt."

"Not a bit," said Harry.

"You are not boxing," said Phyllis. "You are fighting!"

"Ahem!"

"Ah-e-e-em!"

"I have no right to interfere," said Phyllis, her fair face scarlet now. "But—but won't you stop? Surely you are too good friends to—to fight like this!"

Wharton peeled off the gloves.

"It's nothing," he said.

"Nun-nun-nothing at all," stammered Bob, wishing that the fair Phyllis was at the ends of the earth. "Look here, we won't go on. It—it was a boxing-match——"

"Weren't you going to fight?"

"Ahem!"

"Stop it at once!" said Phyllis decidedly. "You are a pair of duffers."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites rather enjoyed Miss Howell's plain speaking.

"I am perfectly certain you have nothing to fight about," said Phyllis severely. "How can you be so silly?"

"Oh, dear!"

"Go it, Miss Howell!" said Squiff. "We've been trying to talk sense to them, and they only call us Fords."

"They can call me a Ford if they like," said Phyllis. "I have a good mind to box their ears!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Miss Phyllis!"

Bob Cherry grinned uncomfortably, and Wharton laughed. Both the juniors were feeling keenly ridiculous.

"Now shake hands!" said Phyllis autocratically.

The juniors looked grim at once. Bob shook his head.

"Can't be did, Miss Howell!"

"Sorry!" said Wharton.

"You will not shake hands?"

"Can't be done!"

"Then——" Phyllis' eyes opened wide. "You have had a serious quarrel?"

"Well, yes."

"Then you are very foolish!"

"Ahem!"

"You think me very interfering, of course!" said Phyllis. "Don't shake your heads; I know you do! But I can't help that. I'm not going away till you promise not to fight."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

any more; and if I am late for dinner, I shall be scolded, and it will be all your fault!"

"Look here, Miss Howell!" began Hazeldene, whose courtesy to the fair sex was not quite so marked as Bob's or Wharton's. "This isn't a matter a girl can understand! You'd better leave it alone!"

Phyllis' eyes flashed.

"I will mind my own business if Bob and Harry ask me to do so!" she said.

"Shut up, Hazel!" muttered Bob.

"Dry up, you rotter!" growled Wharton.

"Rotter yourself!" said Hazel, with a sneer. "If Miss Howell knew what you'd done, she wouldn't chip in to save you from what you deserve!"

"Shut up, I tell you!" grunted Bob.

Wharton stood silent, with a flush on his cheeks. Phyllis looked hard at Hazel, and then at Wharton and Bob, in turn.

"There is some misunderstanding," she said.

"We've told 'em both that," said Johnny Bull, "and the frabjous asses stick to calling one another names!"

"Now, I'll tell you what," said Phyllis. "You know that girls have ever so much more sense than boys——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Both of you tell me what is the matter, and let me be the umpire!"

"Hear, hear!" said Squiff heartily.

"You see, we want you to be friends on Saturday afternoon, when there is going to be a little celebration," said Miss Phyllis. "You must make it up before then!"

"Ahem!"

"Put on your jackets and come with me!" said Phyllis persuasively. "Don't keep on saying to yourself that I am an interfering little minx, Harry——"

"I—I wasn't!" stammered Wharton, flushing scarlet.

"And don't you keep on wishing that I would go away quietly, Bob——"

"I—I didn't—I wasn't——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But come and be civil, and don't be absurd!" said Phyllis. "A Highcliffe boy threw a clod at me as I came over——"

"Oh, the rotter!" ejaculated Bob.

"And if you were polite, you would see me safe back to Cliff House, instead of punching one another's foolish heads!"

"Why, of course we will!" exclaimed Wharton. "I mean, I will—or Bob—I mean, Cherry——"

"Whichever you like," said Bob.

"Both!" said Phyllis.

The two juniors exchanged a hopeless look. Foes as they had become, they felt a deep sympathy for one another at that moment. Without discourtesy, they could not rebuff Miss Howell, and neither of them thought of that for a moment. With somewhat grim faces they put on their jackets, and walked out of the gym with Phyllis.

"Hurrah!" chirruped Squiff.

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!" said the nabob, in great relief. "The esteemed miss will talkfully bring them to their common or garden senses, and everything will be gardenfully lovely!"

And the Co. fervently hoped that the nabob was right.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Promise!

BOB CHERRY wheeled Miss Howell's bicycle on one side, while Wharton walked on the other side of the girl. Both were grim and silent as they left the gates of Greyfriars.

The situation was so awkward and absurd that they hardly knew what to say or do.

But for the bitter cause of offence between them Phyllis' intervention between them would have been an excellent thing. As it was, the fight was postponed, and the cause of offence remained untouched with all its bitterness.

Phyllis' colour was very deep now. She realised that she had taken a great deal upon herself in acting as she had done, and that she had put a very great strain upon the juniors' politeness. But it was her sincere friendship for both of them that had dictated her action, and she did not regret what she had done. That there could be no real reason for so bitter a quarrel between two good chums she was convinced. A misunderstanding was at the bottom of it, and if she could set it right, she knew that both the juniors would be glad that she had intervened.

"Won't you tell me what it is?" she asked. "I am sure it is only some miserable mistake."

Grim silence.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

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

"Then I shall ask you, Harry. What has Bob done?"

"Never mind that!" said Harry.

"But I do mind!" said Phyllis. "You are thinking me impertinent for interfering; but if there is an explanation, you will be glad!"

"Yes; but—but you don't understand, Miss Howell. Nothing's been done, so far as that goes, only—only we're not friends any longer."

"That's it," said Bob. "That's all, Miss Howell."

"It looks to me," said Phyllis quietly, "as if someone has been making mischief. Surely you two would not believe anything against one another on the word of a third party?"

"A chap can believe his own ears!" said Wharton.

"Exactly!" said Bob.

It was at that moment that Monson of Highcliffe came in sight. That cheery youth was leaning on the stile, probably with the intention of pelting Miss Howell again as she returned to Cliff House. The sight of him came as a relief to Wharton, who spotted him first.

"Is that the fellow who threw a clod at you?" he asked.

"Yes. Never mind him now—"

"But I do mind!" said Harry, and he started at a run towards Monson.

"Harry!"

Bob Cherry shoved the bike against a tree and started, too. Both the juniors were glad of the interruption. But, as Bob passed Wharton with a rush, Harry paused. He did not care to be associated with his former chum in anything, and certainly both of them were not required to deal with Monson, who was already running. And Miss Howell could not very well be deserted. Wharton halted, and took the bike Bob had relinquished.

"Let's get on," he said. "You'll be late for dinner."

"But Bob—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He won't be back for some time. Look at him!"

Phyllis smiled as she looked. The terrified Monson was running for his life, and Bob was raging in pursuit, and they were already two fields away. As a matter of fact, Bob was not so anxious to avenge the pelting of Miss Howell as he was to get away from the awkward questions of Miss Howell herself. It was pretty certain that he would not join again in that walk to Cliff House.

Wharton wheeled the bicycle on, and Phyllis walked on with him.

"Now you can tell me," she said. "Mind, I insist on knowing all about it, or I shall tell Marjorie to talk to you! I am perfectly sure that there is a misunderstanding, and you ought to be glad to have it set right!"

"Well, I should be, of course!" said Harry. "But—but it isn't a misunderstanding! Bob's changed his opinion of me—why, I can't even guess! He takes Hazel's part—"

"Then there is trouble with Hazel, too?"

"Well, yes. For some reason I can't understand he got his back up, and Bob's sided with him, though he's generally more down on Hazel's tantrums than I am. They both think—or say—"

"They both think what they say," said Phyllis.

"Well, they think, then, that I've acted badly towards both of them, though why I simply can't guess!"

"That proves that it is all a mistake, for I know quite well that you have not acted badly."

"Thank you, Miss Howell! I should not like you to think that I've acted badly towards anybody!" said Harry. "And a fellow doesn't like being called treacherous, or a back-biter!"

Phyllis uttered an exclamation.

"But—but surely Bob hasn't said—"

"Yes. Now you've got the whole story!" said Harry. "You see, there's nothing to be done!"

"I see there is something to be done!" said Phyllis warmly. "No, it isn't a mistake, I see it now! It's some mischief-maker who has been causing trouble!"

"If you mean Hazel—"

"I don't mean Hazel. I mean some wicked and unscrupulous boy who has set himself to cause trouble," said Phyllis. "That's the only possible explanation, if you would think of it."

"I don't see how."

"I am sure of it," said Phyllis earnestly. "Now, do make me a promise, Harry—don't quarrel with Bob again till you're sure there's something to quarrel about. Will you promise me not to do so, till a few days at least? It may all come out."

"Cherry would have to be consulted about that."

"If you tell him you have promised me, he will let it drop."

"But—but—"

"You would promise Marjorie if she asked you. And if she were here, she would speak just as I am doing."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"I—I suppose so. Well, I promise, then," said Wharton reluctantly. "It sha'n't go any further, if Cherry's willing to drop it. I can't say any more than that."

Phyllis smiled brightly.

"I'm sure you will be glad of that afterwards," she said. "Now, you may go back, or you will be late for dinner. Good-bye, Harry!"

And Miss Howell mounted her machine, and rode on to Cliff House. Wharton walked back to Greyfriars with a thoughtful, knitted brow. Phyllis' words seemed to have let some light in upon the strange affair. Wharton acknowledged that feminine eyes somewhat saw more clearly than masculine ones, and it was possible that Phyllis was right—that some unscrupulous third party had been making mischief. But who—and how? There he was all at sea.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Tip from Phyllis!

"PENNY for 'em," said Miss Clara flippantly.

Afternoon lessons were over at Cliff House, and Marjorie and Clara and Phyllis were seated by the school-room window, knitting socks. But Phyllis' knitting-needles, for once, were not busy. They moved slowly, or ceased to move, and the girl's brow had lines of thought upon it.

Phyllis looked up with a smile.

"I was thinking," she said.

"Horrid!" yawned Miss Clara. "I never think! I'm going into the garden; you can stay here and think."

And Miss Clara ran away. Phyllis resumed her knitting, but after a few minutes she laid down the needles. Marjorie looked up, and smiled as she caught her eyes.

"How thoughtful you are," she said.

"I've got reason to be," said Phyllis.

"Did you speak to Harry about to-morrow afternoon?"

"I forgot."

"Why, that is what you went over to Greyfriars for!"

"Yes. But look here, Marjorie, there's something wrong. They are all at sixes and sevens there, and nobody seems to know what it is about. Somebody has been making mischief, I know that."

Marjorie looked distressed.

"I want to know who it is, and clear it up," said Phyllis.

"Wharton and Bob were just going to fight when I got over there—"

"Phyllis!" exclaimed Marjorie.

"I stopped them," said Miss Howell coolly, laughing a little. "They both wished me at the very dickens, but I stopped them. But I've got a bone to pick with you, Marjorie."

"With me?"

"Yes. The last day or two—since our tea-party last Wednesday—you haven't been quite the same."

Marjorie coloured.

"You were raising objections to going over for the match on Wednesday, and you were against the little party to-morrow," said Phyllis. "You have been quite snappish whenever Bob was mentioned."

"I—I haven't! I didn't mean—"

"You don't want to see Bob Cherry again?"

"No, I don't!"

"Why not?"

"Because—because I don't!"

"That isn't good enough, my dear. Bob is attached to you like a faithful dog, and if he knew, he would be hurt."

"Oh, no, he wouldn't!" said Marjorie. "You don't know."

"I don't know, but I'm going to," said Phyllis coolly. "Things don't happen without reasons. Why don't you like poor old Bob now?"

"We are not getting on with the socks," suggested Marjorie, "and they have to be sent out to the Front, you know."

"Not this minute," said Phyllis. "I've been thinking, Marjorie. Rattenstein, that horrid German boy, was talking to you that afternoon. Now, I sha'n't ask for any particulars—only one question. Was it anything Rattenstein said to you that made you feel less friendly towards Bob?"

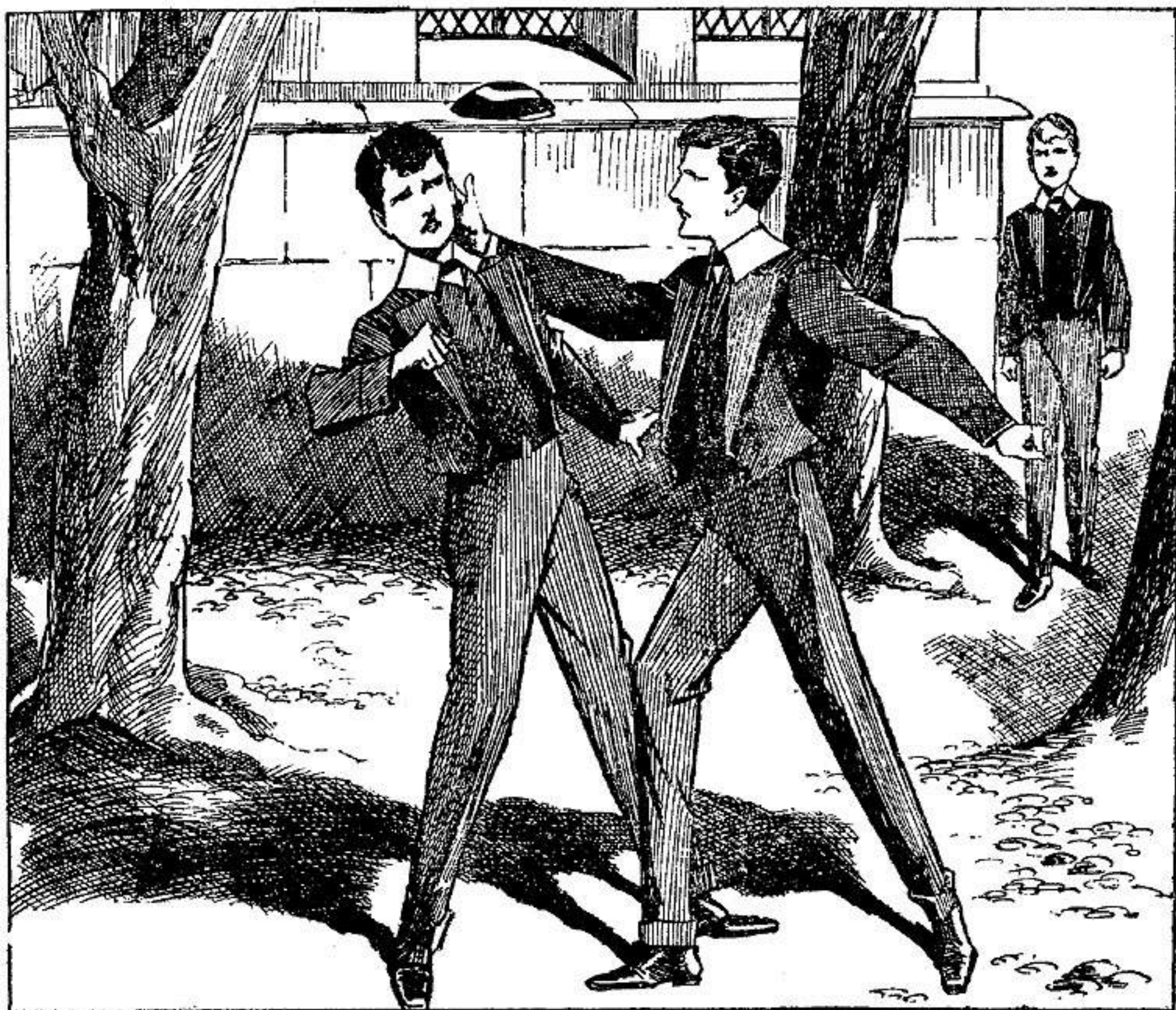
Marjorie started.

"Because, if so, most likely he was fibbing," said Phyllis.

"Germans are awful sneaks, you know, and I know that Rattenstein is despised at Greyfriars, and he might be revengeful."

"But—but Rattenstein wouldn't tell me a barefaced untruth," said Marjorie, in dismay, "just to make mischief."

"Wouldn't he!" said Phyllis. "My dear kid, isn't he a



Smack! Hazel struck out suddenly, and the captain of the Remove, off his guard, received the blow full in the face. 'That's my answer!' said Hazel savagely. See chapter 8.

Hun? Now, look here. Why I have thought of Rattenstein is this—he tried it with me. He told me about Bob having no eyes for anybody but you, in such a pointed way that I knew he was trying to make jealousy."

"Phyllis, he—he told you that? Why, he told me the opposite!" exclaimed Marjorie breathlessly.

Miss Howell gave a little chirrup of triumph.

"What did I tell you?" she exclaimed. "Now, tell me exactly what he said, Marjorie. Of course, you know I'm not a chatterbox!"

"It—it was so humiliating," said Marjorie, her face crimson. "But I will tell you, because—because I think now perhaps Bob did not say anything of the kind. Rattenstein said—at least, he hinted—that Bob wouldn't come on Wednesday, because—because—oh, it was caddish!—because he wouldn't appear to be throwing over an old friend for a new one—you understand? He wouldn't do as he wanted, because he thought I should be hurt."

"You little duffer!" said Phyllis. "Do you think that Bob, if he thought anything of the kind, would tell Rattenstein so. They're not chummy—hardly even friendly. Not that there's anything in it. Bob is still your faithful Newfoundland dog, just as he always was."

Marjorie laughed.

"Of course, I shouldn't mind," she said. "But the way Rattenstein put it, it was so humiliating, as if Bob thought I could be jealous."

"That was what he meant you to feel," said Phyllis. "Well, you know now he was lying."

"But Bob didn't come, Phyllis."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"Might be a lot of reasons for that. Perhaps Rattenstein has been telling him falsehoods, too—about you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Marjorie, horror-stricken. "Could anybody be so wicked?"

"We shall see. Now, just look at it," said Phyllis. "There wasn't any trouble among our friends before Rattenstein came. Rattenstein has tried to make mischief between you and me, and between you and Bob. Isn't it very likely he's at the bottom of the trouble between Bob and Harry?"

Marjorie nodded.

"Oh, Phyllis, if he has lied to poor Bob, and hurt his feelings! Bob is so sensitive, and a word would be enough."

"I believe the German is at the bottom of it all," said Phyllis. "But it will come out. Look here!"

Phyllis ran for a pen and paper, and with the sheet on a blotting-pad, began to write. Marjorie looked over her shoulder.

"Dear Bob,—You and Harry and Hazel have a misunderstanding. I am sure it could be cleared up, if you would compare notes patiently; and, above all, find out whether anything that has been said came from Rattenstein. If Rattenstein had anything to do with your not coming over last Wednesday, you must understand that whatever he may have said was untrue. I have proof that this boy has tried to make mischief, and I think very likely he is the cause of what has happened between you and your friends."

"Yours sincerely,

"PHYLLIS and MARJORIE."

"There!" said Phyllis. "That's quite plain, isn't it?"
 "Very plain," said Marjorie, with a faint smile. "I—I hope you are not doing the German boy an injustice, Phyllis."

"I've said I have proof, and I have proof, haven't I?" said Phyllis. "Rattenstein told us two different stories—just to make mischief. He pretended that Bob had confided things to him, when we know Bob hadn't. He wouldn't have spoken like it to anybody—and certainly not to Rattenstein, a foreigner he dislikes. You were a goose not to see that at once."

"I—I suppose I was," admitted Marjorie. "But—"
 "No supposing about it—you were!" said Phyllis. "Now I'll post this letter, and Bob will get it in the morning."
 And in a few minutes more the letter was in the box, and both the girls felt very much relieved in their minds.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. Comparing Notes!

SOME of the Remove fellows had looked forward to a renewal of the fight in the gym, which had been interrupted by Phyllis Howell. They were disappointed, however; for during the remainder of the day Harry Wharton carefully avoided Bob Cherry, and they did not come into contact. Their friends were glad and relieved, for although the trouble still remained unsettled, it was something that the personal encounter had been put off.

That it could be put off for long, however, was unlikely, and the peace-makers received rebuffs from both parties, and were puzzled and exasperated. Even Mark Linley, who had a great influence over Bob, had no luck when he spoke to Bob Cherry in the evening at prep.

"It's no good talking, Marky," said Bob. "I don't say I want to hammer a chap I used to be friendly with. I'm not going out hunting for trouble, but it must come to that; and, anyway, we can never be friends again. I don't understand why Wharton is keeping off the grass, as a matter of fact. I know he's got plenty of pluck."

"I can explain fully explicate," said Hurree Singh, looking up from his work. "The esteemed Wharton has promised the charming miss to keep off the august grass."

"Oh, I see!" said Bob. "Well, I don't want to row. I'm sure—unless he goes for Hazel again. I won't stand that."

"I don't see why you should back up Hazel against one of your best pals," said Mark. "We all know Hazel's temper is uncertain, and he seems to have quarrelled with Wharton about simply nothing."

"I think he's in the right."

"Then you must know more about it than I do."

"Well, I do know more about it than you do," grinned Bob. "So there you are, Marky! Now let's grind!"
 And the subject dropped.

In the morning, when the Remove turned out, Bob did not even glance at Wharton or Nugent. He went down with Hazel. Wharton and Nugent went out by themselves. Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were at a loss. So far as they could see, both parties were obstinate and wrongheaded, and their role, as friends to both, was a difficult one to play.

"Letter for you, Bob," said Johnny Bull after breakfast.

"Oh!" said Bob.

He read the letter just before morning classes. He stared as he read it, and a strange change came over his face. He stood rooted to the floor. Hazel came along and tapped him on the shoulder.

"You'll be late," he said.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

He thrust the letter into his pocket and hurried into the Form-room. His brain was in a whirl.

The girl's frank letter had put strange thoughts into his mind. Bob was restless during lessons, and hardly heard a word Mr. Quelch said to him. He was intensely relieved when the Remove was dismissed. Billy Bunter button-holed him immediately the juniors came out.

"I say, Cherry, as you've got a remittance—"

"I haven't, fathead!"

"Eh! What was in that letter, then?"

"Go and eat coke," said Bob. And he sat the Owl of the Remove down upon the oak settee in the passage. It was no time to bother with Bunter just then. He hurried after Johnny Bull, leaving Bunter snorting.

"Johnny, old chap—"

"Hallo," said Johnny Bull; "want to fight me or Inky?"

"No, ass!" said Bob. "Read that letter! Here, Inky, you come and read it, too!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Johnny.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

"The hatfulness is terrific. The charming miss has knocked the esteemed nail upon its venerable head."

Bob looked uncertainly at his two chums.

"Well," said Johnny grimly, "you see what Miss Howell says. You've got something up against Harry. Has Rattenstein anything to do with it?"

"In—in a way," stammered Bob.

"And about your sticking at home last Wednesday? Had the German cad anything to do with that?"

"Ye-es."

"Get up to the study," said Johnny Bull. "I'll bring the other silly asses there, and we'll compare notes, as Miss Howell says. My hat, that kid's got some sense."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh put his arm through Bob's, and led him away to No. 1 Study. A few minutes later Johnny Bull arrived, with Harry Wharton and Hazel, the former looking grim, the latter sulky and savage.

"Look here, what's this silly game?" said Hazel.

"Read that letter, both of you!" said Johnny Bull.

Wharton and Hazel read Phyllis' letter. Wharton's look did not change, but Hazel stared at it open-mouthed.

"My hat!" he said.

"Oh, we're getting to something, in your case at least," said Johnny Bull grimly. "Now, it looks to me as if there's been mischief made, and that German cad is at the bottom of it."

"I—I shouldn't wonder!" stammered Hazel. "But—but he's been so friendly with me!"

"Serve you right for trusting a German. Now, all you fatheads," said Johnny Bull. "I suppose you want this cleared up?"

"Ye-es," said Wharton. "But I don't see. If Rattenstein tried to make mischief with me, I'd shut him up fast enough. I've had nothing to do with him."

But Cherry coloured.

"Let's begin at the beginning," said Johnny Bull, in a businesslike way. "In the first place, why didn't you come over to Cliff House on Wednesday, Bob? Had the Hun anything to do with that?"

"I—I suppose he was lying, now!" stammered Bob. "But—but—"

"What did he tell you?"

"He—he had heard Marjorie say to Clara when they were here the other day that—that"—(Bob's cheeks were scarlet)—"that—that she wished I—I wouldn't—" He broke off.

"You wouldn't what?"

"That I wouldn't bore her to death with so much footer talk," said Bob. It was out at last!

"Why, you silly ass!" said Hazel. "Marjorie wouldn't have said anything of the kind. Do you think she would pretend to like your silly jaw, and make fun of you to Clara?"

"I—I thought—"

"I am quite certain that Marjorie never said anything of the sort," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Rattenstein could only have repeated it to cause ill-feeling. If he would do that, he would invent it."

"I—I suppose he would!" stammered Bob. "But—but I never thought—"

"No, you can't think," agreed Johnny Bull bluntly. "So that's what you were grouching about—letting a filthy Hun lead you by the nose, to think badly of a ripping girl like Marjorie?"

"I didn't think badly of her," broke out Bob angrily. "I—I thought she might—might be rather bored with me, because—"

"Because the esteemed Cherry's borefulness is terrific. But the charming miss has more patience than the worthy Cherry's esteemed chums."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you can chuck your esteemed tactfulness," said Johnny Bull. "Now, that's one point cleared up. Rattenstein was fooling Bob—easy enough, as Bob was specially designed by Nature to be fooled—"

"Look here—"

"Don't you see, he's been trying the same game at Cliff House, only Phyllis was keen enough to spot him!" said Johnny Bull. "She's got a lot of sense. I dare say she saw right through Rattenstein—girls do see through a cad, you know. Now, next man in! Hazel, you've got something up against Wharton, and you've as good as said that that Hun had a finger in it. Out with it!"

Hazel hesitated.

"If I've been taken in, I beg Wharton's pardon!" he said. "But—but it sounded so—so plausible, and—and Rattenstein had been so friendly. He put it that he was indignant on my account, and wanted to put me on my guard. But—but if Wharton never said—"

"What am I supposed to have said?" asked Wharton quietly.

"Well, according to Rattenstein, that—that you didn't want me in the footer team, and you only put me in to please my sister, and—and you'd have dropped me out, only Marjorie asked you not to, and—and a lot like that," said Hazel, flushing. "I—I took it all as gospel."

"I should hardly think it necessary for me to say that I never said a word of that kind to anybody," said Harry. "Whom am I supposed to have said it to?"

"Rattenstein heard you saying it to Nugent—I mean he said he did!"

"Well, Nugent knows whether I did or not," said Wharton, shrugging his shoulders.

"It's a beastly whopper from beginning to end," said Frank.

"I—I know that now," said Hazel, hanging his head. "I—I wish I'd come to you direct, but—but I felt so rotten about it, and—and—"

"So that's settled," said Johnny Bull. "Rattenstein had spotted that Hazel was a suspicious, sulky chump—"

"Look here, Johnny Bull—"

"So he knew he could play on his feelings," said Johnny calmly. "Shut up, Hazel—plain speaking won't hurt you. Now, Bob, it's your turn. What have you got up against Wharton?"

Bob looked uncomfortable.

"I—I heard him myself," he said; "but—but when I come to think of it, I—I may have had a wrong impression. It was on Thursday—I came along the passage, and Wharton was saying to Nugent—"

"What the dickens was I saying, then?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, you said 'I'm fed-up with him!' in a jolly contemptuous tone," said Bob, flushing, "and it wasn't pleasant to hear. I didn't think you were referring to me, though, till Rattenstein said—"

"Rattenstein again," said Johnny Bull. "But let's have the facts. Were you referring to this howling fathead, Harry?"

"Of course I wasn't," said Harry. "I remember it quite well, though I didn't see Bob in the passage. Hazel had just been ragging me, over nothing, as I supposed, and I told Nugent I was fed-up with him. If Hazel remembers all the things he said to me, he can't be surprised that I felt fed-up."

"Well, that's so," said Hazel shamefacedly. "I was in the wrong, as it turns out, but I never knew—"

"You weren't speaking of me?" said Bob. "Well, I didn't think you were, till Rattenstein said he had heard my name—no, now I come to think of it, he didn't exactly say so. He made out that I'd been grumpy lately—I suppose I had, too, owing to that beast's lies—and he urged me not to take any notice of what Wharton said—and—and I let him take me in, I suppose."

"And that was all?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, when I found that Hazel had been talked about, too—I mean he believed he had—I sided with him," said Bob. "How was I to know that he was idiot enough to let a German cad stuff him up with lies?"

"Well, you were idiot enough, too," said Hazel.

"I—I'm sorry, Wharton," said Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't have thought it myself; but—but that rotter, and then Hazel—"

"All serene!" said Wharton. "You're a silly duffer, you must admit that, and there's my fist on it."

Bob Cherry grinned sheepishly, and took his old chum's hand.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Hun Goes Through It!

"I SAY, you fellows, is it a feed?"

"Ha, ha! No."

"What the thunder is it all about?" said Bolsover major.

The Remove fellows were crowding into the Rag. A notice had been put on the board, calling a Form-meeting immediately after dinner. The Remove turned up almost to the last fellow, wondering what was toward.

Their surprise increased when Wharton and Bob Cherry—now evidently on the best of terms—came into the Rag arm-in-arm with Prince Rupprecht von Rattenstein.

Rattenstein was looking decidedly uneasy.

His arms had been taken as he came out from dinner, and he was marched off, without his permission being asked. Neither did the juniors vouchsafe a word of explanation. The youthful Hun simply had to come.

"What's the little game?" demanded Peter Todd. "Explain, you asses! What are you doing with Rattenstein?"

"Keep that cad safe," said Wharton, and he mounted on a chair. "Gentlemen of the Remove! You are hereby called together for an important purpose. Honourable THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

members are aware that yesterday my old pal Bob Cherry and I, came near mopping one another up—also that Hazel and I had a scrap in the quad. Gentlemen, it was all due to a misunderstanding brought about by this squirming Hunnish scoundrel, Rattenstein. The beast lied to Bob Cherry, and lied to Hazel, to cause trouble, and we never found it out till to-day, when we compared notes."

"Pity you didn't compare notes before you started punching," remarked Rake.

"Well, we didn't. As a matter of fact, we didn't tumble, till Miss Howell gave us the tip. Rattenstein tried to play the same game at Cliff House, but Miss Phyllis spotted it. Now we're going to make an example of him, partly to punish him, and partly to put all the fellows on their guard against a snake in the grass."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on, though," said Peter Todd. "Let the fellow speak up for himself. Even a Hun has a right to defend himself."

"Right! Rattenstein told Hazel that I made remarks to Nugent about him. He professes to have been eavesdropping, I suppose. Well, now Hazel has told us, both Nugent and I solemnly declare that it is an invention from beginning to end. Is our word good enough?"

"Yes, ass. And it's two witnesses against one," said Todd judicially. "Rattenstein, have you anything to say?"

"I—I—I—"

"Take your time. I haven't got the ink ready yet," said Johnny Bull.

"I—I—I—" panted Rattenstein, white as a sheet as the juniors closed round him with grim looks. "I—I was mistaken—Miss Hazeldene was mistaken—Cherry was—was mistaken—I never meant—I did not say—and—and Hazeldene misunderstood me, and—and—"

"That's enough," said Vernon-Smith, "don't roll out any more German lies, or you'll turn the air blue."

"Ready!" said Johnny Bull.

"Gentlemen," said Wharton, "as you all know, it is no good talking to a Prussian. You could talk to him for a hundred years, and then he would still be the same liar and sneak and slanderer. We've taken the liberty of borrowing the Head's birch—we borrowed it once for Bunter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Now we've borrowed it for this German cad. He's going to have twelve strokes with the birch, well laid on, and we call on Bolsover major, as the biggest fellow present, to lay them on."

"I'm your man," said Bolsover major heartily. "Wasn't I down on that worm from the first? I was going to smash him, but Wharton chipped in—"

"You won't find me chipping in again," said Wharton, "and I'm willing to beg your pardon for chipping in at all."

"Good enough! Lay him across the table."

"Ach! Mein Gott! Help! Help!"

Bump went the Hun across the table, and his princely nose came into painful contact with the wood. Skinner thoughtfully drew a duster round his head to muffle his howls. It was needed. Bolsover major laid on the twelve strokes with the Head's birch as if he were beating carpet.

When the infliction was over, Rattenstein was shrieking wildly in the duster. But his punishment was not over yet.

Johnny Bull yanked him off the table, and he was gripped by Bulstrode and Bob Cherry. Then a concoction of ink and glue was solemnly mixed in his hair, and daubed on his sallow face. Then a card was pinned on his waistcoat, bearing the inscription in large letters:

"HUN, LIAR, AND SNAKE IN THE GRASS!"

"Now, gentlemen, all together and kick your hardest!" said the captain of the Remove.

Rattenstein flew to the door, propelled by every boot that could get near him. He vanished howling from the Rag.

That afternoon six very cheery juniors arrived at Cliff House to tea, and all, as Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh said, was gardenfully lovely. Hazel—who was to keep goal on Wednesday, after all—gave a merry description of the German traitor's punishment. And the Famous Five solemnly passed a vote of thanks to Miss Phyllis for the inestimable service she had rendered.

THE END.

(Do not miss "THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!" next, Monday's Grand Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF OUR GREAT NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL STORY. START TO-DAY!



: : By : :

T. C. BRIDGES.

The First Instalments Told How:

DICK DAUNT and DUDLEY DREW, two chums, discover a letter in a bottle which they have extracted from the body of a shark.

They are informed by its contents that a certain MATTHEW SNELL is marooned on an unnamed island in the Keys, and he offers a substantial reward to any persons effecting his rescue.

On going to the island, however, they are unable to find Mr. Snell.

EZRA CRAY, a moonshiner, and his scoundrelly colleagues then visit the island, and, finding that it contains gold, attempt to kill the two chums.

Having previously hidden their boat, Dick and Dudley seek refuge in a cave. Dudley shows signs of having contracted a fever, and it becomes necessary for Dick to replenish their water supply. On the way he is detected by Cray's gang, and hides in another cave. Here he is amused to find an arrow in luminous paint on the wall.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Mystery of the Paper Packet.

Luminous paint it was, but what luminous paint was doing daubed on the wall of a cave on the coast of a practically unknown island was a problem which fairly staggered Dick Daunt, and he stood staring at it as though he had seen a ghost.

What was the meaning of it? Who had put it there?

It could not have been there for very long, or it would certainly have lost its luminous qualities. Was it a trap of Cray's, or had old Matthew Snell put it on the wall for some reason of his own before he had vanished from the island?

Dick stared at it again, and presently became aware that it was not a mere bar, as he had thought at first, but a roughly-designed arrow, with the end pointing inwards.

It struck him suddenly that this might possibly have been the old man's cache, his secret hoard where he hid his gold. He considered for a moment or two, then stepped back to the mouth of the narrow cleft, and stood listening keenly for a moment or two.

There was no sound of pursuit. He had not expected it. He did not think for an instant that Cray or his men would dream of venturing up among the chaos of tumbled crags. They had far too much respect for their own skins.

He turned again, and very cautiously advanced into the cave.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

It was very dark, and, as he did not like to strike a match, he was compelled to feel every step in advance with the butt of his rifle.

Just beyond the luminous arrow the passage curved round at a sharp angle, and as he rounded it there came to his ears a sound which made every pulse in his body thrill. He pulled up short and listened.

'Tink—tink! There was no mistake about it. That was the musical splash of water falling drop by drop into a pool.

Hardly able to credit his senses, he took his matchbox from his pocket, and, with fingers trembling from excitement, struck a match. The curve, he knew, would prevent the light from being seen outside the cave.

As the little flame burnt up he held the match out in front of him. The light gleamed upon a little pool perhaps two feet across—just a tiny hollow in the hard, crystalline rock. And every moment its clear surface quivered under the impact of a large drop of water falling from the cave roof above the pool.

"A spring!" he muttered thickly.

And, still hardly able to believe his eyes, he dropped on his knees beside the pool, and, cupping his palms, lifted some of the water to his lips.

It was cold as ice, clear as crystal, beautifully fresh.

He drank, and drank again, and felt new life flow through his veins. All that day he had drunk nothing but one cup of tea, and on the day before two cups only. All the rest of the water he had saved for Dudley.

The match had gone out. He struck another, and lit an end of candle which he had in his pocket. By the light of this he began bailing the precious fluid into the keg. Whilst at this work he noticed that the overflow made its way, not outwards to the mouth of the cave, but inwards, where it seeped into a crack and vanished. He saw, too, that the pool itself was not entirely natural, but had evidently been opened out and enlarged by means of a drill, or something of the kind.

"Snell's work," he said aloud. "Not a doubt about it. But what luck! What wonderful luck to stumble on the old man's spring! Now we're all right, so far as water goes. They're welcome to their blessed creek!"

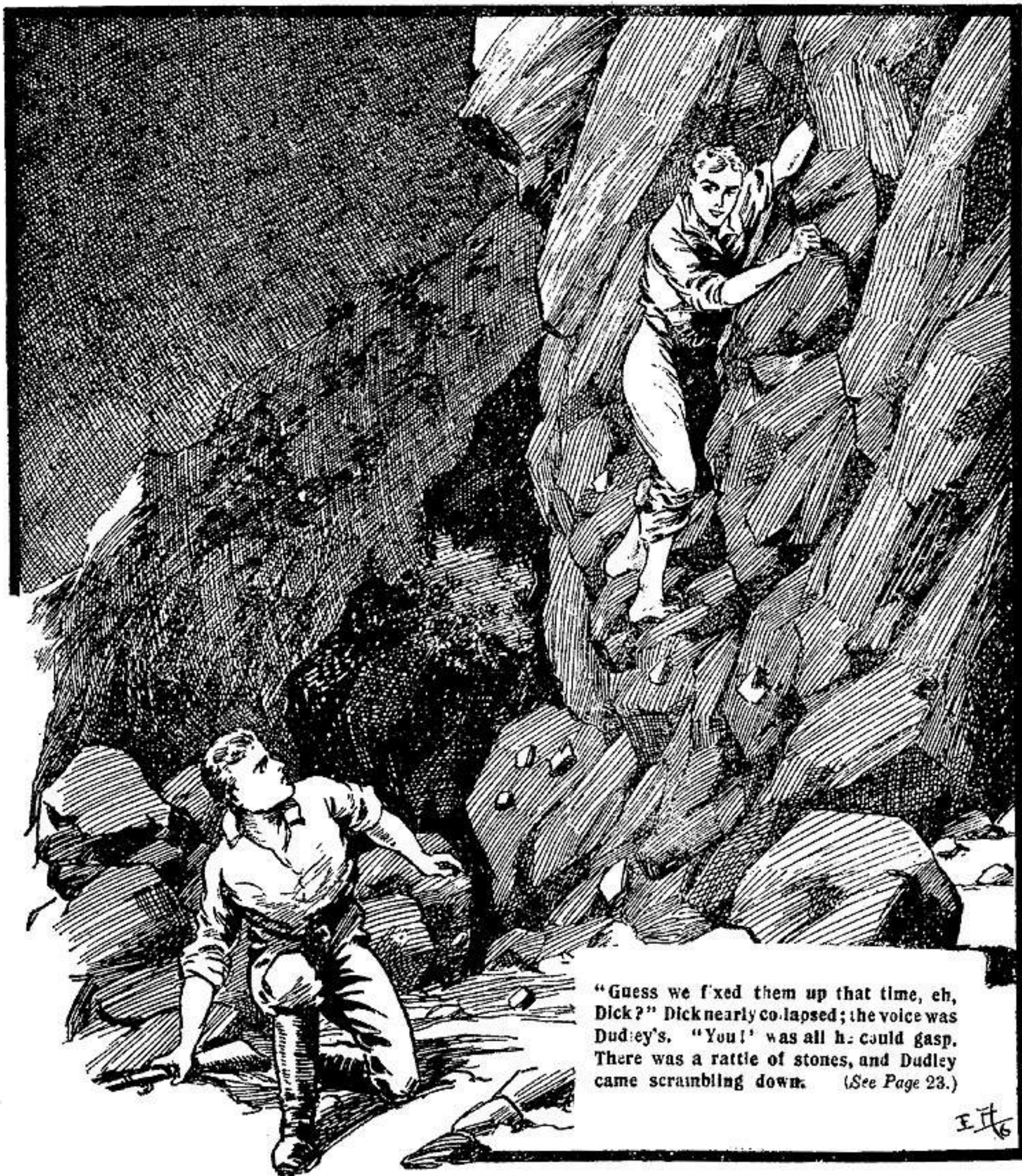
He chuckled softly.

"What a sell!" he went on. "What a sell for Cray & Co.! We've got grub for weeks, and now that the water question is solved, we can laugh at the swabs!"

Then his face clouded.

"If we only had some quinine!" he murmured sadly.

AN IMPORTANT EDITORIAL NOTICE IN THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD," ½D. DON'T MISS IT!



"Guess we fixed them up that time, eh, Dick?" Dick nearly collapsed; the voice was Dudley's. "You!" was all he could gasp. There was a rattle of stones, and Dudley came scrambling down. (See Page 23.)

E. H. G.

He finished filling his keg, rammed in the bung firmly, and, shouldering it again, blew out his candle, and crept softly out of the cave. In spite of his anxiety for Dudley, he felt a thousand times happier than he had been fifteen minutes earlier. This fresh, cool spring water was infinitely better than that from the creek, and would probably do Dudley good. In any case, they could have all they wanted. They could refill the keg every night, if necessary.

Once outside, he listened again, but still there was no sign of the enemy. He took no unnecessary risks, but crept along as close under the cliff as possible. The climb down to the beach was steep and awkward, but he managed it successfully, and a few minutes later was scrambling up to the ledge by the usual way.

The cave was very still and dark—so still that for the moment he paused, with his heart beating hard, before he ventured to slip softly inside.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

Then the sound of Dudley's breathing reassured him, and when he struck a light he was both surprised and delighted to see his chum sleeping quietly.

Without a moment's unnecessary delay, he blew out the light again, lay down close by the other, and, tired out with his adventures, was himself asleep inside two minutes.

When he awoke the pink flush of dawn was in the sky, and he got up very softly so as not to disturb the other.

"Hallo, Dick! You awake?" came Dudley's voice, still weak, but much less so than on the previous day.

"It's me all right, old chap. How are you?"
"Fine! But, say, Dick, where in thunder did you get that quinine you fired into me last night?"

"Quinine—I! What are you talking about, Dudley?"
"Quinine—quinine," replied Dudley, a little irritably. "The dose you gave me when you came in. It fixed me up properly."

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

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

Dick stared. He began to think that Dudley still had fever, or was delirious again.

"You lie still, old chap," he said soothingly. "I'll make you some tea."

"Shucks! I'm not asking for tea," retorted Dudley. "I'm asking you where you got that quinine last night!"

"I never gave you any quinine. You must have dreamt it."

"Dreamt it! Dreamt I swallowed twenty grains of sulphate! Not much! Why, I can taste it right now. And, anyway, what do you think stopped my chill if it wasn't quinine?"

Dick shook his head.

"Dudley, I never gave you any quinine. You were asleep when I got in with the water, and I lay down and dropped off that very minute."

"Well, if you didn't give it me, someone else did," Dudley asserted firmly. "I was kind of dozing, and feeling real rocky, when someone came along, and laid a light down on the floor behind me, and slipped me a cigarette-paper full of quinine. I swallowed it down, and he gave me a drink from a dipper, and I began to feel better right away."

"Did he speak?" demanded Dick.

"I think he said 'Take this,' but I don't remember a deal about it. I guess I was pretty near off my chump!"

"It wasn't me," said Dick slowly.

"Then I reckon it was the same chap that rolled those rocks off the cliff on to Bent the other day."

Dick looked all round the cave. Nothing seemed to be disturbed. Suddenly he caught sight of a little twist of white paper lying on top of the rock they used as a table. He swooped at it, and unrolled it. Inside was about a tea-spoonful of soft white crystals. He moistened a finger, touched it to the powder, and tasted it.

"Quinine, as I'm alive!" he gasped.

"Guess you'll maybe believe me now!" said Dudley triumphantly.

"I do," Dick replied blankly. "But it beats Banagher who brought the stuff here! Wonder if there's one of Bent's crowd who's white?" he added thoughtfully.

"I guess he wouldn't stay white a great while in that company," answered Dudley. "But, say, Dick, I guess I'll take another little dose, so long as the stuff is there, and then maybe you'll tell me how you came to get that water last night. I'm real anxious to know how you managed it!"

So Dick gave him ten grains more of the precious drug, and then, after lighting the oilstove and putting on the kettle, spun the yarn of his adventures on the previous night.

The story seemed to do Dudley as much good as the medicine. He chuckled delightedly when Dick told him that two more of the enemy were damaged, and he was absolutely overjoyed to hear of the spring.

"It was mighty smart of you to find it, Dick!" he declared. "No, I don't care a cuss whether it had a painted sign or not. It took nerve to go into that place in the dark, and it was simply great, finding the spring. Now I guess we've got Cray to rights, and I don't care if it snows!"

"How do you mean—got him to rights?" asked Dick.

"Why, he won't know that we've got water, and he'll be reckoning that we're dying with thirst in this little hole of ours. Along about two days from now he'll be calling around to look for our corpses. That's going to be the minute he gets the shock of his misspent life."

Dick laughed.

"I shouldn't wonder if you aren't right, old man. Anyhow, it's up to us to sit tight for the present. As soon as

you're on your pins again, then—as the lawyers say—we will take steps."

Dick got breakfast, and for the first time for two days Dudley was able to eat some solid food. It was the cheeriest meal for a long time past.

Afterwards Dudley went quietly to sleep again, while Dick tidied up, and then set to work to rig up some fishing-lines. It was in his mind that he might slip down to the beach at dusk, and get a few mullet or rock-fish, which would be a pleasant change from the usual tinned stuff.

The day passed peacefully enough, except that about two in the afternoon it breezed up stiffly on top of the tide, and soon afterwards the strange hooting, roaring noise began again. But to this they had got so accustomed that they paid little attention to it.

At dusk Dick scouted up and down, but saw no sign of the enemy, so went down and began to fish, casting a weighted line well out into deep water. He got some mullet, then baited a larger hook with half a small mullet, and to his great delight hooked something big, which gave him five minutes' pulling and hauling before he got it ashore. It turned out to be a fine channel bass of about twelve or fourteen pounds weight.

This was a real prize. There are few better fish than bass, and the change of food would be excellent for Dudley. He did not risk remaining on the beach any longer, but, shouldering his catch, returned to the cave.

With quinine, fresh water, and good food, Dudley pulled round rapidly, and within a couple of days was quite himself again. On the third evening more water was wanted, so Dick prowled off after dark to the cave spring.

He got there without trouble, filled his keg, and had just reached the beach again, when the sharp crack of a rifle broke the stillness. It came from the direction of the cave.

"Cray—he's attacking!" gasped Dick. In an instant he had the keg off his shoulders, and had hidden it behind a rock. Grasping his rifle, he hurried forward through the starlit gloom.

Crack, crack, crack! Three more shots sent the echoes crashing along the cliff.

(The Red Flare.

Dick's heart was thumping. The long-expected attack had come, and Dudley was alone to meet it. Was ever such ill-luck?

At first he began to run, then checked. If he showed himself he might be shot down before he could reach the cave. The only thing to do was to keep close in under the base of the cliff and try to gain the southern path to the ledge. Then it came to him that the attack was almost certainly coming from the opposite or northern side. If it had been from the south, he must have seen or heard the attackers pass.

He quickened his pace, and gained the southern approach to the ledge. He had to sling his rifle in order to climb. The slope was so steep it needed hands as well as feet for the work.

All the time the shooting went on, now a single shot, then two or three in quick succession.

At last he reached the ledge. It was clear. There was nothing between him and the stone wall which he and Dudley had piled across it. He was right. The firing was coming from the other side.

With a quick run, he gained the wall, and gave the signal whistle which Dudley knew. He waited a moment, but there was no answer, and it was with a sinking heart that he crept through the little tunnel entrance.

The firing had stopped. He could not see or hear anything. There was no light in the cave.

"Dudley!" he called in a sharp undertone.

Still there was no reply, and he dashed into the cave.

"Dudley!"

He struck a match. There was no one in the place. Dudley had vanished.

"They've caught him!" groaned Dick, and, filled with a sudden rage, crept quickly across towards the northern parapet.

He peered through a loophole. All was quiet. He could see no sign of anybody, and for the moment was more certain than ever that Cray's gang had somehow managed to catch Dudley and carry him off.

If so, they had no doubt gone off up the beach. The tide was full ebb, and there was good going all the way under the cliffs, and round the Northern Point.

But in that case they ought still to be visible. They would not yet have had time to get round the point beyond Hidden Bay.

He raised his head to get a good look over the parapet. It was very near to being the last thing he ever did in this

FREE FOR SELLING OR USING 12 BEAUTIFUL POSTCARDS AT 1d. EACH.

As an advertisement we give every reader of this paper a splendid present **FREE**, simply for selling or using 12 Beautiful Postcards at 1d. each, Gold Mounted, Embossed, Patriotic, Real Photos, Glossy, etc. Our new Prize List contains hundreds of different kinds of free gifts, including Ladies' & Gents' Cycles, Gold & Silver Watches, Periscopes, Feathers, Chains, Rings, Fur Sets, Cinemas, Gramophones, Air Guns, Tea Sets, Toys, etc., etc. All you need do is to send us your Name and Address (a postcard will do), and we will send you a selection of lovely cards to sell or use at 1d. each. When sold send the money obtained and we immediately forward gift chosen according to the Grand Illustrated List we send you. (Colonial Applications invited.) Send a postcard now to—**THE ROYAL CARD CO., Dept. 3, KEW, LONDON.**

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

AN IMPORTANT EDITORIAL NOTICE IN THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD." 1/2D. DON'T MISS IT!

life. From behind the cover of a rock on the ledge, barely thirty yards away, a rifle barked, and his hat flew from his head. As he ducked two more shots rang out.

"So they're still there!" he muttered, as he crouched under shelter of the parapet. He was completely puzzled.

He poked his rifle-barrel through a loophole and waited for any movement. But there was none. The enemy, like himself, preferred to keep under cover, and the starlight was not strong enough to show where they lay hidden.

The whole situation bothered him. If they had made a surprise attack, why the firing? If not, how had Dudley allowed himself to be taken. The parapet was not broken down, and so far as he could tell, the enemy had not been in the cave. The only possible solution was that Dudley must have gone outside the enclosure for some reason, and been caught, and now they were laying for him—Dick.

Yet even so, this did not account for all the shooting.

He racked his brain for the best thing to do, but could think of nothing. More than one of Cray's men was there, waiting for him, and he could not advance without the certainty of being killed. On the other hand, the feeling that Dudley was in the hands of these brutes was simply maddening, and he had an almost overwhelming impulse to make a rush at any cost.

Suddenly he remembered the old ruse of drawing the enemy's fire. He slipped back into the cave, got a stick, and picking up his soft felt hat, which had a bullet-hole through the crown, raised it above the parapet.

The moment it was high enough to be against the skyline, two rifles spoke simultaneously. One bullet actually caught the end of the stick, sending a sharp tingle through his hand. But both shots came from cover. It was no use wasting ammunition by firing back.

Dick was almost at his wits' end, when, without the slightest warning, the scene was lit by a sudden blaze of light. From some point higher on the cliff, above the ledge, a great ball of blazing material fell, flaring like a meteor, and dropping neatly on the ledge, lay burning furiously, red, oily flames leaping from it, and making a glare which lit up the whole cliff-face as well as the ledge.

With a yell of terror a man leaped up from behind a boulder in full sight of Dick, and ran like a hare. Instantly Dick let fly. His second shot got the fellow, and he went sprawling forward on hands and knees, then rolled over, and, losing his balance, toppled right over the edge, falling with a heavy thud on the beach below.

At the same moment a second rifle began to talk from the same point from which the flare had come, and Dick saw two more men spring out from hiding-places further away and race back into the darkness. He himself fired at them, but the flare was already dying down, and apparently they both got away unhurt. At any rate, he heard the rattle of their feet, and the clickety-click of loose pebbles falling as they scuttled away down the steep descent at the far end of the ledge.

Silence fell absolute and complete, then just as Dick had made up his mind to advance, a voice came from above.

"Guess we fixed them all right that time, eh, Dick?"

Dick nearly collapsed. The voice was Dudley's.

"You!" was all he could gasp.

There was a rattle of stones, and presently Dudley came scrambling down. How he managed it was a marvel, for the cliff seemed almost perpendicular.

"It's me all right," he observed, as he dropped to the ledge.

"Say, Dick, we did 'em up all right that time. Guess they'll do a whole heap of thinking before they try this game again. That was a mighty good shot of yours. If we keep on this way, there won't be any of them left soon!"

"But how did you do it? What made you go climbing up the cliff like a monkey?" demanded Dick. "You nearly scared the life out of me. I thought they'd got you when I came in and found you gone."

"I knew you'd be scared, Dick," replied Dudley, with a laugh. "But I couldn't help that. Fact is, I'd been reckoning they'd be coming along some night soon, and making preparations according. It was yesterday, while you were down fishing, I found a way up to that perch above. You see, I reckoned that, if they came in force, they might rush our coral, and then we would be needing some place to retire to. As for the flare, I fixed up a couple out of old rags and stuff soaked in oil, and had 'em ready."

"Jove, it was great!" declared Dick heartily. "It was jolly smart of you, Dudley! We might have been in a nasty hole if you hadn't stopped them like that. But who was doing all the shooting?"

"They were. I left my hat on a stick just over the wall. I guess they wasted twenty rounds on it!" He began to hunt round, and presently picked up the missing article. "Gee! It's a good thing my head wasn't in it!" he chuckled, as he examined his headgear, which was simply knocked to pieces. "Guess I'll have to tie a handkerchief over my head next time I go out in the sun."

"And as for me, I'd better go and fetch in that water," said Dick. "I'll leave you to hold the fort while I go."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 423.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"I reckon we've done all the holding that's needed for this night," replied Dudley. "And when you come back, we'll just slip down to the beach and see which of the beggars it was that you nailed just now."

Dick went off, and was soon back with the keg. Then they went down to the beach. The man lay there stone dead. He had been shot clean through the body. He was a long, thin, scrawny fellow, with about half an inch of stiff beard on his face. But neither of the boys had ever seen him before. They took his rifle, and left the body for the tide to carry away. Then they went back to the cave and slept peacefully until morning.

Dick was very silent at breakfast, and by the slight frown which creased his forehead, Dudley knew that he was thinking up some plan. But Dudley asked no questions. He knew that sooner or later Dick would broach his project.

Dick finished his mug of coffee, then spoke.

"You're pretty fit again, Dudley?"

"I guess so," was the quiet reply.

"What d'ye say to trying a bit of scouting to-day?"

Dudley did not answer at once, and Dick went on:

"You got a goodish way up that cliff last night. Do you think we could get to the top?"

"Not from where I was," Dudley answered. "There's right smart of an overhang above the place I got to."

"Still, there ought to be some way up," Dick insisted. "You know we decided to try for a way up, that day before you went sick."

"I reckon we could find some road, if we look long enough," agreed Dudley. "But what's your notion if we do get up?"

Dick considered for a moment.

"It's this way. We've finished two of Cray's crowd for keeps, and I certainly hit two others that night I tried to cross the beach. My notion was that we should try and find out how many there are left. If Cray only had seven in the first place, he's got but three able-bodied men left. That's not such long odds!"

Dudley nodded.

It would be a mighty good thing if we could find out, old son. But we don't really know how many he did have first go off. You see the beggar knew we were here ahead of him, and I guess he brought one or two more than he reckoned to originally."

"Still, seven was about as many as that boat of his would carry comfortably, and he wouldn't want too many to share up the dust with him."

"That's so. Well, I guess we'll have a look around, anyhow," said Dudley. "All the same, we'll have to be mighty careful if we're going cruising around these cliffs in the daytime!"

"We shall that!" agreed Dick. "Still, we're not overlooked, even if they have got a chap posted up topside, and if we slip out quietly, they won't be any the wiser."

"I guess we'll take our guns, anyway," observed Dudley, picking up his rifle.

The cave being on the western side of the island, the beach below was always in shadow until midday. All the same, the two took every precaution against being seen as they slipped through the little opening in the southern barricade, and crept along the ledge.

"You're right about the overhang," said Dick presently, as he glanced up. "There's not a dog's chance of climbing unless we can find a gully or gap of some sort."

Gullies and gaps there were, but none led high enough to give the boys a chance to gain the top of the cliff, where the palmetto fronds rustled harshly in the sea breeze. At last they reached the big fall at the south end of Crooked Cliff.

"Bit risky going up this in daylight," said Dick doubtfully.

"I guess it's all right," replied Dudley. "Don't reckon there are any of Cray's folk around to-day. What's left will be too busy with the dust to think of us. Besides, I haven't seen that water-cave of yours yet."

"And I could do with a drink," he added, with the smile that lit up so pleasantly his lean and usually rather grave face.

"We'll be all right there, if we can reach it," said Dick. "But keep under cover all you can, Dudley!"

He led the way up the steep side of the great mass of broken rock, and they gained the top quite safely. Then Dick went down on hands and knees, and literally crept to the cave.

"We might almost as well be potted ourselves as let Cray's lot into the secret of the spring," he explained.

"That's so. I guess they wouldn't waste much time dynamiting it," agreed Dudley.

The little pool was brimming, and they both drank deeply of the clear, cool water.

"Mighty good!" declared Dudley, as he took his flask and filled it. "I never tasted better water. But, say, Dick, this

cave goes on right away into the cliff. I'd like mighty well to follow it up."

As he spoke, he held up the bit of candle which they had lighted, and its gleam illuminated a narrow passage which ran deep into the heart of the cliff.

Dick hesitated.

"I don't believe it will do us any good," he said. "And we haven't got an awful lot of candle."

"Let's go in a piece," begged Dudley. "Guess we've got plenty of candle to burn for half an hour, anyway."

"Why are you so keen?" asked Dick.

"I'd like to see if we can find any more sign of the fellow who painted up the sign for you. Looks to me like this passage had been used some time. The floor's sort of worn."

Dick still hesitated. He felt an odd reluctance to venture into the depths of this unknown cave. But Dudley urged strongly, and as he had said, there was plenty of candle for quite half an hour. Eventually he yielded, and Dudley joyfully led the way forward into the narrow, winding passage.

Trapped!

For some distance it was all plain sailing. The passage, it is true, was narrow, crooked, and in places the roof was so low that they had to bend almost double. But the floor was sound enough.

All the way the passage ran up at quite a steep angle, and the odd thing was that it was nothing but a passage. It never widened out into anything you might call a cave.

Here and there had been small roof-falls, but on the whole the roof, like the floor, seemed fairly sound.

"Rummiest cave I ever did strike!" observed Dudley, turning to Dick. "Don't look to me like it was cut by water, and, anyway, this ain't limestone rock!"

"Hadn't we better turn back?" suggested Dick.

"Pshaw! It's just getting interesting," declared Dudley. "And the candle ain't half done yet. Besides, mind you, we're going up hill all the time. Looks to me like this might take us out up at the top if we keep on long enough."

Dick yielded again, though somehow it was against his better judgment. He had a queer dislike to the whole proceeding. They turned another corner, and Dudley pulled up short.

"Guess this is where the circus ends," he remarked.

Dick stepped up. Sure enough, they seemed to have come to an end. There was a blank wall in front of them.

"I'm glad of it!" he growled. "I'm sick of the place!"

Dudley was not listening. He stepped quickly forward.

"My mistake! Here's a way through."

Before Dick could remonstrate he had squeezed through a narrow crack in the wall to the left-hand side and disappeared, leaving Dick in pitch-darkness.

Next moment there was a thud, a sharp cry, and a sharp scuffling sound.

Then silence.

For a moment Dick stood paralysed with sudden alarm. But only for a moment. Hastily he struck a match, and, holding it well in front of him, pushed his way into the gap.

"Dudley!" he shouted. "Dudley!"

Weird echoes sent his shout rolling and roaring horribly through unscen passages and crevasses. There was no other answer.

Again and again he shouted, but there was no reply.

The second match burned down till it scorched his fingers, and he dropped it. For a moment or two he stood in the pitch-darkness, struggling desperately to get a grip of himself and to make up his mind what was best to do.

The wisest course would be to return, fetch all the rope he could, and find an oar or something to which he could fasten it, so that he could safely explore the depths into which Dudley had fallen.

On the other hand, this would take some considerable time, and the thought that, meanwhile, Dudley might be bleeding to death in the horrid depths below there was simply unbearable.

It was a horrible dilemma, and for the very life of him Dick could not tell what was best to be done.

Then, as he stood there in that awful darkness, with his mind torn by conflicting emotions, out of the depths below came a faint groan.

"Dudley!" he cried again, and waited, craning forward.

Still there was no answer, but after a while another groan.

So Dudley was still alive. What was more, the sound told Dick that he was not, after all, so very far below.

In frantic haste, Dick ransacked his pockets. He found a scrap of paper—an old envelope—and, opening it out, lit another match and set fire to it.

It flashed up with a bright flare, and the light showed him Dudley—Dudley lying flat on his face, with his arms stretched out, at the bottom of the steep slope. And the slope, to Dick's intense relief, was hardly more than a score of feet in length.

He hesitated no longer, but pushed his way through the opening and dropped into a sitting position. Then, spreading out his hands, palms downwards, to break his fall, he slid forward.

In spite of his precautions, the speed of his descent nearly took his breath, and it was all that he could do to save himself from crashing right on top of Dudley.

But he was not hurt, and as soon as he could gain his feet he at once struck another match, and finding the candle, lit it. He fixed it on a little ledge, where it burnt clearly in the windless air, and turned and lifted Dudley.

Dudley was bleeding badly. There was an ugly cut over his left eye. His face was very white, and his looks gave Dick a fresh shock.

Suppose that Dudley were badly hurt how on earth was he ever to get him out of this horrible place?

Once more Dick cursed his foolishness in not having put his foot down definitely and stopped his clum from penetrating further into this miserable cave.

He tore up his handkerchief and began by bandaging the cut. He managed to stop the flow of blood; and Dudley moaned again, and moved slightly. But his eyes were still closed.

Dick had whisky in a flask. It is a thing which most men carry in a country where poisonous snakes abound. And Dudley had water in his bottle. He had filled it at the spring. Dick mixed a pretty stiff drink in the metal cup, and managed to get most of it down Dudley's throat.

The result was excellent. Dudley gasped, choked a little, then his eyes opened.

"Say, w-what's up?" he asked, in a faintly surprised tone.

Dick told him.

"I'm real sorry!" said Dudley. "I never thought of a slide like that. Guess I must have half-scared the life out of you."

"You certainly did," said Dick rather grimly. "But how are you? How do you feel? You haven't broken anything, have you?"

"Nothing, except my head," replied Dudley. "And, thanks be, that's pretty hard! No; I guess I'm all right, Dick—right enough to get back to our place, anyway."

"About time, too," he added, glancing at the candle. "It won't be any sort of a picnic to get left around here in the dark."

He sat up as he spoke; then, with Dick's help, rose rather unsteadily to his feet.

"As ugly a little trap as ever I did see!" he observed, glancing up at the narrow opening through which they had arrived in this part of the cave. "Dick, I guess you'll have to go ahead and give me a hand. I don't fancy I'm great on climbing right this minute."

"All right, old chap!" answered Dick. "Luckily, I've got a bit of rope with me. It's only a few feet which I had for the keg, and slipped into my pocket; but it's going to come in useful, if I'm not mistaken."

"Mighty useful," answered Dudley, as Dick turned and started to clamber up the slope.

He got up about six feet, then slipped back.

"Confound it!" he exclaimed angrily. "It's all wet, and slippery as so much ice. Wait! I'll take a run at it!"

He went back a few steps, took a sharp run, and reached a point a foot or two higher than before. Then he flung himself flat, grasping for a hold.

There was none, and, as before, he slid back to the bottom. Now, for the first time, he began to get a little alarmed.

"It's like so much glass, Dudley. There's been water dripping here for a few thousand years, and the whole surface is polished. What's more, there's no sort of hand-hold. Looks to me as if we shall have to cut out steps, or something of the sort."

"Then I guess we'll have to be smart about it," replied Dudley, trying to speak lightly. "I don't reckon that candle is going to burn for another half-hour."

Dick whipped out his big clasp-knife, and set to work. He hacked away for a minute or so, then turned to Dudley. In the feeble light of the candle-flame, Dudley saw real alarm on his friend's face.

"Can't touch it!" he said curtly. "It's harder than cement."

(Another long instalment of this splendid new serial story next Monday. To avoid disappointment, order your copy early.)



B. JERVIS,
Stafford.



B. R. DETH and F. H. JACKSON,
Salisbury.



JOHN HEAP,
Haslingden.



J. W. PARKINSON, Junr.,
Blackburn.



A PARTY OF LOYAL READERS OF THE COMPANION PAPERS.
All members of St. Peter's Co., Church Lads' Brigade, Southsea.



F. DAWSON, C.C.,
Hull.



MISS DOROTHY HIBBERD,
Bangor, Co. Down.



A. V. WALKER,
Tunbridge Wells.



MISS NELLIE REMY.
A Loyal Magnetite.



E. PEARSON,
Bradford.



T. STOCKER,
London



H. ROBINSON,
Bradford.



H. BLUEMENTHAL,
London.



WILFRED SUTER,
York.



R. GIBSON,
Loughborough.



J. P. GREENWOOD,
Todmorden.

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 1d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

In next Monday's magnificent 30,000-word complete story of school life, the appointment of a musketry-instructor at Greyfriars causes a considerable stir among the juniors, and, indeed, throughout the whole school. The new-comer proves himself to be a Nero and a Kaiser Bill rolled into one, and very few fellows fail to escape from the ban of his iron rule. It is not surprising, therefore, that feeling runs so high in the ranks of the Remove as to cause a red-hot-rebellion. Many exciting events ensue ere the brutal tyrant is eventually quelled, and harmony takes the place of discord among those who writhed under the rule of

"THE MAILED FIST AT GREYFRIARS!"

NOW ON SALE!

But not likely to be so very long, as the demand is already enormous.

"RIVALS AND CHUMS!"

This book is Mr. Frank Richards' latest and greatest work. No reader of the "Magnet" can afford to miss this magnificent yarn of Greyfriars and Highcliffe. As the title suggests, Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar share the honours with Harry Wharton and his chums. From beginning to end, the story has not a dull line. Get it to-day!

"SOME" LETTER!

T. Howarth, Newbiggin, who says he will forward his full address if I want it—but really I am not particularly interested in it—writes me a letter which I reproduce word for word below. I see no need to answer the foolish and futile charges he makes, and I may add that, though, of course, I value my loyal American readers, I certainly should not disturb myself greatly if I believed Mr.—or Master?—Howarth's statements—which I don't!

Here is the letter:

"Dear Sir,—I take the liberty of writing these few lines in order to give you my candid opinion of your so-called 'boys' paper.' How you can honestly think that such a paper as the 'Magnet' can do any good to a healthy-minded boy is beyond my understanding! The youth of to-day should be reading books which will be beneficial to them when they become men, not such as yours! Your book is forgotten as soon as read! I guess you don't call yourself patriotic when you spread broadcast such misleading literature! You don't care what becomes of the future generation—the generation to which I shall belong, not as a man among men, but as a man among demoralised beings! I have been in communication with many Anti-Magnet Presidents, both here and in America, where I come from! You may know that over there, there are more Anti-Magnetites than Magnetites! That is the plain truth! Here I have not had very much time to find out, but I think it is about equal! A scheme which is common both to America and England is afoot, which will ultimately materialise in—well, I will leave you to think that out! I suppose now you will have another name of dishonour! Dishonour!! You don't know the real meaning of the word! Why, the very 'beings'—I will not call them boys—who you call 'staunch supporters' are your accomplices in a universal scheme of harm! If you care to answer, insert a notice to that effect in your 'Chat,' and I will furnish you with my full address. Publish this letter, too, and I hope you will reform some of the 'beings'!"

"I remain, yours pityingly. T. HOWARTH."

Strange that anything should be beyond Mr.—or Master?—Howarth's understanding, isn't it? Wonder whether he ever heard what Mr. Gladstone replied when some M.P. of no special mark said that he failed to understand what the G.O.M. could possibly mean by a speech he had made? Mr.

Gladstone retorted that he thanked Providence that he was not responsible for the honourable member's understanding. What a fine thing it will be for our friend Howarth when he becomes the only man among the "demoralised beings"—such a nice change for him! Seriously, I am surprised that anyone with sufficient brains to put together a letter which, except for one obvious slip, is grammatical and tolerably well expressed should fill it with such absolute piffle as his talk about the Presidents of the Anti-Magnet Leagues. I defy him to prove that any organisation worthy of the name in that way exists at all! The so-called Presidents are snuffling, silly little creatures with just education enough to write foolish letters full of the grossest errors, and often lapsing into sheer obscenity. Howarth is fully welcome to all the moral and material support they can give him in his absurd campaign.

ORDER IN ADVANCE!

Just a brief reminder to any among my readers who have not yet acted upon my strong hints to order their copies of the Companion Papers in advance. If you don't see about this at once, you are more than likely to find yourself left!

NOTICES.

"Owing to the War."—Will the writer of this story in the recent "Magnet" Story Competition kindly send to the Editor his, or her, name and address? These do not appear upon the MS.

Gunner W. Freeman, 57171, R.G.A., No Man's Land Fort, Portsmouth, a very lonely spot, will be glad to correspond with "Magnet" or "Gem" readers.

Miss Doan Jay, of Colchester, wishes to thank J. E. H. (Manchester) for kind congratulations sent on her winning of a tuck hamper. She has replied personally to others who wrote, but in this case has no address.

"For His Cousin's Sake."—Will George Catchpole, who entered this story in the "Magnet" Competition, kindly send the Editor his address?

If "Tiger," who lately asked for a copy of "Through Thick and Thin," will send me his address, I will forward him one kindly sent along by another reader.

J. Hindmarsh and B. English, 1, Clydesdale Road, Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne, are thinking of publishing a small amateur paper, and would be glad to hear from readers of the "Magnet" who would like to contribute.

Miss Vera Maden, who was among the highly commended competitors in the recent "Magnet" Story Competition, wishes to express her sincere thanks to the unknown Manchester fellow-reader who sent her so kind a letter of congratulation.

Ernest A. Knight, No. J 36490, Mess 20, H.M.S. Liverpool, c.o. G.P.O., London, would be glad to receive copies of the Companion Papers, or other interesting reading matter for himself and a dozen comrades, who are all keen readers of the "Magnet."

A. G. Fowler, 53, Kennington Road, Wollaton Road, Nottingham, wants to get the old halfpenny numbers of the "Magnet," and is willing to pay full price for them.

C. Beckett, Fort House, Ellingsford Road, Hackney, N.E., wants to get the first twelve numbers of both the "Magnet" and "Gem."

W. Watling, 8, Letchford Green, College Park, wants to join a concert league of Magnetites within a four-mile radius of his address. He omits to state where College Park is, however, and I do not know. Nor am I aware of the existence of such a league anywhere.

West Kensington Park F.C. require home and away (within easy distance of Hammersmith) matches. Apply to Hon. Sec., 14, Talgarth Road, West Kensington, W.

Your Editor