

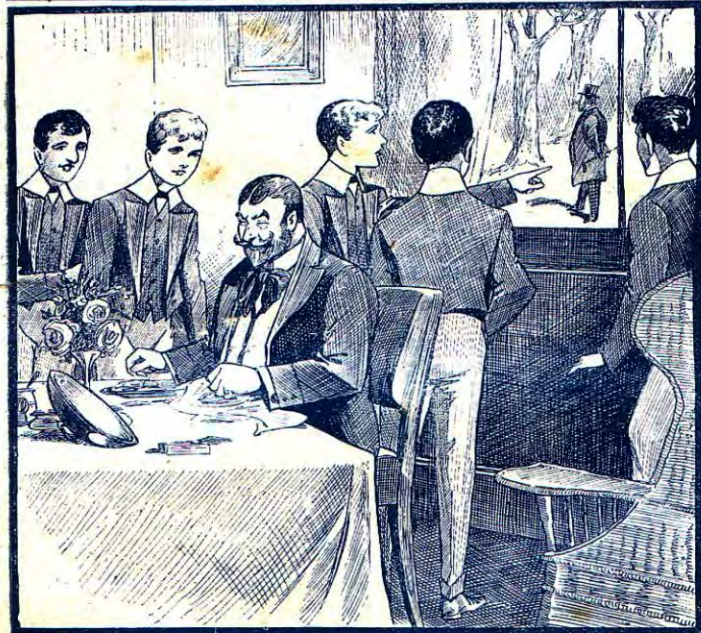
MONSIEUR WIBLEY!

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



No. 438. Vol. 10.

JULY 1st, 1916.



Under the elms in the quadrangle a neat, frock-coated figure was pacing to and fro. It was Monsieur Charpentier. The Famous Five stared at Mossou in the quad; then they spun round and stared at Mossou at the study table. There were two of them!

(An Extraordinary Scene in the Splendid Long Complete Tale of School Life in this Issue.)

OUR READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," id., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, id., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND," id., Every Friday. "THE PENNY POPULAR," id., 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 OTHER BUNTER!"

By Frank Richards.

Most of our readers will remember a very amusing story in which Wally Bunter, cousin to the famous—or, rather, notorious—William George, appeared as a visitor at Greyfriars; and many have been the requests for another story in which the cousin, who is the very counterpart of Bunter in face and fatness, should play a part. None of those who wanted this—indeed, none of all our many thousands of readers—is likely to be disappointed with next Monday's story. It is one of famous Frank Richards's best and most characteristically humorous yarns. Usually I give some more definite idea than I am doing this week as to what the story contains. I have a reason for saying less than usual, however, in this particular case it would be almost impossible to offer even the briefest outline of the story without giving away the secret, and I feel sure that my readers would get more enjoyment out of discovering—or failing to discover until it is revealed—the secret itself. So be early at your newsgent's next Monday, all of you, and get your "Magnet" and read for yourself about the curious mix-up that occurred through the overwhelming vanity of William George Bunter and his queer resemblance to

"THE OTHER BUNTER!"

AN INTERESTING LETTER FROM AN AUSTRALIAN.

Recent Colonial mails have brought me even more letters than is customary—and there are always a good many—from Colonial readers. Among those last to hand is one from a West Australian boy, who is a very keen supporter of the Companion Papers, as may be judged from the fact that he has turned a league out at the time for various reasons, and that this league has been the means of getting no fewer than fifty-two new readers for one or another of them—really creditable work when one considers how small are the chances in a comparatively sparsely populated country like Westralia.

This reader tells me some very interesting things about the first contingent of Australian troops for the Great War. It is quite a long time ago now, of course; but so very little was allowed to leak out at the time, for various reasons, that some extracts from his letter may interest those who read this even at this distance of time.

"On November 14th, 1914, the people of Albany, the chief port of West Australia, were surprised to hear that in a few days transports, carrying thousands of Australian troops on their way to fight the Hun, would put into harbour there. There were four ships in all, and they carried 30,000 men. Besides the transports there was an escort of men-of-war, including H.M.A.S. Sydney, H.M.A.S. Monitor, and three Japanese cruisers. First to arrive at Albany were the Queenclanders; then came the men of New South Wales, and in succession after them the Victorians, the South Australians, the Tasmanians, and, last of all, the New Zealanders.

"For about three weeks the town was full of troops and the harbours of ships although the whole force of transports did not arrive at once. They stayed outside in the Sound, coming in a few at a time to coal and let the men on shore for a short leave. The Victorians had quite an exciting experience. They were due back aboard on the evening of the day they came on shore. About three in the afternoon a south-west gale got up, and at five they were told to lie to in such a way. So they had to stay ashore. And they had to stay for four whole days, during which time the gale continued to blow so hard that it would have been crazy folly even to attempt getting them aboard again.

"It was on Saturday, December 7th, that people learned the troops were going; and next morning, long before six o'clock, the hour fixed for sailing, the hill above the harbour

was packed with spectators, and cameras were clicking everywhere. At 6.15 the Sydney steamed slowly out past Bald Head; then came the flagship of the transports, and the rest followed in Indian file, with a half-minute interval between each and the next. The Monitor brought up the rear, and the three swift Japanese cruisers circled about the long flotilla. It was a grand sight—one which those who saw it will never forget as long as the breath is in them.

"On the way to Europe, as you know, the Sydney fought and beat the rider Emden, and this is a verse we sing in Australia about that fight, to the air of 'Tipperary':

"It's a long, long way to Cores Island,
It's a long way to go,
Where the Sydney sank the Emden,
Which made the Kaiser swear.
It's a long, long way to Cores Island,
But the Sydney, she got there!"

NOTICES.

G. L. Green, 52, Wantz Road, Malden, Essex, particularly wishes to get No. 2 of the "Greyfriars Herald."

Will H. Thomas, the Australian reader who asked for a copy of "The Boy Without a Name," write to S. Book, 12, New Row, Willington, Co. Durham, who kindly offers to supply him with one.

Vigilant, 15, Duches Street, Belgrave, Leicester, wants to buy back numbers of the "Magnet" before 200, and also No. 3 of the "Greyfriars Herald."

A. Chadwick, 20, Belmonte Street, Garston, Liverpool, wants to arrange cricket matches in the Liverpool district for his team—average age 12-15.

Private Thomas Holmes, 1447, 1st Coy., 15th Bait. Royal Scots, B.E.F., London, would be very much obliged if some reader would send him the "Gem" and "Magnet" regularly every week.

H. Webber, Officer's Steward, 1st Class, H.M.S. General Wolfe, c/o G.P.O., London, would be glad to correspond with girl readers.

Norman Wilkinson, 14, Brunel Street, Gateshead-on-Tyne, wants to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League with the main object of sending papers to men at the Front. Will be glad to hear from anyone interested.

Andrew Kershaw, Sea Scout, H.M. Coastguard Station, Norman's Bay, Pevensy, Sussex, would be very glad to receive letters and papers from readers, or to meet any living near his station.

N. L. Ross, 29, Wayman Street, Southwick Road, Sunderland, wants to form a "Magnet" League, and would be glad to hear from readers in his neighbourhood interested.

L. C. Chambers 2226, Mess 22, H.M.S. Powerful, Devonport, would be glad to receive back numbers of the Companion Papers.

G. Edwards, 22, Level Street, Brierley Hill, wants to form a local "Gem" and "Magnet" League, and will be glad to hear from anyone in his neighbourhood interested.

Benjamin Atherton C.C. want home and away matches with junior teams. Hon. Sec., W. R. Tanner, 7, Warner Street, Barnsley, N.

J. Taylor, 2, Admiral's Yard, Stonehouse, Plymouth, wants to form a local "Magnet" League, and will be glad to hear from readers interested.

S. N. Williams, B. Whalley Avenue, Marple Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, wants members for a "Gem" and "Magnet" League. Main object, the sending of parcels of the Companion Papers to men at the Front. Open to boys or girls anywhere.

Your Editor.

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

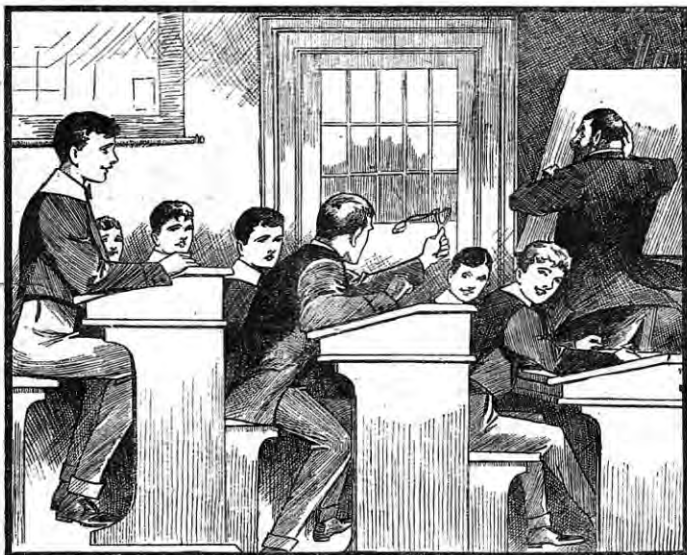


The Editor will be
obliged if you will
hand this book,
when finished with,
to a friend. . . .

MONSIEUR WIBLEY!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Cheese it, you ass!" whispered Harry Wharton hurriedly. Bolsover major did not heed. There was a twang of the catapult, and a pellet, composed of blotting-paper kneaded up with ink, shot across the Form-room and caught Mossco on the back of the head. (See Chapter 1.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

MOSSCOO was ratty that afternoon. There was no doubt about it. Tho Remove knew it to their cost.

As a rule, Monsieur Charpentier was the best-tempered master at Greyfriars; indeed, his patience and kindness often led fellows to "pull his leg" in class. Bob

Cherry's mixture of the genders, and Billy Banter's weird pronunciation, Tom Dutton's deafness, Fisher T. Viah's obtuseness, never moved him to wrath. He never brought the pointer into play, and seldom gave out lines.

But on this special afternoon Mosscoo was decidedly ratty.

Even Harry Wharton and Mark Linley, his best pupils, came in for a share of it. Skinner, who ventured to be humorous, had his knuckles rapped, and he sat smacking his

knuckles afterwards in a state of breathless indignation and fury. Billy Bunter, whose "ougs," and "bongs" generally passed muster, was failed to fill he was in a state of perspiration. Fisher, D. Fish was the recipient of remarks that almost made his hair curl. Bob Cherry received a hundred lines, Johnny Bull a similar amount, and Hurree Janset Ramet Ram Singh two hundred. Hurree Singh's English was weird, but his French was weirder, and it seemed to get on Mossoo's nerves that afternoon.

The Remove felt that it was too "chick." If Mossoo had been a sharp-tongued man, like "old Hick" of the Shell, it would have been different. They would have known what to expect, and would have been on their guard. But for the lamb to turn into a lion in this unexpected way was exasperating. So while Monsieur Charpentier glared his little black beard, and rated his class, there were sullen and savage looks among the Removites, and fellows who were quite good at French assumed an impetuous stupidity in order to worry Mossoo as much as possible.

Bolover major, who had been given fifty lines for persisting that "chapeau" was feminine, had a catapult in his hand under his desk, and was debating in his mind whether he would venture to catch Mossoo on the back of the head while he was chalking on the blackboard.

"Zis class is more stupid as ever!" rapped out Monsieur Charpentier. "You, Bolover, you are one dunce!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Sherry!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You speak viz yourself?"

"Ahem! Yes, sir!"

"Take one hundred lines!"

"Certainly." The name hundred that you gave me before, or another hundred?" asked Bob, with an air of great innocence.

"Another hundred, you stupid garcon!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"I have never found boys zat are so stupid," said Mossoo, breathing hard. "Now, Bolover!"

"Hullo!" said Bolover.

"Zat is not a respectful way to answer viz your master, Bolover. I zink zat you better take ze care, isn't it? I give you simple sentence, and you talk not understand viz you. Now I says him again: Avez vous le chapeau de mon grand-pere?"

"No, sir!"

"Vat!"

"I don't know your grandfather, sir," said Bolover major calmly, "and in any case, I shouldn't be likely to have his hat!"

There was a subdued chuckle from the Removites. Monsieur Charpentier glared at Bolover major.

"I says to you 'Avez vous le chapeau de mon grand-pere?' he shrieked. 'Zat is to say in English, 'Have you ze hat of my grandfather?'"

"And I say I haven't, sir!"

"You stupid boy, I do not ask you ze question. It is zat I give you zat sentence. Vous comprenez maintenant?"

"I don't know anything about your grandfather's hat, sir," said Bolover major, deliberately misunderstanding. "So far as I know, your grandfather has never even been to Greylairs."

"It is zat I explain ze gnitive!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "In English you call say 'My grandfather's hat'; but in French you call say 'Ze hat of my grandfather.'"

"But that isn't French, sir; that's English!"

"Giel! Will zat boy never understand? You call say 'Le chapeau de mon grand-pere.'"

"Le chapeau de mon grand-pere," said Bolover.

"Stupid! Drole! Is it zat you understand now?"

"I'm willing to take your word for it, sir," said Bolover.

"All the same, I appeal to all the fellows whether anybody's seen me with your grandfather's hat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monsieur Charpentier was almost dancing. But that howl of laughter from the Removites enlightened him a little, and he realised that Bolover's obtuseness was being assumed for his special benefit. He caught up the pointer from Mr. Quelch's desk.

"Come out viz you, Bolover!"

"What for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you viz ze pointer. I teach you not to choke yourself in class."

"I am not choking, sir."

"Ven I say choke, I mean choke, as you know verce well, Bolover!"

"Probably Monsieur Charpentier meant 'joke.'"

"Come here viz you, Bolover!"

"THE MASTER LIBRARY—No. 438."

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1st.

Bolover major sat tight, with thunder on his brow. Such an order from Mr. Quelch would have been obeyed at once; but Mossoo was Mr. Quelch. Bolover did not move.

Mossoo glared at him, and came among the juniors, and rapped Bolover's knuckles severely. Bolover gave a roar.

"Now zen, you learn to be more respectful, isn't it?" panted Mossoo.

"Yew-ow-ow-ow!"

"Stop zat silly noise at vunce viz you, Bolover!"

Monsieur Charpentier, breathing hard, went back to the blackboard, where he traced in chalk that simple sentence, which was designed to reveal the weird mysteries of the French genitive to the Removites. He had to turn his back to the class while he was wielding the chalk. Bolover major jerked the catapult out from under his desk.

"Cheese it, you zas!" whispered Harry Wharton hurriedly. Bolover major did not heed. His knuckles were smarting, and he was in a revengful and reckless mood. There was a twang of the catapult, and a pellet, composed of blotting-paper kneaded up with ink, shot across the Form-room and caught Mossoo on the back of the head.

"Men Dieu!"

Monsieur Charpentier jumped clear of the floor in his astonishment.

"He whirled round on the grinning class.

"Vat zat? Somevun zrow somevun, isn't it?"

Dead silence.

Mossoo chafed in among the desks. The catapult was under the desk again, but it was dragged out to view the next moment. Monsieur Charpentier's face was purple. He seized Bolover by the collar and dragged him out before the class.

"You bad, wicked boy! You assault your master, isn't it, viz iz catapult! Zen it is zat I zash you."

Whack, whack, whack!

The pointer came down across Bolover major's broad shoulders with terrific vim. Bolover roared and struggled.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yarcooh!" roared Bolover. "Chuck it! Leggo, you French idiot! Oh, my hat!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

The French master had quite lost his temper. Bolover major made a grab at the pointer and grasped Mossoo's wrist. Then the Remove was treated to the extraordinary sight of a master and a boy struggling together in the Form-room. They gazed on the scene spellbound. Mossoo was little more than a match for the burly Bolover, and, indeed, the burly Bolover could have knocked him out, if he had ventured to hit out. As he struggled with the muscular junior, a folded paper slipped from Monsieur Charpentier's coat and dropped on the floor of the Form-room.

It fell in full view of all the class. There was a buzz.

The paper was a pink one, and the title on it could be plainly seen by every fellow in the class, even by Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

The "Racing Tipster."

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

"The 'Racing Tipster'!" chuckled Wibley. "Mossoo! The 'Racing Tipster'! Oh, crumbs! The giddy sportsman!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

Monsieur Charpentier released Bolover suddenly. He made a dive at the tell-tale pink paper, and thrust it hastily into the inside pocket of his coat. His face was crimson.

Never had anyone seen the unfortunate French master so utterly overwhelmed with confusion.

So completely flabbergasted was Monsieur Charpentier that some of the juniors could not help feeling sorry for him, exasperated as they were.

He made a gesture to Bolover with a trembling hand.

"Go back to your place, Bolover!"

The scowling Bolover returned to his place, panting.

Monsieur Charpentier faced the class, his cheeks burning. The surprise and the amusement in all the faces before him seemed to overwhelm him.

He opened his lips several times, but no word came forth. The Remove waited, breathless.

"The class class class!" gasped Mossoo, at last. "I take you no more sis afternoon."

And he turned and strode out of the Form-room.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

"Nothing Doing!"

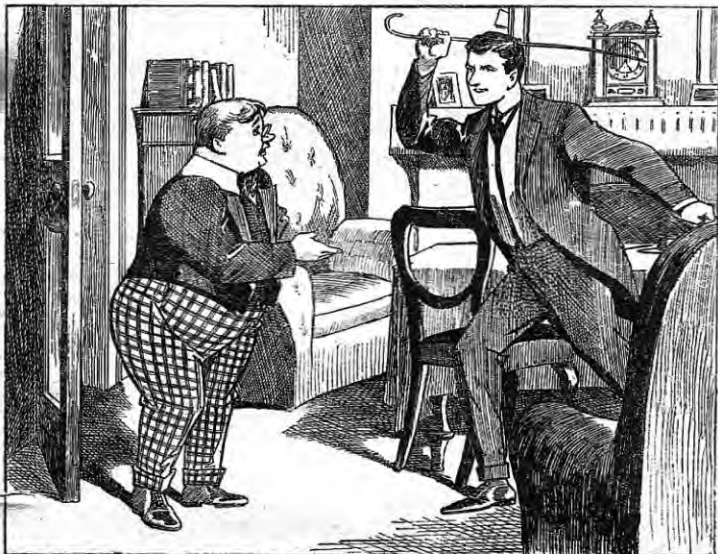
"GREAT Scott!"

"My only hat!"

"I say, you fellows, did you see it?"

"Mossoo—a giddy sportsman!"

There was a buzz of amazed voices in the Remove Form-room.



"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter. "I—I'm only doing my duty, you know——" "And I'm going to do mine," said Wingate. Swish! (See Chapter 5.)

The juniors were left to themselves, and they had nothing to do but to discuss that amazing happening.

"The awful rotter!" growled Bol-over major. "A rotten betting beast, that's what he is! Sporting papers in his pockets, in class, by Jove!"

"Why, it means the sack for him if the Head knows!" chorled Skinner. "The Head ought to be told, somehow."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry Wharton gruffly. "Moscoo can't have had that paper for any reason of that kind."

"What's he got it for, then?" grinned Snoop. "Chaps don't carry racing papers round with them unless it's because they go in for betting."

"I guess it's a cinch!" exclaimed Fisher T. Field. "Any fellow at Greyfriars should be sacked for betting. I calculate it's worse in a master. Nice sort of example to set us—what?"

"The Head would have a fit, by Jove!" said Peter Todd.

"But it's all rot!" exclaimed Wharton. "Moscoo may have taken that paper away from some chap he found with it."

"Then why was he so jolly scared when it came to light?" chuckled Skinner.

Wharton was silent. He could not answer that question.

But the idea of this staid, respectable French master as a betting-man and a "sportsman" was inadmissible. Certainly, if Dr. Locke had known that one of his staff was given to betting on races, that member of the staff would not have stayed long at Greyfriars. The Head would certainly have been shocked and angry, and he would have

sent the master away without hesitation. Skinner & Co. were chuckling gleefully over the discovery. They felt that they had the upper hand of the French master now.

"That's why he's been so jolly rattly this afternoon," said Skinner sagely. "The gee-gees have been running away with his money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," chirruped Billy Bunter, "he ought to be shown up, you know! I call it disgraceful! A Greyfriars master, you know!"

"Somebody ought to tell the Head, I guess!"

"You go and tell him, Fishy!"

"Ahem! I guess I don't want to put myself forward. Skinner might go to the Head——"

"No jolly fear!" said Skinner promptly. "I think Wharton ought to go, as captain of the Ferns."

"A Form-captain's business isn't to speak," said Harry Wharton disdainfully. "And I don't believe there's anything in it. Moscoo is a decent man, and he's not likely to have taken up blackguardly betting."

"Rats! You know it as well as we do," said Bolsover. "He was simply knocked over when that paper showed up!"

"Knocked into a cocked hat!" said Snoop. "He's been having a flutter on the races. That's why he's so rattly. His dead cert's have turned out uncertain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The less said about it the better," said Wharton.

"There'll be trouble for any chap heard saying things like that about a master."

NEXT MONDAY—**"THE OTHER BUNTER!"** A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"He shouldn't be a betting blackguard, and then we shouldn't say so!" grumbled Skinner. "I know I'm jolly well not going to do my lines! If he asks me for them, I'll tell him that one good turn deserves another. I'll keep his betting dark if he lets me off the lines!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wouldn't have the nerve, you ass!"

"Well, I'd have the nerve," said Bolsover major truculently. "You jolly well say whether I do my lines!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Nugent. "Mossoo has been rather a beast this afternoon. But he's all right, as a rule. We don't want to be down on him."

"He hasn't leathered you with a pointer!" snorted Bolsover major.

"Well, I haven't caught him on the napper with a cataplaf. What else did you expect?"

"Look here! It's up to us to say nothing about this," said Wharton. "Mossoo is a decent chap, and he's always kind enough. I suppose he's worried about something this afternoon—"

"Yes, rather; and I know what it is—gee-gee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't be having anything of the sort," said Harry. "Anyway, it's no business of ours. I'm going to do my lines."

"Same here," said Bob. "It's rotten to be down on a man because he's ratty just once. We shouldn't back up against Quelch—he wouldn't stand it!"

"Cave! Here comes Quelch!"

The buzz of voices in the Form-room died away as Mr. Quelch stepped in. The Remove-master gave the juniors a severe glance.

"There is a great deal of noise in this room!" he exclaimed. "Where is Monsieur Charpentier?"

"He dismissed the class, sir," said Wharton.

"Indeed!"

Mr. Quelch was surprised, but he made no further remark. It was time for last lesson now, and the Remove-master had returned to take his Form again. Bolsover major and Skinner and Snoop were whispering together. The young cads thought only of how to make capital out of the discovery of the sporting paper. The exposure of Mossoo's supposed speculations on the races would be a crushing vengeance for what the Remove had suffered at his hands that afternoon. Bolsover major was the only fellow in the party who had nerve enough to address Mr. Quelch on the subject, and even he hesitated. Mr. Quelch's sharp eyes fell on the group of whisperers.

"Bolsover! Skinner! Snoop! Stott! Fish! What—"

Bolsover, urged on by his comrades, rose to his feet.

"If you please, sir, there's something I think I ought to tell you," he said.

Harry Wharton set his lips. The captain of the Remove had a regard for the French master, and one afternoon's bad temper was not sufficient to blot out the memory of many kindnesses. But there was no stopping Bolsover now.

"What do you mean, Bolsover?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"It's about Monsieur Charpentier, sir."

"If you intend to make some complaint of Monsieur Charpentier, Bolsover, you may save yourself the trouble. Take your seat!"

"I feel that you ought to know, as our Form-master, sir," said Bolsover doggedly. "Mossoo Charpentier isn't fit to have charge of us—"

"What!"

"His character isn't good, sir. A man who goes in for racing and betting—"

Bolsover, rebuffed as he was, faltered a little at the expression that came over Mr. Quelch's face. The Remove-master seemed to be unable to find his voice for a moment.

"Bolsover," he gasped at last, "do you dare to bring such an accusation against a gentleman like Monsieur Charpentier?"

"Yes, sir. He—"

"Silence! Come out before the class!"

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane from the desk. Bolsover had refused to obey a similar order from Mossoo. He did not venture to disobey Mr. Quelch, however. He came out sullenly before the class.

"It's true, sir," he said. "All the fellows know it. Mossoo Charpentier goes in for betting and racing papers—"

"Silence!" bellowed Mr. Quelch. "I have observed more than once, Bolsover, that you have failed in respect towards Monsieur Charpentier, whom I have every reason to respect highly. Hold out your hand!"

"But—but—"

"Do you hear me, Bolsover?"

"But I say—"

"If you say another single word, Bolsover, I will take you to the Head of a bargain!"

"THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 438.

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 10.

Bolsover major said no more. He held out his hand. Swish, swish! Swish, swish!

Bolsover major returned to his seat almost doubled up. And any fellow who had felt inclined to acquaint Mr. Quelch with the "true inwardness" of Mossoo's character received very wisely to keep mum. It was evident that there was "nothing doing."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act!

"JOLLY queer bizny!"

That was Bob Cherry's opinion.

The Famous Five were gathered in No. 1 Study after lessons. Lines had fallen like leaves in Vallombrosa in the French class that afternoon, and the Co. had all come in for a share. And as the lines had to be handed in by five o'clock they were busy.

"Jolly queer!" repeated Bob reflectively. "Mossoo was a regular Hun this afternoon. It's the first time I've known him like it. He must have something on his mind."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Wharton.

"As a matter of fact, it's jolly clear," said Johnny Bull. "Mossoo doesn't carry racing papers about for a joke. He's been taking them up to make capital out of them."

"It's rotten, if it's true," said Wharton, frowning. "The Head would flog any fellow here who did it. Skinner has been flogged for that kind of thing—and so has the Bouncer. If a master did it he ought to be sacked, and the Head would sack him like a shot, if he knew. But I can't believe it!"

"Anyway, we don't know the facts, and 'tain't our bizny, anyway," said Frank Nugent.

"We know that Mossoo is a good little ass as a rule. He helped me no end for my exam for the French paper, and he gives Linley extra too for nothing."

"He's a good sort," said Bob. "But it's jolly queer all the same. Of course, we forgive him—lines or no lines. We're nice, forgiving chaps—none better—"

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"The fellows aren't nice, forgiving chaps like us!" grinned Bob. "Skinner & Co. are laying plans for downing Mossoo on the strength of that sporting paper."

"Rotters!" growled Wharton.

"Bolsover didn't have much luck," chuckled Johnny Bull. "They won't try it with Quelch again."

"Let's luck up with the lines," said Wharton. "We shall be hot for tea at Cliff House, anyway!"

"Right you are!"

The clatter of the Remove ground at the lines. Bob's imposition was the heaviest, and the others piled in to help him when their own were done. Mossoo sidled examination the "fist" in an impot—indeed, it was not often that he gave out lines at all. The juniors were still busy when Billy Bunter blew into the study.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off!"

"But I say, about my lines, you know," said Bunter. "Under the circumstances, I think I oughtn't to do them—Mossoo being such a beastly blackguard, you know—"

"Shut up!"

"I want to ask Wharton's advice," said Bunter. "I've a right to ask my Form-captain's advice, I suppose!"

"Well, I advise you to do them," said Harry.

"Ahem! That isn't exactly what I mean. Do you really think that the lines ought to be done, Wharton?"

"Yes, Tubby!"

"Then I suppose you wouldn't mind doing them?"

"Oh—"

"Think it's up to you, Wharton, as you think they ought to be done."

"Fathead!"

"Otherwise I shall take Bolsover's advice and not do them. Besides, I haven't time if I'm coming over to Cliff House with you fellows."

"Oh, really, Cherry?"

"Oh, really settled," growled Bob. "You're not!"

"Oh, really, Cherry?"

"Buzz off and do your lines, you fat oyster!"

"Of course I'm coming!" said Bunter. "Do you know that Marjorie will be disappointed if I don't come. And Phyllis, too—you know Phyllis is rather—ahem!—rather spoony in my direction—Yarrooh!"

Billy Bunter's little fat nose had a marvelously narrow escape. Bob Cherry slammed the door. The Owl of the Remove jumped away just in time.

"Beasts!" he howled through the keyhole.

Billy Bunter rolled discommodately down the passage, and looked into Rake's study. Rake and Wibley and Morgan and Micky Desmond were all there—three of them grinding out lines for Mossoo. Wibley was otherwise engaged. He was standing before the glass, busy with green-paints and

artificial whiskers. Wibley was the great shining light of the Remove Dramatic Society, and his latest ripping idea was to introduce Monsieur Charpentier into the next comedy to be played by that distinguished society. He was making up his face now for practice, and Billy Bunter fairly jumped as he blinked at him. It was rather surprising to see a sallow, bearded, middle-aged face on a junior in Etoms. Wibley had a wonderful gift of impersonation, as much owing to mobility of feature and expression as to his skill in make-up. So far as his face went, he looked the double of the French-master at the present moment.

"It will be a cozier," Wibley was remarking to his student, as Bunter rolled in. "I've got Mossoo to the life. Anybody could imitate his squeak, too, that he culls a voice. And I've got a new wheeze, too—ripping!"

"Oh, ring off!" growled Rake. "How's a chap to do his lines?"

"Blow your lines! I'll tell you my latest wheeze—"

"Keep it!"

"Fatshead! You see, I was going to bring in Mossoo as a comic character into the comedy," said Wibley eagerly. "That would be a regular scream in itself. But I've thought of a development. I'm going to make him a sporty character—dropping racing papers all over the place, you know—"

"You fathead!" roared Rake. "Suppose Mossoo should come in while we're playing the comedy?"

"Well, that can't be helped. It would really be a valuable tip to him not to be so jolly careless with his racing papers," said Wibley. "He couldn't go for me. You see, he couldn't admit in public that he was that kind of goat."

"It would hurt his feelings."

"Oh, blow his feelings! A chap can't stop to worry about a chap's feelings when it's a question of getting up a really good comic character."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, seat!"

"Look here, Rake, I want to ask your advice. I've got fifty lines to do."

"Go and do 'em, and be blowed!"

"But I've got to go over to Cliff House to tea. Marjorie will be disappointed if I don't. Don't you think a fellow ought to refuse to do lines for a disreputable character like old Charpentier?"

"You can try it if you like!" grunted Rake. "I don't envy you what you'll get."

"Well, my idea is that some determined chap ought to speak to the Head about it. A chap like you, Rake. You've got lots of nerve."

"Thanks! Nothing doing!"

"I say, Desmond—"

"Shut up!"

"As an Irishman, Desmond, it's up to you to take the lead. Irish chaps always have lots of pluck. You've got tons more pluck than Rake. Don't you think you ought to go to the Head and point out—"

"Shut up!"

"I'm sorry to see you're a funk, Desmond! I say, Morgan, old chap, you've got more pluck than those two beastly funks. Will you go to the Head—"

"I'll come to you if you don't clear off," growled Morgan, "and if I come to you, I'll wring your fat neck!"

"Alum! I say, Wib, old man, that's a ripping impersonation. You're jolly clever, you know. And you're plucky, too. I think you're the very chap to go to the Head and say—"

"Yoo-cow!"

Billy Bunter did not really mean to advise Wibley to go to the Head and make that surprising remark. He made it involuntarily as Rake hurled a cushion, which caught the Owl of the Remove under the chin and hurled him into the passage. Wibley kicked the door shut.

"Yow-ow-wow!" mumbled Bunter. "Beast! I'm jolly well not going to do lines for such a disreputable character as Mossoo. I wonder if Smithy—"

Bunter opened Vernon-Smith's door and peered in. The Bounder of Greyfriars had lines to do, and so had Skinner. They were both at work at the study table.

"I say, Skinner, are you going to the Head about—"

"No, I'm not. Shut up!"

"Of course, you haven't pluck enough. I say, Smithy—"

"Get out!"

"Mittler, old man, you're a chap with no end of nerve," said Bunter. "You're the very fellow to show Mossoo up. You see, if he's sacked we shouldn't have to do our lines. Suppose you go to the Head—"

The Bounder reached for a cricket-stump, and Billy Bunter bent a hasty retreat. It really looked as if Bunter would have to go to the Head himself, or let the matter drop. He decided to let it drop.

Harry Wharton & Co. came out of No. 1 Study with their things done. Billy Bunter blinked at them.

"You fellows starting now?"

"Yes, fatty."

"Who's going to lend me a bike?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

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

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

The Famous Five gently shoved Bunter out of the way, and made their way to Monsieur Charpentier's study. Wharton tapped discreetly at the door, and as there was no reply, he opened it. If Mossoo was not in his study, it was sufficient to leave the impositions on his table.

But Mossoo was there!

He was seated at the table, with the pink racing paper open before him, deeply engrossed in the content—so deeply that he had not heard the tap at the door. He was muttering to himself, and the astounded juniors caught the words:

"Blue Bird—ah—ten to one! Zat is ten shillings to one—suffin—ah—but ven it is zat he not win—"

"Ahem!"

The five juniors coughed loudly in chorus.

Monsieur Charpentier started to his feet, whipping his hand behind him with the sporting paper in it. He blinked at the juniors.

"Wharton—Sherry—vat—"

"Our lines, sir," said Wharton.

The juniors advanced into the study and laid the impositions on the table. Monsieur Charpentier did not speak a word. He could not. The Famous Five left the study with out a word either.

They heard the French-master gasp as the door was closed.

In the passage the clumps of the Remove looked at one another queerly.

"Caught in the giddy act!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat! Mossoo, of all people; he must be off his tether!"

"Not a word about it," said Harry.

"Oh, of course!"

The Famous Five went out for their bicycles. They went in a thoughtful and somewhat dismayed frame of mind. There could be no doubt about it further; Monsieur Charpentier was engaged in racing transactions, and that was the worry on his mind which had caused him to cut up so riotously in class that afternoon. They knew it now; yet it still seemed incredible. That staid and respectable middle-aged gentleman was the last man in the world to be suspected of playing the "giddy goat." And there was not the slightest doubt that it meant the "sack" for him if the headmaster learned of it. Unless the French-master was out of his senses, it was simply not to be understood.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Makes a Discovery!

"I never rains but it pours!" grunted Bob Cherry.

The chums of the Remove were wheeling their bicycles from the shed, when Bob discovered that an old puncture had broken out again. There was nothing for it but to wait while it was repaired.

"Buck up, Bob!" said Harry.

Bob Cherry up-ended the machine and set to work. William George Bunter ambled down to the lath-shed while he was thus engaged.

"I say, you fellows, I'm coming, you know. I say, Mossoo's just gone out. He was looking jolly queer," said Bunter.

"I dare say he's gone to meet some locomotive. What do you think?"

"I think I'll bump you if you don't ring off!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! It's awfully disgraceful to have a master like that at Greyfriars. Do you think it's a chap's duty to watch him, and see what he's up to?"

"You fat load!"

"Of course, you're not so shocked at this as I am," said Bunter loftily. "You haven't the same high sense of honour. I'm shocked and disgusted!"

"We haven't the same sense of honour, certainly!" said Wharton drily.

"Of course, you were only joking about not wanting me to come. I really feel it's my duty to keep an eye on Mossoo, but I'm giving that up to come with you. Can I help you with that puncture, Bob? I'm rather a dab at mending punctures."

"Go and eat cake!"

"Well, be careful with it. You don't want it to go again, as you're going to give me a lift on your bike."

"Can't you kick that fat idiot out while I'm mending a puncture, you slackers!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Any old thing," said Johnny Bull. "Now, then, all together—as hard as you can!"

Billy Bunter took a hurried departure. But he was not beaten yet. When the puncture was done with at last, and the juniors wheeled their machines down to the gates, they found the Owl of the Remove waiting for them there.

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EVERY MONDAY.—"THE OTHER BUNTER!"

"Which of you chaps is going to give me a lift?" asked Bunter affably.

"I am," said Johnny Bull.

"Thanks awfully, Johnny, old chap! Here, I say—yaroooh!—wharrer you at?"

Johnny Bull lifted Bunter by the collar, shook him, and plumped him down on the ground, hard. Then the Famous Five mounted their bicycles and pedaled away. It was some minutes before Bunter recovered sufficient breath to stagger up and roll after them. He shook a fat fist at the five cyclists disappearing down the lane.

"Boasts!" he yelled.

Then Bunter started. He had debated in his mind whether Harry Wharton & Co. would adopt drastic measures if he turned up at Cliff House, and decided that the presence of Marjorie and Clara would save him. So he rolled after the cyclists. Bunter was not a good walker, and he was likely to be very late for school; but where a feed was concerned, Bunter's belief was that it was better late than never.

The Famous Five turned into the bridge-path through the wood to save time. Cyclists were not supposed to ride on the bridge-path, but it was a short cut, and the party were already late. And the path was a lonely one.

"They dashed on at a good speed under the thick branches, strung out in line."

"Hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. Bob was riding alone. "There's some telly ast on the path!"

"He rang his bell loudly."

The juniors slackened down a little. A tall figure in a black frock-coat and silk hat was dimly seen in the dusty path. As they came nearer the juniors recognized Monsieur Charpentier, the French master of Greyfriars. He was in conversation with a fat, stumpy man with a very red face, who wore a bowler hat cocked on one side of his head. The juniors knew him also. It was Mr. Banks, the bookmaker of Courtfield.

Monsieur Charpentier spun round as he heard the clanging of the bicycle-bells. His face changed. He made a sudden sign to his companion, who stepped back among the trees, though not before he had been seen.

"The cyclists rode on."

The same thought had come into their minds at once. After what they had seen in Mosso's study, they were not greatly surprised to see him in talk with a bookmaker. They wondered that he had not picked out a bookmaker with a somewhat less unsavoury reputation than Mr. Banks; but probably poor Mosso was quite inexperienced in "blagging." They knew how confused and humiliated he would be at the discovery, and they rode straight on without looking at him or saluting him, as if they had failed to recognise him in the deep shadow of the trees.

They were past him in a minute or less, and the five cyclists rushed on towards the Pepp Road.

Monsieur Charpentier stood staring after them blankly, his colour coming and going.

The chums of the Remove did not speak until the wood was left behind, and they were riding on the open high-road in the sunshine again.

"Well, that was a go!" said Bob Cherry.

"The go-funness was terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "But the esteemed and blackguardly Mosso does not know that we knew him."

"It's jolly well getting too thick!" growled Johnny Bull. "What on earth would the Head say if he knew? I'm beginning to agree with Bobow that he ought to be shown up."

Harry Wharton shook his head decidedly.

"No business of ours," he said. "I can't believe that Mosso is really a rotten blackguard. He's been led into it somehow. You know, the old fellow is as simple as a baby."

"Anybody might spot him there," said Nugent. "My hat if Bunter is coming after us—and most likely he is—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Bob Cherry whistled expressively. If Billy Bunter came plodding the path, and saw what they had seen, it would not be long before all Greyfriars knew it.

"Can't be helped," said Wharton.

"Well, I suppose we can't go back and give the blackguard a tip not to be caught blagging," grinned Johnny Bull. "It's his own look-out."

The juniors rode on to Cliff House. In spite of this extraordinary development of Mosso's character, they could not help feeling a little concerned about him. He was deliberately risking the loss of a good position and a handsome salary, and it seemed to them that he must really be out of his senses. They had received many little kindnesses at the hands of the French master, and they had not forgotten them. And they felt that Mosso must be quite new to playing the giddy goat—or he would have been a little more careful about it.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was strolling determinedly after THE MASTER LIBRARY—No. 458.

the cyclists. He had seen them turn into the bridge-path, and he turned into it after them, and tramped along doggedly.

The bridge-path wound among the big trees, and Bunter's footsteps were inaudible on the grass and the fallen leaves. He came quite suddenly on the elegant, frock-coated figure of the French master. He heard the voice of Monsieur Charpentier, and halted in sheer amazement.

"And zat vill be hefty pounds, Monsieur Banks?"

"Ten to one against, sir," said Mr. Banks, and Bunter heard every word clearly. "That's the price again Blue Bird."

"And zat horse, he vill win?"

"I'm taking the chance of that, sir. You 'and me the fiveer now, and on Saturday, you'll see—" Mr. Banks stopped suddenly as he caught sight of Bunter.

Monsieur Charpentier looked round. His face became quite white as he saw the round eyes of Billy Bunter growing bigger and rounder behind his glasses. He strode angrily towards the fat junior.

"Buntair! You vicked boy! You spies on me, isn't it?" "Ninnno!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't—I was—I—I—I didn't know you were here talking to Mr. Banks, sir. I—I don't even know Mr. Banks by sight. Oh, My hat! Yaroooooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Monsieur Charpentier's cane fell across Bunter's shoulders. As a matter of fact, Bunter had happened upon him quite by chance, but he had to suffer for his bad reputation. The Peeping Tom of Greyfriars had no secrets well known.

Billy Bunter flew back the way he had come, roaring, with the French master's cane lashing behind. Monsieur Charpentier pursued him a dozen steps, till the Owl of the Remove dodged into the wood and escaped. Then the little gentleman turned back, peering, and rejoined the bookmaker. Mr. Banks was grinning.

"Mon Dieu! But zat is ze bad luck!" growled Monsieur Charpentier. "Zat vicked boy vill talk!"

"Give him another 'ding, then, sir," said Mr. Banks.

"Now, where shall I see you on Saturday, sir?"

"Pas ici!" said Mosso breathlessly. "Not here! I vill see you in ze old barn. Nobody ever comes zere zix himself. And if zat horse he vin—"

"Then I shall bring the money with me, sir," said Mr. Banks, with a cunning gleam in his eyes. "I can't help thinking you've got 'old of a good thing. You're an old 'and at this even game, sir."

Monsieur Charpentier shook his head.

"Du tout," he said. "I have never before done viz, never, and I zink zat perhaps zis time I shall have got hold of ze wrong horse by ze car, isn't it? But ze paper he see zat it is ten to one. If it is zat, zat horse he lose, I pay you viz five pounds on Saturday. At zis moment I have not five-pound note in my pocket."

"Your word's good enough for me, sir," said Mr. Banks. "Saturday at five, then?"

"Oui, oui! Now I goes, or perhaps ezers zey see me, and I am ashame."

The French master walked away hurriedly. Mr. Banks looked after him very oddly, and lighted a big black cigar.

"My eye!" murmured Mr. Banks. "This 'ere is a stroke of luck! The silly idiot, the 'owl' as! Wot does he know about 'orse? Blue Bird! Ha, ha, ha! The 'owl' dumpy! If that there 'orse comes in nineteenth, he will do remarkably well." Mr. Banks chuckled. "It's a fiveer for me, which will come in 'andy in these 'ard times, with racin' knocked on the 'ead by the rotten war. And—and some more fiveers to follow if, I fancy—wot!"

And Mr. Banks walked away in a high good humour, evidently in a state of the most complete satisfaction.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Painful Duty!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. had tea at Cliff House without being joined there by William George Bunter. Evidently the Owl of the Remove was not such a "sticker" as they had supposed.

When they took leave of Marjorie and Clara and Phyllis, the chums of the Remove rode back to Greyfriars by the road. They could not help thinking of Monsieur Charpentier and that peculiar meeting on the bridge-path. But as Bunter had not turned up, they hoped that the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars, at least, knew nothing about it.

But that hope was short-lived. When they came into the junior Common room on their return Billy Bunter was there. He was the centre of a crowd of the Remove folk, and he was holding forth with a deep indignation. There was a buzz from the crowd, and the Famous Five caught the name of Monsieur Charpentier.



The captain of the Remove followed Bolsover major, and they went into No. 1 Study. Bolsover closed the door, Wharton eyeing him in surprise. "Well?" said Wharton. (See Chapter B.)

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's on?" asked Bob Cherry, as the five joined the group.

"I say, you fellows—"

"It's another yarn of Bunter's," said Mark Linky. "All rot, of course!"

"More whoopers!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy! It happened just as I've told you, and these fellows know all about it, too. They must have passed the beast in the wood."

The Famous Five exchanged a quick glance.

"Do you fellows know anything about it?" asked Tom Brown. "Bunter says he saw Mossos in the wood jaming with Banks, the bookie!"

"And Mossos went for him," said Squiff. "I dare say he did, if he found Bunter spying on him."

"I wasn't spying!" roared Bunter. "I was going to Cliff House, and I came on Mossos quite by chance. He was jaming to Banks about a horse—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Wilber.

"I tell you he was! And these fellows know it, too! They must have seen him!" howled Bunter. "Mossos went for me like a wild beast!"

"Know anything about it, you chaps?" asked Peter Todd. But the Famous Five strolled away without replying. They did not intend to corroborate Bunter's story.

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"Can't you answer, you dummies!" roared Bolsover major.

"Tell us if you saw him!" shouted Skinner.

But Harry Wharton & Co. had left the Common-room.

"They jolly well did!" said Billy Bunter triumphantly.

"They won't say anything against Mossos, that's what it is. I tell you Mossos was putting money on a horse he called Blue Bird—"

"Bow-wow!" said Hazeldene. "It's too thick!"

"It's true, you fathead! And I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head about it. The rotter ought to be sacked!"

"He ought to be sacked if he's a gambling beast!" said Squiff.

"But I don't believe he's anything of the kind. You went to sleep in the wood, and dreamed it, Bunter."

"I didn't—I wasn't!"

"I suppose we didn't all go to sleep in the Form-room and dream that racing paper!" sneered Skinner.

"Greyfriars is coming to something, I must say," said Bolsover major, with virtuous indignation. "I'm disgusted. The fellow ought to be kicked out of the school."

"Oh, go easy!" said the Founder. "We're all human at times!"

"Oh, you'd back him up, of course!" sneered Bolsover.

"It's quite in your line, Smithy. I dare say you'll find Mossos at the Cross Keys some evening when you go there for a game of banker."

NEXT MONDAY—**"THE OTHER BUNTER!"** A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, Mossoo went for me like a wild beast, just because I spotted him by accident," said Bunter pathetically. "He's an awful rotter! Who's going to the Head about it?"

"You're the man, Bunter," grinned Rake. "Better put some exercise books in your clobber first, though."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Something ought to be done," said Bolsover major. "I didn't have any luck with Quechey. Suppose you tell a prefect, Bunter? Go to Wingate."

"Don't be a rotten sneak!" growled Squiff.

"Tain't sneaking," said Bolsover. "The rotter ought to be shown up. Suppose some kid took to bad ways owing to Mossoo's bad example?"

"Pooh! We've stood your example without turning a hair, and, after that, we can stand anything Mossoo does!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky idiot!"

"Look here, I'm going to Wingate," said Bunter. "I've a right to ask a prefect's advice about it. I'll ask Wingate's advice."

"Do!" chorused Bolsover and Skinner and Snoop. And they marched Billy Bunter away to the Sixth-Form passage, to strike while the iron was hot. Harry Wharton & Co. sat them on the way.

"Where are you going, Bunter?" asked Wharton quietly. Bunter blinked at him loftily.

"I'm going to do my duty," he said.

"If that means that you're going to sneak about Mossoo

"So it's true!" exclaimed Skinner. "You saw him!"

"Never mind about that. It's not Bunter's business to jaw

"Least said soonest mended," urged Bob Cherry.

"Speech is silver, but silence is far above rubies, as the English proverb says," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"And a still tongue in time saves ninepence."

"Look here, Bunter—"

"You needn't talk to me, Wharton. I've got my duty to do. It's a painful duty. But I've got a conscience. I'm not like some fellows."

And Bunter marched on, and Bolsover knocked at Wingate's door and opened it for him. He pushed Bunter into the study.

The captain of Greyfriars was at work, and he lifted his head, and stared at Bunter far from amiably.

"What do you want?" he rapped out.

"Ahem!" Billy Bunter did not feel quite at ease under Wingate's eyes. "The—the fact is, Wingate—"

"Pick up!"

"I—I want to ask your advice, Wingate. I—I'm expecting a postal-order—I—I mean—that is to say—" stammered Bunter. "Suppose— I mean—"

"You'd better say what you mean pretty quick," said Wingate. "I'm busy."

"Suppose I found a Greyfriars master playing the giddy or, Wingate—"

"What?"

"Suppose it was Mossoo Charpentier, and I found him backing horses—"

"I—I say, Wingate—"

"I didn't know you were a humorist before, Bunter," remarked the captain of Greyfriars, "and I confess I don't see the point of the joke. But a fat duffer can't talk about a Greyfriars master like that. Hold out your hand!"

"Oh, really, Wingate, I—I—really—"

"Do you hear me?"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter. "I—I'm only doing my duty, you know—"

"And I'm going to do mine," said Wingate.

"Swish!"

"Yeeow!"

"Now the other paw—sharp!"

"Swish!"

"Now get out, and don't come here to be funny again," said Wingate; and he bundled the Owl of the Remove out of the study, and slammed the door after him.

Billy Bunter tucked his fat hands under his arms, and seemed to be trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife.

"Licked?" asked Skinner, with a whistle.

"Aw-ow-ow!"

"What did he lick you for?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Yow-ow! I don't know! Yow! He's a beast! I—I say, you go in and tell him, Bolsover."

"No jolly fear!" said Bolsover major promptly. "Skinner can't like him!"

"Catch me!" grinned Skinner.

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Billy Bunter rolled away, squeezing his fat hands and groaning. Bolsover & Co. followed him, and the captain of Greyfriars was left in blissful ignorance of the surprising revelations he might have heard. Billy Bunter had said that he was going to do a painful duty—and it had turned out much more painful than he had anticipated.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Skinner Tries It On!

MONSIEUR CHARPENTIER had the pleasure of taking the Remove again on Friday. The Remove stared at him curiously when he came into the Form-room.

Mossoo's weird adventures as a blackguard were the talk of the Lower School now.

Naturally, Mossoo did not hear the talk of the juniors, and he was quite unaware of the light in which he was regarded.

To the surprise of the Removites, Mossoo was very kind and patient that afternoon. Apparently the French master had repented him of the "rattiness" which had made the last French lesson so severe an ordeal to the Removites.

Some of the juniors noted that there were signs of worry in his face, and he was a little absent-minded. Probably, as Skinner remarked in a whisper, he was thinking of the chances for and against Blue Bird in the race on the morrow—a suggestion that made the Removites chuckle.

Harry Wharton & Co. made it a point to be very respectful to the French gentleman. They had been annoyed by his previous "rattiness," but they did not bear malice, and they did not join in the least in Skinner and Bolsover's feud against monsieur.

But both Skinner and Bolsover were on the war-path, and they worried the little gentleman with assumed stupidity as much as they could.

After his previous exhibition of temper, the juniors expected Mossoo to break out at any moment. But he did not. His patience appeared to be inexhaustible; and it was easy to see that Mossoo was trying to make up for that bad outbreak. Even when Skinner called upon to compose a sentence, constructed "J'aime les chevaux," Mossoo did not seem to see the application to himself.

"The rotter's afraid of us!" Skinner whispered to Bolsover. To Skinner's mind, that seemed the only possible explanation of the French master's patience. He did not understand that a kind man, who had been betrayed by worry into an unjustifiable outbreak of temper, might be anxious to make up for it by excessive patience on another occasion.

"That's what it is," agreed Bolsover. "He knows we know something, and he's trying to get on our right side."

With that belief in their minds, the young rascals were not likely to have much mercy on Mossoo.

But they found that the worm would turn. Mossoo's patience, amazing as it was, was tired out towards the end of the lesson, when Skinner ventured to project an ink-ball at him as he stood at the blackboard. Certainly Skinner would never have ventured upon such a step if he had not been convinced that Mossoo was afraid of the class.

Mossoo caught the ink-ball with his ear.

He whirled round on the class, his eyes blazing.

"Skinnair! Come here viz you!"

"You've done it now!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

Skinner stepped out before the class with great trepidation. Monsieur Charpentier eyed him sternly.

"Skinnair, you have been verree bad all zrough ze lesson. I zink zat you are ze vorst boy in ze class. Now I zink I cano you!"

Skinner gritted his teeth. Apparently the French-master was not afraid of him, and what he knew, after all. Skinner had made a little mistake.

Monsieur Charpentier took up the Form-master's cane from the desk.

"Hold out ze hand, Skinnair!"

Skinner backed away.

"I appeal to the Head, sir!"

"Vai!"

"I appeal to the Head!"

"Bravo!" murmured Bolsover major.

Monsieur Charpentier eyed Skinner slyly. Mr. Quelch would have caught him there and then, but Mossoo did not possess the Remove-master's force of character.

"I zink zat you have a right to appeal to ze headmaster, Skinnair," he said. "But you must know zat Dr. Locke he cano you more severely zan I."

Skinner looked dogged. He had taken the resolution to speak out to the Head concerning Monsieur Charpentier, in the hope of escaping a licking altogether. As a licking was certain from Mossoo, it would not be much worse to get one

from the Head, if his "dodge" failed. Skinner thought it was worth risking.

"Verree good," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I give you one note to take to Dr. Locke, Skinnair."

Mossoo scratched down a note, folded it, and handed it to Skinner. Skinner left the Form-room with it.

Dr. Locke was in the Sixth Form-room, expounding to the Sixth Formers the beauties of Q. Horatius Flaccus. He looked round in surprise and annoyance as Skinner came in with the note.

"What is it—what is it?" he exclaimed.

"Mossoo Charpentier has sent you this note, sir," said Skinner, his heart beating hard.

The Head took the note and opened it, the Sixth Formers, given an unexpected rest from Q. Horatius Flaccus, looking on curiously.

Dr. Locke frowned as he read.

"Skinner, you have been impertinent to Monsieur Charpentier, and have refused to be camed by him. Give me the cane from the desk."

"If you please, sir—"

"Kindly give me the cane at once, Skinner!" Skinner fetched the cane from the desk. But he was determined to give him his say. It was his only chance.

"Please, Dr. Locke, I think you ought to know—"

"You can have no excuse for impertinence to Monsieur Charpentier, Skinner."

"It's because we don't respect him, sir—we—we—"

"You dare to tell me that you do not respect Monsieur Charpentier?" exclaimed the Head, in angry surprise.

"Yes, sir, because of his character."

"What!" thundered the Head.

The Sixth-Formers stared at Skinner. They wondered where he got his nerve from. Skinner faltered.

"I—I mean he is a rotter, sir—I mean it's known that he's not a decent man—he backs horses in races, sir, and—and—"

The Head's face was a study.

"Skinner!" he almost roared. "You—you venture to utter such ridiculous slanders against a respectable and estimable gentleman on the school staff? Silence! Not another word! I shall come you for impertinence to Monsieur Charpentier, and still more severely for uttering such base and unfounded allegations!"

"Swish, swish, swish! Swish, swish, swish!" The Head did not often lay it on hard, but he was quite athletic on that occasion. The unfortunate Skinner was almost doubled up.

"Skinner, you will take five hundred lines of Virgil! I shall speak to your Form-master! Let me hear you uttering another word against Monsieur Charpentier and I shall administer a public flogging! You may go!"

Skinner went.

He came back into the Remove-room with a face white with rage and pain, and his hands squeezed under his arms. It was easy enough for the Removites to see how he had fared with the Head. Bolsover major gave him a sympathetic look when he dropped limply into his seat.

"Did you try it on?" he whispered.

"Oh! Yes."

"Nothing doing?"

"Yow! No."

"Hard cheese!"

"I zink you talk in ze class," said Monsieur Charpentier mildly.

There was no more whispering, and there was no more ragging. Skinner's fate was a warning to his friends. But when the lesson was over, Skinner left the Form-room with a face that Bob Cherry likened to that of a drawn-in reindeer.

"Not much good trying to give the boss a run!" remarked Snoop.

Skinner ground his teeth.

"I'll make him squirm for it!" he muttered. "I've got an idea, too. They won't listen to a word against him; but I'm going to get back and then—"

"Why not chuck it up?" suggested Bob Cherry. "Mossoo couldn't stand having things chuckled at him; you couldn't expect it!"

"Oh, rats!"

Skinner stamped away with his friends to hold a council of war.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

"ROTTERS!" growled Harry Wharton.

It was the following afternoon, and the Famous Five were in flannels. The Remove were playing the Upper Fourth that afternoon. Monsieur Charpentier came out of the School House, and nodded kindly to the juniors as he passed on his way to the gates.

Harry Wharton & Co. had just come off the pitch, and were THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 438.

NEXT MONDAY—

"THE OTHER BUNTER!"

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

going to the school shop for refreshing ginger-beer before the Fourth Form innings. Their glance followed Monsieur Charpentier to the gates, and they noted that Skinner and Bolsover major, who were lounging in the gateway, started out after the French master. Hence Wharton's expressive remark.

"The rotters are watching him!" he said.

"Let's go after them, and bump them bald-headed," suggested Johnny Bull.

"We've got to get back to cricket."

It was not exactly the business of the Famous Five, but they would have quipped in, but for the chains of cricket. As it was, the two young rascals sauntered down the lane after Monsieur Charpentier undisturbed.

Skinner and Bolsover were actuated partly by curiosity and partly by a sense of righteous indignation. Their idea was that Mossoo ought to be shown up in his true colours, and they were quite prepared to do it. As for the meanness of playing the spy, they tried to feel that the end justified the means. Skinner, in any case, was not troubled with many scruples.

Monsieur Charpentier did not even dream that he was being watched. He walked down the road quickly to the village, and stopped at the newsagent's in Friarale High Street. The afternoon editions of the evening papers were there, and the two spies could guess what he wanted. Mossoo came out of the shop with a paper in his hand, and walked away quickly towards the wood. His manner was agitated and full of unexpressed nervousness.

"He's got that paper for the giddy race results," murmured Skinner.

Bolsover major chuckled.

"And he don't like to be seen reading race reports!" he grinned. "He's going to a quiet place to look for Blue Bird."

"He, he, he!"

The two juniors followed at a respectful distance. Monsieur Charpentier entered the footpath in the wood, and halted. Keeping under cover, Bolsover and Skinner watched him through the trees. The French master opened the paper, and scanned it eagerly. After a few minutes he evidently found what he was looking for, and it gave him a shock. His hands clenched on the paper convulsively, and his face turned white.

"Mon Dieu!" he murmured.

"Not a winner!" whispered Skinner ecstatically.

Monsieur Charpentier crumpled the paper in his hand and hurled it into the wood. Then he walked limply away, with his head bowed down, his whole attitude telling of despair and utter dejection.

Skinner crept towards the spot where he had been standing, and fished the paper. It was open at the "Stop-press column," and there was the "Latest news":

"Newmarket, 20.

"Billiard Ball, Hooky Walker, La Montagne.

"Also ran: Tiny Tim, Pride of Killarney, and Blue Bird."

Skinner choked.

"Also ran!" he murmured. "Also ran, by gad! The silly old ass! What does he know about racing? Also ran! He, he, he!"

"And the silly ass was backing Blue Bird!" said Bolsover major.

"According to Bunter. And you can see by his chivy that his gee-gee's lost!" chortled Skinner. "Serve him jolly well right! Nice for a Greyfriars master—what!—backing gees-ees and interviewing lookies! And the Head kicked me for trying to tell him how the rotter was disgracing the school! I wonder where he's heading for now? Going to see Banks, perhaps. He'll have to pay up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monsieur Charpentier had not taken the direction of Greyfriars. Bolsover and Skinner followed him at a distance, wondering whether he was bound. The wood was left behind, and the French master walked limply across the green meadow.

On the edge of the wood the two juniors halted.

"He'll spot us in the fields," said Bolsover major dubiously.

Skinner did not reply. He was watching the French master. Monsieur Charpentier stopped at the old barn in the distance, entered it, and disappeared from view.

"What the dickens has he gone there for?" said Bolsover.

"Don't you see? It's a rendezvous!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Come on! Keep well behind the barn and he can't possibly spot us!"

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



Monsieur Charpentier entered the footpath in the wood, and halted. Keeping under cover, Bolsover and Skinner watched him through the trees. The French-master opened the paper, and scanned it eagerly. (See Chapter 7.)

"Right ho!"

The two juniors started again. The Frenchman, in the old barn, could not see them as they crossed the field to the back of the building. The old barn was in a state of dilapidation, and there were many chinks in the walls. Close behind the barn the two spies found a wide chink in the wood, and peered in.

Monsieur Charpentier was there, pacing to and fro in a state of great agitation, and occasionally clapping at his beard. He was muttering aloud as he paced, and the juniors caught his words:

"Mon Dieu! Les Boches! Les Huns! Quo faire?"

"Talking about the Germans," muttered Bolsover major, puzzled. "Boches are Germans. What have the Germans done to him? They can't get at him here!"

"He's got relations in the French Army," said Skinner. "I've heard of his nephew in the French infantry at Verdun. Blessed if I know what he's muttering about the Germans for! I thought he was here to meet the bookie. He must have come here for something!"

"Les Boches! Pauvre Henri! Les Boches! Quo faire?"

The two juniors were puzzled. They had expected to find Mossoo with his mind full of Blue Bird and the lost race, and apparently he was thinking only of the German enemies of his native land, and his nephew in the French Army. But Skinner suddenly gripped his companion's arm.

"A fat, squat figure had entered at the doorway of the barn. The juniors recognised Mr. Banks.

"The French master caused his hurried passing.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Banks affably. "I 'cep that Blue Bird 'ad bad luck in the two o'clock race, arter all!"

"The Magnet Library.—No. 438.

"Hello! I see him in ze paper," said Monsieur Charpentier.

"Too bad!" said Mr. Banks. "But, bless your ears, a sportsman 'as to take the bad with the good. You stood to win a handsome sum if Blue Bird 'ad got some. As a matter of business, I may mention that you owe me a six-pun note."

"I have come here to pay him," Monsieur Banks.

"That's business, sir," said Mr. Banks heartily.

With trembling fingers Monsieur Charpentier opened his pocket-book, and selected four notes for a pound each, and two for ten shillings.

The two juniors, watching through the chink, were, simply breathless. Here was a proof, if they wanted it, of the notorious dabblings of the French master on the Turf.

The expression on Mossoo's stricken face showed how much it cost him to part with the money.

Mr. Banks stowed the currency notes into his pocket with a great deal of satisfaction.

"Better luck next time, sir," he said. "Wot price the little affair on Wednesday? 'Ave you got a fancy for the Springtown race?"

Monsieur Charpentier shook his head.

"Zat makes ze betts no more," he said, in agitated tones. "I zank ze you, Monsieur Banks. But zat is ze first, and also ze last!"

"Oh, come, sir, don't be downhearted!" said Mr. Banks jovially. "Better luck next time! Stick to it, sir!"

"Zat I cannot do, monnieur. It is not zat it is right for me to do such zings, and my conscience be ze, say, but zere was so much need for some money zat I put ze conscience in ze pocket for sis vance. But aftair sis, nevair, nevair again I do such zings!"

An extremely ugly look came over Mr. Banks' fat face. "If you got anything to say again my business—" he began.

"Pis di tout—I do not mean zat. I zink you are a verree honest man, Monsieur Banks. But it is not for me a master in a school, to do such zings. Ze doctair would be fache—sat you call, rality. It was wrong—but is so. Nevair, nevair again such zings will I do, even if my poor Henri he soll starve in ze Cherman prison!"

Mr. Banks scowled. "Good-afternoon, Monsieur Banks. Our business he is ended now."

"Nix quite ended, sir," said Mr. Banks, stepping between Monsieur Charpentier and the door. "I'm willing to do business with you on next Wednesday's race."

"Zat is impossible. Also I have no more money."

"I'll take the word of a gentleman in your position, sir."

"Impossible! I make ze betts no longer."

"So you're goin' to throw me over—wot?" asked Mr. Banks, in a threatening tone.

Monsieur Charpentier gave him a sudden, scared look. For the first time it dawned upon him that it was not so easy to get out of rascally negotiations as to get into them.

"Monsieur, our business is finished," he said weakly. "I have ze honour to wish you one good-afternoon!"

"I ain't good enough for you, perhaps?" suggested Mr.

Banks, adopting a loud, bullying tone, as the French master showed Gnuddity.

"Monsieur!"
"Well, it ain't so easy to throw me over as all that," said Mr. Banks. "You are honest men, I ain't. I'm willing to do business."

"But zero is no business to do."

"You owe me five quids!"

"But I have pay him!"

"What about the loss of my time, fooling about after a man who don't know his own mind?" demanded Mr. Banks. "I say as you owe me five quids, and it will pay you to pay up."

"I pay you nozzing!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier excitedly. "I owe my five shillings, and I pay up. But I pay nozzing more. I got!"

"I'll come with you," said Mr. Banks, with a grin.

"Vat-vat?"

"I'll trot along with you to Greyfriars."

"To—o Greyfriars?"

"You bet! Dr. Locke will be interested to hear about one of his blooming staff backing 'ceases!" grinned Mr. Banks. "Come on! We'll go together!"

Monsieur Charpentier stopped dead.

"Monsieur Banks, you do not want zat?"

"That's your look-out!"

"Mon Dieu! I never dream zat zero was such wickedness, except in Chermigny! You go to Monsieur Locke unless I give you five pounds!"

"That's about the size of it," said Mr. Banks coolly. "I got to be paid for my trouble!"

"Mon Dieu! I never sink of zat! Mon Dieu! And afterwards you ask me for another five pounds, and another, and another!"

Mr. Banks shrugged his shoulders.

"Zat is blackmail, Monsieur Banks! Zat is rascality! Zey put men in ze prison for zat! I pay you nozzing!"

"Suit yourself," said Mr. Banks. "A walk to Greyfriars won't hurt me!"

"Ciel! You are a villain, Monsieur Banks!"

"Nuff said! I'm off to Greyfriars!"

"Stop!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier, as the rascal swung round towards the doorway. "Zat you stop! Mon Dieu! Listen to me—ceatez! I have not ze money!"

"I ain't a 'ard man," said Mr. Banks. "I'm 'ard up, but I ain't a 'ard man. I'll give you till Monday."

"Hells!"

"Come 'ere at six on Monday, and bring the quids, and we're friends agin," said Mr. Banks.

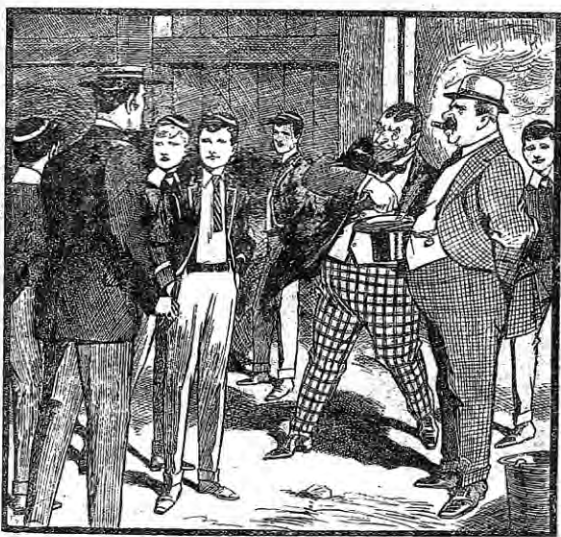
"Friends!" Monsieur Charpentier shuddered. "Friends! Oh, mon Dieu!"

"Is it a go?" demanded Banks in a bullying tone.

"You are one rascal, Monsieur Banks! But for my pauvre Henri, who is a prisoner wix zem 'ile Boches, I knock you down viz ze bat!" shouted Monsieur Charpentier.

"But I must not lose all, ven zero is Henri to sink of. I will come here on Monday at six heures."

"Good enough!"



The Remove-master's brow was very grim as he strode into the barn, frowning. "What does this mean, Wharton?" he exclaimed. "Nugent tells me that some rascally person has been using Monsieur Charpentier's name, and that the person is here! If this is a joke—" (See Chapter 11.)

Mr. Banks grinned, and lighted a big cigar, as the agitated Frenchman rushed out of the barn.

He strolled away himself, smoking and still grinning. Mr. Banks was on what he would have called a "good thing."

Belsover major and Skinner looked at one another with startled faces. They had come there to spy on Messrs. and find out his secrets. They had found out more than they had bargained for.

"My hat!" murmured Belsover. "Poor beast! Blessed if I don't feel sorry for him! What a silly idiot to get mixed up with Banks!"

"He's got it in the neck!" grinned Skinner. "I think I'm about level for that kicking now."

"Oh, choose it!" growled Belsover. "The poor beast is hard hit. He isn't such a rotten blackguard as we thought, either—he's got a relation a prisoner among the Germans, and he's got to help him, and needs money. And he was howling as enough to think that he could raise it by backing horses."

"The thumping idiot!" said Skinner derisively. "Banks will bleed him white. He hasn't nerve enough to stand against a blackmailer!"

"Poor beast!"

The two juniors took their way towards the school. They caught sight of Monsieur Charpentier again in the meadows. The Frenchman was striding along unseeingly, making wild and excited gesticulations.

"Jolly nearly off his rocker!" grinned Skinner. "Oh, my hat, won't the fellows chuckle over this!"

Belsover major scowled.

"Look here! Don't jaw about it!" he said. "It isn't as we thought—and the poor beast is hard hit. Let him alone!"

"Why, you silly ass," exclaimed Skinner, "we've got him as treat you! After what we've found out, we can down him as easy as anything! We're both witnesses, and Quelch will simply have to listen to it—"

"I'm not a witness!"

"What! You heard—"

"I didn't hear anything," said Bolsover major deliberately.

"And if you say you did, I'll contradict you, Skinner."

Skinner gave him a furious look. Bolsover major had his faults, but he was not really a bad fellow in the main, and his conscience was not quite so tough as Skinner's. The discovery that the unfortunate Moscoso had been trying to raise money to help a relative who was a prisoner in England had quite disarmed Bolsover. True, the French master had done wrong, and he had acted with almost incredible folly; but in his worried state of mind he had jumped at anything that seemed like a chance—with terrible results to himself. If Moscoso needed punishing, he had got his punishment now. And Bolsover major, though he was a good deal of a bully, did not believe in hitting a fellow when he was down.

"So you're turning soft?" sneered Skinner. "Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to spin the whole yarn, and call on you as a witness!"

"And I'll deny it all, and give you a hiding into the bargain!" snorted Bolsover. "And that's only for a start!"

"Yarosh!" roared Skinner, as a drive from the fully of the Remove sent him spinning.

He rolled in the grass, and Bolsover major gave him a glare, and tramped away alone to Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover is Sorry!

"RIPPING!" said Bob Cherry. There was a chuckle in Wibley's study. The great Wibley was going through a rehearsal of his impersonation of Moscoso. The cricket match being over, and the Upper Fourth duly ticked, Harry Wharton & Co. had dropped into the study to look out.

There was no doubt that Wibley was entertaining. Wibley was very nearly as tall as the little Frenchman. In a tight-fitting black coat and pointed shoes, with his face made up with great artistic skill, Wibley was rendering an impersonation which was hard to distinguish from the original. Wibley was simply great in the new comic character he had designed for the entertainment of the Remove. What Moscoso would have said, if he had known Wibley did not trouble to ask himself.

Wibley's idea was that an artist could not afford to be a respecter of persons. He declared that Moscoso was, in fact, a regular shrike, and had been specially designed by Nature to be caricatured.

And there was no doubt that Wibley's caricature of him was irresistibly funny. He was Moscoso to the life—with his queer accent, his emphatic gestures, every little trick of speech and manner.

"It's ripping!" said Bob Cherry. "It will make the fellows roar! I only hope Moscoso won't drop in to see the comedy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, he wouldn't recognise the impersonation," said Wibley. "Chaps never know how they look to others. Moscoso would very likely think it was awfully funny, and never dream it was like himself. Chaps are like that."

"Fristinate. S'pose I made up as a big, clumsy ass, with big feet and a face like a kite, you'd never guess it was meant for you, Bob, unless somebody told you."

"Why, you silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Or suppose I made up as a spongy sort of chap, with a face like a girl," said Wibley—"would you guess it was meant for you, Nugent?"

"Why, you—you—"

"Or suppose—"

Wibley's chaffing suppositions were suddenly cut short, as Bob Cherry and Nugent collared him and bumped him on the carpet.

"Cockup!" roared Wibley. "Wharver you at!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're spoiling my costume, you howling asses! You! You're disarranging my beard, you foolheads! Yash!"

Wibley dragged himself away, gasping. His black beard was behind his right ear now, his moustache was on one side of his nose, and his frock-coat had burst a couple of buttons. He glared at the Removeites.

"You silly asses!"

"Don't you be so jolly funny!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

"You howling sufferers!"

There was a tap at the door, and Bolsover major opened it. Wibley turned to the glass, and rearranged his beard and moustache.

"Wharton here!" said Bolsover.

"Here I am!" said Harry. "What's wanted?"

"I want to speak to you."

"Go ahead!"

"About old Froggy— My hat!" ejaculated Bolsover major, as Wibley turned round from the glass. "I—I beg your pardon, sir. I—I didn't see you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Wibley chuckled. His good-humour was quite restored by that unsolicited testimonial to his impersonation.

"Is it yet you speak in that disagreeable way of your master, Bolsover, you vicious, vulgar, low-down—"

"I—I didn't know you were here, sir. I—I—" Bolsover major stared at the grinning juniors. "I—I thought you were out of doors!"

"Hold out so hand, Bolsover!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Chuck it, Wibley! It's all right, Bolsover. It's only that ass Wibley playing the game."

Bolsover major jumped.

"Wibley! Oh, you chump! I—I thought it was old Moscoso!"

"Of course you did," said Wibley complacently. "Lot of good it would be making myself up as Moscoso if you didn't think so! How do you think this will go down in our company?"

"Oh, ripping!" said Bolsover. "I—I'd go rather easy on poor old Moscoso, though, if I were you. He's down on his luck."

"The juniors started."

"Well, that's something new from you!" commented Bob Cherry.

"Perhaps it is!" growled Bolsover major. "But I know something now that I didn't know before. I want to speak to you about it, Wharton, if you'll come along. I don't want it jawed over the school."

"Oh, all right!" said Harry, in wonder. "It's nothing against Moscoso? If it is, you can leave me out."

"Of course it isn't," said Bolsover irritably.

All serene, then, the captain of the Remove followed Bolsover major, and

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and I have no longer ze cash, vat to do my pauvre Henri. I have ze letter of Henri zat tell me yet give him nozing to eat. I sink myself, viz zat forty pound I send ze—vat you call grub—every week viz me—beaucoup, beaucoup. Le pauvre Henri sat not starve. Maintenant, c'est fini—I am ruin—I go! I stay not to be disgrace. I go. I have done wrong. Zat I know. Now if I go back to ze school I get vat you call ordain of ze book. Zat is just. But vat vill come of ze pauvre Henri? Zei give him nozing to eat viz himself."

And Monsieur Charpentier groaned.
"He has, as he had said, 'tout bouleversé,' which the juniors would have translated as knocked into a cocked hat. 'I tell you xia, zat you remember,' said Mossoo. 'Do not ze bad zat ze good may come. Zat good, he never come.' 'But—but you're not going to leave Greysfrirs, sir!'" said Wharton.

"If he faut—it le faut! Zat vicked man he come and betray. Zat is just."

"He lez here, sir," said Harry. "Something can be done. As it happens, we know about it—a fellow told me—but—but there may be some way of bottling up that villain Banks."

"You know—vous savez?" gasped Mossoo.
"Yes, sir. And—and something may be done," said Harry. "We're awfully sorry."

"But how is it zat you know?"
"A fellow heard you speaking to Banks this afternoon," said Harry. "But he said, 'I mention it to anybody else. That's all right. The brute wants you to pay him money to keep him quiet. You won't do that; there wouldn't be an end to it—'"

"Zat I know only too well," groaned Monsieur Charpentier, "and I have no money—vat I give him is all zat I have. I sell some rings, but he ask again, and he ask again—zero is no end. I am ruin!" He made a series of frantic gestures. "I am ruin, and le pauvre Henri he is lost! Fool zat I have been! But I go not back to Greysfrirs for ze disgrace! I run—I fly! You take ze note to ze Head for me, n'est ce pas? I confess, and I fly! Ze Head, I could not face him. Zat is too much. I am ruin!"

"But you're not ruined yet, sir," said Harry. "The head doesn't expect to see you till Monday at six. There's time to think it out."

"I sink him out, till my brain be turn," groaned Monsieur Charpentier. "I feel zat I am vat you call off ze top."

Mossoo's weird English did not make the juniors grin. Their hearts ached for the unhappy man—all the more because the sensitive, emotional Frenchman was laying bare his heart in this way. The unfortunate man was, indeed, very nearly out of his senses at that moment. He had thought and thought over the blackmailer's rascally demands till his brain seemed to turn—he had resolved not to yield to the demand, which was sure to be followed by others he could not meet, and the only resources he could think of was to flee from Greysfrirs before the blow fell. And that, indeed, was ruin.

"Very likely the rotter won't do as he threatened, sir," said Harry, trying to find what comfort he could. "People are sent to prison for blackmail—and Banks knows that. If you don't see him again, he may be afraid to do anything."

"You sink so?"

"It's very likely, sir."

"I wish zat I could sink so. It is right zat I shall be punish; but ze pauvre Henri, he suffer, too. But perhaps you are right. I go not till Monday. Ven zat vicked man he come, zen I fly!"

Monsieur Charpentier limped to his feet. It had done him good to pour out his troubles to the juniors, and he was a little calmer. And as he grew calmer he realised how he had betrayed himself, and his worn face flushed again.

"Mes garçons, I have to speak too much," he stammered. "It is not zat you vill say all zat again for a choke?"

"We shan't say a word, sir, of course."

"Not a syllable, sir," said Nugent.

Monsieur Charpentier nodded, held his stiff hat, and went on his head, and limped away towards the school.

Nugent and Wharton looked at one another.

"Poor old chap!" said Frank. "Fancy putting all that out to a couple of chaps—luckily it was us—nice, discreet kids, what?"

"We've got to help him, somehow, Frank?"

"But how?"

"Dressed if I know! Let's think it out."

During a long walk the juniors and the Remove thought it out, but when they returned to Greysfrirs they had found no solution to the problem. How Monsieur Charpentier was to be helped out of his scrape was a problem that was a little too much for them. They met Skinner as they came in—Skinner was dabbling his nose with his handkerchief and looking furious. Skinner had been talking—and Belsover major had come down heavy.

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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A "Wheeze" at Last!

THE next day, Sunday, Monsieur Charpentier was not seen by the Greysfrirs fellows. He spent most of the day in his room, and it was understood that he was ill. Meanwhile, it had leaked out that Mossoo's nephew was a prisoner in the hands of the liars, and a great deal of sympathy was felt for the French master.

The Remove fellows generously decided to forgive him for his late "rattiness," now that they knew why poor Mossoo had been so disturbed. Even Snoop did not want to make any more capital out of the "gee-gee money" and even Skinner had come round on that point—probably helped by Belsover major's hint.

Even Billy Bunter—according to his own account—was touched, and he made a very valuable suggestion—a fund for sending truck to Mossoo's nephew. Bunter kindly offered to take charge of the money subscribed, and to superintend the purchase of the truck; and Bunter was deeply indignant at finding no takers. There was no doubt that Bunter would have expended the money in truck, had there was a very great doubt whether the said truck would have travelled beyond the walls of Greysfrirs.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton was much exercised in his mind over the French master's mishap. Mossoo was so excitable and emotional a little gentleman that the heroes of the Remove felt a sort of protective regard for him. Wharton had admitted the Co. to the secret, and many discussions were held in No. 1 Study. The Famous Five all agreed that Mossoo was to be backed up. His extraordinary simplifying in fancying that he could raise money by backing horses touched their hearts. It had been a last desperate expedient, and shrewd as it was, the juniors felt only compassion for the unhappy little man. Certainly, if he deserved punishment, his punishment had been heavy enough.

On Monday the Co were still thinking it out. After lessons they talked it over in the study. At six o'clock that evening poor Mossoo was so to see the blackmailer at the old barn, and take him money—or Mr. Banks was to carry out his threat of acquainting the Head with the whole transaction.

"Poor old Mossoo!" said Bob Cherry, for the tenth time. "If he was only a Prussian, he could deny the whole thing. Banks hasn't any proofs—only his word. But as it happens to be true, Mossoo can't deny it."

Wharton shook his head.

"He can't deny it if the rotter comes to the Head," he said. "But he's got to be kept airy, somehow."

"Time's getting on, too!" remarked Johnny Ball.

"The awful thoroughness is the only wheezy good idea," suggested Horace Singh. "Let us go and see the esteemed disgusting Banks, and larrup him thrashfully. Then he won't be able to come to-day!"

"Then he'd come to-morrow, father!"

There was a tap at the door, and it opened. A natty little figure in a frock-coat stepped in. The juniors rose at once.

"Come in, Mossoo!"

"Is it zat you have had your tea, mes garçons?"

"Just finished, sir!" said Nugent.

"Zen you have no tea for me, hein?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Wharton. "We'll have tea ready in a jiffy, Mossoo!"

Zat is a good boy, Wharton!"

The juniors busied themselves at once in getting tea. The little gentleman looked bland and in good spirits, and apparently did not guess that the Co. had been discussing him and his affairs. Nugent handed him a chair, and he sat down, smiling amiably, with his back to the light.

Study No. 1 were only too glad to show the little gentleman hospitality, surprised as they were by his careless good-humour, considering that the time was drawing near for the interview with Banks.

The best that the study cupboard could provide was laid on the table, and Wharton made fresh tea, and the five juniors waited assiduously on Mossoo.

Mossoo's troubles had apparently not impaired his appetite. He made a very good tea, and kept the juniors busy for some time. Nugent, who happened to glance from the window, gave a sudden jump.

"My only hat!" he gasped.

"What's the row, Frank?"

"Look there!" yelled Nugent.

The juniors looked from the window as Frank pointed.

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Under the elms in the quadrangle a neat, frock-coated figure was pacing to and fro. It was Monsieur Charpentier.

The Famous Five stared at Mossoo in the quad, then spun round and stared at Mossoo at the study table. There were two of them!

"Is it you who have some more cake, mes garçons?" asked Mossoo at the table.

"You spoiling villain!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Mon Dieu! Vot!"

"Bump him!"

Mossoo jumped up.

"Here, hold on!" he exclaimed, in quite a different voice. "Only a joke, you silly asses! How the thunder did you spot me!"

It was the voice of Wibley of the Remove.

The juniors glared at him. It was Wibley. With extraordinary nerve the humorous Wib had planted himself on Study No. 1 for an ample tea, in his guise as Monsieur Charpentier.

"Well, you cheeky rotter!" howled Johnny Bull.

Wibley chuckled.

"How do you spot me?" he demanded. "You took me for Mossoo at first?"

"Mossoo's in the quad, you fathead!"

"What rotten luck! Hands off, you fatheads! Can't you take a joke!" roared Wibley. "I was only testing my impersonation. Jolly good, ain't it?"

"The goodfollies is great, but the bumpfulness will also be terrific, you esteemed spoofing fathead!"

The "spoof" Mossoo was making at him, was a genuine article out there," he declared. "I caned Skinner half an hour ago—caned him as Mossoo, you know. I thought he could do with it. I've given Bunter fifty licks. Mossoo will be surprised when he takes them in."

"Ho, ho, ha, ha!"

Wibley grinned complacently.

"I've let you off cheap," he said. "If I hadn't stood you for a tea, I was going to give you a hundred licks each."

"You cheeky ass!"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton.

A sudden idea had flashed into Wharton's mind. His eyes were gleaming.

"Oh, rot! We're going to bump him for his cheek," said Johnny Bull. "The howling ass isn't going to take me in at all. Banks is with us on him!"

"I've got an idea," said Wharton. "With can help us. Look here! We've taken him for Mossoo in that rig. Banks would take him for Mossoo, too!"

"Anybody would," said Bob. "But what—"

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Wib could help us out," he said. "Wib's got sense enough, though he's such a howling ass. The silly ass can give my part, like a born actor."

"Hear, hear!" grunted Wibley.

"But what the thunder—" exclaimed Bob.

"I don't say it will be a success," said Harry quietly. "It's just an idea that came into my head. If Wib can do it, and if he will, it's just possible that it may get Mossoo out of his fix. And a play-acting ass like Wib may be able to!"

"What on earth are you jawing about?" exclaimed Wibley, mystified. "Is old Mossoo in trouble—besides his nephew being a prisoner? I can't go to Germany and rescue his nephew. I draw the line there!"

"Fathead! It's a dead secret, Wib, and you're not to breathe a whisper about it outside this study—not even to Rake."

"Oh, all right! What's it all about?"

Wharton explained tersely.

"Well, of all the howling asses!" said Wibley, in astonishment, when the captain of the Remove had finished. "Mossoo can be fairly off his rocker! Anybody could have told him the kind of man Banks was."

"He's a giddy, innocent lamb," said Bob Cherry. "It's up to us to see him through, if we can. After all, he's an ally. But I'm blessed if I see how it's going to be done. What can Wibley do?"

"I'll do anything I can," said Wibley. "Mossoo isn't a laid little beast. But I don't see what I can do. You don't want me to impersonate him, and get the sack for him when the Head comes down heavy, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!" said Wharton. "Be serious! Would you have the nerve to go out of doors in that rig?"

"I'd go to London in it, and walk down Piccadilly like this," said Wibley cheerfully. "That's nothing!"

"Then you could go as far as the old barn. Of course, you'd have to be careful not to be seen going out—we don't want anybody to know that Mossoo has got a double!"

"That's easy enough—a big coat and the back way," said THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 438.

NEXT MONDAY—

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ONE
PENNY.

Wibley. "But what the merry thunder have I got to go out as Mossoo for? He would be ratty if he knew."

"He's not going to know. It's to help him. I want you to keep the appointment at the old barn instead of the real Mossoo."

"Oh, my hat! Why?"

"Explain, you boulder!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton proceeded to explain, and his change listened with keen attention. When he had finished, they blinked at one another dubiously.

"It's a chance," said Bob, with a deep breath. "If anybody could do it, Wib could!"

Wibley chuckled.

"Leave it to me! I'm your man! I could do it, on my head. I'll promise you to pull Banks' heavy leg!"

"And the sooner the quicker!" said Wharton. "You clear off the back way, and I'll speak to Mossoo, and see that he doesn't go himself."

"Right you are!"

Harry Wharton hurried downstairs, and joined the French master, who was still pacing in agitation under the elms in the Close. Monsieur Charpentier looked at him with a jack-in-the-box eye.

"Excuse me, sir," said Wharton respectfully. "You are not thinking of going to meet that man at six?"

Mossoo shook his head.

"Nen, nen, never! Jamais!" he said. "I wait for re tenderbolt to fall. Perhaps he have some conscience, and he do nozing. Zat is possible. I do not like to zink zat any man he so vicked. But if he come, I see him—and zen I—zen you say in English—hop it!"

"I want to tell you something, sir! I know a chap who is willing to go and see him, who can very likely persuade him to give up the idea," said Harry. "You'll excuse me for acting in the matter, sir, but you'd like to be rid of the rascal."

"You zink so, Wharton—you zink he can be persuaded—"

"I hope so, sir! You give us permission to try!"

"Mon cher garçon, I zank you from ze bottom of ze heart," said Monsieur Charpentier helplessly. "Oh, mon Dieu, if zis shall be all right, I never, never make such a mistake again! Jamais!"

"I hope it will be all right, sir," said Harry. "I'll come to your study and tell you in an hour's time or so."

"Zank you—zank you!"

It almost seemed as if Wharton were the man, and Mossoo the boy; and indeed, there was something very boyish about the emotional little gentleman. Wharton noted that Mossoo looked much less distracted as he went into the house, and he hoped fervently that he would have good news for the unfortunate man. But that depended on Wibley.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Monsieur Wibley!

M R. BANKS pulled at his big, black cigar, and stared out of the doorway of the old barn. Six o'clock was past, and Monsieur Charpentier had not arrived to keep the appointment. The blackmailer was growing impatient.

He gave a grunt as the trim little frock-coated figure came in sight at last, coming across the fields from Priardale Lane.

It was Mossoo—the trim figure, the tight-fitting black coat, the shiny boots, the spotless collar and extravagant tie, the shiny topper, the neat little black band and trim monstaches—the shrew complexion and thick, dark eyebrows—Mossoo to the life!

Mr. Banks grinned as he watched the new-comer.

"I reckoned as he would toe the line!" murmured Mr. Banks. "I reckoned he would! It would cost him pretty dear if he didn't. Hallo! Good-evening, Mossoo Charpentier!"

"Good-evening, mon ami!" said the little gentleman, as he entered the barn. "Zis is fine yezzer, ees eet not?"

"Oh, the weather's all right!" said Mr. Banks, somewhat surprised by the Frenchman's amiability. "Have you brought the rhino, that's the question? You owe me five pounds, sir."

"I zink I do some more business via you, Monsieur Banks. Zat unfortunate Blue Bird, he lose so race. But zere is another horse zat perhaps he do not lose, hein?"

"Oh!" said Mr. Banks.

That the French master should want to do any more business with him, after he had shown his character so plainly, was a surprise. But he reflected that Mossoo, since he has to pay, doubtless reasoned it out that it would be more profitable to bet with Mr. Banks than to pay him blackmail.

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

"Well, I ain't no objection," said Mr. Banks, adopting a more cordial tone. "A man don't like to be throwed over, sir."

"Vous avez raison, monsieur."

"Eh! What?"

"Je vous dire—you are right," said the little gentleman. "Ven I have seen you on sameday—Saturday—I am upset and disturb—zat here he lose, and I am tout bouleverse—all upset by myself. But since zer, I zink. I zink zat perhaps I have ze better luck ze next time, ees eet not?"

"You're a sportsman, sir," said Mr. Banks. "Wot's your fancy for Wednesday, sir?"

"Vat do you zink of Bully Boy, Mr. Banks? I see in ze paper zat zo odds yer are eight to vun."

Mr. Banks grinned. The dabbler in turf speculations evidently had a fancy for rank outsiders and long odds.

"There's a good many cooves thinks as Bully Boy will romp 'ome," said Mr. Banks. "I think it's werry likely myself."

"Zen you not take zo bet," said the Frenchman anxiously.

"Not at all, sir—not at all. I'm a sportsman. I'll book the bet at the odds of the day. Eight to one agin Bully Boy. If you put up a fiver, you stand to 'andle forty quid on Wednesday—if Bully Boy pulls it off."

"Parfaitement! Zen I have lots of ze cash for ze pauvre Henri."

"Lots!" smiled Mr. Banks. He took out his little book to make an entry of the bet.

"Zen you do not come to ze school, mon ami!" murmured the Frenchman.

"Bless your 'eart, sir, I'm your friend!" said Mr. Banks. "Which I was a bit ratty at being throwed over, that was all. So long as we're doin' business together, sir, you rely on me as a pal."

Which was generous of Mr. Banks, but did not cost him much. He was quite as willing to take Mossoo's money in the form of bets as in the form of blackmail.

"Because it is not good for ma zat you come to ze school," said Monsieur. "Zen you find out zings zat I do not wish to have findet out, ees eet not? Alrezy some of ze Greyfriars boys ze have seen me viz you, and I zink zat zere vill be trouble."

"You rely on me, sir," said Mr. Banks.

"Mon Dieu! Vat is zat?"

"The Frenchman spun round as there were footsteps outside the barn. The next moment five juniors appeared in the doorway—Harry Wharton & Co.

Mr. Banks scowled at them. He had had his rubs with the Famous Five before.

"Hellas! Tout est perdu!" ejaculated Mossoo.

"You clear off, you young rips!" growled Mr. Banks.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Caught!"

"The roughfulness is terrific!" grinned Harry James Ham Singh.

"Monsieur Banks, I see you l'atair!" gasped the little gentleman. "Garçons, laissez moi passer! I must go!"

Harry Wharton pushed him back.

"You're not going," he said. "Neither are you, Mr. Banks!"

"Look 'ere—"

"Try to get out of this barn, and we'll knock you flying!" said Wharton coolly.

Mr. Banks cursed under his breath. There were more than enough of the Greyfriars juniors to handle him. Indeed, Wharton alone would have been more than a match for the flabby, unfit fat man.

"You young raskils!" mumbled Mr. Banks. But he did not make any attempt to leave the barn.

"Same to you, and many of 'em!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "You can keep in, my pippin; we're going to look after you."

"Laissez moi passer—let me pass!"

"Not just yet. We're going to keep you here till the bobbies come," said Bob Cherry. "There's enough of us—what?"

Bolover major joined the crowd of juniors in the doorway. Bolover was grinning. There were certainly enough of the Greyfriars nerts to do anything they liked with the book-maker and the Frenchman.

"That's the rotter!" said Bolover major, pointing to the agitated little gentleman. "That's the man I saw with Banks before."

Mr. Banks stared.

"I s'pose you know your own French master?" he exclaimed.

The juniors chuckled in chorus.

"Yes, a little better than you do," said Harry Wharton.

"Franky, cut off and wait for Mr. Quelch in the road. Tell

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him that the rascal who has been impersonating Monsieur Charpentier is here, and ask him to come."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

Nugent cut off.

Mr. Banks stared at the juniors open-mouthed. The Frenchman looked very uneasy.

"Vat is it zat you say?" he exclaimed. "I am Monsieur Charpentier, ees eet not?"

"You can keep that up when Mr. Quelch comes, if you like," said Wharton. "We happen to know that Monsieur Charpentier is at Greyfriars."

"Wot!" yelled Mr. Banks.

"Quelch will be here soon," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "He's going down to the vicarage for his chess-game this evening, and Franky is going to meet him on the road and bring him back. You're going to wait till he comes. Most likely he'll send for the police."

"Mon Dieu!"

"Look 'ere! Wot's this 'ere little game!" shouted Mr. Banks. "You'll get that gentleman the sack if your Form-master finds 'im out. I call that mean!"

"Only he doesn't happen to be Monsieur Charpentier," said Harry Wharton.

"Hot! You know he is."

"Well, we'll see when Mr. Quelch comes!"

"Meaner say that he's been taking me in?" demanded Mr. Banks. "Think I don't know Monsieur Charpentier by sight? If he ain't Mossoo Charpentier, he's his twin."

"Well, he ain't his twin," said Wharton. "But he certainly isn't Monsieur Charpentier, and we're going to put an end of his tricks."

"Mes garçons! Laissez moi passer—"

Bob Cherry gave the excited little gentleman a shove in the chest, and sent him reeling back into the barn.

"You stay there!" he said.

Mr. Banks glowered at the Frenchman.

"Wot's all this?" he demanded. "Ain't you Charpentier?"

"Aye you been a-pulling of my leg?"

"Hellas!"

Johnny Bull looked out of the barn.

"Here they come!" he announced.

"Mon Dieu!"

Frank Nugent was returning, with Mr. Quelch striding beside him. The Remove-master's brow was very grim. He strode into the barn, frowning.

"What does this mean, Wharton?" he exclaimed. "Nugent tells me that some rascally person has been using Monsieur Charpentier's name, and that the person is here. If this is a joke—"

"Look at him, sir!" said Nugent.

"Dear me! Monsieur Charpentier!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, as his eyes fell on the little Frenchman.

Mr. Banks shrugged his shoulders.

"Praps you'll let me pass now!" he said savagely. "Mr. Quelch, will you border them young whelps to let a man pass?"

"Not just yet, you eed!" said Bob Cherry, shoving the bookmaker roughly back. "You're going to answer for this!"

"What does this mean?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Monsieur Charpentier is here—"

"He isn't, sir!"

"He's a spoofer!"

"What! What? Do you think I do not know Monsieur Charpentier by sight?" exclaimed the Remove-master testily.

"Monsieur, why do you not speak?"

"Monsieur Charpentier is at Greyfriars, sir," said Wharton. "This fellow is a spoofer."

"Impossible!"

"I shouldn't wonder if his beard's false, sir," said Bolover major. "Look here!"

Bolover made a sudden grab at the Frenchman's beard. It came off in his hand. The Frenchman uttered a gasp, and Mr. Banks, a yell of astonishment.

"Spoofer!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Name Unknown!

MR. QUELCH looked at the exposed "spoofer" as if he would eat him. It was evident now that he was not Monsieur Charpentier.

"Who are you, sir?" thundered the Remove-master.

"Mon Dieu!"

"A reg'lar swindling 'ound!" ejaculated Mr. Banks.

"Here you, sir, been using the name of Monsieur Charpentier, a master at Greyfriars School!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"He has, sir," said Boleover major.
"I—I—I confess!" stammered the Frenchman. "It was one lark—what you call a choke. I do Monsieur Charpentier no harm. I borrow his name, and zat is all!"

"Rascal!" exclaimed the Remove-master. "And why have you played this trick?"

"I don't believe he's French at all," said Bob Cherry.
"Probably not," said Mr. Quelch. "Probably some unscrupulous criminal. It is clear that he is in disguise—a very skilful disguise—his resemblance to Monsieur Charpentier is remarkable. The police must deal with this matter!"

The spoofers gave a yelp.
"I confess," he howled. "There is no harm done. It is because I—I—I—"

"Ah, you are not French!"
"No!" groaned the impostor.

"Then who are you?"
"Yes, who are you, you swindler!" demanded Mr. Banks.

"You took me in!"
"You'll have to prove that," said Harry Wharton.

"You'll have to prove that you weren't a confederate."
"What?" gasped Mr. Banks.

"Probably you were a confederate," said Mr. Quelch. "Your reputation is well known to me, Mr. Banks. I find you here in company with an unknown rascal who has taken the name of a master at Greyfriars, and has assumed a disguise to resemble him. It is impossible to doubt that some villainy was being planned between you!"

Mr. Banks fairly staggered.
"Pon my davy," he gasped. "I—I thought that there was Mossoo Charpentier! He told me he was. P'raps I was a bit surprised when he told me he wanted a little flutter on a horse. But I took 'im at his word. I thought he was Mossoo Charpentier. I swear I did!"

"Rascal!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Did you imagine for one moment that Monsieur Charpentier would enter into betting transactions with you?"

"I—I—I thought he was the genuine article!" groaned Mr. Banks. "And I ain't the faintest idea who he is. I swear that!"

"Nonsense! This is some conspiracy between you!" said Mr. Quelch decidedly. "The police must be called in. On your oath, showing, Banks, you have been making bets in a place within the meaning of the Act. You are liable to punishment for that!"

"Oh, erikay!" stammered Mr. Banks. "Sir, I swear on my davy I didn't know as that feller was spoofing me! I took him for wot he said. He'll bear me out in that. Speak up, you himage!"

"Tell the gentleman the truth!" cried the Frenchman. "He had been edging towards the door, and the juniors—so woful before—did not seem to notice him. He made a sudden spring through the doorway and fled."

"After him!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Nugent and Johnny Bull and Bob broke into a wild rush after the fleeing spoofers. But the rest, keeping an eye on Mr. Banks, who would gladly have followed his companion's example. But there was no escape for Mr. Banks.

Mr. Quelch glanced from the doorway. The fugitive and the pursuing juniors had vanished across the fields. But Nugent and Bull and Bob Cherry came back panting in a few minutes.

"Ho's got away, sir!" gasped Bob.

"He is very unfortunate, sir," said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "I fully intended to have him taken into custody."

"My hat!" murmured Bob involuntarily.

"What did you say, Cherry?"

"We—me ought to thrash that rascal Banks, sir. Don't you think so?" asked Bob.

"He—he may have got Mossoo talked about by playing this game, and he ought to have a lesson. Of course, perhaps the chap was only doing it for a lark, but—"

"I cannot approve of violence," said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly the man deserves a horsewhipping, if any man ever did. I cannot believe that he did not know that his confederate was an impostor."

"Pon my davy," groaned Mr. Banks. "I never knew nothing about it!"

"He took me in, sir. I swear he did!"

Mr. Quelch gave the bookmaker a searching look.

"I cannot see why he should do so, whoever he is," he said. "However, now the rascal has been exposed, he will scarcely venture to play such an audacious trick again as to impersonate a Greyfriars master. Mr. Banks, I shall call at the police-station in Friarlands and give information that you have been carrying on betting transactions in this building. I warn you!"

And Mr. Quelch strode out of the barn.

"I thank you for bringing this matter to my notice, my boys," he said to the juniors. "Had you not done so, some unpleasantness might have been caused to Monsieur Charpentier."

Well, sir, we know that Mossoo was at the school," said Bob demurely. "He couldn't be in two places at once."

"Quite so—quite so! I thank you!"

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Mr. Quelch strode away.
The juniors waited in the doorway till he was gone.

"You lot me gerraway, you young raskils!" mounded Mr. Banks appreciatively.

"You've got to go through it first," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "You've been making out that your rascally—ahem!—confederate is our French master—"

"I ain't—I didn't! He told me—"

"Not good enough!" said Wharton. "Collar him!"

"And off!" roared Mr. Banks.

"Bump the end!"

There was a rush for Mr. Banks, and he was collared on all sides. The next five minutes were like a bad nightmare to Mr. Banks. He was bumped thrice on the hard floor, his hat was jammed down over his ears, his collar and necktie stuffed down his back, and his coat split from the tail to the collar. When the merry Removeites left him, Mr. Banks looked—and felt—a complete wreck.

Harry Wharton & Co. quitted the barn, feeling that justice had been done.

A quarter of an hour later Mr. Banks crawled away, feeling that life was not worth living. And he had no time to lose, for he knew that Mr. Quelch would carry out his threat, and that it behoved him to put a considerable distance between himself and Friarlands without the loss of a moment. The next day, Mr. Banks was no longer seen at his usual haunts—and probably his usual haunts were all the better for it.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. The Clouds Roll By!

"WIBLEY, you bouncer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat! If Quelch only knew!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had joined the "impostor" in a thick clump of willows by the bank of the Sark.

Monsieur Wibley was removing his disguise, and he had almost become Wibley of the Remove again when the juniors joined him.

He grinned at them cheerfully.

"Well, didn't it go a treat?" he demanded.

"The treatfulness was terrific, my esteemed, spoofing Wibley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping!" chuckled Boleover major. "Blowed if I thought it would work out like that! Bringing Quelch into it was really a giddy stroke of genius!"

"Topping!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But—has if Quelch knew—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quelch don't know," said Harry Wharton. "He's not like us to suspect that the awful impostor who borrowed Mossoo's name was a Remove chap."

"Ha, ha! No."

"But that part will have to be cut out of our comedy," said Nugent. "It won't do for anybody to see Wib got up as Mossoo after this."

"No fear!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Wibley indignantly. "That's rather too thick! Why, I do Mossoo better than I've ever done any character. Haven't I made Banks believe that it was I all the time, and that he doesn't know Mossoo at all?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have, my son," said Wharton. "That was the wheeze, and it's been a howling success. We've seen Mossoo clear by spoofing Banks. But your variety of Mossoo has got to disappear for good. Quelch would pruss if he saw you in the comedy, and you've got to chuck it!"

"Look here—"

"We'll do 'Hamlet' instead, and you shall be the Prince of Denmark," said Harry contentedly.

"Well, that's not a bad idea," said Wibley, mollified.

"Tigger goes a-spoofing with me better. I've often said you I can't do Hamlet better than Tree!"

"You have!" grinned Bob. "And, after this, you can tell us any other giddy whopper you like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you as—"

Wibley changed into his own clothes, which Boleover had brought in a bag. The Mossoo disguise was carefully packed away, and the party returned in great spirit to Greyfriars. They had saved Monsieur Charpentier—there was no doubt about that. He had nothing more to fear from the black-mailer. The black-mailer had been left under the impression that he had never had anything to do with the real Mossoo

at all. Wibley's impersonation had come in decidedly useful for once. As soon as they reached Greyfriars, Harry Wharton hurried to the French master's study.

Monsieur Charpentier jumped up as he came in.

"Mon garcon! You have set news?"

"Yes, sir. It's all right."

"Zank goodness! But how is he all right, mon cher garcon?"

"The fact is, sir," said Wharton diplomatically, "thatascal Banks has an impression that—that you haven't had any dealings with him at all, and that it was somebody else making your acquaintance."

"Mon Dieu! But zat is extraordinary!" exclaimed Mossoo, in amazement.

"Yes, it's a bit odd, isn't it, sir?"

"Verree odd! I do not understand."

"And I think he's leaving the neighbourhood, sir. Anyway, you needn't bother about him any more. And—and if Mr. Quelch should speak to you, sir, about—a chap just like you, using your name, you—you won't give yourself away, of course, sir. You needn't say anything."

"Ze still tongue he show ze visé head, mon garcon. I shall say nozing. I have ze right to say nozing if I like. But I do not understand. You are sure, mon garcon, zat it is all right?"

"Right as rain, sir," said Wharton cheerfully.

"I do not know how to zank you, And your friend zat you speak of—he have seen zat rické man—"

"Vee-ee, sir."

"And zat man he trouble me no more, because he believe zat verree peculiar zing, zat he do not know me! I do not understand. It is zat you call to speak in ze riddles, Wharton!"

"I—I'm sorry I can't explain further, sir. But I assure you it's all right, so long as you don't give yourself away, Mossoo."

"Zen I must be satisfied. Wharton, I do not know how to zank you. And—and I hope zat you till respect me a little, zough I have done one foolish zing."

"We all respect you, sir," said Wharton. "We shall forget all about it at once."

"You are a bon garcon, Wharton!"

Monsieur Charpentier could not understand—which was not to be wondered at. And perhaps he was still feeling some inward uneasiness when Wharton left him. But as the days passed on and he heard nothing from Mr. Banks and learned, once in the prisoner. But the heroes of the Remoé were thinking about that matter, too.

For the next few days, Harry Wharton & Co. were busy carrying out a plan that was formed in No. 1 Study. Color of the Fifth gave his assistance, and Wingate of the Sixth consented to superintend. And after a few days Monsieur Charpentier was astonished to find, upon his study table, a little box, with a label on it which bore the inscription:

"FROM GREYFRIARS SCHOOL, TO

SOUS-LIEUTENANT HENRI."

Monsieur Charpentier opened the box with trembling fingers. The sum of twenty pounds reposed inside—that being the handsome result of the school subscription.

It was an anonymous gift; and no one to whom Mossoo spoke seemed to know anything about it. So Mossoo had no choice but to accept the subscription—and he did accept it—and, with a thankful heart, he despatched a series of tremendous parcels to le pauvre Henri.

The clouds had rolled by at last, and poor Mossoo was once more merry and bright—a happy result that he owed to Harry Wharton & Co. and Monsieur Wibley.

THE END.

Next Monday:

THE OTHER BUNTER!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Order your copy of the "Magnet" Library early.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 438.

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 10.

BRIEF REPLIES

To Readers of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY.

A. S. T. (Pleasantwood).—Date of "Gem" numbers is given at bottom of Page 4 of cover. Thus—1/176. Pronounced "Kortey."

T. B. (New South Wales).—Afraid I cannot tell you where Bob Cherry lives. London in war-time? Well, the streets are very dark at night, and the searchlights play in the skies. There are lots of fellows in khaki about, and lots of wounded, too. Otherwise there is not very much difference. Oh, yes—girls are page-boys, lift-boys, telegraph-boys, messenger-boys; waitresses instead of waiters; and so on.

Newfoundland Leader.—All of Henry's books are published by Messrs. Blackie & Sons, Solo Square, London. No good kicking against home work, is it? If you told your master I didn't approve of it, he might not say "Rats!" but what he did say would mean something like that.

R. B. (Barnard Castle).—Sorry, but we have not room for your tricks. Thanks all the same.

"Clark" (Gordon, Australia).—Our readers generally do not seem keen on articles. There are so many cheap handbooks on all subjects nowadays. An additional penny is not much for the threepenny books, seeing that they have to be carried half round the earth before it is charged.

"Constant Reader" (Melbourne).—No go! Mr. Richards must choose his own characters, and it would not do it all to tell him to bring in Jimmy Beaves, from Melbourne, of the Bunter "Bend." Besides, Greyfriars has two Bunters already, and two Bunters make a crowd.

"A Loyal Australian Chum" (North Rockhampton).—There are certain exercises which might possibly add an inch or two to your height, after a good deal of trouble. But there is nothing I know of which will begin to turn a natural five-footer into a six-footer. If you care to try the exercises, write again. Thanks for your good-work done on behalf of my papers.

"Valda" (Mayfield, Australia).—Your husband's contention is right—characters fictitious. Many thanks for a very interesting letter. The Highcliffe fellows make frequent appearances in Greyfriars yarns. Your youngsters are being brought up in the right way, evidently. You have my heartiest sympathy for the loss of your brother in the Creek.

J. O. B. (Dublin).—When we said 50,000, we meant 50,000, though, of course, a few words under or over did not matter. Your present of back numbers to wounded soldiers was a life one, and I don't wonder it was appreciated.

S. H. W. (Leightonstone).—Letter appreciated. But I have not room to spare for its publication.

G. N. W. (Dunstable).—Glad to hear from you. I hope your uncles will come through all safe and sound.

B. D. E. (Rotherham).—Perhaps "Conjuring for Amateurs" (price 1s. 2d., by post), published by Messrs. L. Upcott Gill, Bazaar Buildings, Drury Lane, W.C., might suit you.

W. S. (Brighton).—Try "Modern Photography for Amateurs" (1s. 2d., by post), of Messrs. L. Upcott Gill. Added above.

"Enthusiast" (Tooting).—You had better try for a job at a garage. "Daily Telegraph" and "Morning Post" would be good papers to consult for advertisements of vacancies.

"A Reader of the 'M.' 'G.' 'B. F.' and 'P. P.' wants Jack, Sam, and Pete, and Sexton Blake out on cover of "Penny Pop" entirely, and the paper filled with school stories. He also wants to know why there are no decent serials in the "Magnet." I hope and trust I have never published one that wasn't decent. I cannot remember it, anyway. He also desires to know why Rockwood have never been near the top in any of the Sports Tournaments. Reply: Because the standard of athletics generally, both at the Jim's and Greyfriars, is ahead of the Rockwood standard.

H. C. (East Finchley).—We cannot undertake to supply any special back numbers more than three months old. The "Gem" and "Magnet" volumes should each have twenty-six numbers, but the last "Magnet" volume ran on for a year through a mistake.

F. L. (Glasgow).—(1) Tom Belcher will probably return to the Beach Boxing Hall. (2) Schoolboys really don't need special training—only a little judgment as to food; (3) Linton is not likely to reform. (4) No.

(Readers will find a further List of Notices on cover, page ii)

Our Magnificent Adventure Serial Story. **START TO-DAY!**

A Story of Strange and Thrilling Adventures in an Amazing Quest

by ALEC G. PEARSON.

PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS BRIEFLY TOLD.

Hal Mackenzie receives a mysterious message urging him to come out to the Southern Andes and learn the secret of the Tower of the Golden Star. He sets out upon the voyage, accompanied by his chums, Jim Holdsworth, Bob Sigbee, and Pat O'Hara. The captain of the cruiser Heron notices them on to a derelict, where they are left. The wreck is destroyed by fire, and they float about for a night on a raft. Finally, they are rescued and taken to the port wherein the Heron is anchored. They recover their belongings, and give the captain a sound thrashing. Later, at Buenos Ayres, Hal is captured and imprisoned by a band of ruffians. His chums, after a thrilling fight with the gang, succeed in rescuing him.

(Now read on.)

The Ruined Estancia.

It was not until they were seated at a late breakfast on the following morning that Hal gave his comrades an account of how he had been trapped.

"It was a bit my own fault," he admitted, "for I ought to have been more on my guard. When I found myself shut up in that room from which you rescued me, I thought perhaps there was some sort of a trap in the floor, which would give way under my weight and plunge me down into a vault, where I should either be killed by the fall or left to die of starvation. So I didn't move away from the door. I was in pitch darkness, you must remember. But I soon discovered they had other means of getting rid of me. The room was as air-tight as a sealed-up glass bottle, and I believe they injected some poisonous gas into it, so quickly did the air become foul. I should have been dead by the morning if you fellows hadn't turned up and got me out of the place."

"Lucky you thought of hammering on the door," said Jim, "or we should've known where to look for you."

"Seems to me," put in Sigbee, "that cafe is just a den where men are lured to be robbed and murdered. I've come across places like that in other airport towns. And it ain't no manner of use complaining to the police, for they're precious little account in these South American cities. Likely as not they're bribed to keep their eyes and ears shut."

"Oh, we can't lodge a complaint with the police!" said Hal. "We should be required as witnesses, and would be kept hanging about in Buenos Ayres for days—perhaps for weeks. We've been long enough here as it is, and must get away to-night by the night mail."

"It's a pity," said O'Hara regretfully, "that we couldn't burn down the cafe first."

"Well, we've left our mark on it," laughed Jim, "and on those ruffians who are in the pay of the proprietor. By the way, Mackenzie, I saw—No. 433.

way, Hal, did you see anything of the chap who was mentioned in the letter—Gaston Mendoza?"

"No. Very likely there is no such person. But one thing seems quite clear, and that is, there is a dead set against us, engineered by a strong and unscrupulous gang, to prevent us continuing our journey. The worst of it is, they don't show themselves, for those fellows at the cafe were only hired ruffians, who would commit any crime for a few dollars."

"I reckon they'll show themselves soon enough," put in Sigbee, "when we get the other side, among the mountains. 'Pize the pie, they will,' said O'Hara. 'It's the account we've got to settle wid the principals. To my mind they're a poor lot av squirts, who hire other men to do their fighting for them.'"

On inquiry they found that the Western Express, of the Buenos Ayres and Pacific Railway, started at eight o'clock that evening, so they packed up all their kits, but didn't send them down to the terminus. For they meant to cover their trail as far as possible, in case some of their unknown adversaries might be on the watch; and did not even tell the hotel people when they were going, until Hal called for the bill after they had finished a late dinner.

Then, half an hour before the train was timed to start, they drove to the station with their traps. They had a long railway journey of six hundred miles in front of them, which would occupy thirty hours, for the express didn't get up any remarkable speed. It was called an express because it only called at the principal stations en route.

"Good-bye to Buenos Ayres," said Jim, as the train steamed out of the terminus. "It's a gay city, and has provided us with some excitement, but I feel no pangs at the parting. Some day, perhaps, we may see it again. Who knows?"

"It ain't ourselves that knows," replied O'Hara; "but there's times comin', maybe, when we'll be tellin' ourselves there's worse places. Give me a fill av 'baccy, Sigbee; mine's all packed up in my kit-bag."

It seemed that they had shaken off their persistent enemies, for the long and weary journey passed quite uneventfully. Their destination was a frontier town named Luján, which was as far as the railway went then.

It was a straggling and uninteresting sort of place, inhabited principally by wild and hardy gauchos and herdsmen, and situated right against the foothills of the Andes. But it was here that they were able to complete their outfit by the purchase of five mules, the extra one being for use as a pack animal.

On the rough and steep mountain paths, which they would have to traverse in their search for the Tower of the Golden Star, these sure-footed mules were in every way superior to horses. In a couple of days all their arrangements were completed, and they were ready for what they regarded as

NEXT MONDAY—"THE OTHER BUNTER!" A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

the real start on their great adventure. For well they knew that the dangers which they had encountered already would be as nothing to the unknown perils they would have to face, before they learnt the secret—if they ever did—of that mysterious tower hidden away in the heart of the mountains. In the course of conversation with a friendly and intelligent gaucho, who had a great admiration for the British, Hal asked him whether he had ever heard of the Tower of the Golden Star. He put the question carelessly, as though he had no special reason for asking beyond idle curiosity.

But the man's face instantly changed. He had been laughing before, now he suddenly became serious.

"I have heard of it," he replied. "It is not, surely, that you and your friends, señor, are going into the mountains to seek the Tower?"

"We are going for shooting," returned Hal, "and to explore parts of the mountain range which are little known."

"Then if you ever come in sight of the Tower of the Golden Star," continued the gaucho, "turn back quickly, and reverse your steps. It is a place of nameless evil, sorcery, and death lurks within its shadow. I was told things about it, by a half-breed, which I should scarce have believed, but that I knew he was speaking truth, for he was a dying man."

Hal repeated the gaucho's words to his comrades when they were riding away from the frontier town; but it in nowise damped their spirits.

"Cheerful sort of cuss, your gaucho friend," said Jim. "But whenever anyone starts on an expedition where there's a likelihood of bumping against trouble, you'll find some person solemnly warning him against the undertaking. But I have a great belief in myself, and"—he glanced round with smiling eyes at the others—"a still greater belief in my comrades."

"Bedad! I wish I had the same belief in this mule what's carryin' me!" exclaimed O'Hara ruefully. "I won't be after sayin' I'm riding the baste. It has its own notions about gettin' along, and never goes sideways. Then, when he wants a bit of acceleration, he twists his head an' bairs me feet."

"That's his play," said Hal, laughing.

"Play is it?" replied O'Hara. "Where'll the toes ar' too tight be if he goes on biting them?"

"Why, in the mule's stomach, of course," returned Hal. But in spite of the eccentricities of the Irishman's mount, they made good progress that day, and at sunset camped in a wooded hollow by a shallow stream. They were fairly in their element now, out in the wild, away from the artificial life of cities, and if the menace of unknown dangers was remembered, it was only because they added zest to the enterprise.

The next day they were only able to cover a distance of twenty miles, as most of the time they were climbing the lower slopes of the mountains, along paths which were mere cattle tracks. Late in the afternoon, somewhat to their surprise, they came upon a large estancia, standing on the top of a low hill. They had imagined that they had left all civilised habitations behind them, that they had even got beyond the most extreme edges of ranch lands and cattle runs, yet here was the house of a ranchero, and to judge by the size of the place, a prosperous one. But when they drew nearer they saw that the prosperity was a thing of the past. The estancia was abandoned, and one wing of it was partially in ruins. In the distance this had not been noticeable.

"The former owner of that place was ahead of the times," said Hal. "Got too far away from civilisation, and was either ruined, or had his home looted by hostile Indians. It will be a good many years yet before this part of the country is fit for settling in."

"Sure," agreed Sigbee. "Seems a pity that a fine ranch house like that should go to ruin, but there ain't no special reason why we shouldn't make use of it now we're here. 'Bout time we camped, I reckon, so we may as well make our pitch in that caboose for to-night. Besides, I got a kind of fancy to have a look round the interior of the place. Might find something interesting."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Jim. "I always have a hankering to rumble through a deserted building myself."

"Faith, I'm hoping it isn't haunted!" said Pat O'Hara. "This meself hates to have me lads disturbed by spirits, the same ben' always cowlid and clammy."

"What!" laughed Jim. "Have you ever been roused from your slumbers, Pat, by a ghostly hand on your face?"

"Not meself. But me grandmother!"

"Switch it off, Pat," interrupted Sigbee. "The tales of your old grandmother ain't evidence."

A few minutes later they dismounted at the main entrance of the abandoned estancia, and after putting the mules in the corral, and giving them a feed, proceeded to examine the interior of the building.

There was a wide, paved patio, or inner courtyard, with the basin of what was once a fountain in the centre. On three sides of the patio were verandas, on to which various doors opened. The rooms in the house were large and lofty, and some of them contained furniture of good quality, but midway from the damp of the last rains.

"There's a tragic history to this place," said Hal, "if the signs all around us are anything to go by. The people who lived here had luxuries; they lived in good style. Yet they abandoned their home, and a heap of valuable furniture. I wonder why?"

"I wonder why?" said Jim. "But I'm not going to worry myself trying to think of the answer to such a conundrum. We've got more than enough mysteries to solve as it is. What about grub?"

"Grub!" echoed Hal, with pretended disgust. "You have no romance in you, Jimmie. But we'll have something to eat, all the same."

They built a wood fire on a wide hearth in one of the rooms, and soon had some bacon sizzling in the pan. O'Hara made the tea, and Sigbee attended to the hot cakes of flour, water, and fat. In less than half an hour they were enjoying a hearty meal.

Afterwards they sat round the fire warming, for the night was cold, as there was a chilly wind blowing down from the snow-clad peaks of the mountains.

About nine o'clock they rolled themselves in their blankets, with their saddles for pillows, as they intended to make a start at daybreak. They did not consider it necessary to keep any watch, for the mules were safe in the corral, and they had not met with a living soul since the previous day.

In a very short space of time they were all asleep. Exactly how long he had been sleeping Jim did not know, but suddenly he found himself broad awake, and listening. He had no idea what had roused him, but he listened by instinct.

Sigbee was the next one to rouse up, then the other two. Those who live in the wilds, often with their lives in peril, are always alert and sleep as lightly as cats. They looked at each other.

"What's roused us?" asked Sigbee. "Anybody hear anything?"

Nobody could say definitely that they had heard any unusual sound. Then as Jim rose to his feet to have a look round outside, there reached their ears a curious sort of grating noise. It was followed by the bang of a closing door, and the sound of a shuffling footstep.

"Seems there's a foundation for your fear, Pat," said Jim, "and this place is haunted after all."

Outlaws and a Captive.

"Haunted, is it?" growled O'Hara. "This meself always feels annoyed, yid ghosts, though I've never seen wan. Why can't they slay aye in their graves, instead of wanderin' around throbblin' decent folks? I'll teach this wan manners, anyway."

He had drawn his revolver from its holster, and was going towards the door, when Hal stopped him.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Just goin' to try will a bullet have any effect on a ghost," replied O'Hara.

"Don't be in too much of a hurry to shoot," Hal cautioned him. "I strongly suspect that ghost is flesh and blood."

And, as though to confirm his statement, they heard a voice shouting something in Spanish, a reply from other voices, a trampling of feet, and a burst of hoarse laughter. Also the scent of tobacco reached their nostrils.

"Well, whatever ghosts do, they don't smoke!" exclaimed Jim. "Let's go and see what the racket's about." Can't be the owners of the estancia come back, as they'd hardly find much to laugh about."

"There's a gallery runs along this side of the building, level with the floor above us," interpolated Bob Sigbee, "and it overlooks the patio. These new arrivals seem to be out in the courtyard. Suppose we take a birds-eye view of them from the gallery first. There's mostly an advantage, I guess, in being able to see without being seen."

His suggestion was adopted, and, climbing the wooden stairs cautiously, the quartette reached the gallery, where, standing well back in the shadows, they could look down on the scene below.

A fire had been lighted in the dry basin of the demolished fountain, and half a dozen armed men were moving about the patio, talking, laughing, and smoking. They had carried out armfuls of furniture from one of the rooms, and breaking it up, piled it on the flames.

They were a ragged crowd, though in the freights they had

(Continued on page 16 of cover.)



JAMES STEVEN,
Liverpool.



REGINALD OWEN,
Bristol.



"GRIFF,"
Oldham.



R. C. BURROWS,
Leicester.



CLAUDE BURDELL,
Nottingham.



H. N. LITTLE,
Liscard.



J. A. NEEDS,
Barnesbury.



JOHN NASH,
London.



A KEEN READER,
Birmingham.



ALBERT B. SHARPLES,
"A Loyal Reader."



ARTHUR J. WELLS,
Witely.



JOHN E. PAGET,
Sheffield.



J. B. WARD,
Dewsbury.



MALCOLM ROBINSON,
Bingley.



A. LANGDON (Scout),
Birmingham.



J. R. POWER,
Bootle.



F. S.,
Croydon.



"A Loyal
"Magnetite." "



JAMES F. SIDEY,
Clapham.



THOMAS OWEN,
Bristol.



HAROLD WORRALL,
Birmingham.



WALLACE LEICESTER,
Leeds.



J. A. ELLACOTT,
Stockport.



H. SHARP,
Rochdale.

ADVENTURERS FOUR.

(Continued from page 20.)

a picturesque appearance, with their bright-coloured sashes, their red handkerchiefs bound about their heads under the wide-brimmed sombreros, and their big rowelled spurs. From the mud and dust on their clothes they must have ridden fast and far.

But they were not a party of honest herdsmen, or gauchos, who had been rounding up strayed cattle. It needed no second glance at them to be certain on that point. The American sized them up in a few terse words.

"Brigands!" he said. "Horse and cattle thieves, or worse! But—gee-whizz!—who have we here?"

The exclamation, uttered under his breath, was called forth by the appearance on the scene of a girl, dark-haired, young, and beautiful. She had been led in from the outside by one of the bandits, and from her half-defiant, half-fearful glance around her it seemed pretty clear she was a captive in their hands.

Judging by her dress, she was an Indian girl, but she was not nearly so dark-skinned as the natives whom the adventurers had encountered hitherto. In fact, she was scarcely any darker than the ordinary type of Spanish women. Her dress was of a rich material, which clung about her in flowing folds. A girdle of flexible gold clasped her costume at the waist.

It was noticeable that the brigands eyed this golden ornament, which must have been of great value, with greedy, covetous looks.

"She must be the daughter of a chief," whispered Hal, "but of what tribe or race I can't imagine."

His companions scarcely heeded his words. Their whole attention was fixed on the girl and her captors. There was a drama about to be unfolded under their eyes—that there was little doubt—and it might be they would have to play a part in it.

Of course, the outlaws spoke Spanish, and the girl, when she was addressed, answered in the same tongue.

Sigsbee spoke that language fluently. Hal was fairly good at it, while O'Hara and Jim had picked up enough to "stagger along with it if they went carefully," as the latter had remarked.

"Give the lady a chair," said one of the fellows. "Let her be seated while we talk to her, for we have much to say."

But the girl refused to be seated. She remained standing, facing them.

"As you please," said a short, thick-set man, who appeared to be the leader of the brigands. "Yet you will do well to remember that we have a sure cure for obstinacy, and that you are our prisoner. I will now tell you how you can earn your liberty."

The girl made no answer, and the man proceeded:

"It is that we require certain information from you, *señorita*—you may have the title of princess, but we pay no heed to Indian titles—which we know it is in your power to give us. The chief, your father, who was the last chief of the Inca, once a rich and powerful nation, confided a secret to you on his death-bed. We intend to learn that secret!"

"He told me many things which it was fitting I should know," said the girl coldly.

"That may be," replied the man. "But we are only interested in one thing, *Señorita Aymara*, and that is the vast treasure of the Inca, which lies hidden somewhere in these mountains, where it has remained untouched for more than three hundred years."

"There is a story—which some of your race tell each other—that a vast treasure lies buried—where?" Aymara spread out her arms with a dramatic gesture. "Yet no one can answer that question."

"You can answer it!" rapped out the brigand. "That was the secret which your father told you on his death-bed, and which you are now going to tell us!"

"I am not going to tell you."

"Name of a fiend! So you are obstinate! But you will be made to speak! Again I ask you to say where the Inca treasure is hidden! Describe the place, so that we shall be able to find it!"

"I do not alter my mind," replied the girl, with proud contempt, "like the women of your race! What I have said remains. You are robbers and cowards, for only cowards would demand a woman who is alone and without protection. Not one single golden piece of the treasure shall ever come into your hands!"

The bandits muttered angrily among themselves at this defiant answer, and one of them said to the leader:

"If she won't be persuaded by fair words, there are other means of persuasion." He grinned evilly. "A girl values

her beauty. Well, hers can be spoiled, unless she speaks. We have an iron in the fire which will soon be red-hot!"

The girl seemed to shrink at this dastardly threat, but she braced herself up, and regarded her captors scornfully.

"You hear?" said the leader. "If you give us the information we require, you will be set at liberty. If you persist in refusing—he shrugged his shoulders—"there is the red-hot iron!"

"Others of my race have suffered torture," Aymara replied, "but they have not spoken. I will not speak. That is my last word."

Sigsbee, his eyes blazing, made a step forward on the balcony, as though he meant to interfere; but Hal laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"Not yet," whispered Hal. "Wait a little. She shall come to no harm!"

"We give you ten minutes to decide," said the leader, addressing the girl again. "Make up the fire, Pedro," he addressed significantly to the most villainous-looking of his followers.

Nothing more was said. Minute followed minute, until the given time had expired. Then the leader spoke again:

"For the last time, girl, will you tell us where the treasure is hidden?"

Aymara made no reply. The leader turned to Pedro, and roared, "That savage-looking brigand took the red-hot iron from the fire."

"This will persuade her!" he growled.

Hal levelled his rifle, and his finger was on the trigger. Pedro took a step forward. There was a flash and a report, the red-hot iron flew from the brigand's hand, and with a howl of pain and amazement he staggered across the patio, his right wrist smashed by Hal's bullet.

Aymara of the Mountains.

The consternation and amazement of the brigands at this startling interruption was so great that for some moments they did nothing but stare up at the balcony. At least, that was all that five of them did. The sixth man—the one whose wrist was broken by the bullet—continued to utter cries of pain, interspersed with imprecations, while he tried to bind up the wound with a rag.

"Demonio! Who is here?" exclaimed the leader at length.

He and his companions had firmly believed there was no one in the estancia except themselves and their captive. The place had been their headquarters when they found it necessary to go into hiding, and up to that evening they had never been disturbed either by white men or Indians.

"It is the Civil Guard," muttered one, in a low voice, as he glanced round to see if the way was clear for escape, "or perhaps the military!"

No doubt that was the general impression at first, that the not over-zealous officials who were supposed to keep law and order in that part of the Republic had tracked them to their lair at last. But when the bandits got a clear view of the four on the balcony they knew this was not the case.

"Those are neither Civil Guards nor soldiers!" cried the leader. "They wear no uniform."

He stretched down his hand for his rifle as he spoke, which was lying on the ground near him. But he didn't get it.

"Stand up straight!" commanded Hal sharply. "Now, raise your hands above your heads, all of you, except the one who is hurt. Don't venture to touch a weapon!"

Four of them raised their hands. The fifth thought he saw a chance of snatching the pistol which was stuck in the folds of his waist-sash. That was his mistake. As his fingers closed on the butt, Hal pressed the trigger of his rifle for the second time. The bullet made a deep score across the brigand's knuckles.

"If you try any tricks," Hal warned him, "my next shot will be into your hands. Hands up!"

The brigand obeyed.

"That's all right," continued Hal pleasantly. "Now you will all remain in that position until my friends have relieved you of your weapons. I shall stop up here, ready to shoot the first man who moves."

Jim, Sigsbee, and O'Hara made their way down the stairs and into the patio, where they proceeded to collect all the weapons they could find, either from the persons of the brigands or anywhere in the courtyard.

While all this was going on, Aymara, the daughter of the last chief of the Inca, stood in a little apart, regarding the newcomers with questioning eyes. They had saved her from torture—if the brigands had really intended carrying out their threat of branding her with the red-hot iron—and for that reason must be looked upon as friends. But what purpose had brought them to this abandoned estancia?

(Another grand instalment next Monday.)