

THE STOLEN STUDY!

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



TROUBLE IN THE TRAIN!

(An Exciting Scene in the Grand Long Complete Story in this issue.)

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d., COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 1d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"

By Frank Richards.

Stories about Herbert Vernon-Smith, to whom still clings his old name of the Bounder, though he is now a very different fellow from the one who earned that name, have always been popular with our readers. In the splendid yarn which appears next week the Bounder plays the chief part, and, through no fault of his own, finds himself in a very perilous position. His guest is Mornington, the aristocratic rotter of Rookwood, with whom he has been on friendly terms in his old unregenerate days. Mornington is self-invited, and the Bounder anticipates no pleasure whatever from the visit. He plans to do the best he can for his guest; but his plans are upset by the intervention of the Highlife nuts, and he finds himself committed to a risky expedition not at all of his own choosing. What happens after that the story must be left to tell; but it may be said that the result is that Mornington is not in the least likely to figure again as

"THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"

BOXING-GLOVES FOR MEN AT THE FRONT.

The result of the appeal made a few weeks ago for a set of boxing-gloves for Private James Balls and his comrades was quite satisfactory, though the response was not of so enthusiastic a nature as to lead me to think of making a regular feature of appeals like this. I had not intended to do so in any case, however, as I recognise the fact that many of my readers have not much money to spare; and I think there can be no doubt that nearly all of them are called upon from time to time in this way in their own neighbourhoods, where it is difficult for them to refuse.

Three contributions of a shilling, one of ninepence, twenty-one of sixpences, one of fivepence, and two of threepence, made up a total of 15s. 2d., and this, with the promised Editorial addition of 2s. 6d., totalled 17s. 8d.—sufficient to enable us to get quite a good set of gloves, and to pay the postage on them. Twenty-nine readers had the pleasure of taking a hand in the little business, and among the twenty-nine were at least ten girls. The contributors were:

"A Reader"; J. M., Looe, Cornwall; "Coldstreamer," Fulham; Miss V. H., Kentish Town; R. H. G., Leith; Miss A. L., Maryhill; "Dorothy," Highbury; Miss I. B. J., Edinburgh; Miss M. S., Grimsby; Miss H. W., Emsworth; Miss C. D. T., Teston, Kent; J. L., Cambuslang; R. D., Southampton; "Another Reader"; "Only a Girl," Aberdeen; "A Reader," St. Albans; "An Isle of Wight Reader"; Miss M. K. R., Brierley, Yorks; "A Flapper Reader"; J. H. B., Notting Hill; W. C., Dunstable; "Puzzle," Drogheda; G. F. W. S., Rotherhithe; H. J. T., Walmer; J. T., Chorlton-on-Medlock; A. B. C., Glasgow; "Grateful"; and C. and T. W.

I had intended to give names in full; but very few of them reached me in full; and I think all will be satisfied with this acknowledgment. Long before they read this the gloves will have come into action over there, for they were despatched on September 4th.

OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY.

This feature has been running for some time now, and has proved very popular. In the natural order of things an end must come to it some day; but before I make up my mind to stop it I want those of my readers who have not yet had their photos in it, but would like to have them, to send them along as early as possible. This will probably be the last request of this sort made, so do not overlook it.

A NEW SERIAL.

For a long time past letters have been reaching me in considerable numbers asking for a school serial in the "Magnet" instead of the usual adventure yarn. I am not

at all sure that it would be to the taste of my readers generally to have a school serial always running; but I think it quite worth while to try the experiment of one. No doubt if my readers had been asked to name

the author they wanted to write the serial, they would have exclaimed as with one voice: "Mr. Frank Richards!" But that is impossible. Mr. Richards already has his hands full. I think you will like the story which starts this week, even though it is not by our nonpareil. The author is one who has done good work elsewhere, though he has not till now made his bow in the "Magnet"; and in Johnny Goggs he has created a character which ought to prove a primo favourite, if I am any judge of what boys like.

"GEM" AND "MAGNET" LEAGUES.

Will those representatives of Gem and Magnet Leagues who were good enough to send on particulars of their organisations in response to my request accept my thanks for the trouble they took, and not think me rude for not having replied to them individually? Very few responded, and it would seem that many of the leagues formed have collapsed.

NOTICES.

Football.

44th Liverpool Boys' Brigade F.C. want home and away matches. Hon. Sec.: C. Fisher, 69, Red Rock Street, West Derby Road, Liverpool.

All Hallows F.C. (average age 15) want home and away matches with good-class teams. Write Captain, 100, Tredegar Road, Bow, London, E.

Cathays Celtic (average age 16-17) want a match for Boxing Day at Bristol. Hon. Sec., A. Owens, 51, Dogfield Street, Cathays, Cardiff.

York Athletic F.C. (average age 16) want fixtures to be played on Hackney Marshes. Hon. Sec., W. Plunkett, 66, Great Cambridge Street, Hackney Wick, N.

Neptune Athletic F.C. (average age 16) want matches. S.W. district preferred. Hon. Sec., P. Alexander, 401, Battersea Park Road, S.W.

Devonshire Street Athletic (average age 13) want matches within 2 miles of Hockley, or could arrange to play in Summerfield or Handsworth Park.—Hon. Sec., J. Luckman, 34, Clement Street, Parade, Birmingham.

Canonbury United F.C. (average age 16) want home and away matches within 4-mile radius of Highbury.—Hon. Sec., W. Martin, 5, North Cottages, Canonbury Road, N.

Wright & Davies' Munition Workers' F.C. (average age 16-17) want home and away matches.—Hon. Sec., F. White, 32, Ampton Street, Grays Inn Road, W.C.

Piccadilly F.C. (average age 15-15½) want away matches for October 14, 28, November 11, 25, and December 9, 23, within 1½ miles of Battersea Park.—Hon. Sec., J. E. Lane, 16, Luna Street, Chelsea, S.W.

Barnes Juniors F.C. (average age 15½) want matches within 5-mile radius.—Hon. Sec., W. F. Knibb, 36, Gerard Road, Barnes, S.W.

Central Office Wages Branch F.C. (average age 16½) have all dates open for the coming season. Would be glad to hear from teams within 8-mile radius of Woolwich.—Hon. Sec., G. G. Wilson, 104, Riverdale Road, Plumstead, S.E.

Albion Sports Club want home and away matches.—Hon. Sec., 143, Brooke Road, Stoke Newington, N.E.

Your Editor

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tive to all readers.

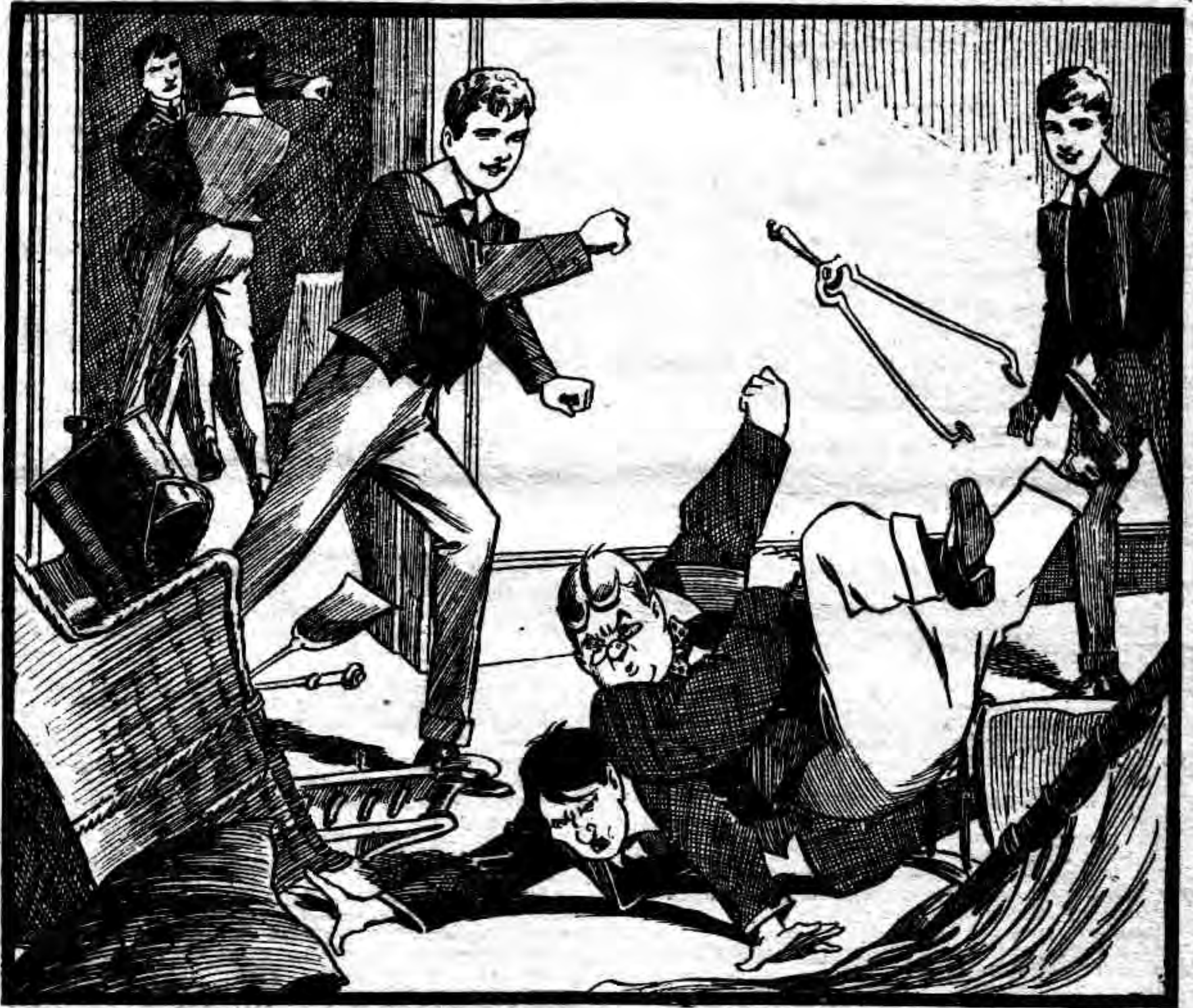


The Editor will be
obliged if you will
hand this book,
when finished with,
to a friend. . . .

THE STOLEN STUDY!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Bump! Billy Bunter landed on Fisher T. Fish, and the unhappy Yankee junior gave a suffocated yell as he was squashed on the floor. (See Chapter 5.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Back to Greyfriars!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Bunter, by Jove!"

Five juniors were chatting on the platform at Lexham Junction.

Harry Wharton & Co. had gathered there, from different quarters, to return to Greyfriars at the end of the summer holidays.

They were waiting for the train for Courtfield, when a fat

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youth in big glasses rolled up, and blinked at them with great affability.

Billy Bunter seemed to be very pleased to see his Form-fellows again. The pleasure seemed also to be all on his side. The Famous Five of Greyfriars groaned in chorus at the sight of him.

"I say, you fellows—I say, Wharton, old chap——"

"Too bad, Bunter!" said Wharton reproachfully. "I'd forgotten all about you. You might have put off this painful moment till we reached Greyfriars."

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October 7th, 1916.

"The mightfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh sadly. "We were bound to see the esteemed Bunter soonfully or laterfully, but the laterfully the betterfully."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Horrid reminder that we've got to stand you again for a whole term, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry lugubriously; "and we were just feeling so jolly!"

"Look here, you rotter—"

"Are you still expecting a postal-order?" inquired Frank Nugent. "And is it the same one you were expecting last term and the term before?"

"And do you want a chap to cash it in advance?" grinned Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter grinned feebly.

"I'm jolly glad to meet you chaps!" he said. "Quite a pleasure, you know! Seems a long time since we parted, doesn't it?"

"Not so long as it will seem before we part again."

"Oh, really, you know! I'm coming in your train."

"Which train are you catching?"

"The four-twenty. That will give me time for a snack here."

"We're catching the three-thirty," chuckled Bob Cherry. "so we sha'n't have the pleasure of your company en route, dear boy."

"I meant to say I'm catching the three-thirty," said Billy Bunter calmly. "How have you been getting on? I've had a glorious time—simply spiffing—on the Riviera!"

"You've been to the Riviera in war-time!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Ahem! I—I meant to say Brighton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I've had a glorious time at—at Brighton. Shooting on the grouse moors, you know—"

"At Brighton?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I—I mean, motor drives," said Bunter hastily, "and trout-fishing in the sea, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And fox-hunting on the pier?" asked Bob Cherry. "And skiing on the Grand Parade?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, it's jolly lucky I've met you fellows!" said Bunter. "I've run out of money—"

"Same old Bunter!"

"And there's a ripping buffet at this station. And I'll tell you what—I'll amuse you with some ventriloquism on the run to Courtfield. You haven't forgotten what a ripping ventriloquist I am?"

"We'd forgotten your very existence," said Bob cheerily. "How could you be so cruel as to remind us in this sudden way?"

"Look here! Are you coming into the buffet, or not?" roared Bunter.

"Not!" said the Famous Five together.

"Then you may as well lend me five bob, Wharton. My money's in—in my bag, and I've run out of change. I say, Harry, old chap, I'm thinking of changing studies this term. I'm rather fed-up with Toddy, and you remember I used to share No. 1 with you—"

"What an awful time that was!" said Wharton sadly.

"Oh, really, you know! Of course, I can take a joke. He, he, he! Is it settled I'm to come back to Study No. 1 this term?"

"You'll go out on your neck if you do!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"Did you say you would lend me five bob, Wharton?"

"Not that I remember."

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the Famous Five as they walked down the platform. He toddled after them.

"I say, you fellows, don't walk so fast!"

"Put it on!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here, I won't come with you if you don't walk a bit slower!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, good! Hurry up!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter halted, out of breath.

"Beasts!" he murmured. "Fancy refusing a fellow a small loan—just after the holidays, too! Lucky I've got a bob left!"

And Bunter rolled away to the buffet, where his last bob was soon expended on refreshments, liquid and solid.

But Bunter was on the platform again by the time the train was signalled. He intended travelling to Courtfield with the Famous Five. He joined them on the platform as the train came puffing in.

"Did you say you wanted a loan, Bunter?" asked Wharton amicably.

"Yes, rather!"

"You'll blow it on ginger-pop and tarts—what?"

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"Yes."

"Well, here you are."

Harry Wharton slid a two-shilling piece into Bunter's fat hand. Billy Bunter made a step in the direction of the buffet. Wharton opened a carriage door as the train stopped, and the five chums entered the carriage, which had only one occupant. They sat down, grinning. With Bunter safe in the buffet, they were secure from the pleasure of his company on the journey, and that was worth the loan. But Billy Bunter did not go to the buffet. He came hurrying back to the train.

"Urry up, there!" shouted a porter.

Bob Cherry was closing the carriage door when Bunter grasped it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What do you want?" demanded Bob.

"Lemme get in!"

"But you haven't got your ginger-pop!"

"That's all right. I'll have that at Courtfield," grinned Bunter, and he jerked the door open and rolled in.

"Why, you cheeky porpoise!" exclaimed Wharton. "Look here, you buzz off to the buffet and guzzle!"

"I'm coming with you, old chap," said Bunter affectionately. "You don't think I was going to desert you, did you? Make room for a chap to sit down."

Slam! The carriage door closed, and the train began to move. Billy Bunter stood up and blinked round for a seat. There were eight seats in the carriage. One was already occupied by a stiff-looking old gentleman with a white moustache and a military air, who looked round frowning as the merry schoolboys invaded the carriage in a swarm. The rest of the seats were filled up by the Famous Five, who spread themselves out to fill them.

"I say, you fellows, give a chap a seat!"

"No room for porpoises!" said Harry Wharton.

"The esteemed place for an esteemed porpoise is on the august floor," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Sit on the floor and shut up!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"I'm jolly well not going to sit on the floor!" roared Bunter. "You might be decent, after pressing me to join you as you did. Look here, make room for a fellow, and don't play the giddy ox!"

"Cannot you boys be quiet?" rapped out the old gentleman in the corner, in an extremely irritable tone.

Bob Cherry looked at him.

"I dare say we could, sir, if we were asked civilly," he replied cheerily.

The military gentleman turned purple, and the juniors chuckled. Apparently the old gentleman had no civility to waste upon merry youths in high spirits.

"Lemme sit down!" roared Bunter.

"Silence!" rapped out the gentleman in the corner.

"Well, of all the cheek!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter plumped down between Nugent and Johnny Bull. Johnny promptly shoved him off, and the Owl of the Remove rolled over, clutching wildly at the old gentleman's knees to save himself.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The startled old gentleman was dragged half out of his seat, and he jumped up and shook Bunter off furiously.

"How dare you touch me!" he roared.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I will complain to the guard at the next stop! Disgraceful! Cannot a man travel without being deafened by a crowd of unruly young hooligans?" roared the irritable gentleman.

"Perhaps you would like the carriage to yourself, sir?" suggested Bob Cherry demurely.

"Yes, sir, I would!"

"Then might I suggest, sir, that you should reserve it, or buy it of the railway company?" asked Bob. "Otherwise, you are liable to have other passengers along with you—which is jolly unpleasant for the other passengers, too!"

The old gentleman glared at the humorous Bob and snorted, and sat down and opened a paper. Billy Bunter emerged from the feet on the floor, and found a seat at last, and sat down gasping. The juniors took no further notice of their irritable fellow-passenger.

There was a merry buzz of talk in the carriage as the chums of the Remove discussed the coming term and the prospects of the football season. The passenger's nose, which could be seen above his paper, was growing redder and redder—a sign of rising temper. It was clear that the buzz of voices in the carriage had an irritating effect upon him; but the Co. did not feel inclined to travel like a party of funeral-mutes to oblige him. The old gentleman slapped his paper down on his knees at last, and glared at the cheery juniors.

"Will you be quiet?" he rapped.

"You don't want to hear us talk, sir?" asked Bob.

"No! Certainly not!"



General Popham tore open the carriage door, and leaped out on the platform as the guard came up. "Guard, there is a dog in the carriage—a savage dog! Remove it at once!" he roared. (See Chapter 2.)

"Then you'd better change carriages at the next station, because we're going on talking," said Bob calmly.

"The regretfulness is great, esteemed sahib, but the talkfulness will be terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"You can't expect us to travel without speaking a word, surely, sir?" exclaimed Wharton.

"I expect you to be silent, sir!" roared the old gentleman. "If I had you in my regiment, sir, I would teach you to hold your tongue, by gad!"

"Must be jolly in your regiment, sir," said Bob cheerily. "You must be awfully popular, sir!"

A glare was the only reply, and the exasperated passenger rose as the train slowed down in a station, threw up the window, and roared:

"Guard!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Invisible Dog!

"GUARD!"

The guard came along the train as the red face and white moustache were thrust out of the carriage window. The juniors smiled at one another.

"Yessir!" said the guard. "Anything wrong, sir?"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"

The guard appeared to be acquainted with the irate passenger, and was very respectful to him.

"I complain of these young hooligans making a din in the carriage!" rapped out the military gentleman. "I require them either to be silenced or removed to another carriage!"

"He requires!" murmured Bob. "He doesn't ask or request—he requires! I rather fancy I'm sticking here."

The guard blinked at the unreasonable old gentleman, and blinked at the juniors.

"You 'ear what General Popham says, young gents?" he said. "Would you mind goin' farther up the train?"

"Is there an empty carriage?" asked Wharton.

"Nunno; but there's room in the next two or three—"

"Can't be done, then; we're travelling together!"

"Yes, ratherfully!" said the nabob, with emphasis: "I suggest that the esteemed and ludicrous old gentleman does the changing."

"Good idea!" said Bob. "Can I help you out, sir?"

"Help you out with pleasure, sir!" chimed in Johnny Bull. Snort!

"Guard, remove these boys at once!"

The guard blinked again. As he had no power to do anything of the sort, the request was a little unreasonable.

"Comin'!" he called out, as if in answer to a call.

"Right-ho! Right forrard!"

Slam! The door closed and the train moved on.

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

The general returned to his seat fuming. The juniors could not help grinning. The general's purple complexion hinted that he came from India's torrid clime, and doubtless he was accustomed to carrying matters with a high hand in that happy country. Probably it was a painful shock to him to discover on his return to his native land that he was no longer a little tin god. The juniors were far from wishing to be disrespectful to a man old enough to be their grandfather, but the general was really the limit. He could hardly expect to be allowed to treat his fellow-countrymen like coolies.

"I say, you fellows, have you any sandwiches?" asked Billy Bunter.

"No, fatty."

"Any toffee?"

"No."

"I suppose you've got some chocolate or something?"

"For goodness' sake, find him something to gnaw, or he'll never dry up!" exclaimed Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm rather peckish, you know—"

"Shurrup!" roared all the juniors together.

Billy Bunter grunted, and relapsed into discontented silence. The juniors were soon chatting cheerily again. The football season was close at hand, and, naturally, they had a good deal to talk about.

A succession of savage snorts proceeded from behind the general's newspaper; every word uttered by the schoolboys seemed to have the same effect on him as a red rag on a bull.

He slapped down his paper at last, and glared over it.

"I insist upon silence in this carriage!" he snorted.

"Insist away, sir!" said Bob Cherry. "We don't mind. I wonder how Hazel will turn out in goal—"

"Silence!"

"Bow-wow!"

"What—what!" shrieked the general.

"Bow-wow! Likewise rats!" said Bob.

"For goodness' sake be reasonable, sir!" exclaimed Wharton tartly. "We are not sepoys in your regiment, you know."

"I wish you were!" snorted the general. "I would teach you manners! Wait till you are eighteen, my lad—wait till then, and then you'll learn to obey orders! I hope I shall have the training of you, that's all, by gad!"

"What a happy prospect!" said Bob Cherry. "I shall look forward to my eighteenth birthday. If you train us, sir, shall we grow up to be nice, good-tempered old gentlemen like you, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The old gentleman grasped his cane.

"Another word of insolence and I will lay this about you!" he shouted.

"Go ahead!" said Bob, his eyes gleaming.

The general seemed inclined to take Bob at his word; but fortunately he restrained himself, and settled down again with a snort. The juniors looked at one another. They did not want to come to fisticuffs with the fiery old gentleman, and it really looked as if the peace would be broken before they reached Courtfield.

Bob Cherry chuckled suddenly. An idea had come into Bob's active brain. He took a packet of butterscotch from his pocket, and Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles at the sight of it. Bob scrawled a few words on the packet.

"Have some butterscotch, Bunter?" he asked amiably.

"Yes, rather!"

Bunter took the packet, and grinned as he read what Bob had scrawled on it. It was:

"Give the old boy some ventriloquism!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Bunter.

Billy Bunter was always ready to display his wonderful powers as a ventriloquist. As a rule, his displays led to thumps and thick ears, the Greyfriars Remove being fed-up with ventriloquial tricks. But on this occasion Bunter's ventriloquism, Bob considered, would come in usefully.

Cheery talk was next to impossible in the presence of the snorting, scowling old Indian. The juniors waited for the fun to begin. But it did not begin at once. Billy Bunter masticated the butterscotch to the last atom before he turned his attention to ventriloquism. But when the butterscotch had disappeared Bunter gave his little preparatory cough.

Mew-miau-miauh!

General Popham gave a sudden jump as a cat mewed under his seat. He started up, gathering up his feet hurriedly.

"By gad!" he ejaculated. "A cat—a cat in the carriage!"

Grrrrrr!

It was a dog's growl this time—a deep and savage growl, which was really alarming—close to the general's ankles. General Popham leaped up.

"Good heavens! A dog! You have brought a dog into carriage, against railway regulations!" he roared.

"No, sir," said Bob demurely. "No dogs in this party."

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Grrrrr!

"Mind he doesn't bite you, sir," said Billy Bunter. "He sounds awfully savage."

Grrrrrr!

The general got as far away from the seat as he could. That savage growl just under the seat was unnerving. It sounded as if the savage brute were just preparing to bury his teeth in the general's leg.

"If that dog belongs to you, call him out!" he shouted.

"He doesn't belong to us, sir," said Wharton, smiling.

"Then to whom can he belong?" roared the general. "He assuredly does not belong to me. There was no dog in the carriage before you entered. You smuggled that dog into the train, some of you! I refuse to be bitten by a savage dog! Call him out from under the seat immediately!"

"I don't suppose he would come, sir. You see, he doesn't know my voice!"

"Nonsense! Call him out at once!"

Grrrrrrr!

The growl came just behind the general this time, and he spun round like a humming-top.

"By gad! Keep that beast away from my legs!" he yelled.

Grrrrrrr!

The general fairly hopped on to the seat. He did not dare to leave his legs within reach of the beast that was growling so savagely. The sight of the stiff old gentleman on the seat made the juniors yell. They could not help it. General Popham fumed at them.

"You insolent young rascals! I will have you most severely punished for this! I will have you prosecuted, by gad, for bringing a dog into the carriage! In this hot weather, too! He may be rabid! He sounds rabid!"

Grrrrrrr!

The train stopped at Redclyffe, and the general hopped down, and put his head from the window.

"Guard!" he roared.

Grrrrrrr!

The sound came close behind him, and he jumped. With a hurried hand he tore open the carriage door, and leaped out on the platform as the guard came up.

"Yessir?" said the guard, in a tired voice.

"Guard, there is a dog in the carriage—a savage dog! Remove it at once!"

"Oh, my eye!" said the guard.

He looked into the carriage.

"You young gents got a dog 'ere? That's agin the regulations! Better 'and out that dog, and I'll put him in my van!"

"I don't think there's a dog here," said Harry Wharton. "I've seen nothing of it!"

"But the general sez—"

"Well, you can look!"

"He don't belong to you?" asked the guard.

"No; we haven't a dog with us!"

"It is a lie!" shouted the general, peering over the guard's shoulder. "The dog was not there before those young ruffians came in!"

"There's no animal at all in the carriage since the general got out!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Guard, that dog must be removed!"

"Orlright, sir!"

The guard entered the carriage, and peered under the seats. But there was no dog to be seen, and he looked puzzled and exasperated.

"There ain't any dorg here, sir," he said.

"What—what! Nonsense! I tell you he growled under my seat several times!"

"Well, he ain't 'ere, sir!"

"Are you a fool?" roared the general. "I tell you the dog is there!"

"No, I ain't a fool!" said the guard tartly. "And I've 'ad enough trouble with this here carriage! Can't delay the train!"

The guard stepped out.

"Guard, I order you to turn out that dog!"

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ANSWERS

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"Right away!" shouted the guard. The general hopped into the carriage to avoid being left behind. The guard slammed the door with an emphatic slam.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry in Hot Water!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. grinned serenely. The general peered under all the seats before he sat down again. He was puzzled and perplexed to find that there was no dog to be seen. How the animal had got out of the carriage was a mystery, but certainly it was not there.

Having repaid the irritable old gentleman for his cheek, the juniors were prepared to let him alone for the remainder of the journey. But Billy Bunter was encouraged by success, and he had not finished yet.

The general, after several snorts, settled down with his newspaper, when a wasp began to buzz about his ears. He could not see the wasp—it was quite an invisible wasp—but there was no doubt about the buzz.

Buzzzzzzzz! Buzzzzzzzz!

The general flapped round wildly with his newspaper to drive off the buzzing insect. The newspaper caught Bob Cherry across the nose, and Bob roared:

"Look out! That's my nose!"

"Get out of the way, then!" roared the general. "By gad, where is that wasp?"

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

The newspaper flapped in all directions, but the elusive insect went on buzzing. The general, tired out with his exertions, dropped into his seat again, and a sudden yelp rang out, and he leaped up again.

He glared at the seat, under the impression that he had sat on the mysterious dog, but the seat was bare.

Buzzzzzzzzzz! sounded round the back of his head, and he flew round. Buzzzzzzzz! He whirled the newspaper round, and caught Harry Wharton on the side of the head with it.

"Mind what you're doing!" yelled Wharton.

"Bah! Get out of the way!"

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

"Good heavens! Where is that wasp? Ah, I see it!"

The general did not see it, but in his excitement he fancied he did—on Bunter's head. He made a swipe with the newspaper, and the buzz ceased suddenly, the Greyfriars ventriloquist uttering a fiendish yell instead.

"Yaroo! You silly old idiot——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The general sat down triumphantly, satisfied that he had killed that exasperating wasp. Certainly there was no more buzzing.

Billy Bunter sat and rubbed his head, and glared at the general with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles. It was some time before Bunter was ready for business again.

"Shurrup!" murmured Bob Cherry, as Bunter gave the fat little grunt which was a sign that ventriloquism was coming.

"Nuff's as good as a feast!"

"He's biffed me on the napper!" said Bunter ferociously.

"Do you think I'm going to be biffed on the napper?"

"Shurrup!"

"Rats!"

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

The general looked up savagely from his paper. The renewed buzzing of the wasp had a most exasperating effect on him. The grinning of the juniors, too, seemed to put a new idea into his head.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

"You young rascal!" shouted the general, suddenly, glaring at Bob Cherry. "So it is you!"

"What-a-at!" ejaculated Bob.

"There is no wasp here!" roared the general. "It is a trick—a trick, sir, to annoy me! I have found you out! It is you all the time! You young scoundrel!"

"Here, leggo!" yelled Bob, as the angry old gentleman grasped him, and began boxing his ears. "Chuck it, you old duffer, do you hear? By George, I'll biff you if you don't leggo!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Bob Cherry was not likely to stand that. He hit out, and caught the general on the chest, and the fiery old gentleman sat down on the floor of the carriage. Bob glared down at him.

"Keep your silly old paws to yourself!" he roared.

"Begad!" stuttered the general. "I have been assaulted, by gad! I'll have you locked up—bread and water, by gad! Thunder!"

"Courtfield!" said Nugent, as the train slowed down.

The general scrambled up, purple with fury. He hurled open the carriage door, and roared:

"Guard!"

"Oh, evings!" groaned the guard, coming along slowly.

"Wot is it now?"

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"THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"

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ONE
PENNY.

The general hopped out of the carriage, and pointed a finger that trembled with rage at Bob Cherry.

"That young ruffian has assaulted me—struck me, by gad! I give him in charge! Call a policeman!"

"Oh, my heve!" said the guard.

"Come on!" said Wharton; and the juniors left the carriage.

The general immediately caught Bob by the shoulder.

"Call a constable!" he shouted.

"You silly ass, let go!" growled Bob.

But the general did not let go. He was in deadly earnest. The fact that he had boxed Bob's ears did not seem to matter in the least. The schoolboy had touched his sacred military person, and it seemed to General Popham that it was time for the skies to fall. And he held on. The guard yelled to a porter, and the porter called in the constable from outside the station.

The Greyfriars juniors were dismayed. Billy Bunter sidled into the crowd and disappeared. Bob's chums remained with him, but the Owl of the Remove decided that it was time to vanish, and he vanished.

"Officer, I give this young ruffian in charge!" fumed the general. "He has assaulted me—struck me, by gad!"

"But you were punching me, weren't you?" howled Bob.

"Take him in charge, officer!"

"Then I give you in charge, too!" said Bob. "Officer, take that dangerous old donkey into custody!"

"We are all witnesses!" chimed in Wharton. "We all saw him assault Bob! Take him in charge, officer!"

"What—what!" fulminated the general. "Insolent young rascals! Officer, take that young ruffian to the station at once! I will come with you and make my charge!"

"And we'll come, too, and make ours!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

The policeman looked perplexed. He took down the names and addresses of all parties in his pocket-book, and seemed inclined to let the matter end there. But the general was not appeased. Nothing would satisfy him but a procession to the police-station.

"You young gents had better come along," said the constable.

"Any old thing!" said Bob cheerily.

And the party marched out of the station, followed by curious stares on all sides, and headed for Courtfield Police Station.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Stealing a Study!

"HALLO, here's the porpoise!"

Bolsover major made that remark as Billy Bunter rolled into the School House at Greyfriars.

Greyfriars was swarming with fellows, and with bags and trunks. The school was gathering again for the new term. Gosling, the porter, was busy and perspiring and in a bad temper. Groups of fellows were chatting over their holidays; others were unpacking bags or looking round the studies. Most of the Remove had already arrived. The Famous Five were not on the scene yet, however, being otherwise engaged.

"Seen anything of Wharton?" asked Squiff, giving Bunter a playful tap on the nose.

"Yow!" grunted Bunter. "Oh, yes; I've seen him! They fixed themselves on me for the journey from Lexham. They've got into trouble."

"What's the matter?" asked Mark Linley.

"Oh, they're locked up!"

"Locked up!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

Bunter nodded and grinned.

"Yes. Bob Cherry got into a fight with a chap in the train, and they've all been taken to the police-station. I suppose the Head will have to go and bail them out. He, he, he!"

Peter Todd took Bunter by the collar and shook him, and the fat junior's chuckle stopped suddenly.

"Are you gassing as usual, or is it so?" asked Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy—Yow! Wow-ow!"

"Where's Wharton?" demanded Peter.

"Locked up!" howled Bunter. "They're in the cells at Courtfield Police Station! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover major. "What a ripping way to begin the term! What will Quelchy say?"

"I guess Quelchy will get his hair off!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "You'd better go and tell Quelchy, Bunter, and let him go and bail them out."

"Oh, rats!" growled Bunter. "I'm going to look after my study!"

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Bunter rolled away, leaving the juniors discussing the news. The Owl of the Remove made his way to No. 1 Study in the Remove passage, and blinked round it. The junior studies were in a newly-swept and garnished state, and No. 1 looked very sunny and cheerful. No. 1 was one of the best studies in the passage, and Billy Bunter had his own ideas about that study. He called Fisher T. Fish as the Yankee junior passed the door.

"Come in here, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish stepped in.

"Nothing doing!" he said coolly. "My spondulics are going to stay in my trousers pockets, Bunter!"

"Blow your spondulics!" growled Bunter. "Look here, are you going to have No. 14 this term, along with Squiff and Bull?"

"I guess so."

"Why not bag this study?"

"Hey?"

"This study is heaps better than No. 14," said Bunter. "A fellow has a right to take any study he likes. First come first served, you know! I'm going to have this study, and you can whack it out with me, if you like."

Fisher T. Fish looked thoughtful, and then a grin overspread his thin face.

"Jerusalem crickets! That's a ripping good stunt!" he exclaimed. "First come first served! That's the rule! Fellows generally bag the same study if they want to; but if they're late——"

"If they're late they'll find somebody else in possession!" grinned Bunter. "That's their look-out!"

"Yep! I'm on!"

"It will be rather funny to see their faces when they come and find the study bagged!" chortled Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fish. "But, I say, suppose they chuck us out, neck and crop?"

"Then we'll complain to Quelchy. It's our study if we collar it. They ought to be here on time!"

"I guess so, but that galoot Wharton is a beastly hard hitter!" said Fish cautiously. "There'll have to be a third in the study, anyway. We'd better ask another chap—somebody who's good in the fighting line."

"Good! There's Delarey. Call him in. I say, Delarey!"

The South African junior was passing, and he came in as his name was called. He looked inquiringly at Fish and Bunter.

"What is it?" he asked.

"I guess we want you to share this hyer study with us," said Fisher T. Fish. "You don't want to dig with Mauly this term—what? This is a better study."

"Much better!" chimed in Billy Bunter. "Better fire-place! And there's a hob—that's useful for cooking—and a window on the Close, with a view of the cricket-ground. Bigger, too! What do you say?"

"But this study belongs to Wharton and Nugent," said Delarey.

"First come first served, I guess!"

"Late-comers have to take what they can get!" chuckled Bunter. "If we're settled here when they come, they can't say anything. It won't make any difference if they do. And you could lick 'em if they make a fuss."

Delarey shrugged his shoulders.

"So I'm to fight Wharton and Nugent so that you can steal their study?" he remarked.

"Tain't their study unless they bag it for the term. First come first served, you know!"

"I guess that's good law," said Fisher T. Fish. "The galoots can go and eat coke! This hyer shebang is ours now!"

Delarey shook his head.

"It's rather mean to collar a chap's study because he's late!" he said. "I advise you to chuck up the idea. Anyway, you can leave me out!"

"Look here, Delarey——"

The Afrikaner walked out of the study. Bunter grunted angrily.

"Silly ass! What about Bolsover! Bolsover always ready for a row."

"I guess he will fill the bill."

Fisher T. Fish hurried out in search of Bolsover major. He came back in a few minutes with the bully of the Remove. Bolsover was grinning.

"Jolly good idea!" he said. "I don't see why those rotters should have the best study in the passage! It's ours now!"

"Hear, hear!" chirruped Bunter.

"We'll get our props into it, and turn theirs out!" said Bolsover, grinning. "What a surprise for the magnificent Wharton! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!"

Bolsover major entered into the scheme heartily. The three

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juniors set to work at once. The furniture in the study was stacked outside in the passage, and Bolsover and Fish and Bunter carried their own property into No. 1. That proceeding attracted a good deal of attention, and Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, of New South Wales, came along to inquire what was up.

"Changing our quarters, I guess!" said Fisher T. Fish airily. "I'm rather fed-up with digging with you, Squiff!"

"Not so fed-up as I am!" said Field. "Jolly glad you're not going to be in my study! But does Wharton know?"

"He will know when he gets here, I calculate!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"It's a dirty trick!" said Squiff, frowning. "Those chaps want their study!"

"They can whistle for it!" said Bolsover major.

"Well, if anybody bagged my study, he would go out of it on his neck!" said the Australian junior emphatically.

"If they can put me out on my neck they're welcome to do it!" said Bolsover major, with a snort.

"Not much doubt that they will!" remarked Tom Brown.

"And I'll lend 'em a hand if they want it!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Rotten trick!" said Hazeldene.

"Looking for a thick ear?" asked Bolsover major pleasantly.

"You've no right to take Wharton's study," said Mark Linley warmly, "and they won't let you keep it, either!"

"Rats!"

And the new occupants of No. 1 Study went on unheeding. Wharton and Nugent's belongings remained stacked in the passage. Fisher T. Fish strolled away to the Sixth Form passage when he had finished, and looked into Loder's study. Loder of the Sixth had a special "down on Harry Wharton & Co., and he was a prefect, and Fisher T. Fish had a full share of the wisdom of the serpent, though not of the innocence of the dove.

"I say, Loder, I've changed into a new study!" he remarked.

"What the dickens does that matter to me?" said the Sixth-Former politely.

"I guess I've taken Wharton's study, as he hasn't come. First come first served, you know. That's the rule, ain't it?"

Loder grinned.

"Yes, that's the rule," he said.

"I guess those galoots may eat up rusty, but I calculate I'm not going to be done out of my rights," said Fish. "As a prefect, Loder, it's up to you to see that there isn't any—ahem!—bullying."

"Certainly!" said Loder. "You have a right to select your study, and if Wharton chooses to be late, that's his look-out. If he hasn't come, and you've taken the study, right is on your side, and I shall certainly put down any nonsense."

"Right-ho!" said Fish, delighted.

And he departed, grinning. Loder was left grinning, too. The bully of the Sixth would be quite pleased to see Wharton dished out of his study, and he was sure to keep an eye on the Remove passage that evening to put down any "nonsense." And Fisher T. Fish "opined" that he would be quite safe in his new quarters.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Whose Study?

"SILLY old ass!"

Thus Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were tramping to Greyfriars from Courtfield. In spite of the irate general, Bob had not been detained at the station. Inspector Grimes had pooh-poohed the whole matter, and even the general, when he was a little calmer, realised that he was making himself ridiculous. After a considerable delay the matter had been dropped, and the juniors started for Greyfriars.

"Silly old ass!" repeated Bob Cherry. "Rather a surprise for him to find that my charge against him was as good as his charge against me. That old chap didn't have enough lickings when he was a kid. And now we shall be late for tea."

"Never mind. All's well that ends well," said Nugent. "I wonder what became of Bunter?"

"Sneaked off when it looked like trouble, of course!" growled Johnny Bull. "He's at Greyfriars an hour ago."

"We shall find him ready for tea!" grinned Nugent.

"All serene! We're in lots of time for roll-call," said Harry Wharton. "It might have been worse."

The juniors arrived at Greyfriars. There was a buzz as they entered the School House.



"Hullo! You fellows at work?" said Bolsover. "I hope we sha'n't interrupt you with a four-handed mill—what?" And the mill commenced—with shouting and trampling and bumping the table—and Wharton and Nugent did their work as best they could. (See Chapter 12.)

"Hullo! Not in the cells after all?" exclaimed Skinner.

"We were going to have a whip-round to bail you out!" chortled Snoop.

"Did you pay the fine?" asked Stott.

"Forty bob or a month! Ha, ha, ha!"

"So Bunter's been jawing already!" growled Bob Cherry. "And he was the cause of all the trouble, with his rotten ventriloquism."

"Ah! You are late!" said Mr. Quelch, meeting the juniors in the passage.

"Sorry, sir! We were unavoidably detained," said Wharton.

"Very well—very well!"

Harry Wharton had brought in a parcel from the bunshop in Courtfield. The five juniors were quite ready for tea. They proceeded to the Remove passage, some of the fellows grinning after them. A surprise was awaiting the captain of the Remove.

"Hullo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as he sighted the stack of furniture in the Remove passage.

"What's the name of this little game?"

"Why, that's our stuff!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Somebody's been turning out our study!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in astonishment.

"Breaking up the 'appy 'ome!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I suppose they've been cleaning the study. But they might have put the sticks back. Better come along to my study for tea."

"But there's somebody in our quarters," said Harry, as THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 452.

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he heard voices within; and he opened the door of No. 1 and looked in.

The table—another table—was spread in No. 1 Study, and three juniors were seated at it having their tea. Bolsover major and Bunter and Fish had made themselves quite at home. The Famous Five regarded them in astonishment.

Bolsover major looked round with a frown.

"Can't you knock at a chap's door before coming in?" he demanded.

"Why should I knock at my own door?" said Harry.

"It isn't your door! It happens to be my study!" said the bully of the Remove coolly. "And when you've done staring into my study you can hook it!"

"Your study?"

"Yes! Getting deaf?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Bunter.

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"This is my study, Bolsover," he said quietly.

"Mine this term," yawned Bolsover.

"I guess it's ours, Wharton. First come first served, you know. That's business!"

Harry Wharton set down his parcel in the passage. There was a certain amount of reason in Fishy's contention. The studies did not belong to anybody in particular, and were sometimes changed for a new term. If two fellows could not settle on the ownership of a study, they generally decided the matter by fisticuffs. Wharton was quite willing to settle it that way if the invaders of No. 1 insisted upon it.

"I calculate you should hop in sooner if you wanted to

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choose a study," continued Fisher T. Fish. "You're late, and you've got left. That's all!"

"It's Bunter's fault we were late," said Harry. "He got us into a row with his ventriloquism."

"Well, you're late," said Bolsover. "That's the long and the short of it! Would you mind shutting my door? There's a draught."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Bob Cherry.

"The cheekfulness is terrific. I suggest ejecting the esteemed rotters neckfully," remarked the nabob.

"If this is a joke, we'll take it as one, Bolsover," said Harry. "But we want the study."

"You can wait!"

"Is it a joke?"

"Not at all."

"Business from the word 'go,' I guess."

"You've cleared our furniture out, and shoved your own things in!" exclaimed Frank Nugent indignantly.

"Of course! We don't want your sticks here!"

"And we don't want you here!" said Wharton wrathfully. "You're going to clear out of our study!"

"I'm waiting for you to clear out of my study," observed Bolsover major.

"I guess you can go further along the passage. There's room for everybody, you know."

"He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton stepped in, looking very determined.

"Are you going out?" he asked.

"No!" roared Bolsover.

"I guess not."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I warn you that you'll be put out if you don't go!" said Harry angrily.

Bolsover major rose to his feet. It had never been quite settled—to Bolsover's satisfaction at least—whether he or Wharton was the better fighting-man. Bolsover was of a bulldog nature, and he was always ready to put it to the test again.

"Any chap that can put me out is welcome to do it!" he remarked.

"I guess law and order's on our side, Wharton," remonstrated Fisher T. Fish. "You'll have the prefects on your track if you kick up a shindy, I warn you."

"Are you going?"

"Nope."

"Oh, pile in!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm ready for tea. You take that Yankee worm, and Nugent can take Bunter, and I'll take Bolsover."

"Leave Bolsover to me!" said Harry.

"Come on!" roared Bolsover.

The captain of the Remove came on fast enough. He grasped Bolsover, and Bolsover grasped him, and they struggled.

A crowd of Removites gathered round the doorway, looking on with interest. There were some fellows in the Remove who enjoyed seeing Wharton dished. But the general sympathy was on the side of the old owners of No. 1 Study. It was generally regarded as mean to bag a fellow's study because he happened to be late, though the strict letter of the law was on the side of the baggers.

Bob Cherry seized Fisher T. Fish and whirled him to the doorway. The thin, weedy Fish was not much use in Bob's grasp. He went through the doorway like a stone from a catapult, and there was a hasty clearing back of the fellows outside to give him room to fall. Fisher T. Fish came down with a bump, and roared.

"Yow-woop! Yow! I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you, you galoot!"

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter, as he went whirling doorwards in Frank Nugent's grip. "I—I say, you know, I was only j-j-joking! Yaroooh!"

Bump! Billy Bunter landed on Fisher T. Fish, and the unhappy Yankee junior gave a suffocated yell as he was squashed on the floor.

But Percy Bolsover was made of sterner stuff. He was putting up a terrific fight, and Harry Wharton had his hands full. They crashed into the table, and set it rocking. There was a clatter of tea-things into the fender, where they smashed merrily. The table went over, and the chairs followed it, and the combatants crashed into the bookcase, and a shower of books thundered down on them.

"Go it!" roared the juniors in the passage, in great delight. It was quite an exciting opening of the new term for the Remove.

"Go it, Bolsover!" howled Snoop.

"Chuck him out, Wharton!"

"Hurrah!"

"Shall I lend you a hand?" asked Bob.

Wharton panted.

"No! I can manage him!"

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The struggle was, as Hurree Singh remarked, terrific. The study was looking a wreck already. But the combatants were gradually approaching the door. Bolsover major, in spite of his furious resistance, was well on the way to being chucked out. They came whirling into the doorway at last, and the juniors cleared back. But there Percy Bolsover rallied, and the struggle went back, only to come doorwards again as Wharton put all his beef into it.

Crash!

Bolsover major was out at last. He rolled on the floor, gasping for breath, quite spent with his terrific efforts. Wharton panted in the doorway.

"Hurrah!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Chuck their rubbish out!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Lend a hand, my esteemed chums."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major sat up, as a shower of books and other property landed round him in the passage. There was a chirrup from the direction of the stairs.

"Cave! Prefect!"

Loder of the Sixth strode upon the scene, with a wrathful brow and an ashplant in his hand.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Turned Out!

"STOP this, at once!" thundered Loder.

The shouting and laughter died away. The matter became serious with the arrival of a prefect upon the scene.

Loder glared at the juniors.

"Now, what's this thumping row about?" he exclaimed.

"I guess those galoots are turning us out of our study," groaned Fisher T. Fish, who was nursing an assortment of bumps all over his bony person.

"We're chucking them out of our study," said Nugent.

"Groooh!" gasped Bolsover major. That was the only contribution he could make to the discussion at present.

"Oh, a row about a study—what?" said Loder, assuming a judicial manner. "Well, I'll settle it for you. You'll take a hundred lines each for kicking up this row, anyway. Now, whose is the study?"

"Mine and Nugent's," said Wharton.

"Mine!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Mine, I guess."

"You can state your claims, and I will decide," said the prefect. "What is your claim to the study, Wharton?"

"It was mine last term."

"That has nothing to do with it."

"Well, you see—"

"You claim the study, Bolsover?"

"Grooh!"

"Do you claim the study?"

"Yow-ow! Yes. It's mine. I took it before these fellows came," gasped Bolsover. "I suppose a Greyfriars study ain't their personal property?"

"Certainly not! Wharton and Nugent have no right to it whatever, simply because it was theirs last term."

"Oh!" said Wharton.

"The study belongs to whoever occupied it first on coming back," said Loder. "Who was that?"

"Us, I guess."

"Did you find these fellows in possession of the study when you arrived, Wharton?"

"Yes."

"Then you have no claim whatever to the study," said Loder coolly. "I'm surprised at you, Wharton! As head boy of the Remove you ought to know better."

"But it's my study!" shouted Wharton.

"It is not your study. It belongs to Fish, Bunter, and Bolsover. You have no claim to it at all. Let there be no more of this!"

"But we're going to have our study!" howled Nugent.

Loder raised his hand.

"If Bolsover and Fish and Bunter are not left in peaceable possession of this study you will have to deal with me!" he said.

"But, look here—"

"If there is any further attempt to use force in the matter, I shall report you to the Head!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And now let's have no more rowing," said Loder. "I shall expect those lines by tea-time to-morrow."

And Loder strode away.

"Shame!" growled Squiff.

"Rotten!"

"Bag the study all the same," suggested Hazeldene.

Wharton shook his head.

The prefect's decision was final; Loder had authority on

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

his side. And it could not be denied that Bolsover & Co. had a certain specious claim. They had a right to take any study that was unoccupied on their arrival, though, as they knew that Wharton and Nugent wanted their old quarters, it was a mean advantage to take. It was certain that the Head would uphold Loder's decision, if the matter was taken before him—not that Wharton wanted it to be taken before Dr. Locke.

"So we're going to be done out of our study!" growled Nugent wrathfully.

"Dash it all, don't be such a cad, Bolsover!" said Mark Linely. "You know very well that Wharton ought to have the study."

"Mind your own business!" grunted Bolsover major.

He went back into the study, and Fisher T. Fish and Bunter limped in after him, the Famous Five making no move to stop them.

"Well, this is a go!" said Bob Cherry. "Come along to No. 13 to tea, anyway, and we'll talk it over."

Harry Wharton nodded, and the chums of the Remove went along to Bob's study. The furniture remained stacked outside No. 1 for the present.

Bolsover & Co. had won the day.

But they were not rejoicing much in their victory. They retained possession of the stolen study; but Bunter and Fish were groaning over their bumps, and Bolsover, who had been hurt in the terrific scrap with Wharton, was in a decidedly bad temper. He glared round the wrecked study, and growled. He was more determined than ever to keep possession of the study, but it did not look very hospitable at the present moment.

"Pretty state of things!" he growled. "Get this study to rights, you two!"

"Eh?"

"Buck up!" said Bolsover savagely. "Look at the grub, trampled on. Lot of good that is now! I'll go down to the tuck-shop while you're getting the study to rights. Mind it's tidy when I come back."

Bolsover major tramped out.

Fisher T. Fish and Bunter did not set to work clearing up the wreckage. They sat and rubbed their injuries, and groaned.

When Bolsover major came back with his new purchases for tea he found them still mumbling over their injuries, and the study in the same state. He gave a howl of wrath.

"Why haven't you cleared up the study?" he roared.

"Yow-ow! I guess I ain't feeling up to anything."

"Wow-wow! I'm injured!" groaned Bunter.

Bolsover major set down his parcel and picked up a cricket-stump.

"Where will you have it?" he asked.

"I—I say—oh, really, you know——"

"I guess—— Yaroooh!" roared Fisher T. Fish, dodging the stump wildly. "Let up, you galoot! Chuck it, you mugwump! Yooooop!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Now set this study to rights!" roared Bolsover major.

Fisher T. Fish and Bunter found that they were able to do it, after all. Under the eye of the bully of the Remove they cleared up the wreckage. The study was in order at last, and Bolsover unpacked his purchases. The three study-mates sat down to tea.

But as Bunter was about to help himself, Bolsover major rapped his fat knuckles sharply.

"Let that grub alone, you fat thief!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, really, Bolsover! I'm going to have tea, you know!"

"You're going to have whatever you stand yourself," said Bolsover. "You're not going to sponge on me as you used to last term on Todd in No. 7."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"I guess——" began Fisher T. Fish.

"If you guess that you're going to have any of my grub, you can guess again," said Bolsover major. "Let me catch your skinny paws on it, that's all."

Fisher T. Fish wisely kept his skinny paws away. He made a journey to the tuck-shop for supplies. But Billy Bunter was in a state of dismay. His last available coins had already gone to the tuck-shop, and he was ready for tea.

"I—I say, Bolsover, old chap!" he began.

"Don't call me Bolsover, old chap!" growled the bully of the Remove. "I don't like it from you."

"Oh, really, old fellow—— Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as he received a cuff.

He gave Bolsover a furious blink, and rolled out of the study. He blinked in at No. 7, where Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were at tea. But he had no time to say that he had come to tea. Peter Todd caught up a cushion and hurled it with deadly aim, and Bunter went into the passage like a skittle. There was no welcome for the study-stealer in his old quarters.

He drifted back disconsolately to No. 1. Fisher F. Fish and Bolsover were still at tea. Bunter blinked in.

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"THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I say, I'm stony, you know——"

"Then you're not wanted here at tea-time," said Bolsover major. "Get out!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"I give you two seconds," said Bolsover, reaching for the stump.

One second was enough for Billy Bunter. He rolled away in a state of fury and dismay. It dawned upon him that, though he had succeeded admirably in dishing Wharton, he was not likely to enjoy sharing with Bolsover and Fisher T. Fish the stolen study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Trade!

THE next day No. 1 Study was still in the hands of its new owners, and the Remove fellows wondered what Wharton would do about it.

It was quite certain that the captain of the Remove would not take this bagging of his old quarters peaceably.

At present Wharton and Nugent were digging in No. 14 with Johnny Bull and Squiff, who made them heartily welcome there, and found them a pleasant change after Fisher T. Fish.

The Famous Five had held a council of war on the subject, and it was decided nem. con. that No. 1 Study had to be re-captured.

It was not only for the sake of the study, but because, as Bob remarked, the famous Co. couldn't possibly take it lying down. Bolsover & Co. had to be ejected from their stolen quarters. But exactly how it was to be done was a question. Wharton was quite prepared to fight the bully of the Remove regularly every day, if that would have done it. But that would not do it. Bolsover's possession of the study was confirmed by authority, and he could not be pitched out on his neck.

Neither could he be persuaded to do what all the Remove considered he ought to do. Bolsover major was a believer in

"The good old law, the simple plan,

That they should take who have the power,

And they should keep who can."

Bolsover major was sticking to the study, and the fact that his action was considered mean only made him all the more determined. His study-mates, perhaps, were not quite so determined. Fisher T. Fish had a business deal in his mind, of which the juniors were to learn later. As for Billy Bunter, he was already tired of Bolsover as a study-mate. Bolsover having plenty of money, Bunter had expected No. 1 Study to be a land flowing with milk and honey. But Bolsover declined to pay Bunter's whack, and he made it clearly understood that unless Bunter paid his share he would not taste a morsel in the study. Bunter's first raid on the cupboard was punished with a cricket-stump, and Bunter crawled away afterwards feeling that life was hardly worth living.

There was nothing for the Owl of the Remove in No. 1 Study, and his old quarters, No. 7, were barred against him. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were quite pleased to be relieved of him. Bunter intended to drop in to tea occasionally, but a boot or a bat generally met him, and he did not carry out those friendly intentions. The Co., too, were down on Bunter, and his borrowings in that direction were stopped. So the Owl of the Remove had little occasion to congratulate himself upon his success during the next few days.

Harry Wharton & Co. turned the matter over in their minds, and weighed it up, and considered-pros and cons, but they simply could not think of a dodge for reclaiming the study. They had to bide their time.

It was towards the end of the week that Fisher T. Fish came to business. Johnny Bull and Squiff and Wharton and Nugent were considerably crowded in No. 14, which was only large enough for three, and not too large for that number. Fisher T. Fish considered that the juniors were probably fed-up with crowding by that time, and he came to business. He looked for Wharton after lessons on Friday with an affable grin.

"I guess I'm going to make a trade with you galoots," he began.

"Sheer off!" growled Wharton.

"But I guess——"

Wharton and Nugent walked away. The Yankee junior hurried after them.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "I guess I'm open for business. I calculate you galoots want your study back?"

The two juniors stopped.

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



The table was spread in No. 1 Study ; and three juniors were seated at it, having their tea. Bolsover major and Bunter and Fish had made themselves quite at home, and the Famous Five regarded them in astonishment. (See Chapter 5.)

"Are you going to give it back, you worm?" asked Nugent. "Waal, I guess I might be induced to go back to my old quarters," said Fisher T. Fish. "I can't say I'm in love with Bolsover as a study-mate, and that fat clam Bunter is always after a galoot's grub. What's the study worth to you?"

"Worth!" repeated Wharton, puzzled.

"Yep! Suppose I absquatulate——"

"Suppose you what?"

"Light out, you know, and give it up. What's that worth?"

"You don't mean to say that you want paying to give up our study?" exclaimed Nugent.

"I guess that's a rotten way of putting it, Nugent! I reckon I'm open to trade. You want a study. I've got the study. Let's do business. I'm open to sell my share in that study for ten dollars."

"Why, you mean rotter——"

"Hard words break no bones, I reckon," said Fisher T. Fish, unmoved. "I'm open to trade for ten dollars."

"Does that include Bolsover and Bunter?"

"I guess I'm speaking for myself. My whack in the study goes for ten dollars," said Fisher T. Fish. "Cheap, I call it, if you want the study. I don't mind going back to No. 14—I guess I can stand Bull and Field, if it's made worth my while. Ten dollars is the figure—that's two quid in your weird money. Is it a trade?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I guess I could allow you a discount for spot cash," said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "Lood hyer! If one of you takes my place in the study you can make it jolly uncomfortable for the other two, and make 'em glad to clear out perhaps. I'll take nine dollars spot cash."

"Rats!"

"I guess that's a good offer," said Fisher T. Fish indig-

nantly. "Don't be mean! Nine dollars won't hurt you. And think what a time you could give Bolsover and Bunter in the same study!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Well, if you won't trade, you won't," said Fish. "You're crowding Bull and Field in their quarters, you know that. Look hyer! Nine dollars ain't exactly the rock-bottom price. What'll you give me?"

Wharton and Nugent exchanged a glance.

"Well, I suppose we could give you something," said Wharton thoughtfully.

"Go ahead!" said the Yankee junior eagerly. "I guess I'm a business man, and I'm open to hear any business offer. What'll you give me, you galoots?"

"We'll give you a jolly good bumping for being a measly rotter!"

"Eh! Hyer, I say—leggo!" roared Fisher T. Fish, as the chums of the Remove grasped him. "Let up! You hear me? Yaroo!"

Bump!

"Oh, Jerusalem! I guess I'll make sawdust of you. Let up!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

Bump, bump!

"I'll make potato scrapings of you if you get my mad up!" yelled Fish. "Will you leggo? Yaroo!"

Bump, bump!

"Oh, gee-whiz!"

Wharton and Nugent walked away laughing, leaving the enterprising

Yankee sitting on the ground, gasping wildly. Fisher T. Fish shook a bony fist after them as he gasped for breath.

"Yow-ow! You mugwumps!" he stuttered. "Yow-ow-ow-ow!" I've a jolly good mind to go after the galoots and make potato-scrapings of them! Yow-wow-wow!"

Fisher T. Fish staggered up, breathless. But on second thoughts he decided not to make potato-scrapings of the chums of the Remove. The process would have been too painful—for Fisher T. Fish!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Squiff to the Rescue!

"GOT it!"

Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, of New South Wales, uttered that exclamation in triumphant tones.

The four juniors were at tea in the study, and Wharton had recounted Fisher T. Fish's business-like offer of his share in No. 1 Study for ten dollars, or nine dollars spot cash. Whereupon Squiff burst into a chuckle, and announced that he had "got it."

"Got what?" asked Wharton. "A dodge for getting our study back, do you mean?"

"A dodge for getting Fishy's whack in it," said Squiff. "That's a beginning. Divide and conquer, you know. If you get Fishy out, and one of you in, that's a beginning. It won't be nice for you to dig with Bolsover and Bunter, but you may be able to get rid of them later on. Accept Fishy's offer!"

"Thirty-five bob for that measly cad!" howled Nugent.

"Yes. You see——"

"I don't see! I know I'm not handing him my pocket-money for weeks to come, for a share in my own study."

"Off-side, Squiff!" said Wharton, with a shake of the head. "Can't be did. The Yankee isn't going to make a bargain out of us!"

"Can't you let a fellow finish?" demanded Squiff. "I haven't told you the wheeze yet."

"Oh, if you've got a wheeze—"

"Lend me your ears, fathead!"

The juniors lent their ears, and the Australian Remoyito explained. There was a roar of laughter in No. 1 when he had finished.

"Ripping!" exclaimed Wharton heartily.

"Topping!" chuckled Nugent.

"First-rate!" grinned Johnny Bull. "It will be outyanking the Yankee, by Jove!"

Squiff gave a satisfied chuckle.

"Always come to New South Wales for your ideas!" he advised.

"Bow-wow! I'll go and look for Fishy now," said Wharton, rising from the table. "We'll strike the iron while it's hot. Come on, Franky!"

The two juniors hurried out in search of Fisher T. Fish. They found him in No. 1 Study, having his tea with Bolsover major. Billy Bunter was not there. Bunter was out of funds, as usual, and was looking for some study hospitable enough to stand him a tea—like a lion seeking what he might devour.

"I don't remember asking you into this study,"

said Bolsover major, as he saw the chums at the door.

"We've come to speak to Fishy. Fishy—"

"Hallo! Ready to trade?" asked the Yankee junior.

"Yes."

"Good! I guess I'll come."

Fisher T. Fish hastily joined them in the passage. He did not want to discuss the "trade" in the presence of Bolsover major. Bolsover might have put his foot down on it, and Fishy had a great respect for Bolsover's big fists. It was wiser to carry that business transaction through without Bolsover's knowledge.

"Waal," said Fish, drawing the two juniors into the window recess, "what's your offer? You handled me, I guess, when I wanted to trade, but I don't bear malice; that ain't business. But the price of that study has gone up."

"Gone up!"

"You bet! Prices do go up in war-time," grinned Fisher T. Fish. "The price of that study is now twelve dollars."

"You welshing worm—"

"Twelve dollars spot cash, I guess! Take it or leave it!"

"How much is that in civilised money?" growled Nugent.

"Two-pound-ten, I reckon."

"Two-pounds-eight," said Wharton.

"Make it even money. I'll take two-pound-ten; and cheap at the price, if you want the goods."

Wharton shook his head.

"Money's limited," he said. "Nugent and I have a pound each. That's two pounds, what you call ten dollars. Take it or leave it!"

"I guess I'll leave it."

"Then go and eat coke!"

"So-long!" said Fisher T. Fish. He made a couple of steps towards the study, expecting to be called back. As



"Keep that cricket-bat away from me, you galoot, or I'll make potato-scrappings of you! Ow! Oh! Ah! Yah!" Fisher T. Fish departed hurriedly from the study, helped by Squiff's bat, shedding books on all sides. (See Chapter 9.)

he was not called back, however, he turned back. "I guess you galoots drive a hard bargain," he said. "Make it eleven dollars."

"Ten!" said Harry Wharton.

"Ten and a half!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Two pounds!" said Wharton firmly.

"Spot cash?" asked Fish, hesitating.

He was inclined to hang out the bargaining, but the temptation of ready money was too strong for him. If the money was spent, the bargain would be off, and money was not likely to remain in junior pockets for long. Fisher T. Fish was under the necessity of striking the iron while it was hot, if he was to secure his profit at all.

"Ready money, if that's what you mean by spot cash," said Harry.

"It's a trade!"

Fisher T. Fish held out a bony hand.

"Hold on a minute!" said Nugent. "We've got to have witnesses."

"I guess I don't go back on a bargain."

"You might. You're so jolly cute in New York, you know. Here, Toddy—Linley—Ogilvy!"

The three juniors came up.

"You're witnesses," said Wharton. "We're giving Fishy two quids for his share in No. 1 Study—ten dollars spot cash."

"Well, the mean skunk!" commented Ogilvy.

"I guess it's business, you galoot!"

"We're witnesses," said Peter Todd. "We'll see that the worm keeps his bargain, if we see the money paid over."

Harry Wharton solemnly handed over two currency notes, Fishy's skinny fingers closing greedily upon them.

"Done!" said Wharton.

"Yep! The study's yours, far as I'm concerned," said Fisher T. Fish. "You can explain to Bolsover. He mayn't like it; but that's his funeral."

And Fisher T. Fish shoved the money into his pocket-book, and walked away in a state of high satisfaction.

Harry Wharton proceeded to No. 1 Study, and walked in. He received a glare from Bolsover major.

"What do you want here?" demanded Bolsover.

"Fishy's changed with me," said Wharton calmly. "I'm sharing this study now."

"Why, the rotter, he didn't tell me—"

"Well, I tell you."

"I'm not going to have you here!" roared Bolsover major. Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't quite see how you'll help it. I don't think you'll get even Loder to say that Fishy can't change out of the study if he wants to."

"I didn't bring Loder into it!" growled Bolsover major. "That was Fishy. Look here, you don't want to be my study-mate?"

"Not at all! You're welcome to get out!"

Bolsover major snorted, and went on with his tea. He did not intend to get out. Neither did Wharton, for that matter. They were study-mates now, and there were certain to be troublous times so long as that arrangement lasted.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Yankee Yanked!

SQUIFF and Johnny Bull were chatting in No. 14 when the door opened and Fisher T. Fish presented himself, with a pile of books under either arm.

The two juniors stared at him.

"Hallo! What do you want?" asked Field.

"I guess I'll come back."

"Come back!" repeated Johnny Bull. "What the dickens do you mean? You don't belong to this study."

"I calculate you haven't forgotten that I shared this study last term."

"Last term! That's got nothing to do with this term, has it?"

"I guess—"

"You told Wharton it hadn't, when he wanted his study," said Squiff. "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, my Yankee pippin! Bull and I have bagged this study for the term."

"Hey?"

"And we're not looking for study-mates," said Johnny Bull. "We're giving Wharton and Nugent house-room till they get their study back. But we don't want rotten neutrals in this study!"

"Look hyer, this is my study—"

"Quite a mistake. It isn't!"

"Wharton's gone back to No. 1," explained Fisher T. Fish. "You've got room for one more now. I dare say Nugent will go back sooner or later, and then we shall be just as we used to be."

"Hardly!" said Squiff. "We had to stand you last term; but this term you've changed out of your own accord, and you're not coming back!"

"Look hyer, I guess—"

"Take those books out, or we'll pitch you out and the books after you!"

"Look hyer, this is my study!" roared Fisher T. Fish,

greatly dismayed at having his own tactics turned upon himself. "I guess I'm coming back to my own study. Keep that cricket-bat away from me, you galoot, or I'll make potato-scrappings of you! Ow! Oh! Ah! Yah!"

Fisher T. Fish departed hurriedly from the study, helped by Squiff's bat, shedding books on all sides.

"You can come back when you want some more!" called out Squiff, and he slammed the study door.

"Waal, I swow!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish, in utter dismay.

He gathered up his books in the passage disconsolately. It had not even occurred to his cute Yankee brain that his former study-mates would refuse to take him back. The excessive sharpness he showed towards others came as a surprise to him when it was turned against himself. He stood for some minutes in thought, realising with dismay that he was homeless. His old study was barred to him, and his new study had been traded away. He had no study at all, and he knew how little likely any Remove fellow was to admit him to his quarters. But he had to have a study. It was getting near time for preparation even now.

The cute Yankee was not at all likely to be welcomed with open arms by any Removites, but he resolved to make the attempt. He looked into No. 13 first, where Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh, Mark Linley and little Wun Lung were settling down to their evening's work. He found the four juniors grinning, and guessed that they already knew the state of affairs. Indeed, it was dawning upon Fisher T. Fish's brain now that Wharton had known what was going to happen, and that that was why he had consented to the "trade."

"You fellows got room for a chap?" asked Fish persuasively.

"Not for a neutral!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Go and offer somebody ten dollars for a share in a study, Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish grinned feebly.

"I guess—" he began.

"Go and guess somewhere else!" said Mark. "Shut the door after you!"

"Look hyer, I calculate—"

"The buzz off-fulness is the proper caper, my esteemed, swindling Fishy!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Esteemed and disgusting neutrals are not desired in this august study. I will helpfully assist you with this ruler—"

"Yow-ow! Keep off, you nigger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door closed on Fisher T. Fish. The disconsolate Yankee junior tried Lord Mauleverer's study next. Mauleverer and Delarey were there. They grinned at the sight of him, and Fishy did not need telling that the story had now made the round of the Remove, and that the juniors were ready for him.

"I guess you fellows would like a chap to whack out this study with you," began Fisher T. Fish.

"Then you've guessed wrong, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Kick him out, Delarey, dear boy! I would, only it's too much fag!"

"Certainly!" said Delarey, jumping up.

Fisher T. Fish did not wait to be kicked out. He closed the door hastily, and retreated. He visited the Bounder's study next, and found Vernon-Smith and Skinner ready for him. They hurled cushions at the same moment, and he went into the passage, whirling. He looked into No. 6, and

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found Wibley and Rake and Morgan and Micky Desmond all at home. And with one voice they addressed him:

"Get out!"

And as Dick Rake picked up a ruler to enforce the order, Fisher T. Fish got out.

He did not trouble any more of the studies. There was evidently nothing doing. He stood in the passage and snorted.

To go into the Form-room to do his prep, and to do the same every evening of the term, was not a pleasant prospect. The ten dollars would be very dearly bought at that price. Fisher T. Fish made up his mind to the inevitable, and returned to No. 1. He found Wharton and Bunter and Bolsover there. They were at work on their prep, Bolsover with a scowling face.

"I guess that trade's off, Wharton," said Fisher T. Fish.

Harry Wharton looked up.

"Hallo! What are you burbling about?" he asked.

"I reckon I'll hand you back your ten dollars, and you can vamoose the ranch," said Fish. "I can't do without a study, and those galoots in No. 14 won't let me come back."

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Serve you jolly well right!" growled Bolsover major.

"Hyer's your quids, Wharton."

"They're not my quids," said Wharton coolly. "Take them away, and take yourself away! I don't want you in my study."

"Look hyer——"

"Oh, buzz off, and don't bother!"

"I'm coming back hyer!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"I give you one minute to get outside, quids and all!"

"Waa!, I swow!"

The disconsolate Yankee ambled out again, and made his way to No. 14, to try his eloquence upon Johnny Bull and Squiff once more. Johnny Bull and Squiff and Nugent pointed to the door at once.

"Travel!"

"Look hyer, you can let me in," pleaded Fisher T. Fish.

"Wharton won't take his money back——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And all the galoots along the passage give me the marble eye. I reckon I must squat down somewhere, you know. Let a chap in. We used to be study-mates, you know," said Fisher T. Fish pathetically.

"We might do a trade," said Squiff thoughtfully.

Fisher T. Fish brightened up. A "trade" appealed to all his instincts.

"Now you're talking!" he said heartily. "I guess I'm open to trade. What do you say to a dollar?"

"Rats!"

"Two dollars!" said Fish. "I guess yo'are driving a hard bargain, but I'm a business man. Two dollars, and there you are!"

"Two pounds," said Squiff calmly.

"What!" shrieked Fish.

"It will cost you exactly two pounds to come back to this study," said Squiff, "and you're not welcome at that. But we stood you last term, and we'll stand you again this term—at that figure. Take it or leave it!"

"Five dollars!"

"Shut up!"

"Six!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Get out!"

"Six and a half!" groaned the Yankee junior.

"Hand me that stump, Johnny!"

"Look hyer, a galoot must have a study!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"You can have this at your own price—two quid. Otherwise, get out! Now, are you going?" demanded Squiff, grasping the stump.

Fisher T. Fish groaned dismally. He dragged out Wharton's two currency notes as if they were teeth being extracted.

"There you are, you jay!"

"Good!" said Squiff, picking up the notes. "I know it's awful to have to disgorge stolen goods, Fishy, but such is life. Even Yankees get left sometimes. Here's your quid, Nugent; take the other one and give it to Wharton, will you?"

"What-ho!" grinned Nugent.

Fisher T. Fish started at the Australian.

"Are you giving that money away?" he gasped.

"Why not? It isn't mine. I'm returning it to the owners."

Then Fisher T. Fish understood.

"It's a plant!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you jays! You mugwumps! You galoots!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "You worked this with Wharton all along, to get me out of No. 1 Study for nothing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes; it was a wheeze from New South Wales," grinned Squiff. "I thought we should catch you; and, lo and behold,

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you are caught! And I think I ought to have a medal for out-yanking a Yankee. Don't you think so, Fishy?"

But Fisher T. Fish only grunted dismally. With all his cuteness he had been dished, and had parted with his whack in the stolen study for nothing. And it was quite a long time before Fisher T. Fish recovered his spirits.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Exit Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON was installed in his old study, and it was, as Squiff said, a beginning. The chairs of the Remove were recovering their old quarters on the instalment system, so to speak.

Bolsover major was ratty, but he could not help himself; and Billy Bunter warmly welcomed the captain of the Remove to the study. Billy Bunter anticipated a more hospitable tea-table, but Bunter was disappointed. Bolsover major could not have guarded his supplies more carefully than Wharton did, and the Owl of the Remove discovered that the change was not for the better. And Bunter did not find the study comfortable at all. Bolsover was a very unpleasant study-mate. Bunter had to fag for him, and to accept an occasional kick or cuff when the bully of the Remove was in a bad temper—as was frequently the case. And when Wharton was called upon to interfere, he declined.

So long as Bunter remained an inmate of No. 1 Study Bunter had to take his chance, and he took it—and the cuffs and kicks along with it. The Owl of the Remove repented very sincerely of his sharp practice, and he gave Peter Todd many hints that he was willing to return to his old quarters. But Peter did not take the hints. He openly rejoiced in having got rid of Bunter, and often mentioned to him that No. 7 was a much more agreeable place now.

The unhappy Owl fell into the habit of having his tea in Hall. And what was tea in Hall to a fellow like him? as he pathetically asked. Bunter could have disposed of three or four teas in Hall every day. A few days after Wharton's return to the study Bolsover was late in to tea, and when Bunter came in he found Wharton at tea by himself.

"I say, Harry, old chap, I'm stony," said Bunter lugubriously.

"You don't say so?"

"I do, you know. I suppose you couldn't lend a chap five bob?"

"Quite right; I couldn't."

"I see you've got two eggs there," said Bunter. "I suppose one of them's for me?"

"Something wrong with your supposer, then," said Wharton cheerfully.

"I say, I'm hungry!"

"Go and have tea in Hall, then."

"I've had tea in Hall," growled Bunter. "Measly spread—chunks of thick bread-and-butter and one bit of cake! Poof! I want a real tea now. Look here, I'll have tea with you, Wharton."

"You won't!"

"That beast Bolsover has got a lot of tommy in the cupboard," said Bunter. "But the beast keeps it locked. He's no right to lock up my study cupboard. My hat! It's open! Somebody's busted the cupboard door open!"

"I did. I wanted my tea."

"Oh!" Billy Bunter made a jump at the cupboard. "I say, Wharton, I'm going to help myself. No business of yours, you know."

"None at all," agreed Harry.

Bunter was not long in helping himself. There might be a painful interview with Percy Bolsover to follow; but Bunter was only thinking of his inner Bunter just now. He travelled through Bolsover's good things at express speed. He was finishing the last crumbs when the hully of the Remove came in.

Bolsover major seemed transfixed for a moment as he saw how Bunter was occupied.

"You fat villain!" he roared.

Bunter spun round.

"Oh, I—I say, Bolsover, old chap——"

"You've burgled the cupboard!" roared Bolsover.

"I—I didn't! Wharton did!" spluttered Bunter.

"You did?" shouted Bolsover major, turning furiously on the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton nodded calmly.

"Yes. I wanted my things, and it was locked."

"And now that fat burglar's scooped my tommy!"

"Unfortunate, isn't it?" said Wharton cheerfully.

"Well, I'll take it out of his hide!" growled Bolsover.

"I—I say—— Help! Help! Yooop!"

Bolsover major took Bunter's collar in his left hand and a cricket-stump in his right. Bunter's yells rang through the study.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Wharton, you rotter, lemme a hand! Help! Rescue! Yow-wowwoop!"

Harry Wharton did not stir from the table. He went on with his tea.

"Help!" shrieked Bunter, as the cricket-stump played on his fat person. "Yah, leggo you bully! Wharton!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Harry. "What a row you're making!"

"Help me, you beast! Draggimoff!"

"What the dickens are you grumbling at, Bunter? You chose Bolsover as a study-mate, didn't you? So long as you're in this study you've got to stand him."

"Yow-wow! I'll change out! Draggimoff!"

Wharton smiled, and went on with his tea. Billy Bunter was yelling when he escaped from Bolsover major at last. He crawled out of the study.

It was the last straw. The Owl of the Remove was fed-up with No. 1 Study. He crawled dismally into No. 7, his old quarters. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton had not yet come in. Billy Bunter went to the cupboard; but he remembered Peter's heavy hand, and paused. He had had enough "stumping" from Bolsover major.

But a fat grin overspread his face as an idea came into his mind. He proceeded to set the table, without helping himself to Peter's supplies. Then he looked into No. 1 again.

"I say, Wharton, lend me two bob!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'm going to change out," said Bunter pathetically. "I'm going back to No. 7, if Toddy will have me. I—I'm going to get tea ready for him, and—and touch his heart, you know. Do lend me a few bob for once!"

Wharton burst into a laugh.

"Honest Injun?" he asked.

"Honest Injun!" groaned Bunter.

Wharton tossed a half-crown across the table. Getting rid of Bunter was cheap at the price.

The Owl's fat fingers closed on the half-crown, and he scudded away to the tuckshop. Then he was very busy in No. 7 Study, from which an appetising smell of frying rashers soon proceeded.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton came in hungry from a cycle-ride, and they stared as they entered the study. The table was laid—hot buttered toast was keeping warm in the fender, and rashers and eggs were ready. The kettle was singing, the teapot was warm—all was prepared.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Peter.

"Oh, good!" said Dutton.

Billy Bunter blinked at them nervously.

"I—I say, you fellows, tea's ready," he stammered.

"But what are you doing here?" demanded Peter.

"Getting your tea ready, old chap," said Bunter affectionately.

"Where did you get all that stuff?"

"I—I'm standing it."

"You're standing a feed!" exclaimed Peter, hardly able to believe his ears. "You've got that ready for us, and haven't scoffed it yourself? Well, my only sainted aunt!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"I suppose that means that you want to come back into the study?" said Peter grimly.

"Ahem! I—I know you want me back, Toddy."

"No, I don't!"

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo! What are you he-he-he-ing about?"

"Your—your little joke!" said Bunter feebly. "I know you want me back, Toddy, and—and I couldn't give my old pals the go-by. And—and I'm standing a feed, you know. I—I say, Toddy, you're not going to be a beast, are you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "So you're fed-up with stealing another chap's study—what?"

"It's a ripping spread, ain't it, Toddy?" said Bunter persuasively. "And—and I knew you'd be hungry, old chap. And—and you had only sardines in the cupboard, and—and I haven't touched them."

Peter Todd chuckled.

"Well, I think you've had a lesson," he said thoughtfully. "You can come back—on conditions. You'll go to Nugent, and tell him you're sorry you acted like a measly cad, and ask him as a special favour to take his study back."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"And I'll come with you and see that you do it."

"I—I don't mind," mumbled Bunter. "I—I'd do anything to oblige an old pal like you, Toddy."

"You'd better! And I'll undertake to lick you, for your own good, whenever you need it, so long as you're in the study."

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DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 14.

"Oh!"

Frank Nugent was surprised to receive a visit from the two juniors a few minutes later. He was still more surprised when he learned its object.

"I say, Nugent," mumbled Bunter. "I'm sorry I acted like a measly cad about your study—"

"Wha-a-at!" ejaculated the astonished Nugent.

"And—and will you, as a special favour, take your study back again?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That'll do," said Peter approvingly.

"I'll take it!" grinned Nugent. "Are you taking that fat beast into No. 7, Toddy? Sorry for you!"

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Peter. "I'm going to make a man of Bunter; I keep an old stump in the study specially for him. Come on, Bunter!"

And in No. 7 Study all was calm and bright once more. And when Bolsover major came into No. 1 to do his prep, he found Wharton and Nugent at work there. He gave Frank Nugent a glare.

"Look here, I'm not going to have Wharton's friends doing their prep in this study!" he exclaimed. "You can cut off, Nugent!"

"My study now," said Frank calmly. "Bunter's changed out, and he's asked me as a special favour to take his whack in this study."

"Look here!" roared Bolsover.

"Oh, shut up! I'm working!"

"I tell you—"

"Dry up!"

Bolsover major snorted, and sat down to his work. Wharton and Nugent had started early, and they were finished before Bolsover major was half through. They began an animated discussion of the coming football season—which was very agreeable for a fellow wrestling with Latin verbs. Bolsover gave them a Hunnish glare.

"Can't you shut up while a fellow's working?" he demanded.

Wharton shook his head.

"No. If you don't like this study, you can go back to your own, I suppose."

"Look here, I've got to work!"

"Go ahead! We're not stopping you."

"I can't do my prep while you're jawing!" yelled Bolsover.

"How unlucky!" said Wharton calmly. "Now, about putting Hazel in goal—I think it's a good idea. I'm going to try Rake at half-back."

"Ogilvy ought to have a chance in the matches, too," remarked Nugent. "And then there's Russell—"

"Will you shut up, or not?" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, not!"

"Not at all!"

"Then I'll jolly well make you!"

"Ha, ha! Go ahead!"

Bolsover major jumped up, but he sat down again. It was really too big an order to make the two juniors shut up. And the talk ran on without a pause while the unhappy bully of the Remove struggled through his prep. Bolsover major was not a bright youth, and he had difficulties anyway. It was borne in upon Bolsover's mind that if this kind of thing was to continue he would really be better off in his old study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover's Price!

"WHAT in thunder are you fellows doing here?"

Bolsover major asked that question the next evening when he came into Study No. 1. Bolsover was late for prep, as usual—he generally slacked about in the evening, and left his work till he had only just time to scurry through it before bed. He found Study No. 1 crowded.

Wharton and Nugent, of course, were there, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Vernon-Smith and Tom Brown and Squiff. And there was a buzz of talk.

"It's a meeting of the football committee," explained Wharton.

"I've got my prep to do."

"Well, go ahead and do it!"

"Your rotten footer committee can't meet in my study while I'm doing my prep!"

"The committee is meeting in my study," said Wharton calmly. "You can go on with your prep so long as don't interrupt us. If you do, you'll be chucked out."

"I suppose this is a dodge to get me out of the study?" howled Bolsover. "Well, I can tell you it won't work!"

"Shush!" said Squiff. "You mustn't interrupt the footer committee when it's met for business."

"I'm sticking to this study!" roared Bolsover major.
"Well, stick away, and shut up!"
"You silly idiots have got to shut up! I can't work with you silly asses gabbling away like a Cabinet Council!" yelled Bolsover.

"Hard lines on you!" said Squiff. "We're goin' on gabbling."

"Yes, rather!"

Bolsover major gave the football committee a Hunnish look. It was simply impossible to work in such circumstances, and leaving the work undone meant having an unhappy time with Mr. Quelch in the morning. Bolsover major snorted with fury, and took his books out of the study to work in the Form-room. That was his only resource. And Wharton grinned and kicked the door shut after him.

The next morning after lessons Bolsover major joined the captain of the Remove in the quadrangle.

"You've been making the arrangements about the footer?" he asked.

Wharton nodded.

"What about me?"

"Nothing about you," said Wharton. "You're not going to be in the Remove team, of course."

"You mean that you're going to make a set against me in the footer, the same as in the cricket?" sneered Bolsover.

"I mean that you're not good enough for the Form team."

"You think that there's a better back in the Remove than I am?" demanded Bolsover.

"I think there are a dozen."

"So I'm going to be left out?"

"Well, I can't play all the Remove, you know. Owing to the laws of football, the team is limited to eleven chaps—"

"Oh, don't be funny! I don't expect to play in all the matches, of course; but I want a chance in some of them—as often as Bulstrode or Hazeldene, for instance."

"You'll have a chance sometimes, when it isn't an important match. Every member of the club has a chance at times. But I suppose you don't expect me to throw away matches for the especial pleasure of playing a confounded disagreeable, bullying bouncer?" said Wharton.

"I know your game," said Bolsover bitterly. "You're going to keep me out of the footer because I'm sticking to your study—I mean, to my study."

"That wouldn't make any difference to me. If you were worth your salt in a good game I should play you, whether you stole my study or not, of course."

"So you say!" sneered Bolsover.

Wharton's eyes glinted.

"Well, to come to business, I'm pretty fed-up with the study since you and Nugent sneaked back into it," said Bolsover. "I'd rather go back to my old study, only I'm not going to be ousted—see?"

"Suit yourself, and go and eat coke!" said Wharton politely.

"It would be a graceful action of the esteemed and ludicrous Bolsover to clear out of the study," suggested Hurree Singh.

"Only, Bolsover has rather a taste for disgraceful actions," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Well, I'm not getting out!" said Bolsover. "That's flat! Still, I shouldn't mind coming to an arrangement. If I have a fair show in the football this season I'm willing to give up the study. I'd rather go back with Esmond and Elliott than stand you and Nugent. Give me a fair show in the footer and it's done!"

"Bribery and corruption!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You'll get as fair a show in the footer as you deserve on your form," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You won't get more than that."

"There's the first match of the season—with Highcliffe," said Bolsover. "That comes off soon. Put me in the team for that match."

"Rats!"

"Play me in the Highcliffe match, and it's a go," said Bolsover major.

"Well, I won't!"

"You can leave out that fathead, Cherry, you know—"

"Why, you silly ass—" began Bob indignantly.

"Well, that's final!" said Bolsover major. "I know your tricks for making the study too hot to hold me, but it won't work! I'm sticking to that study like a leech! Play me in the first match of the season—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Or I stick to that study like glue all the term!" said Bolsover major. "That's honest Injun! You won't be able to shift me! That's final!"

And Bolsover walked away.

Rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton's brows were knitted.

"The cheeky ass!" he exclaimed. "To think that I would muck up the first match of the season to get him out of my study! If he wasn't a silly chump he would know that he's nowhere near Highcliffe form."

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE BOUNDER'S QUEST!"

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

"The chumpfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "But the playfulness is impossible!"

Bolsover major brought Skinner and Snoop to tea in the study that evening. They made themselves as disagreeable as possible, and after tea, when Wharton and Nugent began their prep, the three of them kept up incessant talk. It was tit for tat, and Wharton and Nugent found that it was a game two could play at. After having worried the chums of the Remove all through their prep, Bolsover went off to Skinner's study to do his own work.

The next day Bolsover's guests were with him again. Wharton and Nugent went along to Bob Cherry's study to tea, to escape their company.

With both parties striving to make the study as disagreeable as possible for the enemy, life in Study No. 1 was not happy.

Had Bolsover's terms been a little less exacting, Harry would have conceded them, for the sake of getting rid of so exceedingly disagreeable a study-mate. The old cosy comfort of Study No. 1 was quite gone. When the football committee met there, Bolsover major brought in Skinner and Snoop and Stott, to talk or to hold a four-handed boxing match. He neglected his own work for the sake of interrupting the work of the two chums. Crockery was mysteriously broken, books disappeared and were found up the chimney. Wharton and Nugent realised with dismay that their little plan of making the study too uncomfortable for Bolsover was working out the wrong way. He was making it too uncomfortable for them.

But to accede to Bolsover's terms was impossible. Football practice was going on now, and the Remove players were looking forward to the Highcliffe match, which was to open the season with a victory, as they hoped. To act against his judgment as footer captain, for the purpose of making terms with Bolsover, was impossible for Wharton. Bolsover, on his form, had no claim whatever to play in the first match of the season. But it was quite clear that unless Bolsover's claim was conceded he would stick to the study for the whole term, and make it uninhabitable for its owners.

The Famous Five discussed the matter without finding a solution. Fisher T. Fish and Billy Bunter had been cleared out of the study, but Bolsover major, the most disagreeable of all, was a stickler. It was Hurree Jamset Ram Singh who came to the rescue with a sage suggestion.

"I have been thoughtfully reflecting," he announced. "The reflectfulness of my esteemed and ludicrous brain has been terrific. I have thought of a wheezy dodge."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Wharton, not very hopefully.

"The esteemed and beastly Bolsover refuses to give up the study unless he is played in the first match of the season."

"Well, that's impossible."

"But I have a suggestive remark to make——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Suppose the ludicrous Bolsover is played in the first match of the esteemed season after all?"

"Impossible, you inky ass!" said Johnny Bull. "Why, he would let the Highcliffe fellows through all the time! It might mean chucking away the match!"

"I am not mentioning the esteemed Highcliffe match, my worthy Bull!"

"Highcliffe is the first match of the season, fathead!"

Hurree Singh grinned.

"You do not yet catch on," he remarked. "The esteemed Bolsover has been guilty of sharpful practice, and what is saucy to the goose may be saucy to the gander! My wheezy idea is to take the ludicrous Bolsover in!"

"I don't see—" began Bob Cherry.

"The honourable and esteemed Wharton will agree to play Bolsover major in the first match of the August season! The ludicrous Bolsover will change out of this ridiculous study, and another match can be arranged——"

"Eh?"

"Say a match with the Second Form," said Hurree Singh, beaming. "If it is played at an earlier date than the Highcliffe match, it will be the first match of the season!"

"Oh!"

"And the esteemed Bolsover can disport himself as a footballer against the fags of the ridiculous Second Form——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wharton will give Bolsover a place in the team for the first match of the season. If Bolsover chooses to imagine that it is the Highcliffe match, that is his own esteemed look-out!"

Harry Wharton chuckled.

"Well, he deserves it," he said. "It's a mean trick to

try to force me to play him in a match he's not fit for! He could keep his end up against the fags of the Second!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "Bolsover's awfully keen on distinguishing himself in the first match of the season! Let him!"

"I'll speak to Nugent minor, and arrange a match for next Saturday," said Wharton, laughing. "If that's good enough for Bolsover, he can have his way. Only, I sha'n't mention the fag match. He can guess that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was agreed on all hands that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's wheeze was more than justifiable under the circumstances.

It was the first match of the season that Bolsover major contended for, and undoubtedly the match with the Second Form would be the first match of the season. The agreement would be strictly kept to the very letter of the bond, and Bolsover had no claim to more than that.

Probably he would be surprised when the first match of the season turned out to be a fag match with the Second Form of Greyfriars. That was his own business. The fellow who was seeking to make unfair terms and to take a mean advantage had no right to complain if he was overreached.

Frank Nugent called his minor into the study. Dicky Nugent received—with surprise and gratification—a challenge to a football match with the Remove. Needless to say, Nugent minor jumped at it, and the match was forthwith arranged for Saturday, and Nugent minor further agreed not to mention it at present. And he cheerfully promised the Removites a licking as he left the study.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Coming to Terms!

WHARTON and Nugent were at preparation when Bolsover major came in with Skinner and Snoop and Stott. The four young rascals were grinning.

"Hallo! You fellows at work?" said Bolsover. "I hope we sha'n't interrupt you with a four-handed mill—what?"

"Awfully sorry to interrupt, you know," said Skinner. "I dare say you can work all right while we're boxing!"

And the mill commenced—with shouting and trampling and bumping the table—and Wharton and Nugent did their work as best they could. Wharton looked up from his work at last.

"Look here, Bolsover, that's enough!"

"Go hon!" grinned Bolsover. "We're not finished yet. In fact, we're keeping it up just as long as you keep up prep!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"Altered your mind about the footer yet?" grinned Bolsover.

"Well, if this is going on——"

"It is, I assure you!"

"Now, look here, Bolsover, do you really think you're up to playing in the first match of the season?"

"Yes, I do."

"You know I don't want to play you?"

"Yes, and don't care tuppence what you want!" said Bolsover cheerfully.

"You won't clear out of my study unless I agree to play you in the first match of the season?"

"Exactly."

"And if I do agree, you'll clear?"

"Yes, and be glad to be done with you!"

"Well, I agree, then!"

"My hat!" Bolsover could scarcely believe his ears. "You're going to play me?"

"If you make a point of it, yes."

"I make a point of it, rather! You can have your old study!" said Bolsover major disdainfully. "You're not so fed-up with me as I am with you, I can tell you! I've been in hot water with Quelch ever since the term started over my work! Blow your study!"

"We've got to have it fair and square," said Nugent.

"You'll go to Mr. Quelch and ask his permission to go back to your old study. Then you can't sneak out of it afterwards!"

"I don't want to get out of it! I'm fed-up with you, I tell you! I'll go to Quelch as soon as I see my name up in the footer list!"

"I'll put it there this evening," said Harry. "I was going to put up the list this evening, anyway!"

"And you won't take it out again till the match is played—that's understood?"

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"Of course, that's understood—the first match of the season," said Harry.

"Done, then!"

And Bolsover major marched off in triumph with his friends.

An hour later a curious crowd gathered round the notice-board in the hall, where a paper in Wharton's handwriting was pinned up. The name of the coming match was not mentioned. It was headed, "First Match of the Season." And the list was: Hazeldene; Bull, Linley; Bolsover, Peter Todd, Tom Brown; Hurree Singh, Nugent, Wharton, Field, Vernon-Smith.

Bolsover major read that notice with much satisfaction. He was put down as right-half—a position in which he flattered himself he would perform great performances. Bob Cherry's name was absent from the list, but Bob read it over without seeming to mind.

"I suppose Wharton's dotty?" said Tom Brown, in astonishment. "I say, you're out of the team, Bob!"

"Chap can't play in every match," said Bob.

"Blessed if I understand this!" said Vernon-Smith. "Is Wharton doing this to get his study back?"

"He may be doing it because he gets an extra good player!" sneered Bolsover major.

"It's rather rotten to get over a footer captain that way, Bolsover!"

"Oh, rats!"

"And I can't say it's quite doing his duty as a footer captain!" said Hazeldene. "I think Wharton's going off his chump!"

There was no doubt that the Removites generally were down on that selection for the eleven. There were remonstrances addressed to Bolsover on all sides, to which he replied with contemptuous grunts. And there was a pretty general condemnation of Wharton, too.

It was natural enough that Wharton wished to get the bully of the Remove out of his study, but this was a price he had no right to pay. A football captain had his duty to consider.

But there it was, and Bolsover major was satisfied, if the others were not.

"Have you been to Quelch yet?" Wharton asked when he met Bolsover.

"Not yet."

"Well, if you don't go this evening, your name comes out of the list!"

"Oh, I'm going!"

And Bolsover went.

Mr. Quelch received him frowningly. Bolsover was never a bright pupil, and he had displeased the Remove-master more than ever of late. His peculiar activities in No. 1 Study had left him little time to prepare his lessons, and his construe would have disgraced a fag in the Second Form, as the Form-master had told him.

"If you please, sir, I'd like to change my study," said Bolsover meekly. "I don't seem to be able to get any work done in No. 1. I don't get on with the fellows there. Can I change back into my old study, sir?"

"Certainly you may, Bolsover!" said Mr. Quelch. "And I trust that the change will be followed by an improvement in your work. I shall expect it!"

Bolsover major carried his belongings out of No. 1 Study that evening back to No. 10, which he had occupied the previous term. Elliott and Esmond were willing to take him back, though the bully of the Remove had not taken the trouble to ask their consent.

Wharton and Nugent lent a hand in the moving job with great alacrity.

The Famous Five gathered to a merry supper in No. 1 to celebrate the return of the stolen study to its owners. Bolsover major's name remained in the footer list, to the disgust of the Remove. Wharton had several interviews on the subject.

Ogilvy put his head into No. 1 while the supper was on.

"Playing that howling idiot?" Ogilvy asked.

He was referring to Bolsover major.

"Yes," said Harry.

"In the first match of the season, too?"

"Exactly."

"And you think Bolsover plays better at half than I do?" bawled Ogilvy.

"No fear! Not half so well, old chap—not a quarter."

"Well, I'm glad you can see that, at all events," said Ogilvy, somewhat mollified. "But what's the good of playing him, then?"

"He asked me."

"That's not a reason, you ass! You're playing him simply to get your study back."

"Yes."

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

"You'll lose us the match."
 "I think not."
 "Oh, you don't know anything about footer!" snorted Ogilvy. "If you want to know what I think about it—"
 "Well, I don't, particularly."
 "I think it's rotten!"
 "Good! Shut the door after you."
 Ogilvy shut the door with a slam that rang the length of the passage. He was justly indignant, not yet being aware of the precise nature of the first match of the season.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The First Match of the Season!

HARRY WHARTON tapped Bolsover major on the shoulder when the Remove came out of the Form-room on Saturday afternoon.
 "You'll be wanted this afternoon," he remarked.
 "Eh? What for?" asked Bolsover.
 "First match of the season."
 A dozen fellows heard Wharton's words, and they stared at him. Ogilvy tapped his forehead significantly.
 "Are you off your rocker?" asked Hazeldene, in perplexity.
 "It's only footer practice this afternoon, Wharton—you know that."
 "First match of the season," repeated Wharton.
 "The Highcliffe match isn't for a fortnight yet!" snorted Bolsover major.
 Wharton smiled sweetly.
 "Who's talking about the Highcliffe match?" he inquired.
 "Why, you are, you ass!" exclaimed Bolsover, puzzled and angry.
 "Not in the least."
 "Isn't the Highcliffe match the first match of the season?" roared Bolsover.
 "Not at all."
 "Wha-a-at! It isn't?"
 "Certainly not."
 "Are you wandering in your mind?" inquired Hazeldene.
 "You know jolly well that the Highcliffe match is our first match, Wharton."
 "Not at all, Hazel. Our first match is with the Second Form."
 "The Second Form!" yelled Bolsover.
 "Yes; we're meeting Dicky Nugent and his tremendous players. The match is fixed for this afternoon," said Wharton. "Members of the eleven are expected to turn up on the footer ground at three sharp."
 "But—but—but—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Ogilvy. "So that's the little game, is it?"
 "Exactly!" smiled Wharton. "That's the little game. Bolsover is going to play in the first match of the season, as he bargained."
 "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removes.
 The secret was out now. The juniors understood, and they yelled. Bolsover major understood, too, at last, and his face was a study.
 "It's a swindle!" he roared. "You've made that new arrangement since I changed out of your study, Wharton."
 "No; I made it before you changed out," grinned Wharton. "But I asked Nugent minor not to mention it. I thought that perhaps you wouldn't change out if you knew."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Do you call that fair and square?" howled Bolsover.
 "Yes—as fair and square as stealing a chap's study, and trying to blackmail a footer captain into putting you into a match you would throw away by rotten, fatheaded play!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Bolsover major gasped.
 "I guess you're spoofed, Bolsover!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish, greatly delighted to find that he was not the only fellow who had been spoofed out of the stolen study. "You're landed! He, he, he!"
 "It's a fair catch!" grinned Peter Todd. "Take it smiling, Bolsover! You're only caught in your own trap, you know."
 "I'm not going to stand it!" shouted Bolsover furiously. "I'm jolly well coming back into the study unless you play me in the Highcliffe match!"
 "You're mistaken; you're not," said Wharton coolly. "You've changed out on condition that you were played in the first match of the season. If you were idiot enough to fancy you would be played in the Highcliffe match that's your own look-out. Why, the fellows would want to scalp me if I played you against Highcliffe, and they would be right, too. They've been grumbling already because they supposed I was going to, and I should deserve to be turned out of the club if I played you simply for a bargain. Playing you against the Second Form is a different matter. You are entitled to play the fags on your form—such as it is!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"

EVERY
MONDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

"And you won't come back into the study," continued Wharton calmly. "You've asked Quelch to change you, and if you ask him to send you back, I shall go to him and ask him not to. And if you come there on your own, without permission, you'll go out on your neck!"

"You—you spoofing rotter—"

"Oh, cheese it! You stole the study because I happened to be late on the first day of the term, and you don't even want it—you're only sticking there to worry Nugent and me. You were going on playing dog-in-the-manger all the term if I hadn't put the stopper on like this. You wanted to swindle me into putting you into the eleven against my judgment, and you've got caught, and I think everybody agrees that it serves you right!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "It's a fair catch, Bolsover. You were playing it rather low down on Wharton, you know."

"Oh, rats!"

"The catchfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bolsover. Take it smilefully!"

Bolsover major did not take it "smilefully," as the nabob recommended. But he had to take it—he had no choice about that.

Wharton had promised to play him in the first match of the season, and he was keeping his word. Nothing more than that could be asked. The Removes were not slow to express their opinion of Bolsover's attempt to wedge himself into a match that was above his weight. And he was out of the disputed study now, and he was going to be kept out—there was no doubt about that. The Form-master, certainly, would not give him permission to instal himself there again, against the strenuous objections of the occupants, especially as he had no reason to give for the change but a desire to make himself objectionable. He was foiled at all points, and he had to take it, smiling or unsmiling.

After dinner the Removes turned out for the match. Dicky Nugent and his merry men came down to the footer ground in high feather. The Second did not often play the Remove, and it was an honour they appreciated, and they had wild hopes of pulling off a victory—especially as the clumsy, barging Bolsover was playing for the Remove. Bolsover was in two minds about playing in the fag match—there was certainly no honour and glory to be reaped from playing the Second Form. But, after all, it was the Remove eleven—it was some sort of a distinction to have played for the Form, even in a fag match. So he turned up with the rest, in a decidedly bad temper.

The rest of the team were very cheery. They had feared that they would have to carry Bolsover major as a passenger when the Highcliffe match came off, and they were relieved on that score now. And the way the grasping bully of the Remove had been dished tickled them immensely. They grinned at his scowling face as he lined up with the Remove.

Bob Cherry came down to referee the match. Bob had willingly relinquished his place in the team to Bolsover. Bolsover now understood why. Johnny Bull and Mark Linley also stood out, to give Ogilvy and Rake a chance—they were not wanted to beat the Second.

The match was quite an exciting one. Second Form football consisted mainly of kick, rush, and yell. The Remove players piled up three goals in the first half, and they took things easy. Dicky Nugent had the chance of a lifetime, Bolsover major letting him through, and Dicky beating Hazeldene in goal with a really good kick. And the crowd round Little Side cheered Dicky heartily.

The Second Form had broken their duck, but that was all their success. In the second half Ogilvy and Vernon-Smith took a goal each, and the fags laboured valiantly but in vain to get near the Remove goal.

When Bob Cherry blew the final whistle, the Remove score was five to one, and they strolled smiling off the field, followed by the panting fags.

Bolsover major drove his hands deep into his pockets, and stalked off the field with knitted brows. He had not distinguished himself even against the fags. The first match of the season had been a sweeping victory for the Remove, but Bolsover could not claim that he had contributed to it.

In No. 1 Study all was calm and bright, as Bob Cherry expressed it. And after the first match of the season had been played and won, there was a great celebration in that famous apartment to celebrate the recapture of the Stolen Study.

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE BOUNDER'S GUEST!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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

The Opening Chapters of Our Great New School Serial.

THE FOURTH FORM AT FRANKLINGHAM.

By Richard Randolph.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Two New Boys.

Two passengers got out of the 12.20 train at Franklingham Station. At either of them you would have looked twice.

The first was a fellow of eighteen or so, dark and handsome, with very white and very even teeth, that somehow gave him a wolfish look when he smiled. There was something about him that was not pleasant, for all his good looks.

The other, at least three years his junior, was not in the very least good-looking. He was extremely thin—almost a living skeleton, in fact—and he wore goggles, that gave him a queer, owl-like look.

They had not travelled to Franklingham together, and until that day they had never set eyes upon one another. But, as it chanced, they were to come into close contact in the future, with results that will be told.

The older fellow—Cardenden—gave the younger, whose name was Goggs, one brief glance, and then dismissed him as a person of no possible importance.

Goggs looked harder at Cardenden, wondering who he was. It did not occur to him that this fellow, looking almost a man, was a new boy like himself.

Cardenden passed into the booking-office to speak about a box that had gone astray on the journey.

Goggs, whose boxes were all there, found a porter, and began to ask him questions.

"How far is it to the school?" was the first.

"A mile and a bit by road."

"Is there any other way, then?"

"It ain't so far by the fields. Only you can't go that way, 'cause the plank's been took away what used to make a bridge over the brook. And the brook's wider nor what you can jump, I reckon."

"Could you jump it?" asked Goggs.

"I could if so be I was put to it, I dessay," replied the porter.

"Ah! Pardon my curiosity. I am a most curious person, you know."

"You are that!" the porter said, staring at him in a manner none too polite.

"I do not think that I meant exactly the same as you did. But let that pass. Can I have a cab?"

"Depends upon what you want it for, and whether you can pay for it," the porter answered.

He seemed to pride himself on being a funny man. Goggs thought him very rude.

"I can pay for it. Possibly it will reassure your mind if I show you the necessary cash. No? Well, let that pass. As for my purpose in desiring a cab, I imagine it is much the same as yours or anyone else's might be."

"I don't want no cab!" growled the porter, who began to suspect that he was scarcely getting the best of it with this queer-looking boy. "Leastways, I wouldn't have Aminadab

Jarker's, not at no price. And Betta's can't be had, because it's been ordered for the gent what's gone into the office."

"And what, may I ask, is the matter with the cab owned or driven by the gentleman with the charming name?" asked Goggs.

"Only as he's under a deloosion as he's a-drivin' of a hearse, and his 'oss agrees with him. It's all right if you ain't in a hurry. If you are, it'd pay you to walk."

"Ah! Everyone, unfortunately, does not possess the exceptional activity of mind and body with which you are gifted, my friend. Not for all of us is the active life. I myself incline towards the contemplative existence. Mr. Jarker's cab should, therefore, suit me admirably. Would it be giving you too much trouble if I asked you to put my luggage on a truck, and thereafter to wheel that truck to the cab driven, or owned, or owned and driven, by Aminadab Jarker?"

The porter stared at him hard. He had never before run against a boy with such a flow of polite language, that yet, somehow, seemed to hide a sting behind its politeness.

Goggs walked demurely out by the little gate at the end of the station buildings, and inspected at leisure the red-faced man, the bony horse, and the shaky cab hard by.

He had no doubt at all that this was Jarker's cab. The second one, a much smarter vehicle, with a much better horse, was already being loaded with the other passenger's baggage.

The fixed and steady stare from behind the big goggles began to produce some slight feeling of discomfort in the slow mind of Mr. Jarker.

"Look 'ere, young gent, is it a cab as you're a-wantin'?" he snorted.

"It is. Yes, I want a cab. Have you a cab? Has your aunt's sister-in-law— No; that belongs to the French exercises."

"Aunt be jiggered! Can't you see I've got a cab?"

"Ah, I perceive now! It is, in a manner of speaking, a sort of a kind of a cab. I wonder you bring it out, though. It might be worth much more to you in a museum."

"See 'ere, I don't cotton to funny blokes!" snorted Jarker.

"Strange how tastes differ. Now, I simply adore them! I am, as you will have noticed, a little funny myself. I do not mean that I adore myself. Perhaps I am not the right kind of funny to justify that."

"You'd talk a donkey's 'ind-leg off, you would!"

"I have never yet done so, to my knowledge. It would be interesting to try. But somewhat painful for the donkey."

At this moment the luggage-truck was pushed against the back of the speaker's legs.

Jarker grinned. Goggs looked round reproachfully at the porter, and was about to protest, when something drew his attention.

A Franklingham senior—Goggs knew he was from the

school by the blue-and-silver band on his straw hat—on a bicycle, shot through the station gates, and jumped off close to the cab.

He gave Goggs a single glance. There was no such contempt in it as there had been in Cardenden's. This fellow smiled. He recognised the new boy's oddity, but did not appear to consider it a crime.

He passed through on to the platform, apparently making for the bookstall.

The porter was putting Goggs' boxes on to Jarker's cab, and while their owner waited he became, by pure chance, the possessor of a secret.

He saw Cardenden and the latest comer meet, and saw the expression of surprise—almost of dismay—that swept across the face of the boy who wore the Franklingham colours.

"You here?" he said sharply.

"It looks like it," replied Cardenden, showing his teeth in a smile. "I trust you don't object? Our worthy uncle is troubled that we are not better friends. He would like us to pal up. Therefore am I at Franklingham."

"You don't mean to say that you've come here to stay—to school?"

"You have hit it, Granville! I repeat that I trust you have no objection?"

"I have—the strongest! Don't you make any mistake about that! But we can't talk here, Cardenden. Someone may overhear us. Come on to the platform, will you?"

Someone had heard. Goggs had. His ears were naturally of the sharpest, and he could not help hearing.

He was glad they had said no more then. He did not want to know their secrets, or to be a witness of a quarrel between kinsmen.

But he could not help choosing already, without being aware that he did so, his side in the quarrel.

And that side was not the sneering Cardenden's.

Few people but would have preferred the other fellow—the fellow with the wavy brown hair, the honest and kindly grey eyes, the frank face with just a touch of pride in it, but with never the trace of a sneer.

Granville, Franklingham's captain and best all-round athlete, looked what he was—a clean-bred, plucky, straightforward British youth.

Now the porter had finished his job.

Goggs took from his right-hand trousers' pocket a bag such as farmers use for samples of wheat.

He put in a thumb and forefinger and drew out the smallest coin the bag held.

Threepence in coppers might have satisfied the porter. But that tiny piece of silver, selected with such care by Goggs, annoyed him.

"Been saving up for this little treat, ain't you?" he said, holding the coin in the palm of his hand, and sniffing disdainfully as he looked at it.

"No, my friend—no. I had intended to give you sixpence. But you were rude to me. Also you pushed your truck against the back of my legs. It hurt, and I do not believe that it was an accident. Therefore, I mulct you of one-half of your emolument."

"Here, I say, look here, none of that! You can't do that, you know. You ain't the blessed company!"

"Ah! With your last statement I agree. By the way, it is pleasant to hear you refer to the company in such genial terms. But I quite disagree with your first statement. I not only can do it, but I have done it, my friend. Drive on, cabman, if you please!"

"You've got a rare sort of a freak in your cab this time, Dab Jarker!" yelled the porter. "Take an' bury him!"

"It's my opinion as 'e ain't 'ardly 'uman," answered the cabman.

Goggs registered in his mind a black mark against the name of Jarker. He did not intend to be treated rudely and fail to get even.

Meanwhile, Cardenden and Granville had drawn apart to a quiet spot at the end of the platform.

"I don't like this a bit," said Granville abruptly.

"But why not? My dear fellow—"

"Don't call me your 'dear fellow'! We can't help being cousins. I wish we could. But we aren't friends, and we never shall be! I think it would be for the best, Cardenden, if we met before the other fellows as strangers. They needn't know we're related. There's that between us in the past which puts us apart for ever."

"I don't admit that. You misjudged me, and you persist in your mistake. But have it as you will."

"We can't be friends. We'd better steer clear of one another."

"All right!" answered Cardenden savagely.

But it was with no intention of steering clear of his Cousin Harry that Conrad Harding Cardenden had come to Franklingham—not, as he pretended, because his uncle and Granville wished it, but because he had a scheme to carry out there.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 452.

NEXT
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ONE
PENNY.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Three of the Fourth.

Blount came out of the detention-room. He found the quad deserted.

It was wretched luck to have been kept in, although that fate had been well merited.

But it was good luck to have got out earlier than his chums Trickett and Waters—otherwise Tricks and Wagtail.

He looked up at the clock.

It was just past half-past twelve. No use going to footer. He looked round at the deserted quadrangle, and began to wonder whether it was such good luck, after all, to have got out before the other fellows.

Those three could always find something to do together. Alone, any one of them was apt to be at a loss.

Then Goggs blew in. The phrase is Blount's own. As a matter of fact, Goggs walked in, just like anybody else—except that he was not at all like anybody else Blount had ever seen, and seemed endowed with greater humility than even the meekest new boy Blount had yet encountered.

Goggs spoke in a small, meek voice.

"If you please, sir," he asked, "is this St. George's School, Franklingham?"

"No," answered Blount. "You've come to the wrong shop. Better buzz off and look for St. George's, though I don't mind betting you you won't find it! This is St. Peter's. And you needn't call me 'sir.' I'm not a master."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I do indeed!" Goggs returned, looking quite troubled. "I hope you won't be angry with me. I quite thought you were somebody of importance. My silly mistake! And I'd got the name of the school wrong, too. It's St. Peter's I want, of course. Another silly mistake—I'm always making them!"

He looked so very humble and apologetic that it seemed impossible to suspect him of intending to be cheeky, or else Blount might have suspected it.

"The queerest guy I ever clapped eyes on," thought Blount. But, being a decent sort, he answered civilly.

"Oh, all serene!" he said. "New chap, I suppose?"

"If you please," answered Goggs.

"Don't be an idiot! You are, whether I please or not, aren't you?"

"I—I suppose so, St. Peter. Oh, I beg pardon again! Of course, you're not St. Peter. My silly mistake!"

If that wasn't cheek, what was it? Blount looked Goggs up and down, and wondered.

Blount had red hair. Red hair usually goes with a fiery temper, and Blount was quick-spirited enough. But he did not find it easy to get angry with Goggs.

The new boy did not meet his eyes. At least, Blount could not see that he did. But it was impossible to be sure, because of the goggles.

"No, I'm not St. Peter, kid—nothing of the sort! What's your name?"

"Johnny Goggs, if you please!"

"I don't know that I do please. But, my word, don't you just look it!"

Blount roared. The name fitted so finely. Wouldn't Tricks and Wagtail make Goggs sit up? Goggs—Goggles! Goggs—Goggling Goggs—Goggling Johnny Goggs. It was no end funny!

"If you please—I don't know your name yet—what are you laughing at?" asked the new boy, smiling pleasantly.

"My name's Blount—Bertram Bagshaw Blount, if you want the whole lot of it—and I'm commonly called Bags. And I'm laughing at you."

"But—ah!—isn't it rude to laugh at me, Mr.—ah!—Bags, commonly called—I mean, Mr. Blountshaw Bags?"

Was it cheek? Or was it sheer duffing innocence?

"It may be rude to laugh," answered Blount; "but it's jolly well impossible not to!"

He thought that rather neat.

Trickett appeared at that moment. Trickett was smaller than Blount, bullet-headed, snub-nosed, fair and freckled. He was always in hot water.

"Hallo, Bags!" he called. "Where did you collect that?"

"Didn't. It simply blew in. What do you think of it, Tricks, old son? Its name's Goggs—Johnny Goggs."

"Dunno yet. Let me walk round it first. Whop, boss! Gently does it! Don't kick!"

Trickett walked round the new boy, prodding him here and there, feeling his calves—if his thin legs could be said to have calves.

Trickett came of a horse-loving family, and could ride like a young centaur.

Goggs put up with it quite meekly. He grinned in what seemed to Blount quite an amiable manner, but slightly foolish.

The fact of the matter was that Goggs had taken to these two at sight.

Then Waters arrived. And, as it chanced, Goggs didn't take to him quite as much.

Waters swanked a bit. That was why he had come to be called Wagtail. Everyone who has ever watched a water-wagtail knows how sidey the bird is.

Blount, Trickett, and Waters kept in the same den. Four juniors to a study was the rule at Franklingham; but in Grayson's House there happened to be thirty-five juniors, and nine studies for them, and the trio had thus far managed to keep anybody else out of their den.

It had not occurred to them as yet that the coming of Goggs must alter this.

They stood around him, and admired—or wondered.

"Is it alive?" asked Wagtail, in an awed voice.

"Oh, rather!" replied Tricks. "Can't you see it smiling?"

"I didn't know that was a real smile. I thought perhaps it was a mistake when the figure was made. Won't it come off? Rather horrible for everybody if it won't—eh?"

The smile came off. Goggs looked exceedingly annoyed.

"I say, how did it get here? Really, I mean. Did you have a cab, Johnny dear?" asked Tricks.

"Yes, at least, a sort of cab. It was not a rapid vehicle. I thought I would get out and walk, for a change."

Then Blount remembered that he had looked up at the clock just before the new boy's appearance, and that the time had been just half-past twelve.

Franklingham, being on a small branch line, has few trains. Blount knew them all. The three morning down trains were at 8.10, 10.50, and 12.20. The up-trains were at 7.30, 9.45, and 11.5.

Goggs could not very well have come by an up-train. But to fit in the time of his arrival with the down-train at 12.20 was difficult. The station was fully ten minutes' walk from the school, even for the quickest walker.

He must have come by the 11.5 up, after all! But why had he been so long on the road?

It was not really important, of course; but it puzzled Blount, and he did not like being puzzled.

"What train did you come by?" he asked.

"It left London about twenty past nine—nine-twenty-three,

to be precise, as it is ever my wish to be. I consulted the time-table at the station to verify the information given by 'Bradshaw,' although I understand that that interesting work has a high reputation for correctness."

Tricks giggled. Wagtail snorted the snort of contempt.

That was the 12.20, right enough. An hour and a half to Earlsham, half an hour's waiting there, and then a crawl to Franklingham.

But Bags was left wondering. He was just about to ask another question when the voice of Mr. Aminadab Jarker—whom everyone at St. Peter's knew—was heard from behind the high wall.

"Ere you are! Drat the boy, does 'e expect me to get down an' pull the door open for 'im, an' me pretty nigh doubled up with the room-attics? Why, paint me pink, 'e ain't there!"

"Where's Goggs got to?" asked Wagtail.

The three chums had faced round for a moment, and in that moment the new boy had disappeared.

They went to the gate.

"What's the giddy row, Jarker?" asked Tricks.

"Well, Master Trickett, that ain't hentirely a neasy one to answer of. You might say as I bin an' lost a boy—I suppose you'd 'ave to call the article in questing a boy, for want of no other name for 'im. On the other 'and, I ain't lost 'im, in a sense, 'cos 'e never didn't belong to me, an', what's more, I wouldn't 'ave 'ad 'im as a free gift."

Blount caught sight of Goggs now. The new boy had screwed himself into a corner by one of the buttresses of the school chapel. No ordinary boy could have got into it, but there was room enough for Goggs.

Bags winked at the other two not to give the game away. Was it possible—surely it couldn't be possible—that the innocent Johnny Goggs winked, too?

"What kind of a boy was he, then?" asked Wagtail.

"Well, sir, that's a rum 'un to answer of. 'E weren't like none of you three. 'E weren't carrotty, like Master Blount; nor 'e 'adn't a turn-up nose, like Master Trickett; nor 'e didn't look so cheeky as the old 'un 'imself, like Master Waters."

"Here, come off it, Jarker!" cried Waters hotly.

Trickett only grinned. He did not mind references to the shape of his nose. It was a good enough nose for Tricks.

"I'm not carrotty," said Blount; "I'm anburn. My Aunt Eliza Jane says so, and she ought to know, because she's the same colour."

"But I suppose as 'ow you'd 'ave to call 'im a boy," went on the cabman, heeding them not at all. "A pale, huggy, skinny young youth 'e was—"

"Jarker!"

The shout seemed to come from the other side of the road, behind the cab. Jarker turned sharply.

But there was no one to be seen.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Queer Things Happen!

The old horse had heard, for he flicked his ears, and turned his dim eyes in the same direction.

"Let 'em call!" growled Jarker. "My motter is one job at a time. I got to put this thing straight first, an' get the money from that young hobject."

"Do you think he can have fallen out on the way?" asked Bags.

"No, I don't think as 'e can 'ave fallen out on the way, Master Blount. What for would 'e? Not but what 'e looked foolish enough for that or any other silly trick. But what's a worritin' of me is this. There's 'is luggidge. I've brung that up. 'Oo's a-goin' to pay me for it if 'e ain't? And it's all one as if 'e'd rode up. I don't take nothink off for that there."

"Well, that's not our funeral, Jarker," said Tricks.

Franklingham in general did not love the cross-grained Aminadab.

"I should take the boxes off and wait. We won't charge you anything for sitting in the quad on one of them," said Blount. "If he has come to a terrible end through the unchecked speed of your gallant charger, there'll be an inquest, and you'll be wanted."

Jarker turned to the cab, thinking he might as well unload.

Then the voice was heard again.

"Jarker! Aminadab Jarker!"

It couldn't be Goggs. The voice did not appear to come from his neighbourhood at all. And how could he know the cabby's Christian name?

Jarker swung round.

"None o' that, young gents!" he said ill-temperedly.

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

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THE FOURTH FORM AT FRANKLINHAM.

(Continued from page 20.)

"You're a-takin' liberties with a respectable man—a 'quise' older an' on the Parliament register. I ain't to be called by my first name in that there fashion!"

"We didn't any of us call you, you old idiot!" retorted Wagtail.

Blount was enjoying it all. He met the eyes of Trickett, and saw that his chum was also getting some fun out of it.

Jarker began to unload, grumbling as he worked.

"You might give a 'ard-workin' man a 'and, young gents," he said.

"Where is he?" asked Bags.

"We might give him beer," said Tricks, "but we're not going to—nor a hand either. We sha'n't get anything when he's paid."

"Dunno as I'm ever goin' to get paid," replied Jarker, rubbing his forehead. "That's the doose of it!"

He carried the boxes into the quad. There was a small one which looked like a tuck-box, and in this the three were naturally interested.

Jarker sat down on the biggest box.

"An' 'ere I'm a-goin' to set till that there boy—if the nasty young animal is to be called sich—comes along for to pay me," he said.

"Gee-up! Gee-up, you old bag o' bones!"

The three stared in surprise.

Jarker had but barely finished stating his intention to sit there till Goggs turned up, when—or so it seemed—he started yelling to his horse to go on.

There followed the sound of a whip cracking.

But Jarker had not cracked his whip! He had left it in the holder by the box of his cab.

The horse started off at a better pace than one might have expected from his appearance.

Jarker got up and ran after him.

"You'll get it in the neck if Buswell sees you!" shouted Waters.

Buswell was the local policeman, and between him and Jarker there was an old feud.

The cabman had just got outside the gate when that mysterious voice sounded again:

"Aminadab Jarker!"

He pulled up short. He looked round him, his red face scared and bewildered.

"Catch that 'oss for me, young gents!" he said hoarsely. "I can't run nohow; the room-attics are that crool bad! An' I don't like that there call. I b'lieve as it's my death-warrant, like!"

"Rats!" answered Wagtail. "We're not going to lag for you, Jarker. Better scoot, or you won't catch that old fat-rack of yours before he falls down!"

Jarker seemed to think there was something in that.

He tore down the road, rheumatics forgotten, his long coat fluttering behind him, his language free and lurid.

Blount looked round. Johnny Goggs stood behind him, with his hands to his ears, and a pained expression was on the innocent face of Goggs.

"Bless me, Mr. Shawbags—I mean Bagbert—what dreadful expressions that wicked old man uses! I am sure my dear grandmother would not approve of them!"

"Look here, Funnyface! My name's Bertram Bagshaw Blount, as I told you. You can call me Blount, or you can call me Bags. But if you call me anything else I shall hurt you!"

"Oh, dear me! I beg your pardon! My silly mistake! I'm always making them! But indeed, Mr. Washbags—I mean Bertshaw—oh, dear me! Boundbert—oh, how mixed I am getting! Blount, isn't it?"

Far down the road rose a big cloud of dust. That marked the passage of the horse and cab.

Nearer was a smaller cloud. Inside it was Jarker. And Jarker did not seem to be gaining much on the fiery steed.

"You're the cause of Jarker's language, Goggs, and you know it! Didn't you start the horse off? Wasn't it you who frightened Jarker?"

Goggs looked not only surprised, but positively pained.

"I? My dear Mr. Bagwigs, I assure you— But how could I? The man was a perfect stranger to me until something less than half an hour ago. How, then, could I have known that his godfathers and godmothers, in his baptism, had endowed him with such a name as Abimelech?"

It wasn't Abimelech at all, and Bags wasn't taken in by the seeming mistake. He had already begun to suspect that there was more in Goggs than met the eye.

But he could not understand that voice.

"Rats!" said Wagtail. "Do you suppose a pumphantle like that could trick old Jarker so neatly?"

"Pardon me!" Goggs said. "I think—I do really think—that you must have been badly brought up. My dear

grandmother warned me against quarrels. But I have also learned from her to be courteous to strangers. You are not courteous to me. I should not be sorry, I assure you, if somebody came along and spanked you severely!"

Wagtail reddened and breathed hard, while his two chums grinned.

"Look here! None of your giddy cheek! Just you apologise for saying that, and don't waste any time about it!"

"I must really decline," answered Goggs firmly. "I am, I hope and trust, ever ready to apologise when in the wrong. In this, I think, Mr. Bigwash—oh, pardon! I mean, Mr. Wishbags—will bear me out, brief as is the time during which I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance. But I do not apologise when the other party to the dispute is in the wrong. The person Jarker was rude to me, and I am not sorry for what has happened to him. And you were rude to me, and it would be a pleasure to see you spanked. I have said it, and I shall not retract!"

Goggs folded his arms and stood in a Napoleonic attitude. It was too much for Wagtail. He made a fierce rush at the new fellow.

Goggs neither fled nor yelled for help.

His long, skinny arms unfolded. They gripped Wagtail before that youth could hit him.

Then something happened. Bags and Tricks could not see what. Wagtail could not tell precisely what.

But suddenly Wagtail was seen wrong end up, his legs plunging wildly, and a second and a half thereafter he was sitting in the dust of the quad, his collar burst, gaping up into the meek, goggled face of his intended victim.

"I trust that you are not much hurt," said Goggs. "Though—I repeat it—I should like to see you spanked. I have no joy in the measures of self-defence that you have obliged me to take."

"I'll give you self-defence!" roared Wagtail.

"Pardon me! You can hardly do that. If you treat me with roughness, it will be a most definite act of aggression, and to call it self-defence is to misuse words."

But it really did not look at all likely that Waters would succeed in treating the new boy with roughness, however much he might wish to do so.

Wagtail arose, muttering something under his breath.

It rather surprised his chums that he did not rush in to the attack again. Wagtail had plenty of pluck, and, as a rule, very little discretion.

But he really seemed to have learned a lesson this time.

He began to dust his clothes.

"Allow me to offer you my assistance," said Goggs politely.

Wagtail took no notice.

"May I inquire whether you are at all deaf?" said the new boy.

A stony glare was all the answer he got.

"Is your young friend often taken in this way?" asked Goggs of Blount. "If such is the case, Mr. Wishbags— Oh, beg pardon! My mistake."

"Oh, come off it, you heathen idol!" growled Bags.

"Let's go down the road and see how old Jarker gets on," said Tricks.

"Pardoned me! Is it permissible?" asked Goggs.

"Well, I didn't really mean you. You can come along, though, if you like. I say, what House are you booked for?"

"Mr. Grayson's, I understand."

"Our show. We're proud, I'm sure!"

Goggs bowed politely.

"There's Dummett, the porter," said Tricks. "Hi, Dummett, take these boxes in, will you? They belong to this new chap. Come along, Johnny dear! I hope your grandmother won't mind your keeping company with rough boys like us. I say, you'd be sad if Jarker broke his neck, wouldn't you?"

"Assuredly I should not be pleased. I do not desire for the person Jarker any such severe retribution as that. Perhaps a week in prison, with bread and water and skilly, would be good for him. I do not know exactly what skilly is, but it does not sound nice. Jarker is not a nice individual, I fear, so it should be suitable for him."

"If you don't want to get chipped, you shouldn't have such a funny face!" said Waters, with a sniff.

"I am sorry that you do not like my face. I have only this one. As plain-speaking seems the fashion here, I may add that I am not enchanted with yours! It would be better if the nose were straighter, and there was no squint! As it is, I should think it possible your mother regards it as nice, but I should scarcely imagine anyone else admiring it greatly!"

The other two expected Wagtail to go for the plain-speaker. But Wagtail didn't. He had had a lesson.

(There will be another grand instalment of this exciting story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET Library. Order your copy in advance.)