

THE FELLOW WHO FUNKED!

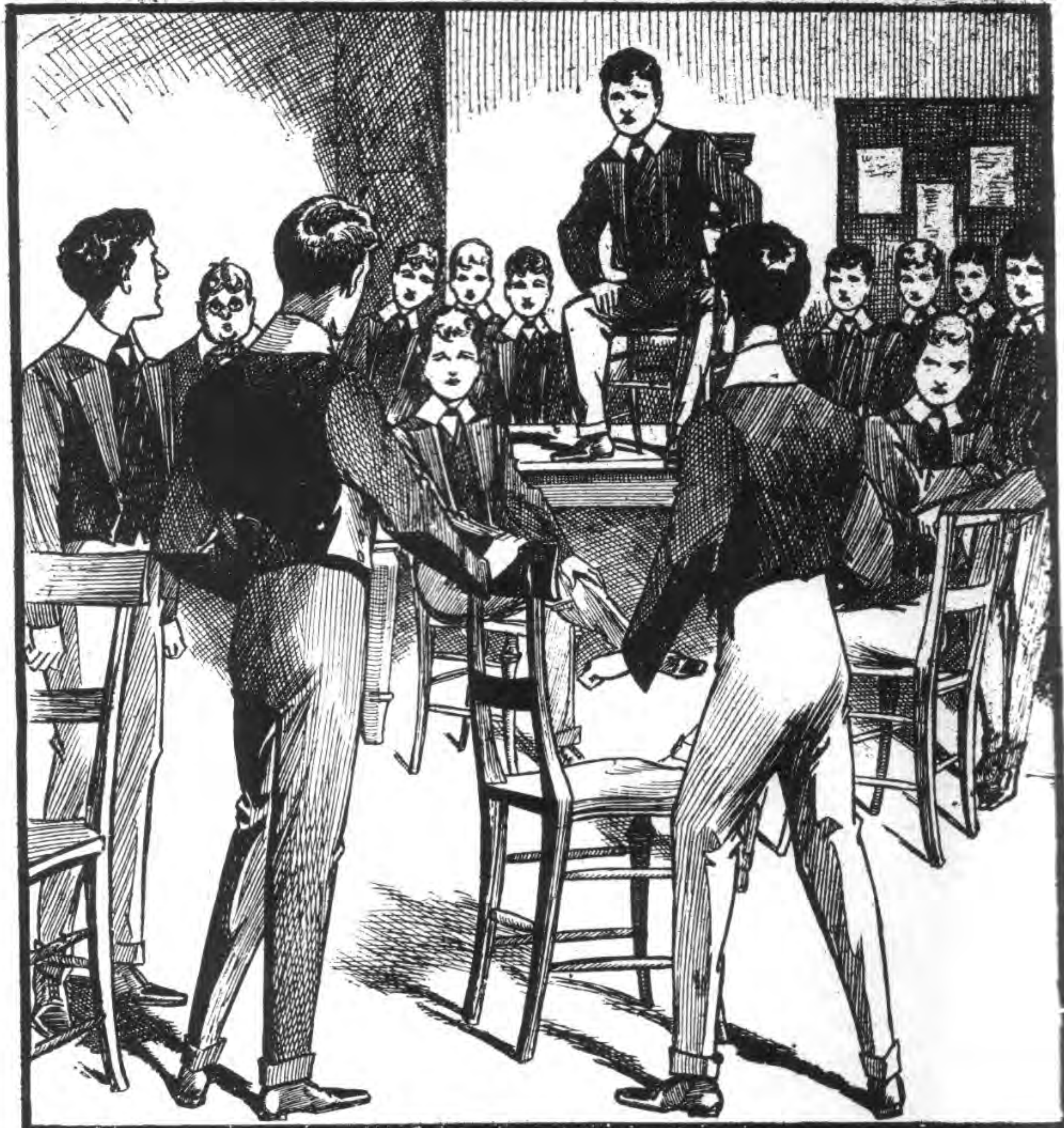
A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co



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FRANK NUGENT ON TRIAL!

(A Dramatic Scene in the Grand Long Complete Story in this issue.)

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THE FELLOW WHO FUNKED!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Highlife on the Warpath!

"YOW-OW-OW!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Wow-wow-ow!"

"There's a picture for you!"

grinned Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five of Greyfriars were just going out at the gates when Billy Bunter of the Remove came in.

They halted to look at him.

Bunter was worth looking at. He presented an extraordinary appearance. There was thick mud daubed upon his fat face, his collar was hanging by a single stud, and all the buttons were burst from his waistcoat. Wherever his plump features were not black with mud they were crimson with exertion. Bunter came up to the gates breathlessly, and gasped.

"Been arguing with a motor-car?" asked Bob Cherry, with smiling sympathy.

"Ow!"

"Or wrestling with a steam-roller?" asked Nugent.

"Wow!"

Billy Bunter leaned on the gate, gasping for breath. He wiped the mud from his big spectacles, and blinked at the chums of the Remove.

"How on earth did you get in that state?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Grooh!"

"Better get cleaned up before Quelchy sees you," grinned Johnny Bull. "You don't look pretty, Bunter."

"Yow-ow! I'm going to Quelchy to complain," gasped Bunter. "It was those Highcliffe cads—Ponsonby and his lot. They've been ragging me—yow-ow!—four to one. Wow!"

"Well, you look rather ragged," said Frank Nugent. "Why didn't you mop up the road with them—a terrific fighting-man like you, Bunter?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Of course, I'd have handled them if there'd been only two, or even three," gasped Bunter. "But four were too much for me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter. "Look at the state I'm in! I'm going to Quelchy, to make him report the rotters at Highcliffe!"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Don't do that, Bunter. No good meaking about the cads. Leave them to us."

"Look at me!" roared Bunter.

"Well, we're looking."

"The lookfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Bunter is a thing of beauty and a joyfulness for ever."

"Leave 'em to us," said Bob Cherry. "We were just going for a ramble on the cliffs. We'll go for a ramble after Ponsonby & Co. instead. We'll wipe up the road with them, and their own tailors won't know 'em after we've finished."

"Well, if you don't, I shall jolly well go to Quelchy!" growled Bunter. And he rolled into the quadrangle, grunting.

Harry Wharton looked at his followers.

"Our little walk's off," he said.

We'll look for Ponsonby & Co. instead.

It's time they were sat on. Just like those cads to rag that fat duffer, who can't stand up for himself!"

"We'll stand up for him," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Come on!"

The Famous Five walked out of the gates. They were not averse to a little scrap with their old enemies of Highcliffe—quite the contrary. It was, as Wharton said, exactly like the Highcliffe fellows to rag the Owl of the Remove, who was a great warrior with his tongue, but not much use with his hands. Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh would be quite a different proposition for Ponsonby & Co. to deal with.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as they sauntered down the lane towards Friardale. "Here's another merry victim!"

Skinner of the Remove was limping towards them. A good many of the Greyfriars juniors were out of gates on that frosty, sunny half-holiday, and some of them had evidently had bad luck.

Skinner was looking as if he had been in the wars. He was muddy from head to foot, and his nose was swollen and streaming red. Skinner was dabbing it savagely with a handkerchief as he came along.

"Seen Ponsonby?" asked Harry Wharton.

Skinner stopped.

"I've just got away from the rotters!" he gasped. "They've been ragging me. Four to one, the cads!"

"We're looking for them," said Bob. "We're on the war-path. Where are they?"

"I got away from them ten minutes ago. They were on the path towards the cliffs."

"Good egg!"

Skinner limped on towards the school, still dabbing his nose. The Famous Five strolled on cheerily. They had reached the stile in the lane, when Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior, came along at a terrific speed. He was running as if for a wager, and he did not even see the Famous Five till they lined up in his path, and halted him by means of a sudden collision.

"Let up!" yelled Fish. "I guess I've had enough! I give you best! Yow-ow-ow! I ain't looking for trouble! Oh!" Fishy recognised his Form-fellows, and gasped with relief. "Oh, gum! I reckoned it was those Highcliffe galoots again! Jolly glad to see you jays, for once!"

"My hat! Ponsonby & Co. are fairly on the war-path this afternoon," chuckled Nugent.

"They cornered me in the village," panted Fisher T. Fish. "They were going to duck me in the horse-trough—me, you know! I guess I vamped!"

"Too proud to fight!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I guess I was in rather a hurry," said Fisher T. Fish. "Of course, I could make potato-scrappings of those jays if I got my mad up."

"Come along with us and look for them," said Johnny Bull.

"I guess I've got to speak to a chap at the school."

And Fisher T. Fish continued on his way at a more moderate pace.

"Pon has all the luck," grinned Bob. "He's happened on all the funks of the Remove so far. Kim on!"

The Famous Five, feeling extremely warlike, marched on to the village. But there was no sign of Ponsonby & Co. in the quiet old street. The heroes of Highcliffe had gone, seeking fresh fields and pastures new. Harry Wharton & Co. turned into the footpath to the cliffs.

"Well, my hat, if there isn't another!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

It was Sidney James Snoop of the Remove this time. The chums of Greyfriars burst into a roar at the sight of him. Snoop had his right leg tied up, and was hopping on the other leg, his hands being fastened down to his sides. Snoop was hopping along desperately, with a furious face. It was evident that he had been in the hands of the merry youths from Highcliffe. The enterprising Pon was really excelling himself that afternoon.

"Lend a chap a hand!" yelled Snoop, as he sighted the Famous Five. "What are you cackling at, you silly idiots?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry!" gasped Bob. "You look funny, you know!"

"Let me loose, you cackling fathead!"

Bob Cherry took out his pocket-knife, and cut through the whiplcord that secured Snoop's limbs.

"Ponsonby, I suppose?" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes; a whole gang of them," groaned Snoop. "I hadn't a chance. I punched Vavasour in the eye, though. But there were eight of the rotters."

"They're growing," said Bob. "There were four of them—"

"Well, there were eight when they dropped on me," grunted Snoop. "Ponsonby, Drury, Merton, Vavasour, Monson, Gadsby, Tunstall, and another chap I don't know."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"That's a big order for five of us," he remarked. "You'd better come along and lend a hand, Snoopey. We're looking for them."

"I've had enough!" snorted Snoop. And he went on his way, no longer hopping.

"We're going on," said Harry Wharton. "Five of us are good enough for eight Highcliffe funks."

"Hear, hear!"

"Pon's the only one that's any good at scrapping, and he's not much good. We'll mop them up, all the same!"

"The mopfulness will be terrific!"

There was the buzz of a bicycle-bell behind on the path, and the juniors looked round. A lot of their own age was cycling up, and they recognised Dick Trumpler of C. A. Field County Council School.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" called out Bob Cherry. "Halt, and give the password!"

Trumpler gasped and stopped, as the Famous Five blocked the way.

"Don't play the giddy goat," he said.

"I'm in a hurry."

"Must give the password," said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"What's the password, fathead?"

"Greyfriars uber Alles!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Rats!" said Trumper promptly. It had never been settled whether Greyfriars School or Courtfield School was top dog, and it was never likely to be. There was a good-humoured rivalry between Greyfriars and Courtfield—quite different from their feelings towards Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe. Trumper and his friends always played the game. Highcliffe never did. That made all the difference.

"Otherwise, we shall be bound to bump you, for your own good, of course," said Bob.

"Sheer off!" said Trumper. "My dad's ill, and I'm taking him some stuff from the doctor."

"Oh, that alters the case!" said Bob gracefully. "Pass, friend, and all's well!"

Trumper grinned, and jumped on his machine again and rode on. He disappeared round a bend in the path ahead of the juniors, going at a great speed.

The Famous Five tramped on in the same direction, looking for the enemy. Ponsonby & Co. were conspicuous by their absence. A few minutes later they fell in with Nugent minor and Gatty of the Second Form, and learned that they had seen the enemy going towards the cliffs, and had sagely given them a wide berth. They marched on towards the cliffs, and, turning a bend in the foot-path, came upon Bolsover major of the Remove, in a parlous plight. Bolsover major looked as if he had been rolling in the mire, and he was seated on a rock and scraping himself, with a face like a Hun.

"More trouble," grinned Bob Cherry.

"By Jove, Pon is going it this afternoon!" said Frank Nugent. "They must be in pretty strong force to tackle a fellow like Bolsover."

Bolsover major jumped up.

"You fellows ready for a scrap?" he exclaimed. "Look at me! Eight of the rotters on to me at once! I jolly well made some of 'em howl, though."

"We're looking for them," said Wharton. "Join up, old chap! Where are they?"

"Gone along the cliff road."

"Quick march!" said Bob.

Bolsover major, muddy and furious, joined the little army with alacrity, and the six juniors marched on, with their eyes keenly open for the enemy.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Frank Nugent Surprises His Chums!

"PONS done the giddy vanishing trick," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Where can the rotters be?"

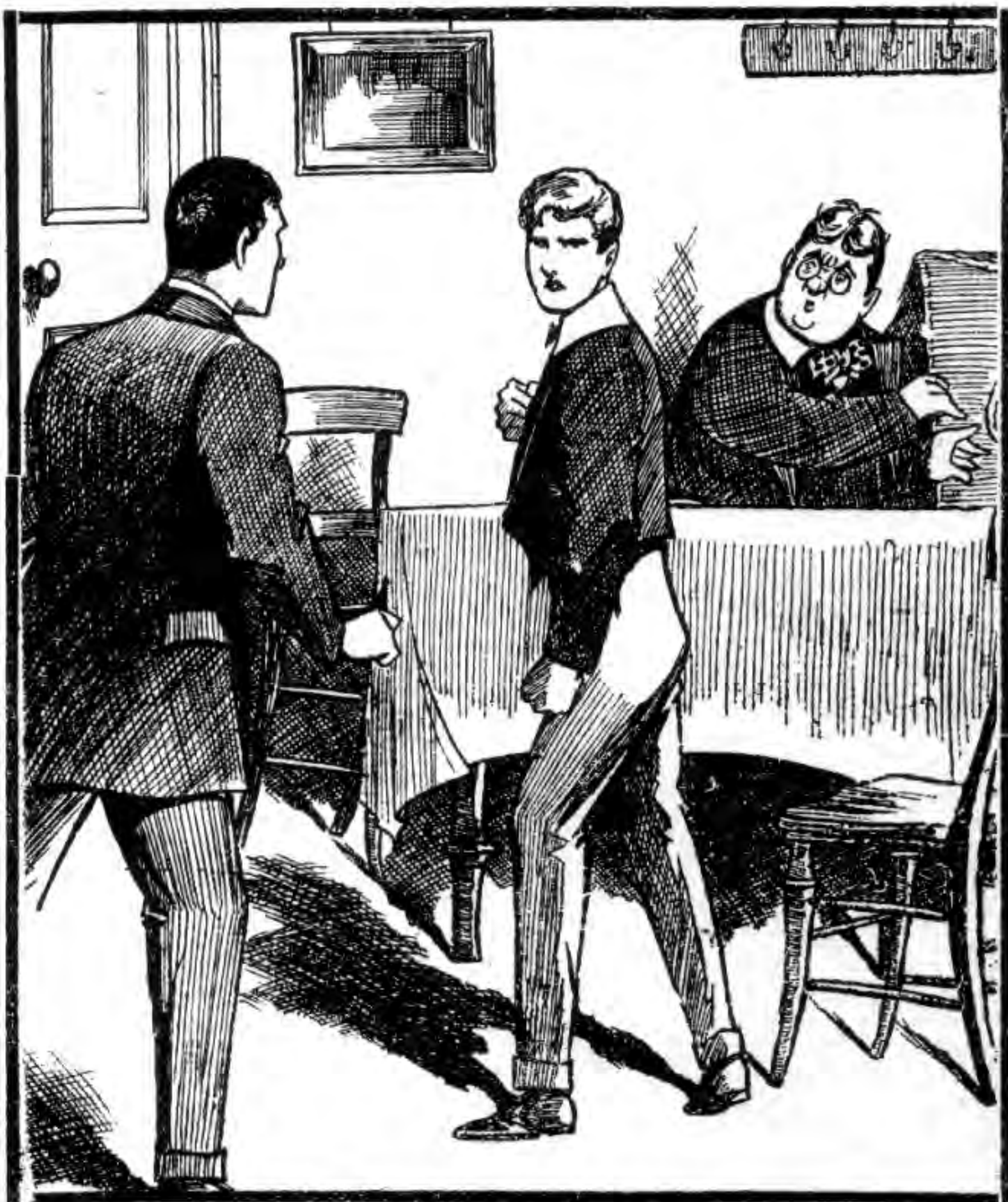
"They can't have gone over the cliffs; they're too jolly lazy."

"Better scatter and look for them," remarked Wharton. "They may be anywhere among these rocks. Climb what sights them to give the coast signal."

"Good!"

The party of juniors broke up. The road they were following ran at the base of the cliffs, and there were a dozen paths leading from it over the cliffs at various points. The Highcliffians might have been within a dozen yards of them, among the rocks and trees, without being seen.

Frank Nugent went on up the steep road, while his comrades scattered among the trees and rocks. The road rose in a sharp acclivity, and from the top of the rise Nugent could see along the road almost as far as the village of Pegg.



Nugent stood up, and stood in front of Bunter. "Hands off!" he said curtly. (See Chapter 8.)

He reached the top, and stood looking about him there, his slim and graceful figure outlined against the sky.

But the enemy, as it happened, were nearer at hand.

Bob Cherry came upon them suddenly quite close to the road, under the trees.

Eight fellows in Highcliffe caps were seated there, on clumps of rock, engaged in a game of cards, using a rock as a table. This was one of the peculiar amusements of Ponsonby & Co., and they had naturally selected a secluded spot for it.

Ponsonby and Monson and Gadsby, the leaders of the Highcliffe juniors, were not present. Bob noted that at once. He recognised Morton, Drury, Vavasour, Tunstall, and several more of the nuts of Highcliffe. They caught sight of Bob at the same moment.

"By gad, another Greyfriars cad!" exclaimed Vavasour.

"Collar him!" ejaculated Drury.

"He's running like the rest," chuckled Morton. "After him!"

Even the delights of banked were forgotten at the prospect of ragging another Greyfriars fellow who was on his own. It did not occur to Vavasour & Co. for the moment that Bob had friends at hand.

Bob Cherry promptly retreated to the road, sending out the coast call loudly as he did so.

The Highcliffians followed him with a rush.

"Back up, Greyfriars!" came Wharton's voice.

The captain of the Remove came dashing up, with Johnny Bull at his heels. Hurree Singh came tearing up from another direction, his dusky face glowing with the light of battle. Bolsover major was slower, but he was coming up as fast as he could. Only Nugent was absent.

Nugent was on the top of the rise in the road, a hundred yards distant, looking away towards Pegg, with his back to his comrades.

Vavasour & Co. halted abruptly at the sight of the gathering Removites. There were five of them, besides Frank in the distance.

There were eight of the Highcliffians, and doubtless Ponsonby and the rest were near at hand; but they did not come on. The cheery nuts of Highcliffe were looking for an easy rag, and not a pitched battle.

"Come on!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, go for the cads!" exclaimed Drury. "There's enough of us to mop them up. Pile in!"

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour. "Come on, dear boys!"

The eight advanced upon the five.

"Back up, Franky!" roared Bob Cherry.

Frank had not turned his head.

With the odds so heavily against them, the Greyfriars party needed every hand to help, and they wondered why Nugent was not coming.

Just as the conflict was beginning Nugent moved.

But he did not come towards them.

To the amazement of the Greyfriars

juniors, Nugent started at a run down the opposite side of the acclivity, and in a moment disappeared from sight beyond the rise.

"Franky!" roared Bob, utterly amazed at that unexpected sight.

"Funk!" yelled Bolsover major furiously.

But Frank Nugent was already beyond the sound of their voices.

"My hat!" muttered Wharton.

That his old chum was no funk Wharton knew well. Nugent's action was amazing. When his comrades were closing in combat with heavy odds, he had deliberately dashed off in the opposite direction.

But there was no time to think about Nugent's extraordinary action.

The Highcliffians, much encouraged by Nugent's flight, came on with a rush, and Harry Wharton & Co. were soon hotly engaged.

There was a wild and whirling combat on the lonely road.

Caps went flying, collars were jerked away, jackets were split, and buttons burst. Loud trampling of feet and louder yells awoke the echoes of the rocks.

There had been many and many a scrap between Greyfriars and Highcliffe, but this was quite a pitched battle. Harry Wharton & Co. were better fighting-men, and had much more pluck than their adversaries; but the odds were bound to tell. The Removites, engaged with foes in front, found themselves attacked behind; and some of the Highcliffians who carried canes or sticks did not scruple to make use of them as weapons.

In that terrific combat the aid of one more pair of fists would have been invaluable to the hard-pressed Greyfriars juniors.

But Frank Nugent did not return.

For ten minutes at least the combat raged on the road, and both parties showed very serious signs of damage.

But pluck will tell, and in spite of the odds the Highcliffians were driven off the road. Vavasour dodged away among the trees, the first to flee, and Merton, with a streaming nose, followed him. Drury lay in the road, completely knocked out by a right-hander from Bolsover major, gasping faintly.

The odds had become even now.

There would have been a general retreat of the enemy at that stage of the proceedings, but they were not allowed to retreat. Each of the Removites grasped his man, and the fight went on till the nuts of Highcliffe yelled for mercy.

A few minutes more, and the unhappy nuts were gasping on the ground, completely beaten, and Harry Wharton & Co. stood victorious, though sorely damaged.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, rubbing his head where a lashing stick had raised a large bruise. "What a merry half-holiday!"

"The merrifolness is terrific," groaned Herree Janset Ram Singh. "My esteemed head has been nearly cracked."

"Rotten funks!" howled Bolsover major. "I've had a stick on my napper. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. It's my turn now!"

Bolsover major caught up Drury's cane, and started operations on the gasping Highcliffians.

There was a chorus of fearful yells, and the nuts scrambled up and fled in all directions.

Bolsover major chased them, lashing away, till they were out of reach. Then he returned, gasping.

"Well, we've licked the rotters!" said Harry Wharton, with his handkerchief to his nose. The handkerchief was crimson.

son and soaking. "They won't forget this in a hurry!"

"We sha'n't, either," said Johnny Bull. "I wish Ponsonby had been here. I'd have liked to mop up Pon along with the rest."

"Well, we had enough of them to tackle," said Bob, rather ruefully. "I can't say I'm sorry Pon had gone for a walk, as it happens."

"Why didn't Nugent help?" demanded Bolsover major fiercely. "The rotten funk, to clear off like that!"

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton.

"I tell you he's a rotten funk, and I'll jolly well tell all Greyfriars, too!" bellowed Bolsover furiously. "Eight of the rotters on to five of us, and that sneaking cad running off as fast as his legs would carry him!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another grimly. What were they to say in defence of Nugent?

"He—he—he must have had some reason for clearing off," said Bob Cherry haltingly. "We all know Franky isn't a funk."

"Yes; he had a jolly good reason!" sneered Bolsover savagely. "He was afraid of getting hurt."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"We've had enough fighting for this afternoon, Bolsover," he said; "but if you say anything more about Nugent, there'll be another fight, here and now!"

"So you're standing up for him?" growled Bolsover. "Well, I call him a funk, and I'll call him a funk before all Greyfriars!"

Bolsover major strode away down the road. Harry Wharton made a step after him, but paused. He looked moodily at his comrades.

"What the thunder did Franky bolt off like that for, you fellows?" he muttered.

"Give it up!" said Bob. "He doesn't seem to be coming back, so we may as well get off. I want a wash and a brush-up, for one."

And the comrades of the Remove started for Greyfriars, not in a very cheerful humour.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bolsover Major is Wrathful!

"HE, he, he!"

Thus William George Bunter, as Harry Wharton & Co. came in at the gates of Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter had been greeted with merriment on his return, after his escape from the hands of Ponsonby & Co., and Bunter considered that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. And he burst into a loud chortle as the juniors came in, dusty and rumpled and damaged.

Bunter's chortle was echoed in several directions as the hardly-used heroes tramped across the quadrangle.

"By gad!" said Temple of the Fourth, regarding them with great amusement. "Can they be Greyfriars chaps, or is this a gang of hooligans come here by mistake?"

"Hooligans, I should say!" chuckled Fry. "Gosling ought to turn them out."

"Oh, rather!" chortled Dabney.

The damaged juniors marched on with burning cheeks. Coker of the Fifth was in the School House doorway, and he burst into a roar at the sight of them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Harry Wharton.

"What do you mean by going about like that?" demanded Coker. "You fags are a disgrace to the school! I've always said so. If I were your Form-master—"

Coker had no time to state what he would have done if he had been Form-master of the Remove. The exasperated juniors collared Coker, and rolled him down the steps into the quad.

They had gone up to the Remove dormitory by the time Horace Coker sorted himself out and charged up the steps again.

To the Remove dormitory, quite an army of Remove fellows followed them, curious to know what had occurred. It was seldom that Greyfriars fellows returned from a walk in such a dusty and dishevelled state.

"Did you meet the Highcliffe gang?" chuckled Skinner.

"Looks as if we did," remarked Snoop. "I wonder you chaps didn't handle them. A crowd of you, you know."

"We did handle them, and jolly well licked them!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Yes, you look like it!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "I guess the other galoots did most of the handling."

"You seem to have had a tussle," remarked Squiff, the Australian junior. "I wish I'd been there to lend a hand."

"Same here," said Vernon-Smith.

"I wish you had," mumbled Johnny Bull. "You see, there were eight of them against five of us, and they used their sticks. Still, we licked them hollow, and they ran for it."

"Good for you."

"There was a chap there who could have helped, but he funked it and cleared off!" growled Bolsover major.

"Not a Greyfriars chap?" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Yes, Nugent!"

"Nugent?" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

"Yes—the rotten funk!"

"What rot!" said the Bounder. "Nugent isn't a funk."

"You're talking out of your hat!" said Tom Brown. "Keep your temper, you know, even if you have had a hard time. No good slanging a chap who isn't here."

"I tell you Nugent funked it and ran away!" roared Bolsover major.

"Rats!"

"And these fellows would tell you the same if they told the truth!" snorted Bolsover.

"I suppose there's nothing in it, Wharton?" said Vernon-Smith, with a curious look at the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton coloured uncomfortably.

"Nugent didn't take a hand, as it happens," he said.

"Wasn't he on the spot?" asked Rako.

"I thought he was with you."

"Ye-es. He was up the road—"

"Too far off to chip in, I suppose?" said Todd. "Just like Bolsover to make a yarn out of that!"

"He wasn't far off," said Bolsover bitterly. "He heard us shout, and looked towards us, and then dashed off in the opposite direction as fast as he could go. He never turned up again."

"Oh, rot! I suppose he didn't, Wharton?"

"Well, he did," said Harry reluctantly. He could not refuse to confirm Bolsover's statements so long as they were limited strictly to the truth. "He must have gone off for some reason, which he will explain when he comes in."

"My hat!"

"He saw us five against eight, and cleared off at top speed!" howled Bolsover major. "He ought to be sent to Coventry."

"He ought, if he did that," said Vernon-Smith drily. "But he will explain—"

"He can't explain that he wasn't a

funk, because he was!" snarled Bolsover major. "We jolly nearly got licked through his sneaking out of it. Fishy himself couldn't have been a bigger funk."

"Look hyer, you galoot—"

"Even Bunter wouldn't have skulked off like that!" said Bolsover major bitterly. "I know I'll jolly well tell him what I think of him when he comes in!"

"Suppose you shut up till he comes in," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I've said I think that he will have something to say to explain what he did."

"Oh, rats!"

The Co. finished their washing and brushing and left the dormitory, still showing a good many traces of the conflict, however. Bolsover major went off to his study to tea, with Snoop and Skinner. Those two cheery youths wanted all the particulars of the affray, with the intention of making capital out of it against the Famous Five. It was a most enjoyable tit-bit to Skinner and Snoop. Bolsover did not mince his words; and indeed, from what he related, and what the others did not deny, it appeared that Nugent had been guilty of funk in the most flagrant manner in a manner that could not have been excelled by even Bunter or Fisher T. Fish.

"The whole Form ought to be down on him!" said Skinner virtuously. "Leaving his own pals in the lurch—my hat! I'd never have thought it of him!"

"Well, I wouldn't, only I saw it with my own eyes," said Bolsover major. "I know Nugent licked Ponsonby last term; but this time there was a crowd to tackle, and he funk'd it."

"Jolly mean!" said Snoop. "Those rotters hold their heads jolly high, and walk about Greyfriars as if they were monarchs of all they surveyed. I fancy this will bring them down off their perch a little."

Skinner, who was a clever fellow with the pencil, took a sheet of impot paper, and began to sketch. He depicted Frank Nugent—quite a good likeness—sprinting away from the scene of the conflict, with a backward glance of terror over his shoulder.

Bolsover major grinned at the picture. "We'll stick that up in the Common-room," he said eagerly. "The rotten coward can see it when he comes in, and see what we think of him!"

And after tea the three juniors took the picture down, and it was duly pinned upon the wall in the Common-room.

Some of the fellows chuckled over it, and some frowned. Meanwhile, Frank Nugent had not returned to the school. Calling-over was past, and Frank had been marked down as absent by Mr. Quelch.

His prolonged absence puzzled his chums; but Bolsover major & Co. were not at a loss to account for it.

"He daren't show up, after what he's done," said Bolsover major. "Simply hasn't the nerve to look the fellows in the face!"

"Looks like it," said Skinner. "Quelch will rag him, though."

"He's risking that because he can't face the Form. He'll come sneaking in just at bed-time, you bet!"

It seemed that Bolsover major was right, for Frank Nugent did not appear. After prep was done, Harry Wharton and his friends came into the Common-room. They looked round, evidently in search of Nugent.

"Hasn't Nugent turned up yet?" asked Bob.

"Not yet!" grinned Skinner. "He's not in a hurry to hear what we've got to say to him."

Bob turned away without replying.

He had a sinking doubt in his heart

that Skinner's ill-natured surmise was well-founded.

Why had Nugent turned his back on the fight, and run away? What possible motive could he have had but the obvious one—that he had suffered from a very severe attack of funk? Why did he not return?

The smiles and sneers of a good many of the juniors made Bob Cherry redden with anger and shame. Unless Nugent could give a thoroughly good explanation of his conduct, it was not only his enemies who would be down on him, but his friends as well. And what explanation could he give?

Bob caught sight of Skinner's sketch on the wall, and his eyes gleamed. He strode across to it and jerked it down.

"Leave that alone!" roared Bolsover major.

Bob twisted the sheet in his hand, and threw it into the fire, without a word. The bully of the Remove was striding across to him, when there was a sudden exclamation from Skinner.

"Here he is!"

Frank Nugent entered the Common-room.

There was immediately a loud and prolonged hiss from all corners of the room. It burst upon Nugent like a storm.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Funk!

FRANK NUGENT looked round, stopping suddenly.

He had been red and breathless when he came in. Now his face flushed a deeper red, and then grew pale.

"Hissssss!"

"Coward!"

"Funk!"

"Coward!"

Frank Nugent stood very still. He waited, without a word, till the storm of contempt and derision died down. Then he spoke.

"Are you talking to me, you fellows?"

"Don't you know we are?" sneered Bolsover major. "Who's the biggest funk in this room?"

"Who ran away from the Highcliffe cads?" howled Skinner.

"Who left his pals in the lurch?" Snoop wanted to know.

"I say, you fellows, he ought to be given the white feather!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Yah! Funk!"

"Shut up!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Give Nugent a chance to explain. Don't be such rotten Huns!"

"Thank you, Smithy," said Nugent quietly. "What am I to explain?"

"Why you bolted from the Highcliffe cads, and left your pals in the lurch?" sneered Skinner. "I'm curious to hear your yarn, if you've got one."

"Roll out your blessed lies, whatever they are, and then we'll tell you what we think of them!" snorted Bolsover major.

Nugent gave him a look, and then came towards his chums. Harry Wharton & Co. were standing, silent and troubled. What to say, or to do, they did know. It was for Nugent to explain; and he had not explained yet.

Frank started a little as he saw the Co.'s troubled and downcast looks.

His face set harder.

"Do you fellows agree with Bolsover?" he asked very quietly. "Have I got to explain to you, too?"

Harry Wharton reddened uncomfortably.

"Look here, Frank!" he exclaimed. "It looks jolly queer, and you must know that! Tell us why you ran off as you did."

"I intended to tell you; not because I thought it was needed, but because I should have mentioned it as a matter of course," said Nugent coldly. "I didn't think I should have to defend myself to my own friends." His eyes began to gleam. "I don't intend to defend myself, either. If you think that I ran away in a funk, you can go on thinking so, and be hanged to you!"

"We—we don't think so," said Bob. "But you can explain—"

"What is there to explain?" asked Nugent bitterly. "If I ran off without a good reason, it was because I was funky. I expect my own pals to believe that I had a good reason without any telling them anything."

"Well, that's right enough," said Harry slowly.

"I don't see it," growled Johnny Bull. "We were set on by odds, and Nugent ought to have backed up with the rest. If it were any other fellow who scooted off like that, we'd say he was a funk at once. We're willing to admit that Nugent had a reason—if he tells us what it was!"

"And if I don't?" asked Nugent.

"If you don't, I say you're a funk!" retorted Johnny Bull angrily.

"You'd better say it, then—for I won't give you any reason!" said Nugent. "You can go and eat coke! I don't want to have anything more to do with you."

"You won't have any choice about that," said Johnny Bull coolly. "I'm not the chap to pal with a funk!"

And Johnny shoved his hands deep into his pockets, and walked off.

"Frank," exclaimed Wharton, "why can't you tell us—"

"Because I won't!" said Nugent bitterly. "If you can't have faith in a fellow, what do you call yourself a pal for? I don't want a friend who expects me to tell him that I'm not a coward, and prove it."

"That's all very well," growled Bob Cherry. "But this isn't an occasion for mounting the high horse. It isn't only us: all the fellows—"

"Hang the fellows!" said Nugent coolly.

"Is that all you've got to say?"

"That's all!"

Bob Cherry turned away his face, very grim. He joined Johnny Bull by the fire at the end of the room. If Frank Nugent had no more to say than that, Bob had nothing to say, either.

Harry Wharton hesitated a moment or two; then, as Nugent did not speak, he followed Bob. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remained hesitating, with a very troubled look upon his dusky face.

"Well, Inky," said Nugent grimly, "what's your opinion?"

"I have no esteemed opinion at the present moment, my worthy chum," said the Nabob of Bhanipur diplomatically.

"Do you think I funk'd?" demanded Frank fiercely.

"The thinkfulness is not terrific!"

"What does that mean, you ass?"

"The esteemed meaning is clearful to my common or garden intelligence," said the nabob, unmoved. "I am regretful that I do not express myself with terrific excellence in the esteemed English language."

"Will you say 'Yes' or 'No'?"

"I will say both 'Yes' and 'No,' if it will please my esteemed pal."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Nugent turned away angrily. It was evident that the dusky nabob did not mean to say anything; whatever his private opinion, he did not intend to quarrel with his old chum.

During this scene the other juniors had looked on in silence, wondering how it

would end. The Famous Five had always been inseparable; and, although there had been rows among them, trouble had always blown over. It looked as if the Co. was split up at last, with a vengeance.

The sight of Nugent's best chums turning their back on him had its effect upon the Removites. If the fellows who had always palled with him did not back him up, it was clear enough what the other fellows were to think.

Nugent walked towards the door, without a word to anyone in the room. But he was not to leave so easily. Bolsover major strode to the door, and slammed it, and put his back against it.

"Not just yet," he said coolly.

Nugent looked at him with blazing eyes.

"Let me pass, you rotter!"

"You've got to answer up first," said Bolsover major roughly. "We'll make a Form trial of it, and give you fair play."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's fair enough, Nugent," said the Bounder. "You gave me a Form trial once, you know."

"Wharton can preside, as he's captain of the Form," suggested Snoop, with a grin. "Come on, Wharton!"

"You can leave me out," said Wharton curtly.

"Toddy's the man!" said Bolsover major. "Toddy's a lawyer! Where's Peter Todd?"

"Oh, rats!" said Peter Todd.

"Stand back!" shouted Bolsover major, as Nugent advanced upon him with clenched fists.

"Get aside!"

"Rats!"

Nugent was attacking the bully of the Remove the next moment. Bolsover major grasped him at once, and they struggled. The slim form of Nugent almost crumpled in the powerful grasp of the burly Removite.

Bob Cherry came striding up.

"Chuck that!" he exclaimed savagely.

"Mind your own business!" snapped Bolsover major. "He's going to have a Form trial. He helped to give Smithy one once."

"I don't want your help, Cherry," said Nugent, between his teeth.

Bob hesitated.

Skinner and Treluce grasped Nugent, and held his arms. Bolsover major shook himself loose.

"Who says a Form trial?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes!"

"We'll give you fair play, Nugent," said Tom Brown. "What are you objecting to?"

Nugent panted. But the great majority of the juniors were in favour of a Form trial—an old institution at Greyfriars, in which Nugent himself had taken part more than once. He ceased to struggle.

"You can go ahead with your silly rot if you like," he said savagely. "Go and eat coke, the lot of you!"

Bolsover major locked the door. Nugent was released, and he stood with his hands in his pockets and a savage frown on his face. And all the Removites gathered round for the trial.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Tried by the Form!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. remained aside. They did not intend to take part in the proceedings; but they could not very well interfere with them. Peter Todd also declined a part, and Tom Brown was elected judge. Billy Bunter offered his services, but was immediately refused. The MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 470.

howled down. The New Zealand junior took a seat upon a chair placed upon the big table, from which elevated position he had a good view of the court.

"Gentlemen of the Remove, the prisoner at the bar stands charged with showing funk in a row with Highcliffe," he said. "The jury will kindly gather round, and stop jawing."

"Hear, hear!"

"Squiff is appointed counsel for the defence—"

"I'm on!" said Sampson Quincey Illey Field cheerfully.

"Skinner is counsel for the prosecution."

"I'm your man!" said Skinner promptly.

"What about me?" demanded Bolsover major.

"You're wanted as a witness, fat-head! Nugent, kindly take your place at the bar," said the judge.

Two chairs placed together formed the prisoner's dock. Frank Nugent stepped quietly into his place. He had quite recovered his calmness now, and he seemed to have made up his mind to go through the proceedings with equanimity.

"Prisoner at the bar, do you plead guilty or not guilty?" asked the judge.

"Not guilty!" said Nugent.

"Then the trial will take place. Counsel for the prosecution will now get on his hind legs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner came forward, with an ill-natured grin on his face. The amiable Skinner was enjoying the scene. The black looks of Harry Wharton & Co. were quite a pleasure to Skinner. Skinner felt that the Famous Five would not be able to carry their heads quite so high after a member of the famous Co. had been tried for funk and found guilty by the Form.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said Skinner, "I beg your attention for a few moments—"

"Cut it short!" remarked Ogilvy.

"Silence in court!"

"Gentlemen, this man stands before you charged with crime," went on Skinner, in quite a legal style. "Look at him, gentlemen! Note his hangdog appearance, his slouching manner, his whole aspect, which betrays conscious guilt—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Silly ass!" remarked the prisoner at the bar.

"Silence in court!" roared the judge.

"The prisoner is not allowed to jaw till his turn comes. Don't you know the rules of a court, prisoner? Courts are places where counsel jaw, and the prisoner is a mere nobody. Shut up!"

Nugent grinned, and shut up.

"The prisoner," resumed Skinner, "is charged with funk—a very heinous offence according to the laws of Greyfriars."

"You ought to know all about it!" remarked Nugent.

There was a titter in court, and Skinner reddened.

"On a certain occasion," said Skinner, "a number of Greyfriars chaps were engaged with the enemy—to wit, the Highcliffe cads. The odds were against them, and the prisoner was on the spot. Instead of backing up, he bunked off, and left his schoolfellows and pals in the lurch. Bolsover major will kindly step forward."

Bolsover lounged forward, with a bitter look at Nugent.

"Bolsover major, were you up at the spot when the prisoner bunked the Highcliffe cads?"

"Yes, I was."

"Describe the circumstances to the jury."

"We've had all that about a dozen time," remarked Vernon-Smith, the foreman of the jury. And the jury nodded assent.

"Never mind. This court must proceed according to law," said the judge. "The witness will describe what happened."

"We were fighting with a Highcliffe gang," growled Bolsover major. "There were eight against five. Nugent ran away instead of helping us."

"That is your evidence?" asked Skinner.

"Yes."

"You may stand down. Wharton!"

Harry Wharton looked round from the fire, frowning.

"You can leave me out!" he snapped.

"Sorry; I can't leave you out!" said Skinner coolly. "I require you as a witness. Kindly come forward!"

The captain of the Remove did not stir. There was a buzz in the jury at once.

"I appeal to his Honour!" said Skinner, looking at the judge. "His Honour has power to direct that a witness may be called."

"Come on, Wharton!" said Tom Brown at once. "You know the rules. You'd be down on any other chap for refusing to take a hand."

Wharton hesitated, but he came forward. He had no choice in the matter. Skinner was quite within his rights in calling upon an eye-witness for evidence.

"Go it, Skinner!" chuckled Snoop, greatly delighted at seeing the captain of the Remove called to give evidence against his best chum.

"Witness, your name is Wharton, I understand?" asked Skinner, and there was a laugh.

"Yes," said Harry.

"You are acquainted with the prisoner?"

"You know I am."

"That is not evidence. Are you acquainted with the prisoner, or are you not acquainted with the prisoner?"

"The witness will kindly answer 'Yes' or 'No,'" said the judge.

"Yes," said Wharton.

"Were you present on the occasion described by the previous witness?"

"Yes."

"Did you witness the exhibition of funk on the part of the prisoner, as described by the previous witness?"

"I saw what happened."

"Tell the jury what happened, then."

Harry Wharton's face was crimson with vexation. He did not meet Nugent's eyes.

"We were scrapping with the Highcliffe cads," he said. "Nugent was at some distance—not on the spot."

"Where was he?"

"At the top of the rise in the road, towards Pegg."

"Was he near enough to see you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did you call to him to back up?"

"Yes."

"Did he obey the call?"

"N-a-no," muttered Wharton, biting his lip.

"What did he do?"

"He went away."

"Did he run away?"

"Well, he was running."

"He ran away in the opposite direction?"

"Well, yes."

"The witness may stand down," grinned Skinner; and Wharton, with furrowed brows, strode back to the fire-place.

"Robert Cherry will please come forward."

Bob came forward unwillingly.

"No need to jaw, Skinner," he said.

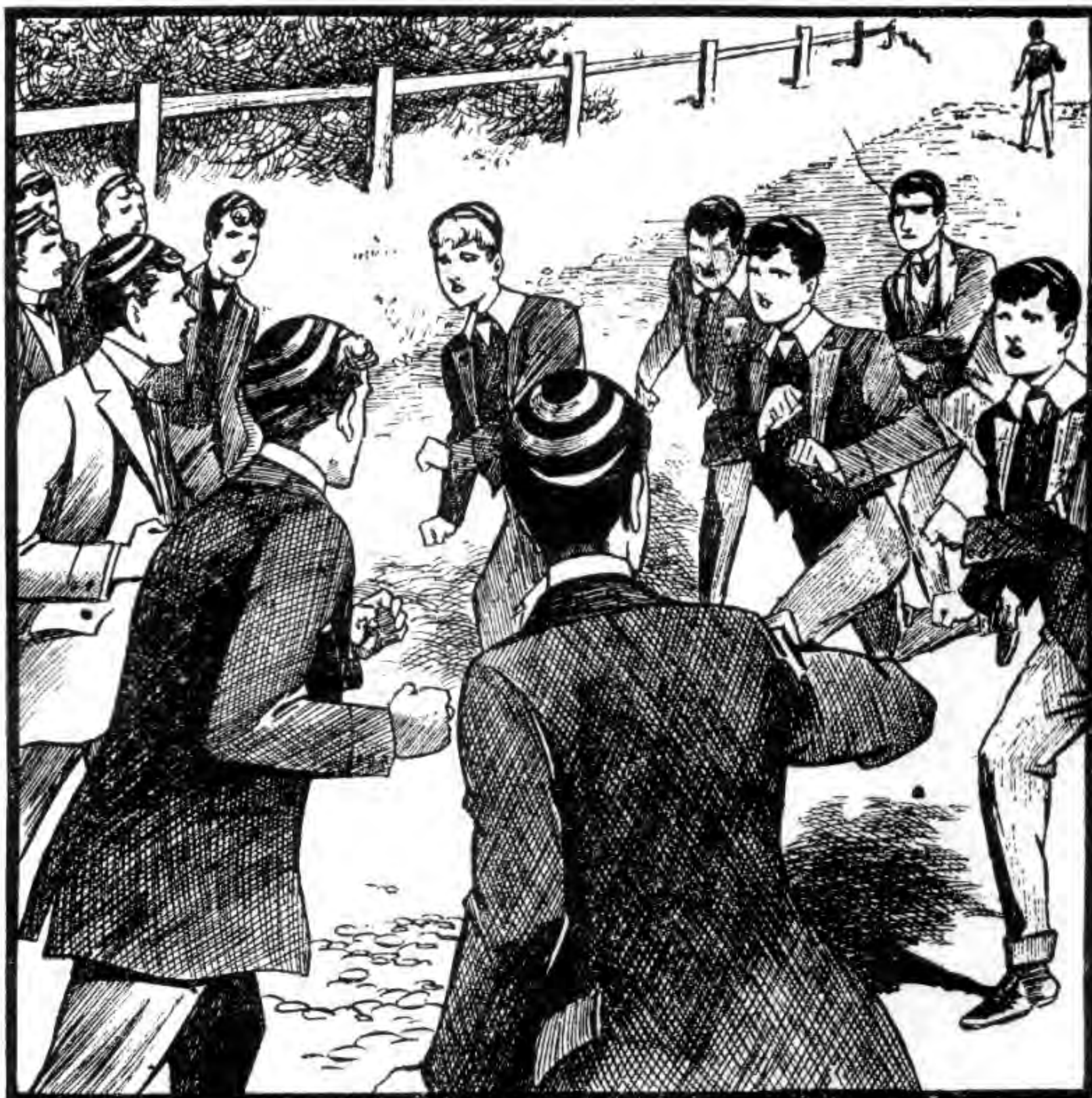
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The chums of the Remove and Bolsover came dashing up. Only Nugent was absent. Nugent was on the top of the rise of the road, a hundred yards distant, looking away towards Pegg, with his back to his comrades. (See Chapter 2.)

"I corroborate the evidence of the last witness, and that's enough!"

And Bob retired immediately.

"John Bull!"

"Same here," said Johnny Bull, without stirring from the fire.

"Hurree Singh!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur entered the witness-box, with an apologetic look at Nugent, who did not seem to see it.

"You were present on the occasion?" demanded Skinner.

"The presentfulness was terrific."

"Did you see Nugent run away from the Highcliffians?"

"No, my esteemed Skinner."

There was a murmur in court, and Nugent raised his eyebrows.

"You did not?" ejaculated Skinner, taken aback.

"The answer is in the esteemed negative."

"Tell the jury exactly what you saw!" snapped Skinner.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh turned a beaming smile upon the jury.

"My esteemed friends and fellow-Britons," he began, "at the desire of the esteemed and disgusting Skinner, I will relatefully describe all that happened on that celebrated occasion. My esteemed friends and my noble self proceeded walkfully to the cliffs, and there we encounterfully met the ludicrous Highcliffians—"

"Describe what you saw!" interjected the judge. "This isn't a gasworks, you inky ass!"

"The esteemed sun was shining, though the weather was frostful," proceeded the nabob calmly. "The cliffs presented an imposing sight, and the sky was blue, and the sea—"

"Never mind the sea!" said Skinner. "Tell us what you saw, fathhead!"

"I saw the road which ran along the cliffs, which was somewhat dusty. Beside the road were several trees, in a leafless statefulness, owing to the exceeding winterfulness of the season—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You howling ass!" said a member of the jury. "Keep to the evidence!"

"The honourable Skinner asked me to describe what I saw," murmured the nabob. "I am describing it, my esteemed Rake. Overhead, in the blue sky, there was an aeroplane, probably proceeding to Wapshot Camp—"

"Let the aeroplane rip!" snapped the judge. "Did you see Nugent?"

"Yes; I beholdfully saw my esteemed and ludicrous chum."

"What was he doing?"

"Standing upon the rise in the road, and lookfully regarding in the direction of the handsome fishing village."

"Did he run away from the Highcliff pads?"

"I am not aware."

"What did he do?" yelled Skinner.

"He proceeded quickly in the direction of Pegg."

"That is to say, he ran away from the scrap?"

"Not at allfully. I am not aware of

what reason he may have had for proceeding quickly in a reverse direction."

"The witness may stand down!" growled Skinner, while the jury grinned.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled beamingly all round, and retired.

"Now, then, guilty or not guilty?" yawned Tom Brown.

"Hold on! You haven't heard the counsel for the defence!" interjected Squiff.

"Oh, buck up, then!"

The junior from New South Wales came forward, and took Skinner's place; but the looks of the jury showed that their minds were made up, and that what the counsel for the defence had to say would not make much difference.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Verdict!

"G O it, Squiff!"

Squiff gave a little cough.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I doubt very much whether the prisoner showed funk, as alleged by the witnesses. I admit that he seems to have bunked off, instead of taking part in the scrap; but I submit that he may have had reasons for so doing, which may have appeared to him—enough."

"Rats!" said the jury.

"Ahem! I have no witnesses to call, but I request his honour's permission to place the prisoner in the witness-box!"

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"Go ahead!" said his honour.

Frank Nugent was led from the chairs to the sofa, that being the witness-box. Squiff whispered to him in transit:

"If you've got anything to say, you'd better say it while you've got a chance, now. You're getting fair-play!"

Nugent's lips set obstinately.

"Buck up!" said half a dozen voices.

"Ahem!" said Squiff. "Mr. Nugent, I shall now proceed to question you in your own interests, and you will remember that you are under an obligation to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as is always—ahem!—done in law-courts. You were a member of the party who went to look for Ponsonby & Co. this afternoon?"

"Yes," said Nugent.

"You went out on the warpath of your own accord?"

"Of course I did."

"Knowing that the enemy were in force, and that there would be a tussle against odds when you found them?"

"Yes."

"I beg the jury to observe that point," said Squiff.

"Oh, get on!" said Wibley. "It's not a question of what he intended to do, but what he did when the time came."

"I am not here to receive instructions from a jurymen!" said the counsel, with great dignity. "Where were you, witness, when the enemy attacked?"

"Some distance away up the road."

"Did you see the enemy?"

"Not at first. I was looking down the slope towards Pegg."

"Did you hear your comrades call to you?"

"Yes."

"Did you then look back and see them scrapping?"

"I did."

"And did you come to their help?"

"No."

"What did you do?"

"I ran in the opposite direction," said Nugent calmly.

There was a buzz in court, and the counsel for the defence coughed. His only witness seemed to be doing himself more damage than all the other witnesses combined. Nugent's face was quite calm.

"You—ahem!—ran away?" said the counsel for the defence.

"I ran in the opposite direction, as I said."

"You were not running away from the Highcliffe cads?"

"No."

"Will you explain to the jury why you ran in the opposite direction?"

"No," said Nugent coolly.

"Why not?"

"Because it isn't their business."

"Ahem! You had a reason for running off as you did?"

"I had."

"What was the reason?"

"Something was going on down the road."

"Oh!" Squiff brightened up a little. "Something was going on down the road, and you went to see what it was?"

"No; I could see what it was from where I stood."

"Will you tell the jury what it was?"

"No, I won't!"

"Ahem! Unless you can give some explanation, you must be aware that you will be found guilty," urged Squiff.

Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

"Why won't you explain, you ass?"

"I'll tell you that," said Nugent calmly. "Fellows who ought to know me better believe that I funk. Without asking me what I did it for, they jumped to that conclusion. When I came back here, I hadn't the faintest idea that I was suspected of anything of the kind. As I am suspected, I refuse to explain a single word! Every fellow who thinks I funk can go on thinking so, and he needn't take the trouble to speak to me again! That's all!"

"Well, I've no more to say," said Squiff, shrugging his shoulders.

Skinner popped up again.

"With his honour's permission, I should like to cross-examine this witness," he said.

"Pile in!" said the judge.

"Kindly look me in the face, witness!" thundered Skinner, in the true brow-beating manner of a prosecuting counsel.

"Thanks, I'd rather not," said Nugent.

"You're not a pretty object to look at, Skinner!"

The jury grinned, and the judge chuckled, and Skinner looked savage.

"Kindly state why you did not return till after calling-over."

"That's my business!"

"Were you staying away because you hadn't the nerve to face the fellows after your cowardly conduct?"

"No, you sneaking cad!"

"You refuse to explain why you ran away, because your noble dignity is wounded by being suspected of funk?"

"You can put it like that if you like."

"Are you not simply mounting the high horse, because you have no explanation to give, and you hope to carry off the matter with a high hand?"

"No, you rotter!"

But a general nodding among the jury showed that Skinner's suggestion had taken root in their minds.

"That is all," said Skinner, with a wave of the hand. "I demand a verdict of guilty from the jury. I am willing to leave the matter to their common-sense."

"Guilty or not guilty?" demanded the judge.

"Guilty!"

It was a chorus from the jury, with hardly a dissentient voice. Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

Tom Brown turned to him with rather a worried look.

"Nugent, you are found guilty by a jury of your Form-fellows, on the charge of faking a fight and leaving your pals in the lurch. You are sentenced to—"

—Ahem! The New Zealander paused, and looked round. "What's the sentence, you chaps?"

"Coventry!" said Skinner.

"Frog's-march!" roared Bolsover major.

"Form licking!" said Snoop.

"Shut up!" said Tom Brown, frowning. "In view of the prisoner's previous good character, he is sentenced to be sent to Coventry for three days."

"That's not enough!" shouted Bolsover.

"Who's judge in this court?" demanded Tom Brown. "Sentence has been delivered, and the court is closed."

"Look here—"

"Rats!"

And the court broke up, Bolsover & Co. looking very discontented. They did not think the sentence nearly severe enough. But to Nugent's friends it did not seem mild. He had been found guilty of funk, and disgraced by the

Form; and that in itself was a severe punishment. It would not have mattered very much to a mean fellow like Skinner or Bunter or Fish; but to a high-spirited lad like Nugent it was bitter enough.

But Nugent did not seem to be downcast. He gave the Removites one glance of cool disdain and defiance, and walked out of the room.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sent to Coventry!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. did not see their chum again till bedtime.

When Nugent came into the Remove dormitory, his manner was quite quiet and calm. He did not speak, and he looked neither to the right nor to the left.

Nobody spoke to him.

He was sent to Coventry by the Form, and the sentence had to be carried out. His old chums were in a difficult position. They could only suppose that Frank Nugent had yielded on that miserable occasion to a sudden attack of funk, and they would have been glad for the matter to be dropped with nothing said about it. Bolsover major had made that impossible.

Bolsover had a grievance, and there was really something in it. He had been severely hurt in the battle against odds, and if Nugent had rendered aid on that occasion, the Greyfriars party would have won a much easier victory. Bolsover rubbed his bruises and growled over them. He took the view that Nugent had played his comrades a dirty trick, and disgraced his school—and his view was generally shared. There was no doubt that something would be heard from the Highcliffians about it; at least, so the Removites expected. To be chipped by their old enemies on having a funk in the Form was not a pleasant prospect to the Removites. If Nugent had been a fellow of no account, like Bunter or Fish, it would not have mattered so much; but, as a member of the Famous Five, he had been one of the leaders of the Form, and had always held his head high. Nugent had always been a peaceful, good-natured fellow; but he had never shown funk before. But he had shown it now, with a vengeance, and he had to take the consequences. If a fellow was a funk, perhaps he couldn't help it; but, in that case, he should be content to sink into insignificance, and not assume the position of one who felt himself entitled to respect.

It was a miserable position for his old chums, and, in spite of the Form's sentence of Coventry, they did not intend to cut Nugent. And when the Remove turned in, they all said: "Good-night, Nugent!" together.

Nugent did not reply.

"You're talking to Nugent!" roared Bolsover major aggressively.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Any fellow who talks to him will be sent to Coventry himself," announced Skinner.

"You can begin with me, then," said Bob cheerfully. "It will be awful to lose the pleasure of your conversation, Skinner. But I'll try to bear it."

"I say, you fellows, you're not to talk to Nugent, you know," said Billy Bunter. "You hear me, Wharton?"

"Eh?" said Wharton. "Dis you speak, you fat idiot?"

"Oh, really, Wharton? Mind, I mean it," said Bunter impressively. "If you fellows speak to Nugent, I sha'n't speak to you."

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"Then what will you do when you're expecting a postal-order, and want it cashed in advance?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My esteemed Nugent, I have wishfully bidden you good-night, and you have not politely replied," remarked the nabob of Bhanipar.

"Good-night, Inky!" said Nugent, at last.

"Shut up, you nigger!" yelled Bolsover major.

"Bow-wow!" said Hurree Singh calmly.

Wingate of the Sixth came in to put the lights out, and the discussion ceased. There was the usual chatter from bed to bed after lights out; but Frank Nugent did not join in it.

When the rising-bell rang out in the morning, Nugent turned out in silence, and did not look at his old chums, or speak to them. He left the dormitory very quickly.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed more slowly.

"Look here, you chaps!" said Wharton, as the Co. came out into the frosty quad. "This can't go on. We're not going to break off with Franky."

"We can't," said Bob Cherry uncomfortably. "I can't understand what he played that queer trick for yesterday; but we know he isn't really a funk."

"If he were, I should stick to him all the same," said Wharton quietly. "But I don't believe it for a moment. It—it was just a momentary feeling, I suppose. He happened to get a scare on that one occasion, I suppose. It isn't a nice thing to happen, but we're not going to be down on an old pal for one slip."

"Let's let it drop, and go on the same as before," said Bob.

Johnny Bull grunted.

"Oh, I don't mind," he said. "I can't think of him the same as before, and that's flat. But I don't mind being friendly."

"What about Coventry?" grinned Bob.

"Oh, hang that!" said Wharton irritably.

"Right-ho! There's Nugent. Come on!"

Nugent was walking in the quadrangle by himself. As his old friends came up to him, in a somewhat hesitating manner, he gave them one steady look, turned his back, and walked away.

The Co. halted, taken aback.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob. "Nugent's got his back up now. He won't speak to us."

"Let him go!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'm not particularly keen on talking to a funk."

"Frank!" called out Wharton.

Nugent did not look round.

"Dash it all, we're not having this!" exclaimed Wharton. "I'll make him speak."

He ran after Nugent, and caught him by the arm. Frank had to stop then.

"Let me go, Wharton!" he said, in a low voice.

"Look here, Nugent——"

"The Form have sent me to Coventry," said Frank bitterly.

"Hang the Form!"

"So you want to keep on with me all the same?"

"Yes," said Harry, at once.

"Though you believe I am a funk?" Wharton was uncomfortably silent.

"So you do believe it?"

"No, I don't," said Harry at last. "You funk'd on that occasion, Frank, and it's no good denying it. A fellow has to believe what he sees with his own eyes, I suppose?"

Nugent's handsome face hardened.

"I shouldn't have believed it of you, if I'd seen you do as I did," he replied. "I should have thought there was some reason for what you did."

"That's what I thought at first, and I only wanted to hear your reason," said Harry eagerly. "If you had a reason for clearing off like that, why can't you say so, and clear up the matter?"

"Because I won't!" said Nugent, between his teeth. "I won't be called on to prove that I'm not a funk! You wouldn't in my place either, and you know it."

Wharton was silent again. Nugent's words struck home. If he was unjustly accused, Wharton could understand how his pride was up in arms at the base suspicion. But what the juniors had seen with their own eyes could not be explained away.

"And so long as you hold that opinion of me, you can keep your distance," went on Nugent coldly. "I don't want to have anything to say to you."

He walked away again, and Wharton did not stop him.

"Let him go!" growled Johnny Bull.

And Nugent went his own way. When he came in to breakfast he did not exchange a word or a look with his former friends, and they did not appear to be aware of his existence. It was by his own wish, and he had his way. And the sentence of Coventry was carried out now.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Parted Chums!

"I SAY, Nugent!"

Billy Bunter came cautiously into No. 1 Study, where Frank Nugent was alone after lessons that day.

He blinked round the study first to make sure that Nugent was alone.

Frank looked up impatiently from his book.

"What do you want?" he snapped. Nugent was usually good-tempered and kind, even to Bunter, but his good temper had suffered lately.

"That rotter isn't here?" said Bunter.

"Whom do you mean?"

"Wharton, of course!"

Whiz! Nugent's volume flew through the air, and landed on Bunter's waistcoat. The fat junior sat down in his surprise, and bumped on the carpet.

"Yow!" he ejaculated. "Wharrer you at, you silly ass?"

"Get out!" growled Nugent.

"Oh, really, you know!" Bunter scrambled up. "Look here! Wharton's down on you, the same as the rest——"

"Shut up, confound you!"

"Well, I must say you're in a rotten temper," said Bunter. "I've come here to sympathise with you, Nugent."

"Oh, clear off!"

"If you call that grateful, I don't!" said Bunter. "The fact is, Nugent, I don't want to send you to Coventry. Of course, I can't speak to you when the fellows are by, but I don't mind giving you a word every now and then, you know."

Nugent grunted. He did not look at all grateful for this exceeding kindness from the Owl of the Remove. Perhaps he knew that the fat junior had an axe to grind.

"Chap can't help being a funk," continued Bunter considerably. "I'm a brave chap myself—brave as a lion, in fact—— What are you cackling at, Nugent? But I can feel for a fellow who hasn't much pluck. I'm not going to be down on you because you ran away from the Highlife cads."

"Will you get out?" roared Nugent.

"You don't seem to understand."

Nugent. I'm going to be kind to you. If you want me to come to tea in this study, I'll come, and chance it. There!"

"Well, I don't!" said Frank gruffly.

"There's another matter. I'm expecting a postal-order shortly," explained Bunter. "If you'd care to advance me five bob, Nugent, I——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Simply till my postal-order comes, of course," said Bunter. "If you're willing to oblige me, I don't mind speaking to you sometimes when the fellows ain't about. One good turn deserves another, you know. Is it a go?"

Bolsover major put his head in at the open doorway.

"So you're talking to Nugent, Bunter?" he exclaimed.

Bunter backed away in alarm.

"Not at all!" he said hastily. "I never said a word. Of course, I wouldn't, as Nugent is in Coventry."

"I heard you!" roared Bolsover.

"Ahem! I—I was just explaining to Nugent that I wouldn't talk to him under any circumstances whatever, wasn't I, Nugent?"

"No!" said Frank grimly.

"I—I say, Bolsover—— Yah! Leggo my ear!" yelled Billy Bunter. "Yow-wow! Rescue! Keep your boot away from me, you beast! Yaroooh! Help! Rescue! Nugent, you rotter, draggim-off!"

The bully of the Remove had Bunter by the ear, and was applying his boot with great vigour to Bunter's fat person. Nugent looked on with a grim face.

Bunter tore himself away, and dodged behind Nugent's chair.

"Keep him off!" he yelled.

Bolsover major rushed after him. He was not finished yet. Nugent jumped up, and stood in front of Bunter.

"Hands off!" he said curtly.

Frank did not look much like a funk as he faced the burly bully of the Remove. Bolsover major came on, hitting out, and in a moment they were fighting.

Billy Bunter blinked at them, sidled round the study, and darted out at the door. The opportunity to escape was too good to be lost.

There was a loud trampling of feet and panting of breath in No. 1 Study. Frank Nugent was hardly a match for the burly Bolsover, but he stood up to him with a grim determination.

But he was driven back under Bolsover's heavy attack, back to the wall, where he still stood up to his bulky antagonist sturdily.

There was a step in the passage, and Harry Wharton came in.

He stared at the combatants for a moment, and then, without a word, grasped Bolsover major by the back of the collar, and dragged him off with such violence that Bolsover went sprawling to the floor.

Nugent stood panting.

The bully of the Remove scrambled up breathlessly.

"Get out of this room!" said Wharton savagely.

"So you're going to stand up for that funk?" roared Bolsover.

"Get out!"

"Put me out!" sneered Bolsover.

"I'll jolly soon do that!"

"You can mind your own business, Wharton!" said Nugent savagely. "I haven't asked you to interfere!"

Wharton did not reply, but he tackled Bolsover major at once, and the bully of the Remove was driven back to the door under his fierce attack. Right out into the passage they went, slogging furiously, and there was a rush of Remove fellows from the other studies at once.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Go it, both of you!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash! Bolsover major went down, and Wharton stood over him with flashing eyes, quite ready to begin again.

Bolsover lay gasping on the floor.

"What's the row about?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Bolsover asked me to put him out of my study," said Harry. "I'm trying to oblige him."

"Perfect!" yelled Rake from the landing, and in a moment the passage was empty.

All was peaceful when Walker of the Sixth came along.

Harry Wharton went back into his study, breathing hard. Nugent was dabbing his nose with his handkerchief.

"What did Bolsover come here for, Frank?" asked Harry.

"He was ragging Bunter."

"Serve the fat brute right!" growled Wharton.

Nugent shrugged his shoulders.

There was a pause. Nugent sat down and took up his book again.

"Are we going to have tea?" Wharton asked at last.

"I'm not stopping you."

"But you—"

"I've had tea in Hall."

"Oh!"

Wharton hesitated a few moments, and then left the study. He went along to Bob Cherry's study to tea. No. 1 was not the comfortable habitation of old.

But when the time came for prep Wharton had to come back to his quarters. He found Nugent already at work.

The captain of the Remove sat down to his work, and the old chums worked on, facing one another, without a word or a look.

Prep done, Wharton rose to his feet. After some hesitation he spoke:

"Coming down, Frank?"

"No."

"Shall I stay here?"

"Suit yourself."

Another long pause.

"Look here, Frank, we can't go on like this!" exclaimed Wharton at last. "It's no good leading a cat-and-dog life in the study."

"That's not my fault."

"Well, I don't see that it's mine. I'm willing to go on as before, if you are."

"I'm not!" said Nugent coldly.

"Then one of us had better change out."

"You can change out if you like. Nobody would take me into his study—funks are not popular, you know."

Wharton made an uncomfortable movement. This grim hardness and bitterness in an easy-going fellow like Nugent came as a surprise to him.

"You'd like me to go?" he asked at last.

"I don't care whether you go or stay."

"I never called you a funk," said Harry. "Nothing would have been said about that rotten affair but for Bolsover."

Nugent's lip curled, but he did not speak.

"Well, I suppose I'd better clear," said Harry. "I'll ask Bob to let me do my prep in his study after this."

A shrug of the shoulders was Nugent's only reply.

Wharton left the study in silence.

Frank Nugent did not appear in the Common-room that evening. He remained in No. 1 Study reading. He was not seen again till the Remove went to their dormitory.

Some of the fellows looked at him enviously then, but without speaking.

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After lights out, Harree Singh said "Good-night, Nugent!" and Mark Linley followed his example, to the accompaniment of a snort from Bolsover major. Nugent lay in grim silence.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish on the War-path!

FISHER T. FISH wore a very thoughtful look the next day.

The Yankee junior had been thinking for some time.

After morning lessons, he asked Bob Cherry to step into the gym, to have the gloves on for a round or two. Bob stared at him as he made the request.

Fishy was a wonderful fighting-man, so far as words went; but when it came to action, Fishy was far too proud to fight. As a warrior he was much more given to using his legs than his hands.

"A round or two?" repeated Bob Cherry. "What do you want to box for?"

"I guess I want to see the form I'm in," said Fisher T. Fish. "I may have a scrap on shortly."

"You're going to fight somebody?" asked Bob, in astonishment.

"Yep."

"Chap in the Second Form, I suppose?" grinned Bob.

"Nope!" said Fish emphatically.

"Chap in the Remove."

"Bunter?" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"I guess not!"

"Snoop, I suppose?"

"Nope, you jay!"

"But there isn't any other chap in the Remove who can't fight," said Johnny Bull, in a puzzled way.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"I guess you can have your little joke!" said Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "I reckon I've told you a hundred times that I could walk over any galoot in the Remove, if I got my mad up! You watch out, and you'll see!"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Johnny Bull, in his painfully candid way. "If you've got a fight on, it's with somebody who can't fight, or you wouldn't tackle him!"

"I guess you're a jay!" growled Fisher T. Fish. "You galoots on this side don't understand the Yew-nited States. We're ahead of you, sir, in everything!"

"Especially swank!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"As for being too proud to fight, you don't understand that, either," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess we've got boss-sense enough to keep out of your silly old war. What good is it doing you? Your war's hanging out for years, and it's bound to end in a drawn game."

"Rats!"

"Fishy's right," chimed in Squiff. "The great Yew-nited States know which side their bread's buttered on. They go to war with a poor little country like Spain; but when it comes to tackling Germany, they're too proud. When the great Yew-nited States goes to war again, it will be with Portugal, or Hayti, or Mexico, or some other country that won't have a dog's chance against them. Isn't that so, Fishy?"

Fishy snuffed.

"That's business," he replied coolly. "Just like you Britishers to go out and tackle the biggest proposition you can find. We don't call that business. But don't you chinwag about things you don't understand. You come along to the gym, Bobby, and put on the gloves."

"Oh, I'm on!" said Bob. "If you've got a fight on, it will be interesting to watch you."

Quite a number of the Removes pro- ceeded to the gym to see Fisher T. Fish

with the gloves on. The Yankee junior seemed to be greatly in earnest.

"Mind, don't you begin slogging!" he said. "This is only a friendly round."

"Oh, I won't hurt you!" grunted Bob. "Time!" grinned Squiff.

Fisher T. Fish began to spar. He stood up to Bob for a round, Bob taking care not to hit hard. Fishy prided himself upon being a boxer—as well as very many other things—but Bob simply played with him.

At the end of the round Fisher T. Fish peeled off the gloves, and looked satisfied.

"I guess that'll do!" he remarked. "I'm in form."

"You call that form?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"Yep! I guess I could walk all round you if I tried," said Fish. "I was letting you off, you know, as it was a friendly round."

"Letting me off!" roared Bob.

"Sure!"

"Well, my hat! Put the gloves on again for another round, and let me off again!" said Bob, breathing hard through his nose.

Fisher T. Fish shook his head.

"I guess enough is as good as a feast!" he said coolly. "I've got a fight on after lessons, too."

"But who's the other warrior?" asked Harry Wharton. "You generally keep out of scraps pretty carefully."

"I guess that's because I'm a peaceful galoot. But I'm going to show you jays what a fight is really like!" said Fish loftily. "You watch out!"

And Fisher T. Fish sauntered out of the gym, evidently extremely well satisfied with himself.

He left the juniors feeling interested and puzzled. If Fishy intended to enter into a fight, they were quite sure that the selected opponent would be some unfortunate individual who could not stand up for himself.

Fishy might have gone forth in search of cheap glory by getting into a fight with a fag of the Second or Third, but certainly some Remove fellow would have stopped him. Besides, Fishy had declared that his opponent was to be a Removeite.

Bunter, certainly, was an easy opponent for anybody, and Snoop was not a dangerous adversary; but it wasn't either Bunter or Snoop, according to Fishy. And any other fellow in the Remove was quite able to give a good account of Fishy.

Even Skinner, though not a fighting-man, would not have hesitated to tackle Fisher T. Fish, with or without gloves.

It was a puzzle, and quite an interesting puzzle. Fisher T. Fish on the war-path was quite a phenomenon.

"Where the dickens is Fishy going to dig up a bigger funk than himself?" Bob Cherry inquired. "It beats me hollow!"

It was a mystery.

Fisher T. Fish did not explain, and the Remove went into afternoon lessons with the mystery still unsolved.

After lessons Frank Nugent came out by himself, and went to his study. Fisher T. Fish found himself surrounded in the passage by quite a crowd. Never had the Yankee junior enjoyed so much limelight.

"Now, who's the happy man?" asked Bob. "Don't keep us in suspense, Fishy!"

"Who's going to have the pleasure of licking you, Fishy?" grinned Bolsover major.

"You are keeping us on the tenter-hooks, my esteemed funky Fisher," murmured Harree Janset Ram Singh.

"I guess you'll soon know!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm going to fight a



Trumper was crawling out from under his bike, and Nugent had the three of them on him before he could help.
(See Chapter 13.)

galoot who's insulted the Yew-nited States!"

"What?" yelled the juniors.

"I guess it's up to a galoot to stand up for Old Glory!" said Fish.

"What the merry dickens is Old Glory?" asked Tom Brown.

Fishy snorted.

"That's the Amurrican flag, you joy!"

"Oh, you have a flag over there?" asked Bob innocently.

Another snort from Fishy.

"I guess you've heard of the star-spangled banner?" he said loftily.

"Sort of flag that's braved a thousand years, the battle and the breeze!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Well, it hasn't done that; but it's licked one that has!" said Fish.

"What?"

"Ha, ha! That's one to Fishy!" said Bob Cherry. "It isn't true, but it's smart. Go up one, Fishy!"

"But who's the victim?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I guess the galoot I'm speaking of has insulted the Yew-nited States, and I'm going to make him hop!" said Fish impressively.

"Well, we've all done that, more or less," grinned Bolsover major. "If you're looking for a fight for that reason, I'll say some things."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'm not going to scrap with you, Bolsover!" said Fish hastily. "One at a time is enough. I'm no hog. All the same, you can let this be a lesson to

you, to see what I'm like when my dauder's rix. I'm going to see that galoot now, and challenge him!"

"Well, it will be funny to see you challenge anybody," said Bob. "But isn't the merry galoot here?"

"Nope! He's sneaked off!"

"Who is it, then?"

"I guess it's Nugent!"

And Fisher T. Fish started for the stairs.

"Nugent!" ejaculated Bob.

"Nugent!" roared Bolsover major.

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the crowded passage. The mystery was a mystery no longer. Fisher T. Fish had selected Nugent as the victim of his listical prowess, and the Remove did not need telling the reason. Nugent had been condemned by the Form as a funk. That was Fishy's reason. But for that unfortunate suspicion as to his courage, Nugent would certainly have appeared a somewhat dangerous adversary for a weedy fellow like Fish. But pluck will tell, and Nugent was supposed to be lacking in that useful article; while Fish, according to his own account, was simply bursting with it. Fishy, convinced that Nugent was afraid to see through a really tough encounter, had made up his mind to reap glory by tackling him, assured in advance of an easy victory.

This was what Fisher T. Fish regarded as extremely cute. But, like all Fisher T. Fish's cute dodges, it was probably

somewhat offside, as Bob Cherry put it. Whatever the Removeites thought of Nugent, they did not think that he was likely to show the white feather against so ridiculous an antagonist as the Yankee junior. But Fishy was eminently satisfied with his own judgment in the matter, and he swaggered away in search of Frank Nugent, with the air of a fellow who was already a great conqueror, and who almost touched the stars with his sublime head.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Glory for Fishy!

"I GUESS you're wanted!" Thus Fisher T. Fish, as he projected his long, thin nose into the doorway of No. 1 Study.

Frank Nugent looked up irritably.

He was surprised to see a crowd of grinning Removeites behind Fishy. Frank was still in Coventry, but that sentence seemed to be in abeyance for the moment.

"What's up?" he asked.

"I guess I want you!"

"Well, what do you want?" growled Nugent.

"The other day, sir, you made a remark about the Yew-nited States," said Fisher T. Fish impressively.

"Did I?" said Nugent puzzled.

"Yep! You said, sir, that the galoots who have cornered wheat in the Yew-nited States and put up the price ought to be lynched."

"Yes, they ought," said Frank, with a nod. "I suppose every decent chap thinks so."

"My popper helped to corner wheat."

"Well, you can't help what your pater does, and I don't blame you," said Frank. "Not unless you'd do the same in his place, of course. In that case, you ought to be scragged."

"I don't allow a galoot to insult my popper!"

"Man who corners wheat can't be insulted! That kind of a reptile is beneath insult," said Frank.

"I guess I'm going to lick you, Nugent!"

"Eh?"

"Don't you understand plain English?" sneered Fisher T. Fish. "You're a funk—a gold-darned, crawling, sneaking funk, sir!"

Nugent rose to his feet, his face crimson. He understood now. Fish had come to pick a quarrel with him because he believed that Nugent was afraid. That was the only kind of wacklike exploit Fisher T. Fish was ever likely to be guilty of.

"You can come into the gym or anywhere you like," pursued Fisher T. Fish. "I'm going to make potato-scrappings of you, sir!"

"You silly dummy!"

"Do you want something more to get your back up?" asked Fisher T. Fish sarcastically. "I've called you a funk—a sneaking, crawling—"

"That will do," said Frank quietly. "I'm ready."

"I don't mind letting you off lightly if you apologise," said Fisher T. Fish magnanimously. "You go down on your knees—"

"What?"

"And beg pardon and eat humble pie," said Fish. "Then I'll let you off with a tweak of the nose."

Nugent burst into an angry laugh. Fishy's extraordinary attitude was a sign of the estimation in which he was now held in the Remove.

"Will you walk to the gym, or will you have it here, Fish?" he asked.

"I guess I'm waiting for you."

Fish swaggered out of the study.

"I shall be your second, Frank," said Wharton.

"I don't want a second."

Nugent followed Fisher T. Fish, and nearly all the Remove followed the two. They arrived in the gym, and the two juniors removed their jackets.

"Gloves?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I don't care!" growled Nugent.

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish. "I don't want to hurt the galoot too much—only to give him a thumping good hiding!"

"You mean, you don't want to risk getting hurt!" snapped Bolsover major.

Fisher T. Fish made no reply to that remark. He put on the gloves very carefully. Nugent followed his example.

Wingate of the Sixth came into the gym, and came towards the group of juniors.

"What's all this?" he demanded.

"Only a scrap, Wingate," said Wharton, laughing. "There won't be any damage done."

"The scrapfulness will not be terrific, my esteemed Wingate."

"You kids are always rowing," said the captain of Greyfriars. "But you can go ahead if you have the gloves on. I'll time you."

"Right-ho!"

"And I shall stop you in time, too," said Wingate.

"I guess I'm not going to be stopped," said Fisher T. Fish. "I've come here to lick that galoot."

Wingate stared at him.

"This is rather a new line for you, Fish, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yep. You see, I'm a peaceful galoot, but when I get my mad up I'm a regular cyclone!" explained Fisher T. Fish. "I've got my mad up now, and I'm going to make potato-scrappings of that galoot."

"Well, I shall be glad to see you show a little pluck, anyway," said Wingate drily. "Time!"

Fisher T. Fish swaggered towards his adversary with his hands up in what he regarded as a scientific manner. He expected to see Frank Nugent blench. Somewhat to his surprise, Nugent showed no sign of blenching. He stood up to the Yankee junior calmly, with a contemptuous smile on his face.

Fishy felt a momentary doubt. But he concluded that Nugent's attitude was bluff. Fisher T. Fish knew all about bluff; he himself was simply great in bluffing. He decided that his bony fists would soon knock the bluff out of

Nugent. And he started with a whirlwind attack, which was intended to send Nugent spinning and to bring him to his knees in a very short time.

Nugent did not give ground, however.

He met Fish's attack with a guard the Yankee junior could not get through, and Fish, from the impetus of his charge, ran on Nugent's fist, and a loud howl escaped him. He jumped back.

"Go it, Fishy!" yelled Bob Cherry in great delight. "Now's the time to stagger humanity, you know."

Fisher T. Fish had no time to think. Nugent was following him up, and his blows came like lightning.

Right and left, left and right, his blows came battering upon Fisher T. Fish—upon his chest, his sharp chin, his pointed nose.

The Yankee junior backed away in utter dismay.

There were no signs of funk about Frank Nugent so far. Not that he had much to be afraid of, if it came to that. Fish was not a terrifying adversary.

The funk, in fact, was on Fish's side. He backed away, and dodged, and twisted, and seemed to be anxious to be anywhere but in front of Nugent.

"Time!" chuckled Wingate.

Wingate's voice calling time seemed like the sweetest strains of music to the ears of the gasping Fish.

Nugent dropped his hands, and Fisher T. Fish staggered out of the ring, and collapsed upon Skinner's knee. Skinner was his second, and he had nourished a faint hope that Fishy might lick Nugent. That hope had disappeared now.

"Yow-ow!" mumbled Fish. "Oh, Jerusalem!"

"Do you call that fighting?" said Skinner contemptuously.

"I—I guess I'll mop him up in the next round."

"How are you going to mop him up by running away from him?" sneered Skinner.

Fisher T. Fish made no reply to that. He had no breath to waste in arguing with his second.

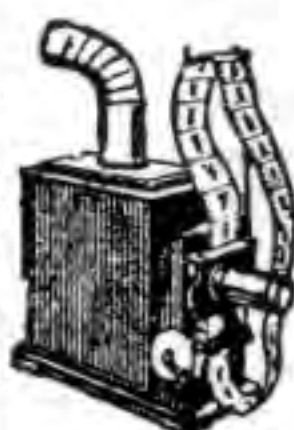
And he was in a state of considerable trepidation by this time.

Whether Nugent had shown funk in

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the encounter with the Highcliffians or so inexpressibly long to anyone as that not, certainly he was not funky of the egregious Fish. And if his pluck did not fail, he was more than a match for the Yankee junior in every other respect. The unhappy Fish realised that he was up against what he would have called a tough proposition. He flattered himself that he was "some" fighting man, but in the first round Nugent had simply played with him. Fish looked forward to the second round with uneasy apprehensions.

"Time!"

Fisher T. Fish appeared to be dead. He was still pumping in breath.

"Time!" roared Wingate.

"I guess I'm ready," mumbled Fish.

He limped into the ring, eyeing Nugent very doubtfully. Fishy decided upon defensive tactics in the second round. He had stated that his "mad" was up; but his "mad" had failed him lamentably now. He would have given a week's pocket-money to be safe outside the ring.

"Go it, Fishy!"

"Pile it in, funk!"

Fishy was not going it; he was being driven round the ring, desperately striving to keep off Nugent's boxing-gloves.

But his adversary was not to be denied.

Nugent was in an angry temper. Fishy's reason for picking a quarrel with him had roused all his bitterness. He intended to make the Yankee junior sorry for having gone on the warpath in quest of glory by a cheap victory over a supposed funk.

And he did.

The unfortunate Fish went thrice round the ring, backwards, with Nugent's fists tattooing upon him all the time.

Never had a two-minute round seemed

so inexpressibly long to anyone as that seemed to Fisher T. Fish. It seemed to him that hours had passed, and still the grinning Wingate had not called time. Nugent's right came home on his long nose; his left followed it up on a sharp chin, and Fish staggered. Nugent closed in, with gleaming eyes, and Fish could stand it no longer. With a jump like a kangaroo, he was outside the ring.

"Let up!" he yelled. "I guess I'm done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent stared at him, and then, with a scornful laugh, peeled off the gloves. Wingate put his watch away, laughing.

Fisher T. Fish leaned on the wall, and pumped in breath. The laughter of the juniors did not worry him; he was only too glad to be safe away from those hammering fists. He felt already as if his long nose had been driven back into his head like a nail under a hammer.

Frank Nugent put on his jacket, and walked out of the gym. He had hardly been touched.

"And that's what you call a fight over there?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of all the rotten funks!" growled Bolsover major. "That bragging ass ought to be sent to Coventry as well as Nugent; only he isn't worth it!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Fisher T. Fish dragged on his jacket and limped away. A howl of laughter followed him. The Yankee junior was not likely to enter upon the warpath in a hurry again. Once more his cute schemes had gone awry; and if Fisher T. Fish had not been so eminently satisfied with himself and his cleverness, certainly he would have been quite discouraged.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Visit to Highcliffe!

BOB CHERRY clapped Nugent on the shoulder as he went into the School House. In spite of Nugent's frown, Bob was determinedly good-humoured.

"Are you coming over to Highcliffe?" he asked.

"Highcliffe! Why?"

"Forgotten?" asked Bob. "Not a row with Ponsonby this time. Don't you remember we're booked for tea with Courtenay and the Caterpillar?"

"I'd forgotten," said Nugent curtly.

"I'm not coming."

"Better come," urged Bob. "Courtenay will wonder why you don't come."

"Tell him I don't care to!"

Frank jerked himself away from Bob's detaining hand and went up to his study.

Bob rejoined his chums.

"Franky's not coming," he said.

"Well, it would be jolly awkward if he did!" growled Johnny Bull. "We don't want Courtenay to see that there's been trouble here. I don't see what Nugent's got his back up for. If we're willing to overlook his playing the funk, it's not for him to be on his dignity about it."

"And he hasn't had much Coventry either," said Bob. "We never took any notice of that. I'm blessed if I quite understand Franky. We had to give evidence at the Form trial, so far as that went."

Harry Wharton looked restless.

"I can't help thinking there's something behind it—something that Frank could explain if he liked," he said.

"Then why doesn't he?" granted Johnny Bull. "I don't like chaps who get sulky and make mysteries."

"It is not exactly sulkfulness," remarked Hurree Singh. "The lofty and

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esteemed pride of the excellent Nugent is wounded."

"Oh, rats!"

"I do not thinkfully believe that the esteemed Nugent was funky," said the nabob calmly. "It is a deepful mystery. But the less said, the sooner the pitcher gets to the well, as your English proverb remarks."

"Does it?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Well, let's get off to Highcliffe. We can make excuse for Nugent."

The four chums wheeled out their bicycles, and rode away towards Courtfield. They passed Dick Trumper on the road, and slackened speed.

"How's your pater?" called out Bob.

"Better, thanks!" said Trumper.

"You'll be at Greyfriars for the match to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes, rather! Look out for a licking!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Nugent's not with you," remarked Trumper. "Is he all right?"

"Eh! Yes. Why shouldn't he be?"

"He wasn't hurt much in that scrap the other day with the Highcliffe rotters, then?"

"Hurt? Oh, no! Nugent wasn't hurt."

"Good! Ta-ta!"

And Dick Trumper rode on. The four Removites continued on their way to Highcliffe School. They arrived there, and left their machines at the porter's lodge, keeping together, and somewhat wary, as they walked on to the School House. They were on a friendly visit to Frank Courtenay, the captain of the Fourth, but it would have been quite like Ponsonby & Co. to select that occasion for a ragging.

They sighted Cecil Ponsonby as they went into the House. He was chatting with Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour in the Hall, and he gave the chums of Greyfriars a bitter look.

Ponsonby's handsome face was marked in a rather prominent way. One of his eyes was darkly shaded, and his Grecian nose seemed a little out of gear, so to speak. The dandy of Highcliffe had, apparently, been in the wars.

"Greyfriars cads!" growled Monson.

Monson, too, had marks of a late combat on his face. Gadsby had a cut lip.

"What do those rotters want here?" muttered Gadsby.

Ponsonby & Co. came towards the visitors; but just then Courtenay came downstairs. He had sighted the newcomers from his study window.

"Come right up!" he said cordially.

And Ponsonby, if he had intended to begin a rag, abandoned the intention. Harry Wharton & Co. followed Courtenay to Study No. 3, where the Caterpillar greeted them with elegant hospitality.

"Glad to see you fiery warriors!" he remarked. "Pon and his merry chums have been in rather a moultin' state since last Wednesday."

"There was a bit of a scrap," said Bob. "These things will happen, you know."

De Courcy nodded.

"Yaas! Pon went out with quite an army last Wednesday, and we heard that he was going to wipe Greyfriars off the face of the earth, or somethin' like it. Any casualties on your side?"

"Well, there was some damage done," said Harry. "It was a regular dust-up."

"I thought so. Pon & Co. didn't look much like victorious warriors when they came in!" grinned the Caterpillar. "Pon's beauty was quite spoiled. I sympathised with him, an' he was ungrateful—dashed ungrateful."

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"But Pon wasn't in the scrap," said Harry, in surprise.

"Pon wasn't?"

"No; we saw nothing of Ponsonby or Gadsby or Monson. It was the other fellows we scrapped with—Vavasour and Drury and the rest."

The Caterpillar looked puzzled.

"Well, that's odd!" he said. "Pon came in with the rest, lookin' sadly damaged, an' I understood it was Greyfriars chaps who'd done the damage. Pon's been utterin' bloodcurdin' threats on the subject ever since. Who could have damaged Pon's Grecian nose if you fellows didn't?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Blessed if I know! It wasn't us, at all events."

"Well, it was some of your lot. Gaddy was urg'in' him to get Mr. Mobbs to go over to Greyfriars an' complain, but Pon didn't think it good enough. Do you want me to fill the kettle, Franky?"

The visitors sat down to tea, and chatted cheerily till the time came to go. Courtenay had remarked that Nugent had not come, but he did not attach any special importance to his absence. And the Co., of course, were silent on the subject of the rift in the lute.

Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar saw them to the gates when they departed, and Ponsonby & Co., who had gathered in the quad to rush the visitors in the dusk, gave up the idea again. The chums of Greyfriars mounted their bicycles, and rode homewards. Harry Wharton was looking thoughtful.

"Queer about Ponsonby being damaged by a Greyfriars chap last Wednesday!" he remarked. "He wasn't with the crowd we tackled. Is it possible that Frank fell in with him? You remember he was very late home."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Bob. "De Courcy says plainly it was a Greyfriars chap damaged him; and we've heard nothing of it, unless it was Bunter did it. According to Bunter, he gave them a terrific fight."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was pretty certain that it was not Bunter, or Fish, or Snoop, or Skinner who had caused the damage to Ponsonby, Gaddy, and Monson. There had evidently been a scrap on that eventful Wednesday of which Harry Wharton & Co. had not heard. Ponsonby might have found trouble with Dick Trumper and his friends—Pon being very down on Courtfield County Council School. But the Caterpillar had apparently learned from Pon himself that it was a Greyfriars fellow who had done the damage. It seemed very probable that Nugent was the fellow—otherwise it was odd that the fray had not been heard of.

When the Co. arrived at Greyfriars Harry Wharton proceeded at once to Study No. 1, where he found Nugent.

"Did you have a scrap with Ponsonby last Wednesday, Frank?" he asked directly.

Nugent started a little.

"Has Ponsonby told you so?" he asked.

"I haven't spoken to Ponsonby; but he's got a blue eye, and it appears that it was a chap belonging to this school who gave it to him. Was that why you were late in on Wednesday?"

Nugent smiled sarcastically.

"What an extraordinary idea!" he exclaimed. "If I'd met Ponsonby, shouldn't I have run away from him?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Wharton crossly. "You were late for some reason last Wednesday, and missed calling-over."

"Skinner will tell you the reason," said Frank coolly. "He has explained to all

the Remove already that I dared not show my face after finking."

"I told Skinner that was a lie!" said Harry.

"I don't see why you should think it a lie. It was quite a natural thing," said Nugent.

"Look here, did you scrap with Ponsonby last Wednesday?"

"Find out!"

Wharton left the study with a flushed face. Nugent shrugged his shoulders, and sat down to his work.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

On the Football-field!

THE next day was a Saturday, and the football match between the Greyfriars Remove and Dick Trumper's team from Courtfield was due. The Courtfielders were coming over in the afternoon, and Wharton was somewhat exercised in his mind about the Remove team. Nugent generally played forward in the Remove matches—at all events, the important matches; but under the present peculiar circumstances it was doubtful whether Nugent would play. There were plenty of substitutes, if it came to that—Rake or Micky Desmond could take his place, or Johnny Bull could be put in the front line, and Bolsover major in Johnny's place at back. Nugent was still supposed to be in Coventry, though the sentence of the Form had been very little regarded, as it had happened.

Billy Bunter bore down on Wharton after morning lessons. The Owl of the Remove had his own ideas about the filling of Nugent's place.

"I suppose you're not playing that funk, Wharton?" he asked.

"Who?" demanded Wharton, knitting his brows.

"Nugent, you know. Look here, there will be a row if you play him. Bolsover major says he won't stand it!"

"Bolsover major can go and eat coke!" said Wharton gruffly.

"There's a better man you could put in, you know!"

"Where, you ass? If you mean Rake

"I don't mean Rake. I'm willing to play!"

"Fathead!"

"Look here, Wharton, I suppose you want to beat Courtfield?" said Bunter, blinking at him. "You can't afford to leave out your best winger—I say, you rotter, don't walk away while I'm talking to you! Beast!"

Bolsover major nailed Wharton as he escaped from Bunter. Percy Bolsover's manner was even more aggressive than usual.

"Nugent's standing out, of course?" he began.

"I don't know!" said Harry shortly.

"You can't play him!"

"I shall play him if he chooses to play."

"You'll play that funk, who's disgraced the school?" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, shut up!"

"The fellows will have something to say about it, I can tell you!"

"Rats!"

Wharton walked away, leaving Bolsover major fuming. He found Frank Nugent in the quadrangle, and put the question to him plainly:

"Are you playing this afternoon, Frank?"

"Yes—unless I'm turned out of the team," said Frank coolly. "I don't see why there should be any question about it."

"There isn't," said Harry. "And

there's no question of turning you out of the team. What rot!"

"Well, a funk isn't much use in a footer match. A chap who's afraid of his own shadow can't play much of a game."

"It seems to me that you're setting up as the injured party in that rotten affair!" broke out Wharton irritably. "Blessed if I expected that!"

Nugent gave him a hard look.

"It's quite natural," he replied. "You see, I happen to be the injured party." And he sauntered away without waiting for a rejoinder.

After dinner Wharton was the recipient of a good many remarks from the Remove fellows on the subject of playing Nugent in the match. The general opinion seemed to be that, as a proved funk, Nugent ought to be laid on the shelf, so to speak—at least, for a time. Bolsover major professed himself quite unable to understand how Nugent could have the neck to make himself prominent in any way, considering what the Remove thought of him. More good-natured fellows than Bolsover wondered at the line Nugent had taken. It would have been in better taste for the disgraced junior to make himself small for a time, they considered, and keep out of the public eye till the miserable affair had blown over a little.

But Nugent did not seem to see it, and he changed with the rest of the team, in readiness for the match. He did not speak to any member of the eleven. But he did not look sulky; he was simply quiet and calm and reserved.

He was on the field, punting the ball about with the others, when Dick Trumper arrived with his team.

Trumper came up to Nugent at once, and shook hands with him very warmly. His action surprised the others a little. They had never noticed any special friendliness between the two before.

"Did you get wigged for being late the other night?" Trumper asked.

Nugent smiled, and shook his head.

"No. I explained to Mr. Quelch how I came to miss call-over, and it was all right," he said.

"I'm jolly glad of that!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Was Nugent with you last Wednesday evening, Trumpy?"

"Yes. He came home with me."

There was no time for more talk, how-

"Oh, my hat!"

ever. Greene of the Fifth, who was to referee the match, came down to the field, and the teams lined up. Harry Wharton won the toss, and Trumper kicked off.

Courtfield were in great form, and Greyfriars needed to put in their hardest play. Trumper at centre-half, Grahame at centre-forward, Wickers on the wing, and Solly Lazarus in goal, were at the top of their form, and the rest of the eleven were quite up to the mark.

But the Remove team were always in good form. Their skipper saw to that. The first half was played hard on both sides, but there was no result—attack and defence being equally good.

Bolsover major snorted emphatically when the whistle went for the interval.

"Of course, we're going to be licked," he remarked. "Fancy playing a rotten funk in the front line! Nugent can't stand up to them!"

"Begad, he seems to stand up to them all right," remarked Lord Maudleverer. "Full of energy, by gad!"

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Bolsover major. "What do you know about footer?"

"Not much more than you do, dear boy," said his lordship equally.

"Shocking state of ignorance, I admit!"

And Bolsover major snorted again.

As a matter of fact, Frank Nugent was

playing a good game. He had received some charges from the Courtfielders which, though perfectly fair, were hard and heavy for a fellow of Nugent's slim build. But he was never seen to dodge from anything he was called upon to meet. Certainly there was no sign of funk about him in that hard-fought match.

In the second half Trumper & Co. succeeded in beating Hazeldene in goal, and scored first for Courtfield. A hot attack on the visitors' goal followed, and there was a struggle before the Courtfield citadel. Wharton sent the ball in, only to see it listed out by Solly Lazarus. Vernon-Smith captured it, and spun it in again. But again Lazarus sent it whirling out. A Courtfield back kicked to clear, when Nugent was on the ball like lightning, and sent it whizzing in—and this time Solly Lazarus was beaten to the wide. There was a roar round Little Side as the leather lodged in the net.

"Goal, goal!"

"Well kicked, Nugent!"

Bob Cherry rushed up to Nugent and thumped him on the back.

"Topping!" he exclaimed. "Good old Franky!"

"Not bad for a funk!" remarked Nugent sarcastically.

"Fathead!" was Bob's reply.

The footballers lined up for the finish, but neither side succeeded in scoring again. The match was fought out hard and fast till Greene blew the whistle, and it ended in a draw.

Both sides were breathing hard as they came off. Frank Nugent's goal had saved his side from a defeat at least.

Trumper & Co. were staying to tea after the match, and, after changing, they proceeded to the Rag, where the Remove generally entertained visitors too numerous for a study party.

Frank Nugent had left the rest, and gone to No. 1 Study by himself. In the circumstances he did not feel inclined to join the convivial party in the Rag.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Righted at Last!

"**W**HERE'S Nugent?"

Dick Trumper asked the question as the footballers sat down to tea at the big table in the Rag.

"Gone off somewhere," said Bob Cherry rather uncomfortably. He did not want the Courtfield fellows to learn that anything was amiss. "Pass the ham, Smithy. You haven't filled Trumper's cup, Harry."

"Pass it along."

"Nugent put up a good game," Trumper remarked.

"Oh, ripping!"

"He's a splendid chap!" said Trumper.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked rather oddly at Trumper. In spite of many scraps between fellows of the rival schools, Trumper & Co. were on friendly enough terms with the Famous Five. But they were surprised to hear Trumper singing the praises of Nugent in particular in this way.

"I guess you're alone in that opinion, Trumper," remarked Fisher T. Fish, who had come in to tea. Fishy generally came in to a free feed if he could. It saved the expense of tea in the study.

"Shut up, Fishy!" growled Peter Todd.

Trumper stared at Fisher T. Fish.

"I don't see what you mean," he said. But for the fact that he was a visitor, Trumper would have answered in more emphatic terms, as his look showed. "Nugent did me a jolly good turn the other day."

"He went home with you on Wednesday, you said," remarked Bob Cherry. "I suppose that was what made him late for call-over?"

"Yes. I was afraid he would get into a row," said Trumper. "I had to have help from somebody. I hurt my ankle falling off the bike."

"Oh, you had a spill?" asked Harry.

"Yes; and a rather bad one. I was afraid my ankle wouldn't mend for the match, but it wasn't serious after all. I shall give Ponsonby something for it, though, when I see him again!" said Trumper, knitting his brows. "It was a cowardly trick—putting a rope across the road to bring a cyclist down!"

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Bob. "Just like Pon! So Nugent found you and took you home?"

"Didn't he tell you?" asked Trumper, in astonishment.

"Nunno!"

"Nugent's in Coventry," said Bolsover major grimly, heedless of the glares the other fellows fixed on him.

"Oh!" said Trumper. "Well, I don't want to give any opinion on your private affairs here, of course, but I'm blessed if I can see what you can have against a chap like Nugent!"

"He's a funk!"

"A—a—a—a what?"

"Funk!" said Bolsover major. "You needn't trample on my feet, Bob Cherry. I don't see why Trumper shouldn't know. If Nugent chooses to disgrace himself, he can stand the racket!"

"If I weren't a visitor here," said Trumper deliberately, "I'd dot any chap in the eye for calling Nugent a funk! You wouldn't have thought him a funk if you'd seen him tackling three Highcliffe rotters on Wednesday."

"What?" yelled Bolsover major.

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"The whatfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhaps Trumper knows something about the esteemed facts? Did you see the scrappiness, my esteemed and ridiculous friend?"

"Of course I did!" said Trumper. "I was crawling out from under my bike, and Nugent had the three of them on to him before I could help him."

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Johnny Bull, with considerably more emphasis than elegance.

"When did it happen, Trumper?" asked Wharton very quietly.

"Wednesday afternoon, soon after I passed you fellows on my bike," said Dick Trumper. "I thought Nugent would have mentioned it to you. I don't see why he should have kept it dark."

"Would you mind telling us exactly what happened?" asked Harry. "There seems to have been a misunderstanding."

"Not much to tell," said Trumper. "You know that rise in the Pegg road? I had to walk my machine up it, and I came down on the other side at a whizz, and at the bottom Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson were waiting. They'd spotted me coming, and they had a rope across, and the bike ran into it, and I was over in a tick. I landed in the road, and the bike rolled over me, and then those three rotters piled on me and pinned me down."

"But Nugent—"

"I thought I was in for a terrific ragging," said Trumper. "You know what those cads are. But Nugent was on the road, and he spotted them, and came along the slope like a fire-engine. They had to let me go as he came along, and they all tackled him together. But he handled them jolly well—they're all

funks. I got out from under the bike, and chipped in to help him, and between us we mopped up Pon & Co., and they ran for it at last. But I fancy Pon took a black eye away with him. Then I found that my ankle was rocky, and I couldn't ride, so Nugent put me on the bike and wheeled me into Pegg."

"Oh!" said Bob blankly.

"The worst of it was that, in falling, I'd broken the bottle with the doctor's stuff for my father, and I couldn't go to Friardale again with my gammy foot—so Nugent took my bike and did it for me," said Trumper. "It made him jolly late, and I was afraid it would mean trouble for him here. But I couldn't refuse to let him do it, as my dad was ill and needed the stuff."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bolsover major.

Wharton's face was crimson, and Bolsover major was looking, for once in his life, remorseful and ashamed.

The juniors understood now.

Frank Nugent, on top of the rise in the road, had seen Trumper pinned down under his bicycle, with the three cowardly Highcliffians piling on him. He had rushed to the rescue, leaving his comrades to tackle Vavasour and the rest; they had not needed his aid so sorely as Trumper did.

He had rushed to Trumper's aid, and tackled Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson together—which was hardly the action of a funk.

His comrades, unable to see what was passing on the other side of the rising ground, had seen only his flight, and never dreamed for a moment of the scene enacting there beyond the rise—which was visible to Nugent from where he stood, but not visible to them.

It was all explained now.

And Nugent had returned late, after risking punishment to do Trumper a kind service, and had been met by a storm of hisses from the Removites, and an accusation of showing the white feather!

The juniors understood now why they had not heard any taunts from the Highcliffe fellows on the subject, as they had expected at first. Ponsonby & Co. had the best of reasons for knowing that Nugent had not funk.

There was a grim silence for some moments at the table.

Trumper looked at the Co. in perplexity.

"There—there was a misunderstanding—

ing," stammered Bolsover major at last. "You see, while you were on one side of the rise we were on the other, and of course we couldn't see you, and didn't know you were there in a fix. We had a gang of the rotters on to us, and we saw Nugent run away, as we thought—"

"He was coming to me!" exclaimed Trumper.

"Yes, we know that now," said Bob.

"I suppose Nugent would have told us all about it, but before he had a chance to speak when he came in, these silly asses started clipping him for having funk—"

"The chipfulness was terrific, and then the esteemed Nugent got upon his ludicrous dignity, and refusefully declined to explain," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The apologies to the worthy Nugent ought to be terrific."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Bolsover major. "I'll tell Nugent so. I don't see why he couldn't have explained, all the same."

"Because you put his back up at the start!" growled Wharton. "I'd have done the same in his place."

"Yes, you would; you're a touchy ass!" said Bolsover. "But I should have expected more sense from Nugent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton opened his lips to reply angrily, but he checked himself.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said.

The Co. rushed away at once to No. 1 Study. Bolsover major followed them. Frank Nugent stared as the juniors rushed into the study. Bob Cherry clapped him on the back with a clap that made him stagger.

"You fathead!" roared Bob. "Why didn't you tell us?"

"You ass, Franky!" exclaimed Wharton. "We've had it all from Trumper. We know now what happened on Wednesday."

"Why couldn't you speak out when you had a Form trial?" demanded Johnny Bull. "Might have expected rot of that kind from Wharton—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry. "Look here, Frank—"

"So you've found out the facts?" said Nugent sarcastically. "Are you quite satisfied that I wasn't funk?"

"Look here—"

"I saw that you were only five against eight; but Trumper had three rotters piling on him, and they had him down."

said Frank. "I thought you fellows could look out for yourselves. Do you think I ought to have left Trumper to be ragged by Ponsonby & Co.?"

"Of course not! But we never knew—"

"It never even occurred to me that you'd think I was running away!" said Nugent bitterly. "I shouldn't have thought it of you!"

"We didn't think so," said Harry. "We thought you'd have some reason to give; but when you wouldn't explain—"

"I didn't have much chance. There was a howl immediately I came in; and you fellows had made up your minds—"

"You ought to have explained, all the same," said Johnny Bull. "I beg your pardon for thinking you a funk, but I think you're a silly idiot, and I think you ought to leave the high-falutin dignity bizney to Wharton; that's his role."

"Shut up, you ass!" roared Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Nugent joined in the laugh. Johnny Bull's exceeding plainness of speech was sometimes a little painful.

"Well, I'm sorry," said Bolsover major. "Can't say more than that."

"Same here, Franky!"

"The samefulness is terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Franky," said Hurree Singh. "We take back everything we have said, and also what we have not said, and we admit that the correctfulness of the esteemed Franky's lofty and ridiculous dignity was terrific. We cannot say morefully."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it's all serene," said Frank. "I don't bear malice. And—and I'm pretty tired of cat-and-dog terms. Let's say no more about it."

"Kim on!" said Bob, and Frank Nugent was marched down to the Rag, where the footballers greeted him with a cheer.

Frank's resentment was a thing of the past, and the clouds had rolled by. The famous Co. was reunited once more, and even Skinner never ventured to hint again that any member of the Co. was a fellow who funk.

THE END.

(Don't miss "SIR JIMMY OF GREYFRIARS!" — next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"SIR JIMMY OF GREYFRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

Sir Jimmy is a baronet. Sir Jimmy is also a cousin of Lord Mauleverer. But Sir Jimmy is not in the very least the sort of fellow one would expect a baronet and a cousin of the elegant Mauly to be. He is in some respects the outside edge in new boys. Not in every respect, because, untought and underbred as Sir Jimmy is, he has the makings of a decent fellow in him. But his manners and his accent, his views of life, and his notions as to "not being bothered" to do things as they ought to be done, take Greyfriars by surprise. You will read all about it next week, so that I do not think it necessary to say more here, except that I am sure you will all like the yarn, and also, in spite of all,

"SIR JIMMY OF GREYFRIARS!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 470.

WAR-TIME ECONOMY.

Something which has long been hanging over our heads has fallen. You will all remember that a few months ago the Government restrictions on the use of paper made it obligatory on us to cut down the number of our pages. Now the supply has been restricted still further, and another reduction has become necessary.

The thing is being done simply because it must be done. It is not a dodge to make extra profits. The already decreased size cost more for paper than was paid before the war, for paper has gone up greatly in price. This extra cost we bore cheerfully. But it is not now a mere matter of paying more; it is a case of not being able to get enough. I am sure you will all see the difference, and I feel sure that I can count on the loyal support of my readers.

I intend doing all that I can to prevent the cutting-down of the reading matter. Our new three-column arrangement is an economy of space. So is the dropping of the footlines. The reduction of the Chat will give just a little more room for the stories. Then we shall not

have so many illustrations in future, and most of those we have will be somewhat smaller. The long, complete story, which is the main feature of the paper, shall not be shortened in any case. Rely upon that!

NOTICES.

I regret to have to drop the notices, but it is inevitable, in the circumstances. We cannot possibly go on affording the space for them. Please understand that those in hand will be printed as early as possible, though that may not be very soon, but that no more will be received after the date of this issue.

Football Matches Wanted By:

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Your Editor

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 6.—JOHNNY BULL.



John Bull

HE was John Bull, junior, when he arrived at Greyfriars, bringing his concertina with him, towards the end of the Christmas term. But he soon became Johnny Bull.

Some fellows get called Johnny instead of Jack—John being a name that few manage to keep for common use—because they are regarded as rather soft. In such cases the name is what the average boy considers a "kiddish one." But it can also be used in an affectionate way, without any imputation of softness. So Lancashire folk talk of "Johnny Tyldesley," who is, most assuredly, not a soft specimen. And so Greyfriars came to call John Bull, junior, "Johnny."

That concertina of his led to more than a little trouble at the start. A concertina is not a universally popular musical instrument; but there is not much the matter with it if the owner can play it. Johnny Bull thought he could. It is to be feared that Johnny lacks the musical ear, for on that point he appears from the first to have been in a minority of one. He went home with Harry Wharton for his first Christmas holidays, and there was an alarm of ghosts at Wharton Lodge. Horrible and discordant sounds were heard—such sounds as a ghost anxious to make himself specially terrible might be expected to emit. And, after all, it turned out to be only Johnny playing the concertina in the summer-house! With a devotion worthy of a better cause, he had got up from his bed on a cold winter night to sit out there and discourse—well, shall we say sweet sounds?

During the next term he gave Harry Wharton & Co. his promise that he would not perform on the dread instrument unless he was asked. That seemed safe enough. Who would ever think of asking him? But somebody did. Johnny was rolling in wealth, and Bunter and others wanted to sponge, so they asked him! After that the concertina was put permanently out of repair. But Johnny got a new one later on. He is not like the young man who, when asked if he could play the piano, replied that he did not know—he had never tried! Johnny has tried—if unsuccessfully!

Bull is a true Briton—sturdy, independent, a bit apt to be prejudiced at times, but essentially fair-minded for all that. His independence goes as far as gruffness now and then; and there have been occasions when his excessive candour has been painful to his best chums. But there is always this to

be said for the utterly honest, downright fellow—he tells you the worst he thinks of you to your face, and you know he will not be saying worse things behind your back!

Johnny has been put to the test, and has proven his level-headedness. It was a queer thing for his Aunt Tabitha to hand over £500 to a mere schoolboy, just to see how he would come out of the ordeal. Few fellows would have come out of it so well as he did. From the first he would not let Bunter borrow; and when his wealth came, the spongers found in him no easy victim. But when poor, simple Alonzo had been spoofed into believing that Bull's Aunt Tabitha was sending him—Alonzo £500, and in that belief had incurred a bill close on £10 in standing treat at the tuckshop, Johnny settled the bill without a murmur, and to his chums he has always been generous.

His cousin—Lucas Crane, a worthless rascal—came along in the hope of leading the boy into doggish ways, and getting most of the cash from him; but Johnny did not succumb to the wiles of the tempter. His chums thought he had, but in that they did him wrong. His sturdy independence stood him in good stead then, as at other times. Johnny can say "No" in a very decided and convincing manner. One reader of this paper was badly put out because, in the story entitled "For D'Arcy's Sake," Bob Cherry weakly consented to play nap for money with that rascal Punter, while Bull refused. He thought it should have been the other way round, which only showed how curiously he had misread their characters! Bob Cherry's is not a weak "No"; but it has not the strength and finality of Johnny's.

Quite early in his career at Greyfriars Bull was chosen to make of the Famous Four the Famous Five. When he left Greyfriars for a while he suggested that Squiff should take his place, and his comrades agreed. But Johnny came back—as told in that capital yarn, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." He did not get as far as Australia with the rich uncle who wanted to adopt him and take him to live there.

He only got as far as Port Said; and he came back, to see the steamer he was on torpedoed by a German submarine, and to be rescued from the sea by Harry Wharton. Johnny showed up at his very best in that matter of the uncle. He kicked against the uncle's sending his secretary, one Falke, down to the school to report on him—an incident which may be referred to again when the career of Herbert Vernon-Smith is dealt with. He did not get on with the uncle when that rather crusty old gentleman came along himself. But when he learned that the old chap had suffered heavy losses, he agreed to fall in with his plans. The losses turned out not to be real; and the uncle saw that Johnny would be happier at Greyfriars than anywhere else, and so, knowing now Johnny's sterling worth, he allowed him to return.

Bull and Vernon-Smith did not by any means hit it in the old days, before the Bounder became the good, shrewd fellow he now is—the days when he was a cunning rotter, without honour or pity. Johnny said very plainly what he thought of him, of course; and when the Bounder began that notable campaign against his enemies, Johnny was the first of them: he managed to get out of the way—expelled, conducted to the station by Wingate. But Bull came back, and helped great-hearted Bob Cherry and loyal Inky to hold the fort. Again he had a narrow squeak, when he and Bob were convicted on "false evidence" of a cowardly attack on Mr. Quelch; but in the nick of time the charge was disproved.

He has shared in the exploits of the Famous Five, and has never been found wanting in pluck or presence of mind. It is not the intention of these articles to tell all that has ever happened at Greyfriars to the fellows with whom they deal. To do that would need far more space than can be spared. Only a few of the outstanding incidents can be mentioned. So many things about J. B., junior, must be passed unnoted here; but it is worth while to say that he is a most useful member of the Remove Eleven, both at football and cricket. And mention must be made, too, of the fact that he has all along been in No. 14 Study—at first with Fish only, later with Squiff also. Johnny does not approve of Fish, and has been known to use a cricket stump upon him, quite in the Peter Todd style. But he and Squiff have always been good chums.

Very outspoken, this good Johnny! Even to a master he cannot relax his accustomed bluntness. In another fellow it might be cheek; but he has no intention of being cheeky. "What are you doing, Bull?" asks the angry voice of authority. "Knocking Snoop's head against the wall, sir!" answers Johnny at once. No impudence meant; he merely speaks "after the use of the English, in straight-flung words and few," as Mr. Kipling has it!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 470.

EXTRACTS FROM THE GREYFRIARS HERALD.

A WILD-GOOSE CHASE.

By JOHNNY BULL.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Lines!

AINTREE minor, two hundred lines for talking," said Mr. Ambrose, commonly known as "Ambernose," the Fourth Form master of St. Bartholomew's.

A titter went round.

Aintree minor, a cheeky-looking boy, with merry eyes, and his Eton collar struggling to climb over the back of his neck, grinned surreptitiously at his chum Tellson, usually called Beetles, because of his keenness in collecting butterflies, moths, and other members of the bug tribe. Then Aintree made a wry face, and turned both his thumbs down.

At that instant the school clock chimed twelve.

"Aintree minor, I shall expect those lines by two-thirty this afternoon. If I'm not in my class-room by then, leave them on my desk. But if they're not properly done, they'll be increased to four hundred. You may go!"

Instantly every boy sprang from his form. There was a subdued murmur of excitement. As they scrambled out of the room, pushing and jostling, whistling and shouting, a voice yelled out:

"Aintree, you ass!"

Aintree, turning to the class-room door, whence the sound came, hurled his Latin primer at the offending Beetles. The book missed its mark, went flying through the open door, and only just failed to strike "Ambernose" on his nasal organ.

Aintree and Beetles immediately bolted.

"Whew!" whistled Aintree, as he ran along the corridor. "Jolly narrow shave!"

"You old cuckoo," growled Beetles, "to get those lines!"

"Aintree got an inkpot?" asked Jennings, coming up at that moment. "Oh, you helpless idiot!" he cried, wiping his face with ink-stained fingers, which left a blue smear across his cheek and mouth.

"All right, you ink-coloured fool!" snapped Aintree. "Don't jaw!"

"I shall if I like. What did you want to get lines for when we're all going on the spree this afternoon?"

"Hallo, Fatty!" cried Aintree, ignoring his chum's last remark, as a very plump and rotund boy came past. He looked like a cross between a stunted alderman and the fat boy of Peckham.

"What do you want?" asked he of the rotund form.

"Turn that face of yours away, and I shall be able to bear the strain!" said Aintree. "Golly, Fatty," he added, "if I had a face like yours—just like a bladder of lard—I'd pawn it, and lose the ticket!"

Fatty lunged out with his left leg, but missed. Then he laughed good-humouredly. He was quite a popular member of St. Bartholomew's School. He knew how to take a joke, and gave back as good as he got—when he was able to think of something.

"Well, what's up, you fellows?" he asked.

"Everything 'll be up if you can't help me with my impot," replied Aintree. "I've got two hundred lines. I'm in a beastly hole, and want you to dig me out."

"Got a spade?" grinned Fatty.

"Funny old rubber-face!" retorted Aintree. "Come on, Fatty," he said soothingly. "Be a sport! The two hundred lines have got to be in old Ambrose's class-room by two-thirty. I've got to do 'em somehow by one-thirty. We've got a spree on."

"A spree?" asked Fatty. "Any tuck going?"

"I should think there is! It'll be the biggest lark we've ever known!"

"Shall we tell him?" whispered Beetles to Aintree.

Aintree nodded.

"Look here, Fatty," burst out Jennings, "if you help Aintree you shall come in with us!"

"It's going to be stunning," put in Aintree, "and you can eat until you burst, Fatty."

The face of Fatty immediately became radiant, as he saw visions of limitless quantities of tuck.

"Out with it!" he said.

"Aintree minor," began Beetles, "Jennings, Ginger Carrots, Borden, and I are going this afternoon to have a feed at the Chequers Rest Coffee House at Frampton—you know the place?"

Fatty nodded heavily.

"We arranged it all last week," explained Beetles. "There's to be a goose, apple sauce, sage and onions, vegetables, mince-pies, and suckers, and stodgy cakes."

"We each arranged to subscribe two bob," put in Aintree. "That includes everything—even lemonade. Old George Gargles, the fellow who keeps the place, is going to have it all ready by three o'clock. As it's a half we needn't be at call-over till five-thirty."

"If you like to throw in a bob, Fatty," said Beetles, "and help Aintree with his impot, you can come."

"Twiggez vous?" inquired Aintree, slapping Fatty on the back.

"Done!" grinned Fatty. "Crumbs, won't I just pile in! What about the lines, young Aintree?"

"I'll do a hundred if you'll do the same, Fatty. Old Ambrose has never twigged our joint impots yet. Your writing's just like mine when you care to make it so."

It was by no means the first time Fatty had helped Aintree out of a hole.

"Come on, then," agreed the fat one, "let's start at once."

"E-a-a-a-a!" bawled out a voice from upstairs.

"You're nearest the stairs, Beetles," said Aintree, "so up you go!"

It was the custom that any lag nearest to the study stairs should answer the monitor's call when it came.

Beetles, as if in silent protest, put his fingers to his nose, spread them out, and wagged them at Fatty. Then he ran up.

Fatty and Aintree, arm-in-arm, sought

the Common-room, and got out paper, ink, pens, and histories, from which to copy the lines.

"I'll start at the beginning of Charles the First," said Aintree. "I know the first two pages off by heart."

"Right-ho!" grinned Fatty. "I know! the first four pages—I've written 'em often enough!"

Then they reckoned where one should leave off and the other take it up. Soon they were both up to their necks in work.

"Hallo, Aintree!" said a voice suddenly. "What's up?"

It was Ginger Carrots, so called because of his red hair.

He was freckled, and had small, twinkling eyes.

"Can't you see, you ass!" snorted Aintree.

"You bright specimen!" grinned Carrots. "Why the dickens couldn't you escape an impot to-day? Get 'em done! We must leave here at one-thirty sharp, and then we shall have to run all the way to the coffee-house."

"What?" gasped Fatty. "Run the whole way?"

"Yes, old rubber-face! If you're coming, it'll melt some of that lard of yours."

"He is coming," said Aintree, endeavouring—and successfully, after an effort—to fix two nibs on to one holder in such a way that they would write two lines at the same time. Meantime he told Ginger Carrots of the bargain with Fatty.

"Good old Fatty!" cried Ginger. "But I'm not going to help you if you explode on the way back."

"Oh, I say, stow it, Ginger!" said Aintree. "Scoot, and leave us alone, or we'll never get done!"

Ginger Carrots deftly flicked a piece of twisted paper between his fingers at Fatty's round cheeks. The aim was a good one, and the missile caught Fatty on the nose.

Fatty seized the book from which he was copying the lines, and hurled it at the offending Carrots. Carrots dodged it successfully. The book flew through the air, and, speeding onwards towards the door, struck the shoulder of the Head as he suddenly strode into the room!

The doctor's side whiskers—face-springs, the boys called them—fluttered in the wind the book made in its flight.

The Head scowled as he came to a dead stop.

"Who threw that book?" he demanded fiercely.

There was a terrible silence. Then Fatty, looking very red, his cheeks quivering like a shaken blancmange, blurted out:

"I did, sir. I—I beg your pardon, sir! I—I—I'm very sorry."

"You know it's against the rules to throw school books about, Bracebridge!"

Aintree was writing for all he was worth, having deftly detached the second nib from the holder.

The doctor could be very stern, but he was also very just. He had been a

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schoolboy himself, and he knew very well that the missile was never meant for him.

"What are you doing in the Common-room instead of being in the playing-fields?"

"Writing lines, sir," admitted Fatty.

"And you, too, Aintree minor?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, sir."

"In for punishment already, and the term only just started!" remarked the doctor, with the suspicion of an angry tremor in his right "face-fixture."

"Well, Bracebridge," he said, in a more softened tone, "I will accept your apology."

"Thank you, sir!"

"But I insist on discipline being maintained and the rules being obeyed. You must do me fifty lines by first school to-morrow."

"Yes, sir!" said Fatty, in a very subdued tone.

"Greek lines, Bracebridge."

"Yes, sir!"

The two juniors heaved a sigh of relief when the doctor strode off.

Ginger Carrots discreetly withdrew, leaving Fatty and Aintree minor to their scribbling.

"We're meeting under the School House clock at one-thirty," whispered Carrots a moment later, peering round the door. "Don't eat too much dinner, Fatty, or you'll never get to the place," he added, as a parting shot.

Fatty's lips moved, but no sound came forth.

When the dinner-bell rang at one o'clock each boy had done eighty lines.

"I shall cut dinner," said Aintree, "and do the remaining forty lines whilst you're feeding."

"It'll mean extra school or drill to-morrow," said Fatty.

"Can't help it! I'm not going to miss that spread this afternoon for anything!"

Fatty threw his contribution towards Aintree.

"You're a brick—a red one!" grinned Aintree.

Fatty flicked Aintree's ear with his pen-holder, slapped his face, and ran off before Aintree had time to catch him. Time was precious, so he did not give chase.

At one-twenty-five Aintree gathered up his exercise-book and history, attached Fatty's contribution to his own, jammed his books and papers in his locker, and tore off with his lines to Ambrose's class-room.

Fortunately, the door was unlocked. Aintree rushed in, put the lines on the master's desk, then bolted for the School House clock.

He found Beetles, Fatty, Ginger Carrots, Jennings, and Borden awaiting him.

"Good egg!" cried Beetles, when they saw Aintree. "Finished 'em?"

"Rather!"

"Hallo, Fatty!" said Borden, with a wink, catching sight of the elephantine leg. "You coming?"

"Not half!"

"Good old Fatty!" grinned Jennings. "Do your tires want pumping up?" He bent down, and pinched Fatty's calves. "Yes, they jolly well do! They're as lumpy as a three-punctured motor-lorry wheel!"

Then he stooped down still more, made a lower noise, and pretended he was inflating a tyre with a pump.

"Silly cuss!" cried Fatty, jerking his

leg backwards, thereby suddenly throwing Jennings sprawling.

"Come on, you rotters," cried Ginger Carrots, "or some beastly monitor'll be yelling out 'fag'!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Hard Lines!

THE six juniors scuttled off, and were soon clear of the school premises. Fortunately, their way lay over field-paths and country roads, and most of it was downhill. They settled down into a steady run.

"Keep it up, you fellows!" said Aintree.

"The charge of the Electric-light Brigade—five bob!" shouted Beetles, putting on speed.

"In charge of the police!" grinned Ginger Carrots.

"If you stamp and grunt like that, Fatty," panted Borden, running alongside the plump one, "people'll think there's a rhinoceros let loose!"

Fatty's face was now the colour of a new chimney-pot. He breathed heavily and with difficulty. His two round cheeks quivered like a duck's tail in a thunderstorm.

"Let me know when you want pumping up again, Fatty," said Jennings.

"D-d-d-d-don't be a w-w-w-woose f-f-fool than you can help!" jerked out Fatty.

With much chaff of this kind, the half-dozen boys at last arrived at the coffee-house. They had run nearly all the way.

"Hallo, Gargles!" cried Aintree, catching sight of that worthy as he stood at the open door. "Everything ready?"

"Yes, sir!"

The boys crowded into the room, and found a big table laid for five.

"We shall want another place laid," said Beetles. "There are six of us now." And he pointed to Fatty.

"Come on, you chaps!" he cried. "No extra charge for chairs!"

There was a scramble for the table.

"You haven't got a chair with five legs to it, I suppose?" asked Beetles very seriously of Gargles, grinning at Fatty, who seemed more or less in a state of collapse.

"No, sir, I'm afraid not," replied Gargles.

"Because," went on Aintree, "that young fellow there"—pointing to Fatty—"who looks as if he's wasting away, always has a special chair with five legs, on account of his weight. An ordinary chair simply collapses like a confection if Fatty plumps himself down on it."

"I dare say I could have one made, sir!" grinned Gargles.

A shout of laughter greeted this answer.

Then the goose was carried in amidst cheers.

This bird had already served the Gargle family for a bountiful meal, and had been heated up for the juniors.

"Who'll carve?" cried Beetles, flourishing a knife.

"I—I—I!" cried several voices.

Then in came the potatoes and greens and apple-sauce, which were set down opposite the bird.

"My eye!" gurgled Fatty. "Doesn't it smell good?"

"Where are the goose's legs?" cried out Aintree, noticing their absence.

"P'raps, sir," said Gargles, with a wink, "one o' the missing legs has strapped itself on to the chair o' the big gentleman with the rosy face."

A yell of delight burst from every throat.

"Bravo, Gargles!" said Aintree.

"Who'll carve, anyhow?" shouted Aintree.

"Suppose I do?" suggested Gargles.

"Right-ho, Gargles!" replied Aintree. "Jab at it! Give us a cut from its double-breasted waistcoat!"

All the juniors were soon served, and waded in with appetite.

"The best tuck-in I've had since the hole!" said Ginger Carrots, gobbling away stuffing and apple-sauce.

"Makes you feel like a stuffed dumpling!" mumbled Fatty, full of goose, potatoes, and satisfaction.

"It's fine!" agreed Aintree.

"Great!" exclaimed Jennings.

"Immense!" chuckled Borden.

When everybody had had enough of goose and stuffing, the bird—or, rather, what was left of it—wouldn't have nourished a flea.

The mince-pies and lemonade fled almost as quickly as the time.

Then came a fight with some cushions that lay on a settee—Fatty, Aintree, and Ginger v. Jennings, Borden, and the Beetle.

Just as the fun was waxing fast and furious, and Aintree had sent a well-directed cushion at the Beetle, which very materially impaired the gravity of his deportment, the door suddenly opened, and another cushion from Aintree's hands went plop! into the face of him who had entered.

"Now, then, what are you boys doing here?" said the voice from behind the cushion.

Then the owner of the voice freed himself from his incumbrance, and, lo! the boys saw, standing before them, Dr. Herbert Tallboys, the Head's brother, medical man to St. Bartholomew's, who lived in the town!

Try as he might to look stern, he could scarcely repress a smile as he noted the consternation his appearance had caused.

The juniors were in a very dilapidated state, with Eton-collars torn from refractory studs, and their coats off. Bits of goose-bone and mince-pies littered the sanded floor.

"What are you doing here?" the medical man asked again.

He had ridden over from the town, having business at Frampton, and had looked in to see Gargles, who did odd jobs for him sometimes.

"We're here for a lark, sir," said Aintree.

"For a lark—eh?" said the medical man. "Now, I should say the bird was of the goose tribe!"

"Yes, sir," stuttered Ginger Carrots trying to laugh, but too nervous.

"Let me see," the surgeon went on, looking round. "Six of you. That will be six doses of castor-oil and stomach-mixture for you to-morrow. You know as well as I do that though the road past this house is not out of bounds, the coffee-house itself is. Who paid for this epicurean banquet?"

"We all subscribed, sir," answered Beetles.

"Well, cut off as quickly as you can. It'll be as much as you can do to reach the School House by call-over. It's a quarter-past four now; and up-hill all the way."

There was a hasty scramble for coats and caps. Then the boys started home.

"We're in for it this time!" gasped Aintree.

"I reckon we jolly well are," agreed Beetles.

"Will old Sawbones show us up at the Head?" panted Jennings.

"I don't know," replied Aintree. "If he does, it'll mean a swishing. But he's a good sort."

All six of them were panting and breathless by this time. They were not

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yet two miles on their way, and had much up-hill work still to do.

"I can't go another yard," admitted Fatty presently to Aintree and Beetles beside him.

The plump boy threw himself on the turf.

"Try and do half a yard," suggested Aintree, grinning.

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Beetles. "We've got to get Fatty back with us somehow."

By dint of help the ponderous one managed to get to his feet again, and he was assisted by his two chums. Aintree shouted to the other three, who were ahead, to push on and look after themselves.

At last the boys reached the level road, and, with words of encouragement to Fatty, they settled down into a steady run. They might just be in time for call-over. But there was not a moment to spare.

It was almost dark. Suddenly, as they neared a sharp corner, the sound of a motor-hooter broke upon their ears. It was too near to be comfortable. Aintree spurted forward, shouting. The road was so narrow that there was scarcely room for pedestrians to pass vehicles.

Then there came the sound of a terrific impact—a harsh, grating noise. The motor-lights wobbled and tilted. Then a girl's stream rang out.

"Over, by Jove!" cried Aintree, running forward.

When the juniors reached the car they found it all tilted, on one side. It had run into the high bank at the side of the road. The glass screen was splintered to fragments. The chauffeur was dabbling his face with a handkerchief. He was bleeding badly.

But what was the most astonishing thing of all was the sight of Dorothy Tallboys, the Head's daughter, in the car.

"Are you hurt, Miss Tallboys?" cried Aintree anxiously.

"No, thanks, Aintree! Only my hand. It got a bit jammed between the car door and a stone on the bank."

The boys noticed that her glove was all torn, and that a tiny crimson stream was flowing from the damaged hand.

"Here's a handkerchief, Miss Tallboys," said Beetles, bringing out a very grubby one.

"Thank you!" she said.

Fatty and Aintree were now helping the chauffeur out of his seat. The man was not hurt, but looked dazed.

"Can anyone go and fetch some water?" inquired Miss Tallboys.

"There's a cottage over there," replied Aintree; and he ran off.

Presently he returned with some water and the old woman who looked after the cottage. With her and the boys' help, the cuts and bruises were soon bathed and roughly done up.

"There is no damage to the car," said Miss Tallboys, "save that the glass screen has gone. If you'll all get in, the chauffeur will drive you back."

They scrambled in.

"I'm afraid you'll all be late for call-over," said Miss Tallboys presently; "but I will tell my father why you were late."

Fatty grinned at Beetles.

"This was a stroke of luck!"

The drive home did not take long. When they arrived at the private entrance to the School House, Miss Tallboys—

sisted on the three boys coming in to tea.

So they sat down to another meal, to which they did ample justice. During the process of this second stuffing, Miss Tallboys disappeared to fetch the Head. Presently he entered the room alone.

"Well, boys," he said, trying to look very stern, though there was a twinkle in his eye, "you must have all been running it pretty close to be in time for call-over when my daughter met with the accident to the car. But since you rendered her very kind assistance, I—I will overlook your absence from call-over. My daughter tells me you have been of great service to her."

"Thank you, sir!" they chorused.

"And now, boys," the doctor put in, "all of you go to preparation."

The boys trooped out of the room. Outside in the quadrangle they began to laugh and scramble.

"A good old sport, really!" said Aintree.

"Quite decent!" agreed Beetles.

"I say, you chaps," put in Fatty, "I hope the others got back in time. And do you think old Sawbones will split on us?"

"Can't say," said Aintree.

All three suffered much whilst waiting for a summons to the doctor that night. But no summons came. The others had got back in time. Next morning the matron came downstairs to the Common-room, and requested Fatty, Beetles, Aintree, Jennings, Ginger Carrots, and Borden to come with her upstairs.

When they entered the matron's sitting-room they found the medical man there. There was a twinkle in his eye, but a nasty "mixture" look on his face.

"All these boys, matron," he said, "must have one big dose of castor-oil and one-dose of special school stomach-mixture. I think they need it!"

Then he felt their pulses, and looked at their tongues.

"Shocking tongues—all of them!" he said, his eyes twinkling very much.

One by one they were given the horrible stuff. Then they marched downstairs again.

"He's a ripping old sort!" grinned Aintree. "He hasn't split!"

"Good old Sawbones!" chuckled Fatty.

"But the castor-oil was jolly hard lines. Ugh!" growled Beetles.

THE END.

P.-C. TOZER'S PROMOTION.

By DICK RAKE.

IT was a dark night, a thorough "Zepp" night, and the silence was only broken by the sighing of the trees.

A heavy step was heard, and P.-c. Tozer, the village guardian of the law's portly form, hove into sight from out of the gloom.

He was patrolling his beat, puffing away contentedly at his pipe, regardless of the fact that his inspector might be in the vicinity.

"Perishing cold night!" he muttered, shivering. "This 'ere night-dooty'll be the death of me! I've told Inspector Skeat so before, and he only said—"

He broke off abruptly as there came to his ears the booming of guns.

"My heve, it's them there Zepps again!" he muttered, his knees trembling.

He gave an anxious look up into the sky—the guns could be heard much more plainly now—and, following the beam of a searchlight, he descried a Zeppelin in full flight, followed by a perfect hail of shells. His pipe dropped to the ground in excitement as he saw one of the shells hit the airship, which rapidly moved on towards it.

"Ooray! They've got it!" he yelled, as the monster still sank, looking as if it would come to earth right on top of the active and intelligent officer.

And it very nearly did.

It finally rested in an adjoining meadow, well under half a mile away.

P.-c. Tozer hesitated. Should he hasten to the spot and render assistance? There might be lives to be saved. He was an officer of the law, and it was his duty. He decided, with many misgivings, to go. He started at a trot, and broke into a run, his fat little legs going like clockwork in the direction of the wrecked Zeppelin.

He pulled up short when about twenty yards from the spot, for he saw a number of people, unmistakably the German crew, who were gesticulating and talking in a language that was quite foreign to him.

Visions of promotion passed before his eyes if he could but capture the crew; and, puffing out his chest to its fullest extremity, he marched boldly forward, and, in ringing tones, exclaimed:

"In the King's name, I arrest you—as prisoners of war! Let no man move, or I will put a hounce of lead through him, as I am fully harmed!"

This was not exactly the truth, for P.-c. Tozer's only weapon was a truncheon. Nevertheless, the commander of the Zeppelin stepped forward, and said:

"We surrender!"

And the remainder of the crew fell on their knees, and yelled:

"Kamerad!"

P.-c. Tozer scratched his head perplexedly. What to do now was a mystery to him. He decided, after a few moments of reflection, to march them through the village to the police-station. People were now hurrying to the spot, and P.-c. Tozer's breast swelled with pride as he thought of the glory he was gaining.

So he lined his prisoners up, and marched them into the village, where crowds cheered him to the echo.

When the whole procession arrived at the police-station, Inspector Skeat nearly fell off the steps in amazement.

"This means promotion for you, Constable Tozer! A fine night's work!"

Again Tozer felt a glow of pride, for praise from his chief was praise indeed. The prisoners were duly put into the cells to await a military escort.

And, a few days later, all Friardale was agog with excitement, for the Lord Mayor of London had arrived to congratulate personally P.-c. Tozer—now Sergeant Tozer—for the splendid way in which he had handled a difficult situation. At the end of a long speech the Lord Mayor gripped Tozer heartily by the shoulder—

"Here, what's this? Come on, wake up! Sleeping at your post, are you?"

And Inspector Skeat accompanied the words with a vigorous shove.

P.-c. Tozer awoke from his dream with startling suddenness. He blinked up at the irate inspector, and his knees shook under him.

"I-I-I—" he stuttered. "Where's the Zepp? I-I—I—"

"Yes, I know!" broke in Inspector Skeat. "This is the second time this month I've caught you asleep! You're always dreaming, and you've Zepps on the brain! Get a move on you! I'll give you another look later on!"

P.-c. Tozer's hopes of promotion had vanished, as they had come, like a dream, and it was a very discomfite Tozer who trudged wearily along on his beat through the darkness, with no pipe to cheer him now!

THE END.

