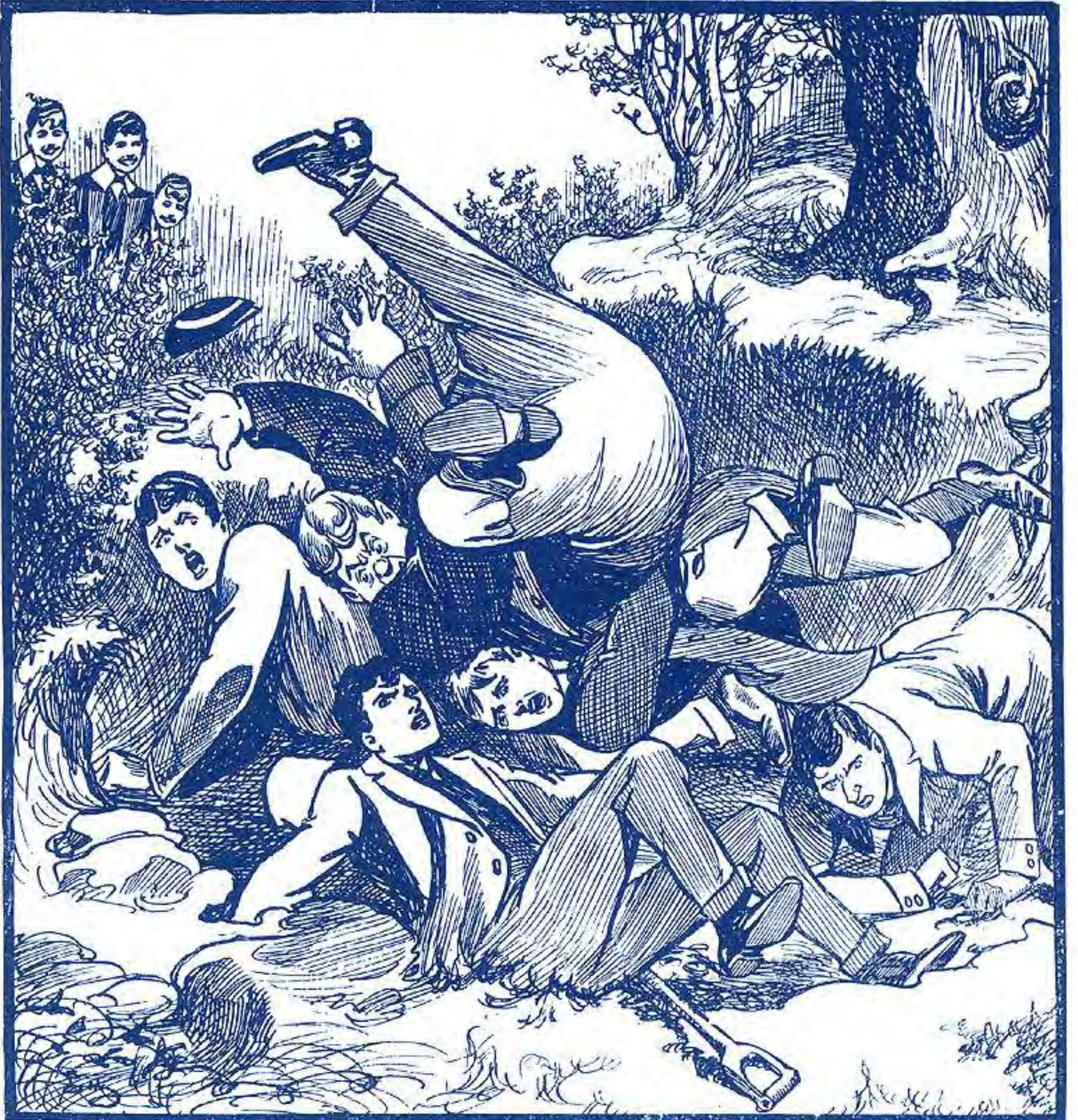
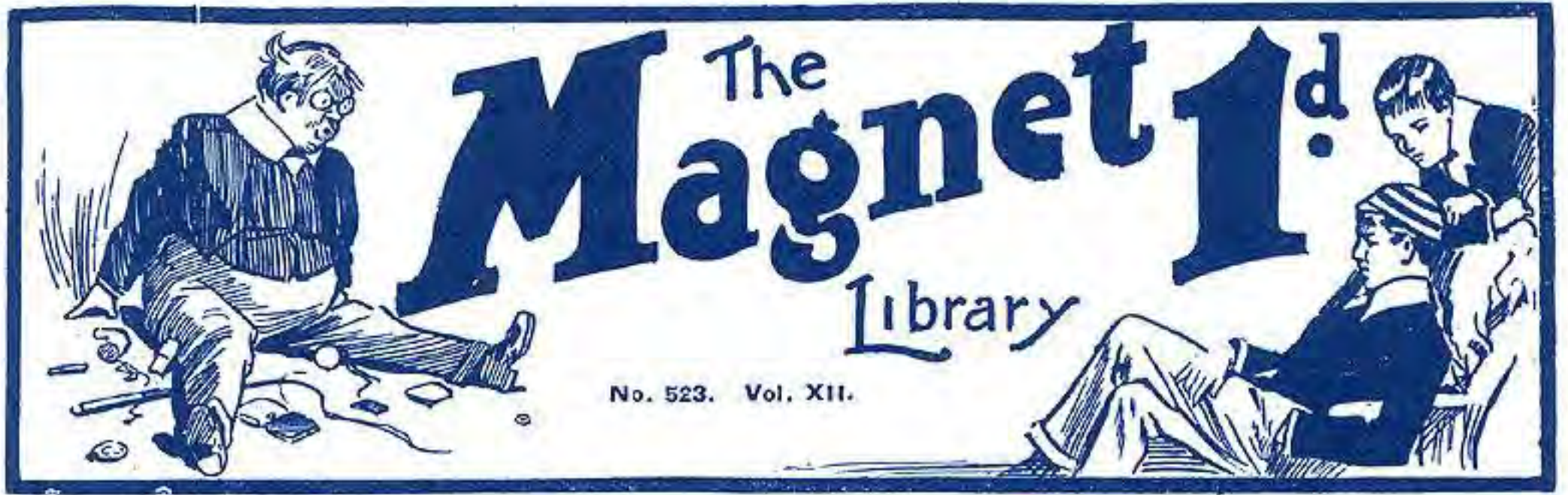


HUNTING FOR TREASURE!



BUNTER ON TOP!

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16-2-13

HUNTING FOR TREASURE!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter's Evergreen!

"MY aunt!" Bob Cherry uttered the exclamation. And the chums of the Remove echoed it.

They were standing at the gate leading into the Head's garden at Greyfriars, gazing at a sight which had almost taken their breath away.

"He must be dotty!" Wharton muttered.

"The dottyfulness of the ridiculous Bunter is terrific!" added Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhanipur.

It was the figure of Billy Bunter which had attracted their attention. He was standing in the middle of one of the Head's flower-beds, wielding a mighty spade with a vigour which was uncommon in the fat junior.

"Here, come off it!" Bob Cherry called. "You'll get spificated if the Head catches you, you silly porpoise!"

Bunter grunted, and went on digging.

He was delving into the earth just beside a large evergreen. There was a little pile of earth beside it, and the chums noted that several newly-planted bulbs were protruding in places.

"What on earth are you doing?" Harry called. "You'll ruin that bed!"

Bunter grunted again.

"Clear off, you chaps!" he panted.

"I'm digging."

"What are you digging for?" asked Johnny Bull, firmly convinced that the Owl of the Remove had taken leave of his senses.

Grunt!

"If you're looking for trouble," said Frank Nugent, "you'll soon find it without digging."

But Bunter continued to dig. His spade suddenly slipped upwards, and he shot a shower of mould over himself.

"Don't bury yourself yet," Bob said.

"There's no need to do that till the Head's finished with you. It will be time then!"

No answer. The Owl continued to dig as though he was making a short cut to Australia.

"Look here," said Harry Wharton, "we'd better pull him off before he gets collared. He must be potty!"

He started forward, but as he did so Johnny Bull gripped him.

"Cave!" he hissed.

Dr. Locke had just swept into view, and the Removes drew back. Bunter was in for it now, but there was no reason why they should ask to share his fate.

The Head of Greyfriars came majestically on, and it was not for a few seconds that his eyes lighted on the perspiring Owl. Then he pulled up sharply.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

The Owl started, and gasped.

"Y-y-y-y-yes, sir?" he said.

"What are you doing, boy?" the Head thundered.

"D-d-digging, sir!"

The Head was speechless for a moment.

"Digging in my garden?" he gasped

at length. "This is sheer impertinence! What are you digging for?"

"T-t-treasure, sir."

"Treasure!" the Head shouted. "Are you aware that I have just been planting bulbs there?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Drop that spade, and come with me!" Dr. Locke thundered. "Your conduct is disgraceful!"

The Owl relinquished the spade, and went. Dr. Locke stalked grimly on ahead, the fat junior, with trembling knees, following.

As the study closed on him Bunter saw the wisdom of the advice which he has just scorned. Dr. Locke was handling a cane already. It was not a promising start to an interview.

"Now, Bunter, perhaps you will be good enough to explain things!" the Head snapped.

The Owl coughed.

"There's some buried treasure in your garden, sir," he said. "I was just finding it for you, sir," he added magnanimously.

"What are you talking about?" asked the Head, frowning.

"It's a—a competition," the Owl said desperately. "They're burying treasure every week, sir, and they say where it's hidden."

He pulled a dog-eared paper from his pocket.

"There's the story here, sir," he explained. "You have to read the story, and you find out where the treasure is hidden. Then they dig up what they've buried, sir, and send it up to the editor, and he sends the money."

Dr. Locke smiled grimly.

"And what made you choose my garden for experimenting with this absurdity?" he asked.

Bunter pointed to a sentence which he had underlined.

"Here, sir!" he said triumphantly. "If you read there, it says: 'They found the dog asleep in Head's garden underneath a big evergreen.'"

The Owl watched eagerly while Dr. Locke read the paragraph, and then turned to the synopsis at the beginning of the story. He scanned the story for a few moments, and then turned to Bunter.

"I really think you might have a little more common-sense, boy!" he rapped out. "If you had read this story you would see that Head is the name of some foolish character who appears in it. I fail to see how his dog, lying under an evergreen, could have anything to do with my garden!"

Bunter coughed nervously.

"I thought it was, the way they put it, sir," he said. "Of course, they wouldn't say where the treasure was actually buried. They leave it to their brainy readers to find out."

"Oh!"

The Head looked at Bunter with a gaze that seemed to go right through the fat junior. Perhaps he was looking for the brains!

"So you imagined you were a brainy reader—eh?" he asked. "Well, I shall have to teach you to let my garden alone. Hold out your hand!"

"I—I—"

"Hold out your hand!" the Head thundered.

Bunter did so, with much fear and trembling.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter roared as though he was being killed. The Head, angry at the havoc wrought in his garden, was laying on with quite unavowed severity.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Brains Wanted!

BUNTER passed along the passage rubbing his hands, and breathing threats of vengeance on the author of the serial which had led him to tragedy. But he did not meet the author. It was Skinner he met.

Harold Skinner grinned, perceiving that the Owl had obviously just received a licking. Skinner was not overburdened with sympathy.

"What's the row?" he asked cheerfully.

"Rats!" growled Bunter.

"Did he lay it on heavily?" asked the cad of the Remove.

The Owl grunted.

"I say, Bunt," Skinner pursued. "I've got an idea to make some money. Care to help me?"

The Owl paused doubtfully.

"What's the wheeze?" he asked, with some interest.

"Oh, it's quite simple!" Skinner said. "You just have to do a little work, and the money's yours. Are you a good hand at digging?"

"Groooh!"

"There's no need to make a noise like that!" Skinner said. "All I want is a chap who's good at digging to help me hunt for buried treasure—Here, stop it!"

To the cad's surprise Bunter suddenly charged at him in fury. The move was very sudden, and Skinner sat down heavily.

"What's up, you maniac?" he shouted. "I'll flay you!"

He scrambled to his feet as Bunter made another charge. But the licking had made the Owl furious, and, after another bump, Skinner suddenly took to his heels and fled.

"Stop it!" he yelled. "Help! Bunter's gone mad!"

As he dashed round the corner he narrowly escaped charging into the Famous Five, who had just come in. Bunter was not so lucky. In his blind fury he did not see the new-comers in time, and buried his head in Inky's waistcoat.

"Yaroooh!" groaned the dusky junior, as he sat down.

Bunter scrambled to his feet. Seeing that Skinner had disappeared, he cooled down a little. Hurree Singh rose painfully.

"The clumsiness of the ridiculous Owl

is terrific," he observed. "Could he not sootfully perceive that I was coming?"

"That beast Skinner!" Bunter panted. "I'll half kill him when I catch him!" The Famous Five grinned.

"What's up, Bunt?" Wharton asked. "He wanted me to do some digging!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to laugh at!" the Owl growled.

"Didn't the Head like you digging his bulbs up to see if they had started growing?" Bob asked.

"You can grin, you rotters!" Bunter growled. "I'll give you something to grin about when—when I've settled with Skinner!"

"Let's know when you're ready," Wharton said.

Bunter mumbled something, and rolled off. The Famous Five grinned after him.

"Poor old Bunt!" Wharton muttered. "Always in trouble!"

"I wonder what he was digging for?" Nugent asked. "Do you think he was looking for that buried treasure stuff?"

"I shouldn't be surprised," said Johnny Bull. "He's just the sort of fellow to start off by making hay of the Head's garden!"

"Well, gassing isn't going to help us!" Bob interposed. "Come along to the study, and let's read that yarn! We'd better have a cut at it before the rest get busy."

"Hear, hear!"

Wharton produced a paper.

"Here's 'Snippings'!" he said.

The chums adjourned to Study No. 1. The latest number of "Snippings" had only been published that day, but the new competition which it included had already spread through Greyfriars.

This enterprising journal promised to bury a token every week somewhere in the British Isles. The serial story contained a clue to the whereabouts of the plunder. Readers simply had to locate the treasure, and claim a large cash prize. It sounded quite simple, and Greyfriars had already taken to it warmly.

Bunter, determined to be first in the field, had set out on his own, but his experience had not been happy. The Famous Five had decided to put their heads together first, before they went digging.

They read the story without finding any particular clue, however.

"Doesn't say much there," Bob observed.

"Well, how could they?" demanded Johnny Bull. "They leave that to the intelligence of their readers."

"Oh!"

"You've got to use a little intelligence," Johnny proceeded. "You have to read between the lines."

"There's nothing between them!" Bob said solemnly.

"Ass!" Johnny Bull snapped. "I only mean figuratively. You've got to read the hidden meaning."

"Go hon!"

"It's quite simple, if you try. It just wants a little common-sense, and then you'll get it."

"Well, get it, then!" said Nugent.

Johnny Bull scratched his ear.

"Of course," he said, "it wants a little bit of doing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And a little brain!" said Bob Cherry. "Yours ain't a big one; it ought to do it!"

"Hang the hidden treasure!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'm going to give Bob some hidden treasure!"

"Come on, then!" said Bob, with a warlike flourish.

The Removites restrained them by



In the Head's garden! (See Chapter 1.)

force. But they did not come to any conclusion as to where the astute editor of "Snippings" had hidden his token.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Coker on the Trail!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter looked into Study No. 1. The trouble between Bob and Johnny Bull had been settled, and the Removites were sitting down to a frugal war-tea.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry sang out. "Nothing doing here, Bunt!"

"I was going to say—"

"Well, don't trouble," said Nugent. "We know you're hungry. So are we. We can't afford to feed a porpoise to-night."

"It's about that competition!" Bunter howled desperately, as he saw a lexicon ready to be launched at his head. "Coker's on the track!"

"What's that?"

The Removites were interested. They always found something interesting in Coker's movements.

Bunter winked.

"I could tell you a lot, if I wanted to," he said knowingly.

"Well, get it out!" said Wharton.

Bunter winked again.

"If you chaps would treat a fellow decently," the Owl said suggestively, "you might learn a lot."

"Oh, come and sit down and tuck-in, then!" growled Nugent.

The fat junior accepted the invitation, and it was not till he had filled himself, scoffing everything left on the table, that he opened his mouth to speak.

"Coker's going in for the competition," he said slowly.

"Yes, we know that," said Wharton. "He's not the first one who has started digging, either!"

"Oh, shut up!" growled the Owl. "He's organising a party to go treasure-hunting to-night."

"My aunt!" laughed Bob Cherry.

"Trust Horace to be in the front. He'll find something all right."

"Anyway, he's taking Potter and Greene with him," the Owl said. "And they're going to take shovels, and a bag for the treasure, and scales and weights—"

"Oh, cheese it, Bunt!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Let's have the facts."

"I tell you it's true!" the Owl said shrilly. "I heard him say so myself. I happened to be tying up my bootlace outside his door—"

"You ought to wear button boots, Bunt," said Bob. "Your laces often trouble you, don't they?"

"Really, you fellows!" the fat junior howled. "If you think I was listening purposely, I won't jolly well tell you!"

"Oh, you needn't worry!" said Wharton. "We don't think so. We know!"

"If you—"

"Cut the cackle, and get on!" said Nugent.

"Well, all they said," the Owl proceeded ungraciously, "was that they had found out where the treasure was hidden, and they were going to look for it. They'll be starting in about a quarter of an hour."

"Are you romancing?" asked Bob.

"Of course I ain't!" returned the Owl. "I hope he gets nabbed by someone!"

"Perhaps he will!" said Nugent meaningly.

Wharton laughed.

"Poor old Horace!" he said. "It wouldn't be a bad idea to liven things up for him, would it? He'll find it pretty dull work digging."

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Shall we rag him?"

"Good idea!"

"The goodness of the idea is excellent!"

"Terrific!" finished Bob.

"All right, Bunt!" Wharton said.

"You can cut!"

The Owl paused.

"By the way," he said. "I'm expecting a postal-order. I think you fellows might lend me five bob till it comes!"

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"Nothing doing, tubby!" said Nugent. "I've put you fellows up to a jolly good thing," the Owl recommenced. "I think

"Scat!"
"Buzz off!"
"I say, you know—"

A cushion came whizzing through the air, and the Owl retreated. As he saw a boot coming he promptly dodged through the door, but in his haste forgot where his fingers were, and got them pinched in the heavy wood.

"Yaroooh!" he roared. "Beasts!"

A chair moved as if someone was rising, and the Owl sped away as fast as his fat little legs would carry him. He wasn't waiting for persuasion. He rubbed his fingers as he went down the corridor.

"Selfish beasts!" he muttered.

Wharton shut the study door and sat down again.

"We'll get one or two more and trail them," Bob Cherry said. "If Coker thinks he knows where the stuff is, he won't be happy till he gets it."

"That's the wheeze!" said Johnny Bull. "Squiff and Toddy will come along all right. Then we'll wait till they get digging, and give 'em a little surprise."

Within a few minutes seven juniors had gathered in the Close, and waited there.

A little later Horace Coker, bearing a large spade borrowed from Gosling, appeared. Potter and Greene were behind him. They were not keen on joining the expedition; but, under promise of a feed of generous proportions, had been lured into consenting.

The great Horace frowned as he spotted the juniors.

"Going worm-hunting?" queried Bob Cherry blandly.

A heavier frown from Coker.

"Got a grave-digging job to do?" suggested Johnny Bull.

A growl from the mighty Fifth-Former.

"Going to bury some of your old boots, Horace?" Nugent asked playfully.

"They want it, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker doubled his fists for an attack. But, remembering the urgent work on hand, he merely snorted, and passed on.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Horace, the Sleuth-hound!

"IT'S as plain as a pikestaff!"

Horace Coker spoke. He was addressing his chums, Potter and Greene, as they tramped along the road to Friardale.

"I'm hanged if I see it!" growled Potter, to whom the task of carrying the gardening implement had now been given.

Coker snorted.

"This is the last time I'm going to explain it to you duffers!" he snapped.

"Look here! The serial says, as far as I remember, that the car came to a cross-road, and Head got out, and stood under a gnarled oak and kissed the heroine. Now, that means that that is where they buried the treasure."

"I'm hanged if I see that!" said Potter again. "I can't see how that's got anything whatever to do with the plunder."

"Ass!" snorted Horace Coker politely. "It's only a figure of speech—a—"

paregoric."

"A which-er?"

"Er—I mean, a paradox."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker turned furiously on his grinning chums.

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"You know what I mean, anyway!" he growled threateningly.

The grins promptly faded. Coker was a mighty man of war when he was roused, and his chums did not want to come to blows with him.

"You mean a parable," Potter said meekly.

"Perhaps I do," said Coker condescendingly. "Anyway, it's pretty evident to me that that's where they have buried the stuff. All we've got to do is to dig it up before anyone else gets there."

"But how do you know what cross-roads they mean?" persisted Greene.

"You have to use your gumption!" Coker said loftily. "I've deduced that. I can recognise the spot from the description of the road. It's just the other side of Friardale. I knew that as soon as I read the yarn."

Potter and Greene smothered their laughter, and said nothing. Coker could do a bit of digging, and thus find out the error of his calculations. They did not intend to dig themselves.

They tramped on in silence. Coker was confident that he was going to lay hands upon the "Snippings" token. Potter and Greene were equally sure that the great Horace was going to make a fool of himself—as usual. The only thing that they objected to was that they should be dragged into it as well.

It never occurred to them, however, to glance back along the road. If they had done so they would have deduced one thing—that there was trouble in store! The Removites were following. They meant to see how luck favoured the magnificent Horace.

Friardale was reached and passed by the treasure-seekers, and they approached the cross-roads which Coker had in mind. He felt a little thrill of anticipation go through him as he looked round. He was looking for the "gnarled oak" under which the hero of that amazing serial had stood.

They passed the cross-roads, and Coker slackened his stride. He looked around him after the manner of a sleuth.

"That tree over there is the sort that a loving couple might stand under," he said meditatively. "What do you say, Potter?"

Potter merely laughed like a hyena.

"It's nothing to laugh at, George Potter!" Coker said severely. "Love is a very serious thing. One day you might stand under a tree with a fair maiden."

"He, he, he!" cackled Potter again.

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Greene.

Coker gazed at them wrathfully.

"It's not my fault if you haven't got high ideals!" he growled. "But you might keep quiet, if you can't appreciate beautiful thoughts."

His chums stifled their hilarity with an effort.

"But this ain't a gnarled oak!" Greene protested. "It said in the book that they stood under a gnarled oak."

Coker looked puzzled. The tree was not an oak at all—gnarled or otherwise.

"And, besides," added Potter, "how do you know that this is the road the merchant took?"

Coker pulled the paper from his pocket.

"They turned down to the right," he said.

"Well, we've turned to the left," Greene pointed out.

"So we have," Coker agreed, almost meekly.

Potter picked up his spade again, and sauntered off in the fresh direction. Coker walked on ahead. He was looking for a likely sort of place for a loving couple to have stood. And that place, according to his reasoning, would mark

the spot where the token had been buried.

"Here we are!" he said suddenly.

His two followers drew up, and Greene burst into a cackle.

"That ain't an oak-tree at all!" he roared. "It's an elm."

"Then, find the rotten oak yourself!" snapped Coker.

Greene looked about him.

"There isn't one," he said, with a grin.

"Then it must have been this," said Coker firmly. "It's just a blind on the author's part to talk about oak-trees. Meant to put a dull sort of chap off the scent, you know, and all that."

Potter sniffed.

"Well, here's the spade," he said. "Where are you going to start digging?"

Coker scrambled over the hedge. The tree stood just off the road, but its branches grew right over the pathway.

"They'd bury it somewhere near the roots," the Fifth-Former said knowingly. "Let's have a look."

His chums followed him.

"Found anything?" Potter asked, after a pause.

"Yes!" said Coker, in a tense and thrilling voice. "Newly-turned earth!"

Greene bent down to follow the pointing finger.

"That's a rabbit-hole!" he grunted.

Coker laughed scornfully.

"That's all you know!" he said.

"Give me the spade. I'll jolly soon have it out now!"

Coker started to dig in earnest, and as he dug he warmed to his work. Potter and Greene stood and looked on, quite amused. Coker might find a rabbit if he dug deep enough. But they did not expect him to bring to light the mysterious token which the editor of "Snippings" was supposed to have buried.

After a bit Coker straightened up for a rest, and as he did so a big clod of earth caught him a thwack on the side of the head.

In the dim light neither Potter nor Greene saw where the clod came from. But Coker had no doubt on the subject. He gave a wrathful cry, and dropped the spade.

"I'll teach you to do that again!" he roared, seizing Potter in a sudden grip and shaking him.

"Oh, help!" yelled Potter faintly.

"It wasn't me, you duffer!"

"Then who was it?" demanded Coker.

"I—I don't know!" howled Potter.

"It must have been Greene."

Coker transferred his attentions to his other aide.

"What did you do that for?" he roared, shaking the helpless Greene violently.

"Help!" Greene howled. "It was Potter! I never chucked it!"

The Fifth-Former released his victim, and eyed the pair doubtfully.

"I'll wipe the ground with both of you if you do it again!" he said. "I'm in earnest!"

He resumed his digging with great energy.

Presently the earth was flying in all directions. Coker put his heart and soul into a job when he took it up. The one thing that he forgot to put into it was his brain. But there may have been reasons for that omission.

Potter and Greene eyed each other doubtfully. The joke on Coker had been ill-timed, and each regarded the other as responsible for it. But they could not help grinning as the perspiration from Coker's face mingled with the earth which he had been too busy to brush off, and ran in dirty streaks over his collar.

Coker had met with no success so far,

beyond making a good-sized hole. The great Horace would have been quite useful in Flanders digging trenches.

At last he paused.

"I'm going to have a squint at that book again," he said grimly. Perhaps I'm overlooking some important clue."

A faint chuckle came from behind the hedge, but Coker did not hear it. He prepared to read, and the Removites listened with keen anticipation.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Mouldy Discovery!

"THIS is what it says," Coker commenced.

He was peering at the small print of the serial story. Potter and Greene, who had both heard it all about a dozen times, yawned ostentatiously.

"The car pulled up slowly, and Head pulled the brake-lever over. The handsome young man got out, and continued on page 29—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter. "That's a note saying where the yarn goes on! It isn't part of the story!"

"Shut up!" snapped Coker, as he rapidly turned over the pages. "Here you are! 'He was the most desperate criminal of the century, and had already murdered five brides in a couple of years.'"

"He, he, he!" cackled Greene. "Some of your high ideals there, old sport!" Coker frowned.

"Shut up, ass!" he snapped. "I've got the wrong page. Listen: 'Led the charming young lady forward. 'Do you love me?' he asked passionately. 'Yes,' she said.'"

Coker paused to swallow. The romance was one after his own heart. Coker had been in love more than once. This sort of thing appealed to him.

"'They were standing now in the shadow of a great elm,' " he read thrillingly, "'and he drew her a little closer to him. 'Kiss me,' he said gently.'"

"Naughty!" came a voice from the hedge. "Oh, naughty, naughty!"

Coker started, and stared furiously.

"Eh?" he said. "Who's that? Was that you, Greene?"

"No!" said that worthy emphatically.

"Or you, Potter?"

"No!" returned Potter warmly.

"Then," said Coker, dramatically, "it must have been someone else!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. could not bottle up their merriment any longer.

"It's those cheeky fags!" roared Coker wrathfully. "They're spying! I'll give them something to go on with!"

He dashed forward towards the hedge, but another clod of earth caught him on the nose, and burst in his open mouth.

"Groooh!" he roared. "Potter! Greene! Give them socks!"

Horace Coker spat the earth out, and dashed on again. A regular fusillade met the trio this time, and when Coker climbed the hedge he found himself cut off, surrounded by the Removites.

"Come on!" he roared.

Nothing daunted by numbers, he made a vicious swipe at Harry Wharton; but half a dozen hands gripped him and dragged him down.

Potter and Greene arrived on the scene a few seconds later, only to find themselves similarly outnumbered.

Within half a minute of the attack the trio were prisoners in the hands of the Removites. And, though they struggled and threatened, it was in vain.

"Let me up!" Coker howled furiously.

"Let me up, and I'll smash you!"

"Thanks; but our name isn't 'Dilly'!" Bob Cherry grinned.

"If you don't get off," Coker raved, "I'll jolly well spifficate you!"

"No bad language," Wharton said calmly. "We've got several things to say to you, Coker, which you may as well listen to, now the tables are turned. We've all got scores to settle with you."

"I'll give you scores!" shouted Coker. "You let me up, and I'll give the lot of you scores!"

"We're not going to let you get up," Johnny Bull said. "Hope it's all the same to you!"

"You cheeky fags!" fumed the great Horace. "Just you—"

"Never mind that, now," said Wharton. "I'll tell you what we're going to do with you. We're going to help you look for the treasure."

"No, you ain't!" retorted Coker. "I bagged this spot."

"Don't get your hair off!" grinned Wharton. "We're not going to pinch any spots from you. Just going to give you a few helping hands. Hoist him over the hedge, you chaps!"

"The hoistfulness of the esteemed Coker will be terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"Just a minute!" sang out Nugent. "Do you want these two bounders?"

He was referring to Potter and Greene, on whose backs he and Squiff were sitting.

"No," said Wharton. "Look here, just tie their hands behind their backs, and then they can go."

"Right-ho!" grinned Peter Todd.

Potter and Greene were jerked to their feet, and, in spite of their struggles, their hands were tied behind their backs, and then together.

"Now buzz off!" said Wharton. "Be careful you don't fall over!"

The pair started off on their uncomfortable journey. Potter being in front, Greene had to walk backwards, and they had not covered fifty yards before the latter tired of that and started struggling. The last the Removites saw of them was as they overbalanced and sprawled in a ditch.

"I'll pay you for this!" Coker roared, as he watched his chums' unhappy fate.

"No need for payment," Bob said blithely. "It's a free gift!"

The noble Coker was hauled over the hedge and along the ground to the hole he had been digging.

"Now we're going to help look for the treasure," Wharton said. "Can you see it, Coker?"

"No!" howled Coker. "But I'll—"

"Then look closer," said Harry. And as he spoke he thrust Coker's face into the loose mould, stifling the storm of abuse which was on the point of issuing from his mouth.

"Groooh!" roared Coker.

"Found anything yet?" asked Peter Todd blandly.

"I'll flay you when I—"

"Have another look!" advised Frank Nugent.

Coker's words were cut off again as he was pushed, face first, into his own handiwork.

"Yaroooh!" he roared as he managed to pull his head clear. "Stop it, you little rotters! I'll pay you out for this!"

"Are you going to keep your hands off chaps smaller than yourself?" Wharton asked quietly.

"No! I'll jolly well scrag you when—"

"Better look a bit deeper for the treasure, then!" Wharton grinned. "Yank his feet up, you chaps!"

Coker's feet suddenly shot into the air, and the Fifth-Former slid forward. His head went right into the rabbit-burrow, and when he was dragged out he looked

like a nigger minstrel. His hair and face were covered in wet, black mould, and his clothes looked as though he had just come from a day's navvying.

"Going to be a good little boy in future, Coker?" Wharton asked mockingly.

Coker growled savagely.

"I think that'll do," the Remove skipper said. "He's had enough, and that's a sample of what he'll get if he starts any more of his rotten bullying!"

They dropped Coker's feet, and climbed the hedge. The Fifth-Former did not go in pursuit. He had realised that they were too strong for him, and he did not want any more treasure-seeking after that style.

"Good-bye, Violet!" Bob Cherry called as they started off.

"Don't stay out too late!" added Johnny Bull.

Coker said nothing. His defeat had been too humiliating for words. The treasure had not been found, and, in addition, he had received a lesson which he deserved. But what the Remove called "bullying" was, in Coker's eyes, merely proper chastisement of cheeky fags.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Spades are Trumps!

BY the following day the excitement of the treasure-hunt had spread over Grayfriars. Copies of "Snippings" were to be seen everywhere.

Little groups stood about the corridors discussing the various passages in the serial in which anything like a clue to a possible hiding-place was given.

It happened to be a half-holiday, and, as there was no match on, there threatened to be a general exodus of treasure-hunters. Gosling found himself deluged with requests for spades.

"I tell you I ain't got none!" he roared, for the twentieth time, as Skinner and Stott approached him. "Blow the rotten treasure!"

"Haven't you got anything like a spade?" persisted Skinner.

"I got a tablespoon!" said Gosling, with a guffaw. "Will that do?"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Skinner, as he passed on.

Horace Coker appeared in the Close with Potter and Greene. They scowled as they passed the Famous Five. But, as there were plenty of Remove fellows handy, they only scowled.

"Going to look for the treasure?" Bob Cherry sang out.

Coker clenched his fists.

"I'll scalp you if you don't keep a civil tongue in your head!" he roared threateningly.

"Ha, ha, ha! Horrid Horace, the Pest of the Prairies!" cried Frank Nugent.

Coker passed on with a brow like thunder. He was not going after the treasure any more. He had had enough of digging. But as he came to the gate Gosling pounced out on him.

"Ow about my spade?" he asked.

Coker glared.

"I haven't got your rotten spade!" he growled.

"But I lent it to you," Gosling said.

"I might 'ave lent it fifty times this afternoon. Fifty times at 'arf-a-crown, that is. Let me see, that makes twenty-seven quid you owes me, Mister Coker, and I wants that spade back!"

"Dry up, you ass!" said Coker fiercely.

"And over that spade, or I'll report you to the 'Ead," Gosling returned.

"And I'll 'ave a fiver of that twenty-nine quid now!"

The magnificent Coker snorted, and

tried to pass on. But the porter barred his way.

"I want that spade back!" he said firmly.

"I tell you I haven't got it!" growled Coker.

Gosling waved his arms in the air. His temper was rising.

"You ain't going to rob a 'onest man of his spade!" he shouted. "I'll make you give it back. I'll—"

"What is all this disturbance?"

Gosling turned, to see that Mr. Prout had come silently upon the scene.

"He's got my spade, sir!" he explained.

"Took my spade yesterday to go treasure-unting, sir, if hever you 'eard of such a thing! Treasure-unting, sir, 'e did—"

"Quiet!" Mr. Prout snapped, turning to Coker. "Er—Coker—is it correct that you have had this man's spade?"

"I—I—that is—"

"Have you had his spade?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"I did borrow it, sir."

"Then where is it now?"

"Ah! Where is it now?" repeated Gosling. "I hexpects—"

"Please be quiet, Gosling!" snapped the Fifth Form master.

"Which what I meanersay is," Gosling continued, nothing daunted, "that I hexpects the fairy goblins 'as bin an' took it!"

"Hold your tongue!" rasped Mr. Prout, his temper rising. "Coker, answer me at once! Where is that spade?"

"I hexpects—" began Gosling again. Mr. Prout silenced him with a basilisk glare.

"I—that is, I forgot to bring it back, sir," Coker stammered. "I left it in a field."

"There! An' wot did I tell you, sir?" demanded Gosling triumphantly.

"I'm not talking to you, my man!" snapped the Fifth Form-master. "As long as you have your spade back, I do not mind what you say, or what you expect. Coker!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You will go out now and bring that spade in at once!" Mr. Prout said. "You will report to me when you have done so!"

"That's if them elfin goblins ain't took it!" guffawed Gosling. "I hexpects—"

"That will do, Gosling!" Mr. Prout snapped. "I do not desire to hear any more of your nonsense!"

Coker glared as the Form-master passed on.

"If that there spade ain't brung back I tella Mr. Sprout!" Gosling grinned.

"That is, if them goblin elfins, wot I hexpects—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled Coker.

He had forgotten about the spade till now; but the only thing to do seemed to journey to the cross-roads and fetch it.

"Let's 'ave some of the treasure!" Gosling called after him. "I'd like a nice duman necklace. Haw, haw, haw!"

Coker frowned, and strode on. Potter and Greene followed in gloomy silence.

"Going to do any more digging?" growled Potter.

Coker grunted.

"Haven't you got any more ideas?" asked Greene.

"Shut up!" snapped Coker.

The three went on a little farther. Potter and Greene were not enjoying the walk. Coker had intended taking them out to tea, and they had been expecting a jolly afternoon. There was nothing jolly about this.

"Why didn't you bring the wretched thing back last night?" growled Potter, after a pause.

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"Because I didn't!" snapped Coker.

"Trust a silly jay like you to forget it!" fumed Greene. "I suppose you want to have a look at the beautiful cross-roads again!"

"Rats!"

"And see the spot where they kissed—"

"Shut up!"

"While Head was shoving the treasure down a rabbit-burrow!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Potter.

"Oh, ring off!" snarled Coker.

There was another silence. The walk was getting on the nerves of Coker's chums.

"There's a gnarled oak over there," said Potter suddenly. "Do you want to have a look underneath it?"

Coker turned round fiercely.

"Keep your silly mouth shut!" he hooted.

"Wouldn't it be fine for a loving couple?" purred Greene.

Coker charged. His chums bolted.

Coker turned, and resumed his journey for the unlucky spade—alone!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Highcliffians!

"IT'S no good looking for treasure if you don't know where to go," Harry Wharton pointed out.

The Famous Five, with one or two other Removites, were just passing out of the school gate. Coker and his two chums were far up the road, still engaged in their argument.

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"The hear-hearfulness," remarked the nabob of Bhanipur, "is terrific!"

"Well, I propose we go and rag the diggers, then," suggested Johnny Bull. "Skinner's gone to Friardale Wood, and there are several other parties there, too."

"Good idea!" said Nugent.

The party struck out for Friardale Woods.

The digging parties had all gone out unostentatiously. They had no desire to call attention to their activities.

"I say, you fellows—"

The chums suddenly turned as a familiar voice floated to their ears. Billy Bunter rolled out of the thicket.

"Hallo, Bunt! What's the trouble now?"

"I say, I'm coming with you fellows, you know."

"Perhaps!"

"Better buzz off while you're in one complete lump!" Bob Cherry said.

"If you're going to look for the treasure—" Bunter persisted.

"We're not!" said Wharton.

"Good!" said Bunter, with a grin.

"It's really just a rotten swindle to get fellows into rows! I don't believe there's any treasure been buried at all!"

"No?"

"As a matter of fact," Bunter said grandly, "I've experimented myself, and proved that there's no stuff buried where they say!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle about!" growled the Owl, blinking indignantly through his round glasses.

"Was that what the Head said?"

"No!" snapped the Owl. "The Head's a rotten tyrant, and he's got no imagination!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows think it's so awfully funny," growled Bunter, "I won't come with you!"

"Well, don't!" said Bob

"We think it's awfully funny!" said Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!" said Bunter feebly.

"Of course, Bull, I can take your little jokes. He, he, he!"

"What are you making that row about, Bunt?" Wharton asked.

"Laughing at Johnny's little joke, Wharton, old fellow," said Bunter. "I say, you chaps, where are you going to have tea?"

"Not going to have any," replied the captain of the Remove. "And not so much of your 'old fellow'!"

Bob Cherry held up his hand warningly.

"Highcliffe cads!" he whispered.

The juniors stopped and looked. Through a clearing they could see Ponsonby & Co. They were eagerly delving under the roots of a giant elm.

"They must have struck a pretty important clue to come over here!" Bob Cherry grinned. "Look at Pon—actually working!"

The chums grinned.

The Highcliffe nuts were putting their backs into their work. Evidently they really thought that they had struck a good clue. The chums of the Remove had never seen them working so hard before.

"It's a pity to disturb them," Wharton said, with a touch of mock sadness. "I expect they're getting ready for their turn to take a spell in the trenches. But it must be done."

"Life wouldn't be worth living if one neglected such plain duties," said Bob piously. "Come on!"

He gave a yell, and the Greyfriars fellows charged. The Highcliffe crowd turned in amazement.

"Greyfriars rotters, by gad!" Ponsonby exclaimed. "At 'em!"

But the Removites were six to five, not counting Bunter, and they had old scores to settle.

Vavasour caught up his spade to meet the attackers. Vavasour's notion of fair fighting included spades, if and when available.

Nugent saw it, and ducked in the nick of time. As the weapon whirled at his head he collared the Highcliffe fellow and sent him to the ground. The spade struck the tree, and caught Vavasour on the mouth as it recoiled.

"You howlin' cad!" he roared. "You did that on purpose!"

Nugent grinned grimly.

Next moment Vavasour's face was buried in the loose earth, and he was biting at big chunks of England in an endeavour to say what he thought.

Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry were sitting on Monson and Drury, who had shown small inclination for the fray.

Ponsonby put up an apology for a fight against Harry Wharton, and Gadsby disputed the matter with Squiff. But when Hurree Singh threw his weight in as well, the last spark of courage left the Highcliffians.

"Got you!" muttered Wharton triumphantly, as he seated himself on Ponsonby.

Ponsonby let out a howl.

"You wait till we get you alone, you cad!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You won't laugh then!" Ponsonby shouted. "You'll—Grooogh!"

"Hold your tongue when you're with your betters!" Wharton said severely, as he dipped the Highcliffian's face into the mould.

"I tell you I'll—Yaroooh! Stop it!"

"You needn't tell us next time you're going to do that," sang out Bob Cherry.

"We know you'll stop it!"

"What shall we do with them?" asked Wharton.

"Let me get at 'em!" cried Bunter.

in a warlike tone. They looked fairly safe now. "I'll show you what to do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's pluck, when the danger was over, was, as Inky would have remarked, "terrific." But it was not wanted.

Bunter lumbered down the bank in very warlike mood.

"Clear off, porpoise!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"But I'm going to give them something they'll remember!" Bunter howled.

"Your postal-order?" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No!" snapped Bunter. "I'm going to give them a good hiding!"

"Needn't trouble!" said Squiff.

"You're too late!"

"Then you can do without my help!" howled Bunter. "And I hope they jolly well lick you!"

"Naughty!" said Bob reprovingly.

"How could you say such a thing! They look like it, don't they?"

"The question is," Wharton asked again, "what are we going to do with them?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Well, they've made a pretty good mess of the ground," he said. "I think we ought to fill the hole in again—with them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good idea!" Nugent remarked.

"What do you say, Gaddy?" He let Gadsby's head up a little, and the Highcliffian vented earth and threats at a fearful rate.

"Most enlightening!" Nugent remarked, as he restored the mouth to its old position. "I think Bob's suggestion is the best."

"Carried unanimously!" growled Johnny Bull.

"If you fellows will leave it to me," Bunter began again, "I'll jolly well settle them for you!"

"Oh, buzz off!" said Wharton. "You make me tired!"

He sprang up suddenly, and hauled Ponsonby after him.

"Pon fire!" he shouted.

The leader of the nuts found himself flying head-first into the hole he had dug almost before he knew what was happening.

"Yarooogh!" he howled.

Monson followed him before he had time to say any more, and, perhaps choosing the softest spot whereon to fall, buried his head in Ponsonby's waistcoat. The others followed in quick time. A chorus of howls and groans floated up from them.

"Help!"

"Grooogh! That's my tummy!"

"Stoppit, you howlin' idiot!"

"Yarooogh! That's my eye!"

The Removites grinned.

"They're trying hard enough to find that treasure!" grinned Wharton. "I hope they'll succeed. Come on, you fellows!"

He turned, and scrambled up the bank, and the others followed. Bunter, not so nimble as the rest, found himself left behind alone. He charged furiously up the slope, but at the last moment lost his balance.

"Help!" he roared.

But there was no help then, and Bunter had his wish of "getting at them" gratified. He rolled down the bank, and landed with a crash on the mass of struggling humanity.

Rump! Crash! Groan!

"Yarooogh!" roared the Owl.

"You've broken my neck!" howled Monson.

"And Vavasour remarked pathetically: "Groooooogh!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Pon's Nose!

"H A, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove roared at the sight which met their eyes.

Bunter was the first of the struggling heap to stagger up; but as he endeavoured to dash away Monson caught hold of him. The fat junior collapsed backwards, and landed on the Highcliffians again.

"Yarooogh!" roared Ponsonby, who was still underneath.

"Gerroff, you fat boulder!" howled Vavasour.

Bunter endeavoured to obey the injunction. Someone had caught hold of a large lump of Bunter and was pinching him heartily.

"Yow!" he roared. "Leggo, you brute! I'll smash you if you don't! Wow!"

"Give it 'em, Bunt!" yelled Bob Cherry encouragingly.

Bunter staggered up, then sat down again. The Highcliffians were helpless beneath the fat junior's weight in their present plight.

"Lick them!" advised Nugent. "But you'll find them a bit gritty, and they'll probably taste nasty at first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl struggled, and rolled backwards. The mix-up became worse than ever, and Bunter grew yet more scared.

"Why don't you help a chap?" he roared lustily. "Why—Yarooogh!"

Vavasour had managed to free himself, and he dealt the roaring junior a punch that knocked all the wind out of him. He rolled over, shouting as though he had been mortally wounded.

"Come on, you chaps!" Vavasour shouted. "Give 'em socks!"

The humiliated Highcliffians struggled to their feet, and lined up ready to charge up the slope at the grinning Removites. Bunter, seeing the coast was clear, picked himself up and scudded away as fast as his fat little legs would carry him. But his going was practically unnoticed.

"Charge!" roared Ponsonby.

He dashed forward heedlessly, so furious, that he did not look where he was going. His foot caught the blade of one of the spades, and he fell forward, striking his nose on something hard.

"Yooop! Yarooogh!" Ponsonby roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Removites.

They were enjoying the spectacle of the discomfited Highcliffians. And they were quite ready to resume hostilities when the others were ready.

But Ponsonby seemed to have had enough. The blood was coming from his nose, and his muddy handkerchief was already rather red. Gadsby looked round desperately.

"Come on, Pon!" he roared.

"Cub od yourself!" gritted Ponsonby through his handkerchief.

"Vav!" commanded Gadsby sternly.

"Pon's hurt," said Vavasour manfully. "I'm going to look after him. He might bleed to death."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites again.

It was evident that the Highcliffians had had enough.

"You wait!" fumed Gadsby impotently. But even in the heat of his temper he was not inclined to attack alone.

"Thanks!" said Wharton sweetly. "How long? Till Pon's nose stops bleeding?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll give you socks!" howled Monson.

"Don't trouble!" said Frank Nugent

sweetly. "We've got some. Send 'em to the soldiers!"

"You'll get a thumpin' good lickin' for this, absolutely!" shouted Vavasour.

"Pon's nose any better yet?" asked Wharton, after a pause.

Ponsonby was still holding the handkerchief up. It was evident that the flow of blood had not stopped.

"Dob't try to be fuddy!" he snarled through his handkerchief. "We'll wibe up the ground with you for this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Highcliffians almost mustered courage for a really ferocious charge, but Ponsonby was not in a state to bear another tap on his injured organ, and there was not enough pluck left among the rest of his party for an attack upon even half their number.

"How's the nose?" asked Wharton again.

No reply.

"Nursey," said Bob, addressing Vavasour, "how's the patient?"

The only reply was a muffled curse.

"You told us to wait!" said the captain of the Remove severely. "It's very rude not to tell us how poor old Pon is going on!"

Grunt!

"We do hope he won't die!" said Johnny Bull.

Ponsonby glared at them in baffled fury.

"What will you have on the wreath?" asked Bob Cherry kindly.

"You'll sig adoder tude befode you're buch oder!" growled Ponsonby fiercely.

"You're sigig it already!" returned Johnny Bull.

Still no attack was made. The Removites were merciful enough to leave the next onslaught to the Highcliffians.

"That nose well yet?" asked Wharton, after another pause.

No reply was vouchsafed.

"Most disgustin' bad manners," the captain of the Remove said, in imitation of Ponsonby's drawl. "Shall we leave them, dear boys?"

"The leavefulness of the ludicrous rotters will be terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"Kim on!" said Bob Cherry, waving his hand. "Toodle-oo!"

The nuts had not even spirit left for a verbal reply. They had been knocked right out of time.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Trouble for One!

HARRY WHARTON and his chums pressed on through the wood in high spirits. They had paid off a score fairly owing to Pon & Co.

Now they looked, like Alexander of old, for fresh worlds to conquer.

"Is that another merchant digging?" asked Bob Cherry suddenly, as he raised his hand and pointed ahead.

"Tisn't one of our chaps," said Johnny Bull.

"Ass!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Who said it was? It looks to me like a young man who ought to have something better to do than dig for treasure in war-time. He would be better digging in the trenches, I should say."

"Noble youth!" said Wharton, half mockingly.

Bob Cherry flushed.

"Well, you know I don't want to sermonise," he replied. "But I don't think any chap of his age ought to be free to mess about digging for buried treasure at a time like this."

Wharton nodded.

The man they were approaching faced them as he dug. He was tall, well-built, and young. It was small wonder

that the Removites thought that his place was rather in the Army than treasure-hunting.

"Hallo!" grinned Nugent suddenly. "A visitor for him!"

Billy Bunter had just rolled out of the bushes, and, seeing the man digging, he pulled up.

"Found anything yet?" he asked.

The young man looked grimly at Bunter.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

Bunter blinked through his glasses.

"You won't find anything there!" he sniffed. "Now, if you want to find the treasure I can give you a really good tip. I happen to know where it is!"

The digger paused. The chums of the Remove had just come up, and they stopped and looked on.

"What's your tip?" asked the young man impatiently.

"I'll tell you where the treasure is—for ten bob!" suggested Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter turned round. He had not heard the Removites come up.

"What are you cackling about?" he demanded. "I can't see anything funny!"

"Anybody got a pocket mirror?" asked Bob.

The digger turned to his work again.

"You won't find anything there, I tell you!" Bunter howled.

The young man looked up savagely.

"What do you young rascals want round here?" he demanded. "I don't want a pack of silly school kids hanging about me. I'm not looking for treasure!"

Wharton flushed.

"You haven't bought the woods, have you?" he asked.

"No," snapped the other. "But my business is no affair of yours. Clear off!"

The Removites looked at each other. The young man raised his spade threateningly.

"What are you going to do with that?" Bob Cherry asked grimly.

"Are you going to clear off?" demanded the young man.

"Not at present," Wharton replied calmly. "We'll go when we choose."

The digger glared.

"Then I'll move you, by Harry!" he exclaimed.

The Removites could not help smiling. The young man, powerful as he was, did not look quite equal to that job.

"We're waiting!" said Wharton sweetly. "We shouldn't like to hurt you unless you really asked for it!"

"Will you get out of this?" shouted the digger, losing his temper completely.

"We've told you once," replied Wharton blandly. "Are you deaf?"

"All right, then," said the young man, shrugging his shoulders. "You can jolly well watch till you're blue in the face!"

The treasure-seeker renewed his digging, and, as if by accident, threw a shovelful of mould over Bunter.

"Hi!" roared the fat junior. "Look what you're doing!"

The young man looked up. His foxy face twisted into a grin.

"Shouldn't get in the way!" he advised.

"I'd give you a jolly good hiding if you weren't bigger than me," Bunter howled. "I'd—I'd spifficate you!"

Another shower of mould came over. The Removites could not help grinning. Bunter wiped his face, and looked as though he was getting ready to explode.

"You rotter!" he shouted. "You do that again, and I'll—"

He stopped short as the digger did it again.

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As the treasure-hunter started work once again, however, Bunter grinned. A sudden idea had come to him. He crept cautiously nearer to the scene of operations.

The next moment a muffled groan seemed to float up from the hole. Bunter was ventriloquising, but only the Removites knew that. The young man stopped short, and stared.

The groan grew louder as Bunter noted the effect. The chums saw that the digger went white.

"Help!" came faintly from the ground. "I'm not dead yet, you murderous scoundrel!"

The Removites restrained their laughter with an effort. Harry Wharton sprang forward with a well-pretended look of horror.

"Have you buried someone there?" he demanded.

"N-no!" stammered the other.

"Liar!" came from the ground.

The treasure-hunter's knees trembled.

"There's someone down there!" said Wharton dramatically. "Get him out at once, or we'll send for the police!"

"I'm in awful pain," came the voice.

"Help! Quick! I'm drowning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Johnny Bull gurgled.

"That silly ass of an Owl will give it away if he's not careful!"

The young man dug furiously. The voice sounded again.

Eat less Bread

"Hurry up! Help!"

The Removites pulled out their handkerchiefs to smother their mirth. The treasure-hunter was paying the penalty of annoying Bunter!

"Woof! Grooooooh! Woof-woof!"

The digger stopped, and pranced to one side, as a fierce dog seemed suddenly to bark at him. He paused, and wiped the perspiration off his face.

"Help!" Bunter threw his voice again. "Thieves! I'm drowning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites could restrain their laughter no longer, and the young man suddenly saw daylight.

"It's a trick!" he roared. "I'll pay you for your tricks!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Dark Affair!

AS the digger scrambled up out of the hole the juniors scattered, and Bunter promptly took to his heels and ran for it.

The assailant certainly looked dangerous. He brandished his spade in a manner which boded no good for anyone who got in his way.

"I'll pay you for your tricks!" he howled again.

The Removites drew together again at a little distance.

"We'd better get that spade from him," said Johnny Bull. "He'll kill someone if he gets half a chance!"

Wharton nodded.

"We'll rush him," he said. "If Bob and Franky make a feint attack on the right, we can collar him from behind."

"Good egg!" said Squiff.

Bob Cherry and Nugent proceeded to carry out their part of the programme at once. They skirted to the right, and then pretended to make a rush.

The digger turned in their direction, wielding his spade threateningly. As soon as they drew near he made a rush, but the juniors were ready for that. They turned tail and fled, and at the same moment Wharton and the others dashed up from behind and wrenched the spade away from the man.

"Give that back!" shouted the young man furiously. "I'll—I'll—"

"You'd better get cool!" Wharton advised, as he faced the angry man.

"You've no right to threaten us, in the first place."

"You came annoying me!" returned the other fiercely. "What I'm doing is no business of yours!"

"Well, I don't know about that!" Wharton returned coolly. "I should say, at a guess, that there's something fishy about it!"

The digger's eyes met those of the captain of the Remove. Wharton had merely loosed a shaft at a venture, and was rather surprised to see that the young man looked taken aback.

"What on earth do you mean?" he snapped.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing in particular," he said. "But it isn't usual for a treasure-seeker to get on his ear because a few chaps happen to turn up and watch him! You don't own the place!"

"I won't have anyone watching me!" snapped the other. "You should have moved off when I told you to!"

"Why?"

"Because I don't want people spying on me!" snapped the other. "I've got special reasons," he added lamely.

Wharton pointed to the ground. His eyes had spotted something which the young man had dropped as he charged forward. It looked like a plan of part of the woods.

"Perhaps that's the reason," he said.

The digger turned. The chums saw that his face went white as he noticed the slip of paper. He snatched it up hurriedly, and thrust it into his pocket.

"Plans are dangerous things to have in war-time," Harry Wharton said meaningly.

"Plans!" blustered the other. "What do you mean?"

"That was a plan of the woods that you just picked up," Wharton returned. "You may be a beastly German spy for all we know. You certainly behave like a Hun!"

The young man paused. Bunter chose the opportunity to return and listen to the battle of words without having to strain his ears.

"I—I don't know what you mean!" the other returned. "You'd better clear off before I give you a thick ear for your cheek! Fancy suggesting that I'm a spy!"

"We're not going till we know what you're doing here!" said Wharton, making a sudden resolution.

"I'm digging for treasure," the young man returned bluntly.

"You said just now that you weren't," Wharton returned.

There was a pause. The young man broke it.

"You fellows have got me in a tight corner," he said. "I see I shall have to tell you everything. I'm here in connection with the treasure. As a matter

of fact, I'm a representative of 'Snippings.' But you mustn't breathe a word of this to anyone."

"I don't see why you should be digging here," the Removite returned.

"I'll explain, then," said the other. "My name's Darke—"

"I knew it was something shady!" Johnny Bull put in.

Darke frowned.

"Will you hear me or not?" demanded Mr. Darke, frowning.

"Yes," said Wharton. "Go on!"

"I'm here to bury next week's treasure," Darke explained.

"Oh!" said the Removites.

"That's the reason why I carry the plan," went on the stranger. "That plan is handed by me, sealed up, to the editor. He will not open it till someone claims the treasure and the time has expired."

"Then we know where next week's stuff is!" Bunter exclaimed eagerly.

"You don't!" returned Darke, smiling. "I shall be digging round about Friardale for a week, to put people off the scent. No one will know where I put the editor's token."

Bunter's eyes gleamed.

"I say, Mr. Darke," he exclaimed, "if you let me know where you put it I'm a generous sort of chap, you know! Why shouldn't we go halves? I'd keep mum!"

"I'm not a swindler!" said Darke, with dignity.

Bunter blinked indignantly.

"I made you a sporting offer!" he snorted.

"Then you'd better shut up!"

"Why ain't you in the Army?" howled Bunter, at a loss for anything else to say.

Darke ignored the remark.

"I hope you fellows will keep mum about my identity," he said, turning to Wharton. "I might be followed about, and then it would give the thing away. You understand?"

"Yes," said Wharton slowly. "You're quite sure that it's all right?"

"Of course," said Darke. "I've only told you this because I felt that some explanation was due from me. I lost my temper now because I was just going to bury the token when you fellows came up, and you wouldn't go away."

The Removites looked at one another. The story seemed feasible enough.

"Besides," Darke pursued, "why on earth should any spy dig in the woods?"

"We'll take your word, Mr. Darke," said Wharton. "Good-bye!"

The Removites went, and the last they saw of Darke was as he caught up his spade and started returning the earth he had disturbed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Missing Letter!

"I WONDER who he really is?"

Harry Wharton voiced his thoughts aloud as the chums walked on.

"Well, it's a pretty good yarn, anyway, if he's made it up," Nugent observed. "There's no reason why we should doubt him."

"But he behaved jolly queerly to start with," Johnny Bull put in. "I think Mr. Darke is a dark horse."

"What do you say, Squiff?" asked Wharton.

"Don't quite know what to think," the Australian junior observed. "Of course, it's no business of ours really, unless he's a Hun spy. Somehow, I don't think he's that. They don't go digging about in broad daylight and giving themselves away. They're too jolly slim!"

"That's right," Wharton returned. "I



Nice for Potter and Greene! (See Chapter 5.)

should say he has really something to do with the treasure. All the same, I'm going to keep an eye open if we meet him again. He might be up to something fishy."

Inky nodded solemnly.

"The fishiness of the ludicrous chump is terrific," he observed. "He should be watchfully regarded."

"I agree with Squiff. It's really no bizney of ours," Bob Cherry said. "I don't think he's a spy, and if it amuses him to dig holes, let him! He'll be in good form by the time they rope him into the Army."

Bunter grunted.

"Hang the fellow!" he growled.

"Where are you chaps going for tea?"

"What do you want to know for?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, I'm coming with you, Harry, old man!" Bunter said, with much affection.

"You're not!" said Wharton, without any affection whatever.

Bunter blinked indignantly.

"What! Not after I licked the High-cliffe cads like that?" he howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Brutes!" shouted the Owl. "If you weren't—"

"Oh, bump him, you chaps!" said Bob Cherry wearily. "He's a fair nuisance."

"Collar him!" shouted Squiff, making a sudden rush.

Bunter did not wait. He was off as quickly as he could travel.

"That's settled him for a bit," grinned Squiff. "I suppose he'll try and find someone else to freeze on to."

A little farther on the party came on Skinner & Co., who were busy upon a patch of their own. Snoop and Stott were slacking, and Skinner was abusing them roundly.

As Bob Cherry observed, it needed a gentle hint that treasure-seeking is a hazardous game.

"Look at all the men who've gone to pot hunting for gold," he said gravely.

"We can't let these dear little fellows fall out over the treasure when they're so friendly together, can we, Harry?"

The captain of the Remove grinned as he caught Bob's meaning.

"No, we can't," he laughed. "We'd better give them a little lesson that it's a tricky job digging for treasure."

Skinner & Co. found themselves suddenly pounced on and rolled in the earth. They were not hurt, but it was sufficient to make them angry.

And it was due to them. Skinner & Co. had been distinguishing themselves in unpleasant ways quite frequently of late.

"You wait, you cads!" Skinner howled.

"Sorry!" said Bob Cherry. "But we haven't got time now."

"I'll make you suffer for this!" howled Skinner.

"To-morrow will do!" Johnny Bull grinned. "Ta-ta for the present! Don't be naughty while we're gone!"

The chums adjourned to Uncle Clegg's, and had tea.

"I reckon there is more fun in helping the others than in digging for yourself," Bob Cherry grinned, as he sampled the war-time cakes.

"I always like to help another chap," said Johnny Bull. "I think we really helped them to get a bit deeper into the subject!"

Tea over, a move was made towards Greyfriars.

"I wonder what's happened to Bunt?" asked Nugent suddenly. "We haven't seen the porpoise for a long time. He must have found something interesting."

Wharton had his mouth open to reply when he suddenly stopped. A shout, in the familiar tones of the Owl of the Remove, floated to their ears.

A second later they saw the fat junior break cover from the hedge and come pelting down the road. A few yards behind him ran another figure, evidently in pursuit. The chums recognised it as Mr. Darke, the treasure-planter.

"Bunt's been and gone and got into trouble, as usual," granted Wharton, as he watched the junior pelt down the road. "Wonder what he's been up to now?"

The fat junior, considering his weight, was moving wonderfully well. He was considerably frightened. He was ex-

hausted by the time he reached the juniors, and he just managed to dodge behind them as Darke dashed up.

"What's the trouble now?" asked Wharton, as the angry man rushed at Bunter.

"Let me pass!" Darke panted furiously. "He's robbed me! Let me get at him!"

"Steady on!" said Johnny Bull, as he barred the other's way. "Leave Bunter alone! What's he done, anyway?"

"He's stolen something!" Darke said furiously, making a push to get past. "I'll have it back, by Harry!"

"Not so fast," said Wharton sternly. "Have you got anything of his, Bunter?"

"No!" answered the Owl sullenly. "He saw me, and I think he went potty, for he started chasing me."

"It's a lie!" shouted Darke. "He followed me, and pinched a letter out of my coat. I'm going to have it back!"

"I haven't taken any letter out of his pocket!" Bunter howled, safe behind the Removites, and defiant again. "It was on the grass, and I just picked it up to give it back to him when he started chasing me!"

"H'm!" muttered Wharton.

He hardly knew what to think. Bunter's actions were often questionable, and it was quite possible that he might get into serious trouble if he had really stolen a letter.

"Where's the letter now?" he asked sharply.

"I haven't got his letter," growled Bunter. "I dropped it on the road."

"You didn't!" roared Darke.

"You——"

"Turn out your pockets, Bunter!" commanded Wharton. "We'll soon see if that's true."

The Owl of the Remove did so with alacrity. But there was no sign of the missing letter.

"He must have dropped it on the road—if he ever had it," Wharton said, turning to Darke. "You'd better go back along the road."

"I'll have you arrested for this!" howled Darke. "Theft from a man's pocket is a serious thing!"

"But Bunter hasn't got the letter," Wharton pointed out. "Was there anything important in it?"

"Nothing!" Bunter said promptly. "About six lines of writing. I don't know what he's making such a fuss about! And I never looked at it!"

Darke shook his fist savagely.

"I'll make you young rascals sorry you ever ran up against me!" he grated, as he turned on his heel.

The Removites watched him retrace his steps up the road, peering on either side for the letter. But apparently he did not find it, for when he came to the break in the hedge he turned and shook his fist again, before he disappeared from sight.

"He's a rummy customer!" murmured Wharton.

"And what did he mean about us running up against him?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Goodness only knows!" said Squiff. "But if he gets into a tear like that just about a blessed letter, I don't reckon he can be up to much good."

"I said there was something fishy about him," muttered Wharton.

And Inky nodded.

"The fishiness of the ridiculous chump," he commenced, "is——"

"Terrific!" finished Bob.

And as they made their way back to the school they became more certain than ever that there was something unusually shady about the darkness which surrounded Darke.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Invisible Ink!

"I 'VE found it!"

Bob Cherry burst into Study No. 1 like a tornado. The chums looked up at him in amazement.

"Found what?" growled Johnny Bull. "The treasure?"

"Or Bunter's postal-order?" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I haven't!" snorted Bob. "I've found Darke's letter!"

"Oh!"

The Removites looked up with interest as Bob pulled a crumpled white envelope from his pocket.

"I found it in the hedge," he explained. "And as there's no writing on the envelope I had to look inside to see what it was. I'm hanged if I can see why he got so excited, though."

"Sure it's his letter?" asked Wharton.

"It must be," said Bob. "Anyway, the chances are that it is the one he lost. Quelchy asked me to nip into Friardale on my bike to post a registered letter, and I spotted the thing as I was coming back, near where he chased Bunter yesterday."

Wharton looked thoughtful.

"I don't like reading other people's letters," he said slowly. "But, as Bob had to look at it, we may as well all see it. Chuck it over, old scout!"

Bob tossed the letter across. Wharton withdrew the crumpled sheet and scanned the few lines of writing.

"Dear Alf," he read. "The parcel of beans reached me safely. I hope you're having a good time down there in Friardale. Things are very quiet now.—Yours, TOM RICHMOND."

Johnny Bull laughed.

"Well, if he gives Tom Richmond beans, I don't see why he should want to give us beans, too," he remarked.

Wharton's lips were pursed.

"Fancy him chasing Bunter to get a thing like this back," he said. "And look at the date! It's six months old!"

"So it is!" said Nugent.

The juniors were silent.

"He's a rummy merchant if he's prepared to make a row over a letter like that," said Squiff. "I think he must be potty."

"Jolly sure he is!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Wharton looked at the paper again, and then tossed it into the grate.

"Well, we don't want his letter!" he said bluntly. "And I don't see why the ass should have got on his ear about losing it."

The others nodded, and the conversation changed to football. But Johnny Bull suddenly gave a shout and pointed towards the grate.

"Look what's happening!" he said dramatically.

The chums stared.

The paper had fallen close to the coals, but it had not caught alight. The heat, however, had worked a change on it. A little series of blue marks had appeared, and, as the chums watched, they grew into words. The Removites realised that a second message had been written on the paper in invisible ink, and the fire had brought it out.

Wharton snatched up the paper. The chums peered over his shoulder in amazement at the message which they saw.

"I have buried the swag in Friardale Woods," they read. "I daren't go down myself, as the cops are after me, and I'm going to get right away out of the country for a bit. Get it when you have a chance, but don't rouse suspicion. It's a jolly good haul. You'll find it under a big elm—the first big tree that you come

to as you walk from Greyfriars School to the village. It's about five yards off the road."

There was silence. The chums were thinking of what they had read. But the faint sound of a sniff outside the door came to Nugent.

"Shush!" he whispered.

He crossed the study silently, and whipped open the door. Billy Bunter fell in a heap on the floor.

"Collar him!" roared Bob Cherry.

Nugent yanked the Owl to his feet and slammed the door, turning the key in the lock.

"You rotten fat spy!" he grated.

"Oh, really, Nugent!" gasped Bunter. "I think you ought to apologise for barging into me like that! I was just tying my bootlace——"

"Same old yarn!" murmured Bob.

"Bunter, why don't you think of something fresh?"

"What did you hear?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Nothing!" said Bunter promptly.

"But we found you listening," Wharton pointed out.

"I never heard a word!" protested Bunter. "I didn't hear you say anything about the treasure being under a tree—I mean, I had only just stopped to tie up my lace when you knocked me over and nearly broke my back."

The chums exchanged glances. It was evident that Bunter had heard most, if not all, of the contents of the letter.

"Bump him, and kick him out!" suggested Bob.

"Right-ho!"

"I say, you fellows—— Yoop!"

Bunter found himself whirled off his feet and bumped heavily on the floor.

"Groooogh!" he roared.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Now you can clear!" said Wharton, as the fat junior was released.

Bunter scrambled to his feet and made for the door.

"Brutes!" he howled from the doorway. "I'll jolly well——"

The door slammed hurriedly as Bob made a movement towards it. Bunter scuttled down the passage before he was collared again.

"Well, what do you make of it all?" asked Wharton, turning to the note again. "The swag is evidently the proceeds of some burglary. And as Mr. Darke had that note in his possession, and got so excited about it, I should say that he's down here after it."

"Whew!" whistled Bob Cherry. "I believe you're right, Harry!"

"But why hasn't he dug under this tree?" asked Johnny Bull.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps he never found the invisible writing," he returned. "He might have thought there was some code in the letter. Perhaps he's been digging next to beans, and that sort of thing."

"Maybe," said Nugent doubtfully. "Anyway, there's no harm in having a look there, is there? We might cut Mr. Darke out, after all!"

"We'd better get out now, before locking-up," said Wharton. "Bunter will spread the yarn, and we shall have the whole school going out there."

"We'll get a spade from Gosling, and go now," said Johnny Bull. "What do you say?"

"The goodness of the idea is terrific!" said Hurree Singh, and the chums agreed unanimously.

They found Gosling gingerly packing up a small parcel. The porter did not seem at all pleased. He was using very bad language, and grunting freely. Every now and then he paused to hold his nose.

"Can you lend us a spade, Gossy?" asked Wharton.

Gosling turned round fiercely. "No!" he snapped. "I've gotter go out and use it meself!" "What have you got there, then?" asked Wharton.

Gosling shuddered. "A cat!" he growled. "A 'orrible, smelly cat! The 'Ead found it in 'is garden, and 'e told me to bury it! Lumme, it don't 'arf whiff!"

"We'll bury it for you!" volunteered Wharton. "That is, if you'll lend us the spade!"

"Then you may 'ave the spade!" said Gosling promptly.

Wharton took the spade in one hand, and the parcel in the other. The chums looked at him in dismay. The cat seemed to speak for itself. It had not lost the power of being objectionable, though it had been dead for several days.

"Never mind the smell," Wharton said, in a whisper, as he led the way through the gates. "Come on! I've got an idea!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Plate—and a Pussy!

"**P**HEW!" Nugent held his nose, and backed away. Johnny Bull screwed up his face disgustingly.

"What in the world do you want that thing for, you chump?" he gasped.

Wharton grinned. "It is a bit niffy," he agreed. "But it's just the thing we want!"

"Niffy!" howled Squiff. "The beastly thing's talking!"

"The nif-fulness of the esteemed cat," gasped Hurree Singh through his handkerchief, "is terrific! The offensive animal should be severely prosecuted!"

"Will you chaps listen?" snapped Wharton. "I don't like the smell myself. I've not got this beastly thing for pleasure exactly. Ugh!"

"Well, what's the jape?" asked Johnny Bull cautiously.

The captain of the Remove dropped the parcel on the grass.

"This," he explained. "Bunty heard us talking about the spot where the stuff is buried. He thinks that it's the treasure. Well, I expect he'll go and dig there. As it's a pity to disappoint him, I thought we'd leave pussy for him to find."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's fairly green," continued Wharton. "We might kid him that he's got the editor's token!"

"My hat! That's quite a notion!"

"If Gossy's got a box," Wharton said reflectively, "we might be able to do something."

"Come on, then!" said Bob Cherry.

Wharton picked up the cat and retraced his steps. A silver coin in Gosling's ever-ready palm soon produced a small wooden box, in which the decayed feline was securely nailed.

"Anyone got a copy of 'Snippings'?" asked Wharton.

Squiff produced one, and Wharton tied it on the outside of the box.

"Oh, for the life of an editor!" chuckled Bob Cherry, as they started off again. "I wish I was on the staff of 'Snippings'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors had not very much difficulty in locating the elm mentioned. And about five yards from the road they came upon a patch of earth that had been turned fairly recently, although the grass growing on it indicated that it had not been touched for a month or two.

"The plot thickens!" murmured Nugent.

Wharton planted the spade in the ground, and commenced to dig. The Removites looked on expectantly.

Harry dug energetically. In a couple of minutes he had made a good-sized hole, and suddenly, as he drove the spade in afresh, a faint chink came to the ears of the juniors.

"There's something there!" said Squiff excitedly.

Wharton dug on, and in another moment the top of a dirty canvas bag came to light. A few more shovelfuls of earth were removed, and then Wharton stooped and pulled at the bag. It came easily out of the ground, and the juniors heard the chink of plate from within.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "We've got it!"

The bag was secured with string. Johnny Bull whipped out his penknife and parted that. The juniors crowded round eagerly as he pulled the canvas apart.

"Plate!" exclaimed Wharton. "Darke couldn't have read that letter after all!" "We've discovered what he's been digging all over the place for. He never hit on the dodge of warming the paper."

"Wouldn't he be sick if he could see us!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Wharton turned briskly and caught up the box containing the deceased pussy.

"Business first, gentlemen!" he grinned. "We can't have all the pleasure ourselves!"

The juniors laughed, and helped to throw in the earth on top of the box. Then Wharton gripped the bag of plate, and tried to straighten himself up.

"My word, it's heavy!" he muttered. "Lend a hand, Bob!"

The juniors lifted the bag between them.

"We'd better report to Quelch straight away," the captain of the Remove said. "That fellow Darke's a crook evidently, and also he's probably a shirker who is dodging the Army! Quelch will put the bobbies on his track!"

"He'll be useful for trench-digging," said Bob Cherry humorously. "He's put in some hefty training down here, and he hasn't done much harm. It's a good thing we found him out!"

The bag was very heavy to carry, and presently Nugent and Squiff took a turn. Johnny Bull and Inky relieved them, and in time they reached the school.

They returned Gosling's spade, and then made their way to Quelch's study. Wharton tapped on the door, and as he did so the clicking of the Remove Form-master's typewriter ceased.

"Come in!" he called.

The Removites entered, carrying the precious bag with them.

"What have you there?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, springing up in horror.

"Wharton, you surely know better than to bring a filthy thing like that in here?"

"It's the swag, sir!" cried Wharton. "Er—that is, I mean, it's the results of a burglary!"

"Good heavens!" gasped the Form-master. "You don't mean to say that you have—"

"It's not our work, sir!" said Wharton smiling. "We found it in the wood."

He told the Form-master in a few words how they had come to locate the spot in Friardale Woods, and of their experiences with Mr. Darke. An expression of wonder crossed Mr. Quelch's face, and it deepened as he looked into the bag and saw the spoils.

"This is most extraordinary!" he exclaimed. "Er—Wharton, you and the rest have done exceedingly well. I shall telephone for the police, and they will doubtless see that the rightful owners have these valuables returned to them. You have done very well indeed! Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, sir!" answered the juniors as they trooped out.

They returned to the study, saying nothing of what they had discovered. They were waiting for the sequel, and when they went to bed they did not go to sleep.

The bait had been laid. It remained to be seen whether they would get a bite.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Token!

SKINNER sat up in bed. "You awake, Bunty?" he whispered cautiously.

Snore!

"Snoop?"

Snore!

"Stott?"

Snore!

"Idiots!" growled Skinner, as he slipped quietly out of bed. "I knew they'd go to sleep!"

It was an hour after "lights-out," but Skinner had urgent work on hand. He drew on his trousers and boots, crept across to Bunter, and shook the fat junior violently.

"Get up!" he snapped.

"Gerraway!" growled Bunter.

Skinner shook him again.

"What's up?" Bunter muttered.

"Tain't rising-bell yet!"

"How about the treasure?" Skinner whispered.

Bob Cherry chuckled silently. The Famous Five were all awake.

"Hang the stuff!" Bunter growled, turning over.

Skinner whipped the bedclothes off the Owl, and dragged him out.

"You're coming with us to prove that it ain't a spoof!" said Skinner complacently. "Get your things on!"

He crossed to Snoop, and Bunter began to do what he had been told. Snoop yielded to the same kind of persuasion, and Stott soon followed his example. Ten minutes later the four crept silently forth on their errand.

They thought they were going to steal a march on the Famous Five. They did not hear the chuckles which arose as the door closed behind them.

Grumbling at every step, Bunter followed Skinner to the box-room and through the window.

"You're in for it now!" Skinner growled, as Bunter started grumbling again outside. "Shut your mouth before someone hears us!"

Stott and Snoop were a trifle keener. The prospect of laying hands on the editor's token spurred their flagging courage. But only Skinner was really enthusiastic.

The juniors got over the wall on to the road. Skinner had managed to borrow a spade and hide it ready to be picked up, and, shouldering the implement, he started off with his reluctant followers.

"A big elm by the side of the road," he muttered. "Is that right, Bunty?"

"Yes!" growled Bunter. "But I don't see what you wanted to drag me out for!"

"You sometimes romance, porpoise," Skinner grinned. "If you've been using your imagination this time we'll jolly well flay you!"

Bunter grunted uneasily.

"This looks like it!" said Skinner presently. "That's an elm. Come on!"

The juniors scrambled through the hedge.

"Someone's been digging here!" Skinner exclaimed. "Give me the spade!"

He started digging excitedly. Bunter hovered in the background, and got a

prod with the handle of the spade that doubled him up.

"Groooogh!" he roared.

Skinner took no notice.

"I've struck something!" he shouted.

"It was me!" growled Bunter, as he picked himself up and scrambled forward.

Skinner continued to dig, and in a couple of minutes he had brought to light a square wooden box. There was a copy of "Snippings" tied to it.

"Hurrah!" said Stott excitedly.

"We've got it!" echoed Snoop.

"That's mine!" howled Bunter, sorry now that he had not come alone.

Skinner hauled the box out triumphantly, but his expression suddenly changed.

"Crumbs!" he exclaimed. "It does just whiff!"

Stott came near the box, and pinched his nose.

"It's gone bad!" he howled.

"It ought to smell all right," said Skinner doubtfully. "Perhaps we've got hold of the wrong thing."

Snoop also held his nose.

"It's jolly niffy, anyway!" he growled.

"Give it to me, then!" snapped Bunter. "I know jolly well that we've got the treasure! I'll take it, if you like, Skinner."

"You're welcome, Bunt!" grinned Skinner.

He passed the box across. Bunter took it.

"Smells all right," he said. "It smells—Groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Skinner.

Bunter did not drop the box, although the odour of the antiquated pussy nearly knocked him over.

"That's the smell of old gold," he said easily. "It ain't nice, I'll admit. But that's because it's been buried so long."

"It's not the treasure at all!" growled Snoop. "You've brought us here on a wild-goose chase! That's a dead cat, or I'm a Dutchman!"

Bunter blinked indignantly.

"Dead cat!" he snorted. "It's the treasure, all right. I remember now that I read about this spot in the serial. And it's got a copy of 'Snippings' tied on it. That's the 'token.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't see anything to cackle about!" growled the Owl. "I'm going to send this up to the editor."

"My aunt!" gasped Skinner.

"I've got the box now," Bunter explained, "and I'm going to stick to it! That prize is as good as mine!"

The box was not a pleasant possession. The other three backed away in alarm.

"You're welcome, Bunt!" grinned Skinner.

Bunter shuddered involuntarily.

"The smell's only to put a chap off the scent," he remarked. "You might have guessed that it would be something like this."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter turned indignantly, and started off towards the school with his precious find. The others followed at a discreet distance.

"He'll get scragged if he takes that thing in!" gasped Snoop.

But Bunter, in spite of his simplicity, did not intend to do that. He left the precious find in the shrubbery, and, not feeling at all well, accompanied the other treasure-seekers back to bed.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble for Bunter!

BUNTER grinned cheerfully into Study No. 1.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Got the prize yet, Bunt?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 523.

Bunter smiled loftily.

"No," he said. "But I sha'n't be long now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl blinked angrily.

"You won't jolly well cackle when I'm rolling in cash!" he growled. "But I've found the token, and sent it off. I expect I shall hear from them to-day."

"You won't be long in hearing, anyway!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Did it niff at all?" asked Johnny Bull interestedly.

Bunter shuddered at the remembrance.

"I should think it did!" he muttered.

"I was ill after it! But it's worth it, you know."

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

Bunter had swallowed the bait. But when the indignant proprietors of "Snippings" opened the prize-packet which the Owl had sent them there was likely to be trouble. Bunter had overlooked several facts when he sent the parcel off.

"Did you know that Darke had been arrested?" Wharton asked casually.

"No," said Bunter.

"They ran him in as a suspected person," Wharton said, "and it's just been proved that he's an expert criminal!"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"And that yarn he pitched us about being down here for the treasure was all spoof," Wharton continued calmly. "As a matter of fact, Quelch says that he's confessed that he was down here looking for some stuff that a burglar buried months ago."

Bunter's face went a little white.

"We saved him that trouble," Wharton explained. "We found that stuff for him, and now it's being returned to the proper owners."

"Y-you found it?" gasped Bunter.

"Of course we did!" said Wharton.

"But I thought you never went out that night after you read the note?" Bunter stammered.

Wharton laughed.

"We had just enough time," he said. "And we did Gossy a good turn while we were out. We're always doing good turns, you know."

"W-what do you mean?" asked the Owl, trembling.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was beginning to see that he had not forestalled the juniors after all.

"What did you do?" Bunter persisted, with a horrible presentiment that something had gone wrong.

"Well, Gossy had a dead cat that he was going to bury," the captain of the Remove explained, "so we said we'd bury it for him while we were digging."

"Was that what was in the box?" gasped Bunter.

"Of course it was!"

"M-my h-h-hat!" groaned the Owl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" howled Bunter angrily.

"It's all a plant!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I've sent that beastly box up to the editor now!" Bunter proceeded furiously. "You chaps are—"

He stopped as there came an ominous knock at the door. Trotter, the page, looked into the study.

"Master Bunter," he said, "the Head wants you!"

"Oh!" said Bunter, his jaw dropping.

"And there's a vory angry gent with him," proceeded Trotter, evidently with some relish. "He says he's come from the editor of 'Snippings.' He—"

"Shurrup!" howled Bunter, making a dash at the informative Trotter.

"I expect he's brought the prize," Johnny Bull said. "Lend me ten bob when you get it, Bunt!"

Bunter slammed the door, and went down the passage with a sinking heart. He tapped nervously on the Head's door.

"Come in!" rumbled Dr. Locke.

Bunter entered. He saw that the Head's visitor was still there. He was a red-faced man, and he held a wooden box in his hand, which Bunter had no difficulty in recognising.

"Is this the young scoundrel?" he snapped, as the fat junior entered.

"Just a minute, please," the Head interposed. "Bunter, this gentleman has just told me that a boy from this school has had the astonishing impudence to pack up—a dead and decaying cat, and send it to his office with a facetious note calling it 'treasure'!"

Bunter looked at the floor.

"I thought it was the treasure, sir," he said.

Dr. Locke smiled, in spite of himself.

"Where did you find it, then?" he snapped.

"In Friardale Woods, sir," explained Bunter. "It was all the fault of those—"

"Silence!" snapped the Head. He turned to his visitor.

"I told you before, Mr. Martin," he said, "that when you bury a token which might be anything on earth, you must expect to get queer things sent you."

"I'll call in the law to my aid!" snapped the red-faced man angrily. "This is a deliberate insult!"

Dr. Locke rose.

"I will order this boy to apologise to you now, if you wish," he said, "but that is all that remains to be done before you take your departure."

"I don't want an apology!" blustered Mr. Martin. "I want damages!"

"Then," returned the Head, "as you do not require an apology, I will not detain you. Good-day!"

Mr. Martin flushed even redder.

"I tell you I will prosecute you——" he started.

"Proceed!" said the Head icily.

He stepped across and opened the door. Mr. Martin snatched up his hat, and stamped out.

"You'll pay for this!" he snarled, as he went.

The Head closed the door, and turned to Bunter. He looked rather grim.

"I have already had to give you one lesson over this miserable competition, Bunter," he said. "I thought that you would have dropped the foolish idea. You will write me five hundred lines, to impress on your mind that I do not care to waste my time seeing people who are brought here by your foolish actions."

"Please, sir," Bunter began, "it was Wharton who——"

"Silence!" thundered the Head. "You were the boy who sent that objectionable parcel through the post, and you can consider yourself very lucky to have got off so lightly. I do not want to hear what Wharton or anyone else did. You can go!"

Bunter turned, and went.

The lines were duly completed and delivered to the Head. But the competition craze, after Bunter's sad experiences, met with a sudden death.

Next week the editor of "Snippings" announced that no one had found the treasure, as it was buried in the North of Scotland.

Which, as Squiff said, was rather a do, as the North of Scotland is not exactly a populous place within the meaning of the Act!

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

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 59.—WINGATE MINOR.

WHEN Wingate minor—whose Christian name is John, but he is usually called Jack, of course—came to Greyfriars the Remove were still fagging for seniors, and Bob Cherry had the honour and glory of being George Wingate's fag. It is quite certain that, as Bob had to fag for someone, he preferred fagging for the genial and good-hearted skipper to being in servitude to anyone else. But it is also quite certain that when Wingate told him that he was dismissed, as the skipper's minor was coming, and the skipper thought that the best way to keep an eye on him would be to take him as a fag, Bob was not sorry.

Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor, of the Third, heard of the expected arrival, and made up their minds at once that the new-comer must be kept in his place. Tubb had a scheme for putting him there at once; but Bolsover minor, who has a keener sense of fair play than his burly brother, pointed out that it was not fair to assume in advance that the new kid was going to be a rotter.

He was not that exactly; but he was a spoiled child, somewhat after the kind of the irrepressible Dick Nugent, and he blew in with far too big a notion of his own importance.

He behaved with something a good deal short of politeness to Wharton, who only wanted to be decent to him for his brother's sake. He rebuked Bob Cherry for burning the toast in the skipper's study. He expected to have a study of his own, and he stated his determination not to fag for anyone.

Loder wanted him; he was not satisfied with Tubb. But Wingate major explained the situation to Loder. Now Loder, of course, had not wanted Wingate minor for that young man's good. It would have delighted Loder to turn Jack Wingate into a complete little blackguard. As he could not have him for that purpose, he set young Tubb against him—an easy thing to do, for Tubb had been very keen on fagging for the skipper instead of for Loder—but a mean and despicable thing. Wingate minor, said the scheming prefect, would occupy a privileged position as the captain's young brother. The Third had better let him have his own way—at first, at any rate.

The Third don't like privileged persons; and if anyone in the Third is going to have his own way that individual certainly will not be a new kid! The bearing of Wingate minor gave colour to the story Loder had told. He was haughty and stand-offish; and the Third ragged him at once—just as a gentle hint, you know.

He went and told his brother!

There is not one of you all who does not understand what a black crime that was in the eyes of youngsters of thirteen or so. The sneak is a fellow beyond the pale in every

school where there is any real healthy public opinion. Let it be said in excuse for this sneak that he was fresh from home, and did not understand. George Wingate tried to make him understand; but he was not grateful, and he went straight to Loder. If one prefect would not take up his cause, another might.

Loder took it up. Loder punished the Third severely, knowing well that he could do nothing better calculated to render Jack Wingate's life in the Form positively unbearable.



The Third ragged him again. He was tossed in a blanket. Again he complained to his brother, but got no change out of that. He found Loder no longer friendly, and his own Form had put him in Coventry. But just as he was at the very lowest stage of misery he found friends. They were only his friends for his brother's sake; but he did not bother about that. Supper and a talk with the Famous Five put him into a better mood, and one sign of it was seen at once—he began to fag for his brother without murmuring.

That did not put him right with his own Form, of course. Tubb & Co. felt very strongly indeed on the subject of Wingate minor. To them he seemed an absolute

young rotter. The Famous Five thought otherwise. General Tubb carried matters very far when he raided a Remove study at the head of his forces to carry off the unpopular Third-Former from under the very wings of the Famous Five. They carried him off. The Remove counter-attacked. But that did not help Jack Wingate. He found refuge with his brother and Arthur Courtney, and they were very kind to him, soothing his wounded spirit when it badly needed soothing. For he was accused of having sneaked again, and this time he had not sneaked, for he had learned better. But the other fags did not know that.

The leaders of the Third were asked to tea in Study No. 1. Of course, they went. The Third do not refuse invitations to tea. But they found Jack Wingate was a fellow-guest, and the result was a row, and the ultimate casting forth of Tubb & Co.

It was Bolsover minor who came to the rescue. He is a soft-hearted youngster; but he has plenty of resolution, and he made up his mind after a talk with Wingate minor that the new kid was not getting fair play. It was dangerous to back up a fellow in Coventry; but Hubert Bolsover accepted the danger, and met it when it came like a well-plucked one. Tubb & Co. made up their minds to tar-and-feather Jack Wingate. But they made a mistake, and Loder got the stuff instead. Loder thrashed Jack mercilessly to make him tell who had done it. Jack would not tell. And the Third knew in time, and the Third came round.

He has had his troubles since, of course. No one escapes them. And lately we have seen him going very far wrong, being taken up by Ponsonby of Highcliffe, and tutored in the accomplishments of smoking and card-playing. Wingate major had kicked Pon off the Greyfriars premises, and this was Pon's way of getting even. It was not all, though. He was not satisfied with making Jack gamble and smoke; he made him steal, too! Do you remember the scene in which the miserable fag is blankly turned down by his tempter? Ponsonby denied everything; and Jack would have had to face the penalty of a crime that was more Ponsonby's than his alone but for the Bounder. The Bounder put the matter right, in his own queer way; and Wingate minor is not likely to forget the debt he owes to Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The youngster's weakness was shown up in that business. But here again one can make excuses. He was flattered by Pon's notice, and thought Pon his pal. The Third did not agree with his goings-on. It is good to be able to say; the Third may be—and are—rough, but they are certainly decent. He came back to the fold repentant. He will hardly trespass in that way again, I think. There is real good stuff in young Wingate, and he is sure to come out all right in the long run.

fall heavily upon one of the three. Another steps in, and takes the blame that is not his. More than that I will not tell you, or it might spoil the story.

ENGINEER CADETS.

I have pleasure in giving publicity, at the request of Major C. A. Assiter, to the following notice:

"The City of London Royal Engineers Cadet Training Corps (T.F.), Headquarters the Guildhall, London, E.C., has for its objects the imparting of technical and practical work, relative to that which is carried out by the Senior Corps of the Royal Engineers. The corps possesses officers who have served during the present war, and classes are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, commencing at 8 p.m., at the Birkbeck College, Bream's Buildings, Chancery Lane, E.C. The following subjects are taken: Field Engineering, Musketry, Topography, etc. On Thursdays Drill Instruction at the Guildhall, from 7.30 to 9 p.m., and intending members should make application to the Commanding Officer (Major C. A. Assiter), who will be glad to give all particulars. Those desirous of joining this corps

must be of good education and 5ft. 3in. in height, and under eighteen years of age. The entrance fee is 2s. 6d., and the subscription for those over sixteen years of age is 1s. per month. Recruits under sixteen years of age are admitted without entrance fee, and their subscription is 9d. a month."

NOTICES.

Back Numbers Wanted.

By A. Thatcher, 5/26, Wansbeck Road, Victoria Park, E.9—any back numbers of **MAGNET**.

By A. Bulloch, 60, Queen Street, Ramsgate—"Gem" containing "Race to Tuckshop," "Boy Without a Name." Offers 2d. each for **MAGNET** and "Gem" back numbers; 4d. for "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library.

Your Editor

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"LOYAL SIR JIMMY!"

By Frank Richards.

We have not heard anything for some time past of Sir Jimmy Vivian, the schoolboy baronet from the slums. He shares a study with Mauleverer and Pict Delarey, and is devoted to them both. They were very decent to Sir Jimmy when he first turned up at Greyfriars, lacking in manners, education, and aspirates; and he has never forgotten it. Between Mauly and Delarey, also, there is a strong bond of friendship; and Study No. 12, though on the face of it that apartment might be considered very like one of the old "happy families" of incongruous animals which used to be shown years ago, seeing how totally different the three fellows who share it are, is quite a real happy family.

But trouble comes through the plotting of a rotter for revenge, and it threatens to

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

CASH ON DELIVERY!

By ERNEST LEVISON.

I.

TOM MERRY paused suddenly. It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and everybody was out of doors. The prefects' room was deserted, so far as the great men of the Sixth were concerned.

That was why Tom Merry was approaching that sacred apartment. For there was a telephone in the prefects' room; and Tom wanted to telephone to Hanney's in Wayland on the subject of his new football, which had not arrived.

But as he neared the door of the prefects' room he stopped, for a voice came from within—the voice of Aubrey Racke of the Shell. And Racke of the Shell—evidently speaking into the transmitter of the telephone—was saying:

"Yes, my name is Merry—Tom Merry—you know the name?"

Tom stood still. He had expected to find the prefects' room empty, as all the Sixth were out of doors. Evidently Racke had been struck by the same thought.

But why was he giving Tom Merry's name on the telephone?

Tom meant to know.

He stepped quietly—after a pause for reflection—to the half-open door, and looked in without making a sound.

Racke was seated at the telephone, with his back to the door.

The captain of the Shell watched him grimly.

Racke was going on: "Exactly! Merry—Tom Merry! Is that Mr. Pawke? Good!"

Tom Merry listened in amazement.

Mr. Pawke was the butcher in Rylcombe. Why Racke should be 'phoning to him in Tom's name was a mystery. But the mystery was cleared up as Racke continued:

"We're giving rather a feed here this afternoon—we want quite a lot of things. Soldiers, you know. Can you send up two dozen best mutton chops—Yes, two dozen! And three sirloins—Yes, three! Mind, best English! Can we have those by three o'clock?"

"My hat!" murmured Tom Merry, almost dazed.

"Pay on delivery," said Racke, into the telephone. "Don't deliver to the kitchen door. Tell your lad to bring the goods directly to Tom Merry, and the bill will be paid at once! Can we depend on them? Thanks! Right!"

And Racke rang off.

He rose from the stool with a grin on his face.

As he did so Tom Merry stepped back from the door, and silently vanished down the passage.

He had happened on the scene just in time to spot Racke's rather peculiar practical joke. There was no spread that day that Tom Merry knew of; and certainly he had no use for two dozen mutton chops and three sirloins of beef.

After a glance round to assure himself that the coast was clear, Tom Merry went into the prefects' room, sat down at the telephone, and rang up Mr. Pawke in Rylcombe.

"Hallo!"

"Is that Mr. Pawke?"

"Yes, sir!"

"This is St. Jim's. About that order I gave you just now—"

"Oh, Master Merry! Yes, sir?"

"The feed's being stood by Racke—Aubrey Racke. On the whole, it would be better to deliver the goods to him direct, as he is the funder of the feast. Make out the bill to Aubrey Racke."

"Very well, sir!"

"Instruct your lad to wait for payment, of course!"

"Certainly, sir!" Mr. Pawke was not likely to omit to do that in any case. "I will do so, Mr. Merry!"

"Thank you! Good-bye!"

Tom Merry rang off.

Having next talked to Hanney's over the wires on the subject of the delayed football, Tom Merry strolled out of the prefects' room feeling quite satisfied.

Racke's peculiar practical joke was coming off! But it would not be Tom Merry who would be called upon to deal with the two dozen mutton chops and the three sirloins of beef!

II.

TOM MERRY and Manners and Lowther were adorning the doorway of the School House with their persons when three o'clock rang out from the clock-tower.

The Terrible Three were cheerful and smiling.

Racke and Crooke and Mellish were chatting on the steps.

At times Racke & Co. glanced towards the Terrible Three, and grinned. There seemed to be a joke on among them.

A few minutes after three a youth in a blue smock, with a heavy basket, came round the House from the side gate.

It was Mr. Pawke's assistant from Rylcombe.

"Hallo!" said Racke, with a wink to his comrades. "Here's the blessed butcher's boy coming to the front door! What can he want?"

The lad came up the steps. He was looking very warm after walking from the village with his well-laden basket.

"Ere you are, sir!" he said.

The butcher-boy's remark should have been addressed to Tom Merry. Instead of that, it was addressed to Aubrey Racke.

"Where shall I take them, sir?" asked the lad.

"Eh? What?" ejaculated Racke.

"The goods, sir!"

"You've got nothing for me?" said Racke, in astonishment. "What the dickens are you driving at?"

"Ain't you Mr. Aubrey Racke?"

"That's my name, certainly!"

"Yes, I've seed you, sir," said the butcher's boy. "Well, I've brought the goods, sir! Ere they are!"

"Are you off your dot?" exclaimed Racke.

"I tell you you've got nothing there for me!"

"Yes, I have, sir!" said the astonished butcher's boy. "The two dozen mutton chops, sir—"

"What?"

"And three sirloins of beef—"

Racke stared at him blankly.

"Look on your bill, you young ass!" he exclaimed angrily. "You won't find my name on it!"

"It's there, sir! Look!"

The butcher's boy held up a greasy bill, upon which the name, style, and title of Mr. Pawke were printed. And under the heading was entered, in ink:

2 doz. Mutton Chops.....	£1	5	0
3 Sirloins, Best Eng.....	£1	7	6
	£2	12	6

Ordered by Telephone.

C.O.D.

Mr. Aubrey Racke, St. James's School.

Racke of the Shell stared at the bill dazedly. "C.O.D." evidently meant "Cash on delivery." And the butcher's boy was waiting for the cash.

"Two pun twelve and six, sir!" said the lad briskly. "And I'm to wait for the money, sir!"

"I—I tell you—" stuttered Racke.

"My hat! You've made a bloomer this time!" murmured Crooke. "You howling ass, you must have given your own name instead of Merry's!"

"I—I didn't!"

"Well, the bill's in your name."

"I'm waitin', sir," said the butcher's boy politely.

"What are you keeping the chap waiting for, Racke?" asked Tom Merry. "Don't you know people are busy in war-time? Pay him and let him go."

"Pay up and look pleasant!" suggested Monty Lowther. "You can't expect to get all that grub on tick, Racke."

"It isn't allowed to order grub on tick," said Manners solemnly. "And you'd better not let it be seen either, Racke. It's a bit in excess of the grub regulations, you know."

Racke gave them a furious look.

"I—I never ordered the stuff!" he shouted.

"I won't pay for it! I won't take it!"

"It says on the bill 'Ordered by telephone,'" remarked Tom Merry. "You were at the telephone this afternoon, Racke."

"You—you saw me?" stammered Racke.

"Yes. I happened to see you at the telephone in the prefects' room," said Tom cheerfully. "No good trying to squirm out of that, dear boy."

"You—you—I—I—"

"I'm waiting, sir!" said the butcher's boy grimly. "I can't wait no longer, sir. Two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence, please!"

"I don't want the stuff!" roared Racke. "What the thunder can I do with two dozen mutton chops and three sirloins of beef?"

"You should have thought of that before you ordered it, Racke," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head.

"Are you going to pay me now, sir?"

"No!" yelled Racke.

"Orlright, sir! I'll leave the goods 'ere, and take the bill in to your 'cadmaster."

"You can't leave them here for me!" shouted Racke. "There's a mistake! It's the wrong name on the bill!"

"There ain't no mistake about that, sir," said the butcher's boy calmly. "And this young gent says he saw you telephoning. Will you tell me where to look for the 'cadmaster, sir?" he added to Tom Merry.

"Take the stuff back!"

"Can't be done! I ain't walked a mile with that there meat, to walk a mile back with it," said the butcher's boy.

Racke clenched his fists.

"Take your dashed rubbish away and get out, or I'll pitch you out!" he exclaimed fiercely.

The butcher's boy spat on his hands in a warlike way.

Racke backed away again with ludicrous suddenness.

"Are you going to pay up?"

"No, I'm not! I tell you—"

Racke broke off as Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, came on the scene from his study, frowning.

"What is all this?" exclaimed the Housemaster. He took the bill from the butcher-boy's hand. "Bless my soul! Racke, you have been ordering this huge quantity of meat! Are you out of your senses?"

"I—I—I—"

"Are you not aware that food regulations are in force in this school, Racke?" thundered the Housemaster. "Even if it were not so, what possible use could you have for this huge quantity of meat?"

"I—I—I—"

"You will not be allowed, Racke, to transgress the food regulations in this outrageous and disgusting way! Have you paid for the meat?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"As you ordered the meat, Racke, you will pay for it, though you will not be allowed to consume it. Indeed, you could not pos-

sibly consume such a quantity!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "Pay the boy at once! Not a word! Pay the money!"

Racke, with a face like a Hun, took out his pocket-book. The wealthy heir of the war-profters, Messrs. Racke & Hacke, had plenty of money, though he did not like parting with it. He scowled blackly as he handed the grinning butcher's boy two pound notes, a ten-shilling note, and half-a-crown, and received his bill, duly receipted.

"Very good!" said Mr. Railton. "Now, my lad, will you kindly take this meat with you back to the village, and deliver it at the Cottage Hospital, with Master Racke's compliments?"

The Housemaster placed a two-shilling piece in the butcher-boy's hand. The lad shouldered his basket again.

"Suttingly, sir!" he said cheerfully.

"You will have the satisfaction, Racke, of knowing that you have aided the Cottage Hospital," said Mr. Railton. "Your gift will be very useful there. Good-afternoon, my

lad! I hope, Racke, that this will be a lesson to you on the subject of transgressing the food regulations. If another instance should come to my knowledge you will be punished severely!"

The butcher's boy disappeared with his basket, grinning. Mr. Railton, with a stern look at Racke, went back to his study, frowning.

Racke stood speechless for some moments. Mellish and Crooke grinned. The outcome of Racke's practical joke seemed funny enough to them, though it was not quite what Racke had intended.

"Two pounds twelve and six!" gasped Racke at last. "What are you chortlin' at, you silly fools?"

"Awfully good of you to help the Cottage Hospital in this way, Racke!" said Tom Merry heartily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—"

"And the next time you use another fellow's name on the 'phone," continued Tom,

"make sure that he's not just coming in to use the 'phone himself. Otherwise, he may countermand your order, and put your name in instead of his. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Crooke and Mellish. "You—you—you—" stuttered Racke.

The Terrible Three, with cheerful smiles, sauntered out into the quadrangle.

Racke glared at his chuckling chums.

"You silly rotters! There's nothing to cackle at—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke crumpled the bill in his hand and stamped away. The unexpected gift of two dozen mutton chops and three sirloins of beef caused surprise and pleasure at the Cottage Hospital, where contributions were needed.

Racke received a polite note of thanks from the hospital, and the writer thereof would have been considerably astonished if he could have seen Racke pitch that polite note on his study floor and jump on it.

THE END

FISHY'S GREAT FEED!

By ROBERT DONALD OGILVY.

(Editor's Note.—The intelligent reader will no doubt realise that this is a story dating back to the times that seem so long ago, when "great feeds" were possible. As for the unintelligent reader—oh, well, of course we haven't any of that sort! So I really don't know why I am shoving in this note. But let it stand!—H. W.)

I.

MONEY was tight in the Remove. It had been "ten in Hall" for days, and nothing at the tuckshop. The Famous Five were stony, and Squiff was stony, and Tom Brown was stony. Bob Cherry said that a feed in the study was like a sweet and far-off recollection of happier days. Then Squiff came to the rescue, and proposed that Fisher T. Fish should stand a study feed.

Now, in the general state of hardupness we were not feeling merry, but there was a roar at that suggestion. Fisher T. Fish never spends anything if he can help it. He has lots of schemes for making money, but none at all for spending any. The idea of Fishy standing a study feed was funny.

But Squiff was quite serious.

"Don't!" said Bob Cherry. "Squiff, old man, don't talk out of your hat! What's to be done? That's the question."

"Fish!" said Squiff.

"Eh? Fish what?"

"Fish is to be done!" said Squiff firmly.

"My dear chap," said Harry Wharton, "if all Greyfriars were expiring of hunger, Fish wouldn't stand a continental red cent, as he calls it, to save their lives! He might try to get their insurance policies at a bargain."

"I know that," said Squiff. "But I've been thinking. We learn to think in New South Wales, you know. Fishy is in funds. He is swanking a whole quid about the Common-room. It was a real quid. I saw it!"

"Might borrow it," said Nugent. "Fishy would want five per cent. a week on it, though, and that comes expensive."

"And Quelchy's down on that," said Johnny Bull. "Last time he caught Fishy lending money at interest he walloped both parties."

"I'm not thinking of borrowing Fishy's measly quid," said Squiff. "I'm thinking of letting Fishy generously stand a study feed with it."

"Fishy would be hanged, drawn, and quartered first!"

"The esteemed Squiff is talkfully conversing out of his esteemed neck!" said Hurree Singh. "The stingfulness of Fishy is terrific!"

"He's fed with other chaps lots of times," said Squiff. "Why shouldn't he stand a feed himself?"

"No reason why he shouldn't, only he's too mean," said Wharton.

"There's one thing Fishy loves even more than he loves money," said Squiff.

"Rats!"

"There is!"

"Bluff?" asked Wharton, thinking it out.

"No. Bluff comes after dollars. Titles!"

"Yes, yes," said Wharton. "Fishy would crawl ten miles on his hands and knees to see a titled chap. But we haven't any titled chaps, excepting Inky and Mauly."

"What about a duke?"

"A which?"

"A duke," said Squiff. "Suppose we ask

a duke to tea this afternoon. It's a half-holiday, and we've got plenty of time to entertain his Grace. What would Fishy do if he knew we had a young duke coming to tea?"

"Claim us all as old pals, and chum up with us no end," said Bob Cherry. "A barbed-wire fence wouldn't keep him out of the study if we had a duke here. But where are you going to dig up a duke? I don't know any dukes."

"I've mistaid all mine," said Tom Brown.

"And I'm sorry I've neglected to cultivate dukes," said Nugent. "It was an oversight."

"What on earth are you driving at Squiff?" demanded Wharton, puzzled. "We can't telephone to the stores for a duke, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha! No. But I think we could manage it," said Squiff. "You see, Fishy thinks a duke is something extra-special, not to say holy, and he would give a hundred dollars to be kicked by a duke. As soon as he knows there's a duke coming to tea, wild horses won't keep him away. Well, we'll consent to let him come, on condition he stands the feed for the duke. I give you my word even Fishy would stand a feed, with his last red cent, to sit at the same table with a duke!"

"But where's the duke?" roared Johnny Bull. "The scheme's all right, excepting for the duke."

"I was thinking of asking Wibley!"

"Old Wib!"

We all stared at Squiff. Wibley is a very clever chap, head of the Remove Dramatic Society, and a very clever actor and impersonator. But Wibley certainly doesn't move in ducal circles. I don't suppose Wibley could tell a duke from a marquis by looking at him.

Then, all of a sudden, Squiff's idea burst on us, and we roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Got it?" asked Squiff.

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton. "If it would work—"

"Of course it would work!" said Squiff. "Work like a giddy steam-engine!"

"Let's go and see Wib!"

"Wib's hard up, too, and he'll be glad of a feed," said Squiff. "Come on! Let's put it to Wib!"

And we rushed off to see Wibley at once.

II.

WHEN does the duke get here, Wharton?"

"About five, Frank."

"What about tea?"

"That's the difficulty. We're stony."

Fisher T. Fish pricked up his ears.

He was coming down the Remove passage. Wharton and Nugent were standing near the window at the end, talking things over. Fishy stopped to listen. The word "duke" was a magical sound to his ears. Fisher T. Fish had never seen a duke, but he had dreamed about them.

Wharton and Nugent ran their hands through their pockets, but they didn't find any cash.

"It's too bad!" said Wharton. "With the duke coming to tea, we ought to have some-

thing extra special. After all, we don't have a duke in Study No. 1 every day!"

"I say, you galoots—"

"We must raise the wind somehow," said Nugent. "I suppose his Grace will come in his car?"

"No; the ducal car has been left to the War Office, I understand. But, however he comes, he's getting here at five."

"I say, you jays—"

"Pity we couldn't have had a longer notice!" said Nugent.

"Well, I didn't know till this afternoon," said Wharton. "The duke naturally thought we'd be glad to see him at any time. Of course, so we would. But it's a difficulty about the tea."

"I'm talking to you, you galoots!" roared Fish.

Wharton looked round.

"Hallo! Is that you, Fishy?"

"Yep!"

"Buzz along, old chap! We're busy."

"We've got a problem to work out," said Nugent. "Don't bother, Fishy."

"I guess you said there was a duke coming to see you this afternoon," said Fisher T. Fish, his eyes gleaming.

"Don't worry!"

"You jay! I want to know."

"Oh, buzz off!"

"Look hyer, Wharton, you might be pally," urged Fisher T. Fish. "I guess it's a long time since I fed with you. Are you going to ask me to tea?"

"No fear!"

"I'll tell you what. I'll stand my whack," said Fishy. "I will, honest. Injun! Put me down for an equal whack."

"Sorry, Fishy!" said Wharton politely. "But the visitor is rather a special one. You, being a republican, wouldn't care to meet him. It's only a duke."

"I guess that's where I live!" said Fisher T. Fish eagerly. "You're quite mistaken, Wharton. I may have made some remarks about played-out, effete aristocrats—"

"You have—lots!"

"I was only—only joking, really. The fact is, I should like to meet his Grace!" said Fish.

"Well, I'm afraid he wouldn't care to meet you," said Wharton. "The fact is, Fishy, if you'll excuse me, the duke doesn't care for—er—Americans, you know."

"You needn't tell him I'm an American," said Fish eagerly. "I'll keep that dark. Look hyer, Wharton, I gather that you're in some financial difficulty about the feed."

"Oh, we shall manage that all right!"

"But how are you going to manage it, you galoot?"

"I dare say something will turn up."

"Bet you it won't!" said Fish anxiously.

"Now, do do the sensible thing, Wharton—don't be a jay! You'll have his Grace arriving, and have to take him into Hall to tea."

"Well, we could do that."

"It's a rotten idea. I'll tell you what. You bring him to my study!"

"Fat lot of good that would be," said Nugent. "What would you offer him—half a sardine?"

"I'll stand the rippingest feed you ever

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FISHY'S GREAT FEED!

(Continued from page 15.)

heard of—I will, honest Injun! You bring the duke to my study to tea, and I'll do him in first-chop style!" said Fish breathlessly. "I'm in funds—honest Injun, I am! Look here! I've got a quid and five bob, and I'll blue it to the last red cent if you bring the duke to tea in my study!"

Wharton seemed to hesitate.

"That's not a bad offer," said Nugent, in a doubtful sort of way. "After all, we've got simply nothing in our study, Wharton, and the duke specially said he wanted tea in the study, to remind him of his school-days."

"Yes, that's so, but—"

"Leave it to me!" said Fisher T. Fish imploringly. "Bring him to my study!"

"But our friends are coming to tea with the duke," said Wharton. "There will be eight of us, beside the duke."

"Oh, Jerusalem! Never mind. I'll stand a feed for the lot—I will, honest Injun! Every red cent I've got!"

Fisher T. Fish was in deadly earnest.

"Better close on that, Harry," said Nugent. "Of course, it's in your hands, as the duke is coming to see you. But I'd say accept Fishy's offer."

"There, you hear what Nugent says!" urged Fishy.

"Well," said Wharton, "if you'll undertake to keep it dark about you being an American, Fishy, Dukes don't like republicans, you know."

"Honour bright!"

"Then it's a go!" said Wharton. "He shall come to your study to tea, Fishy, on condition that you stand a really ripping spread."

"Done!"

"Only you're so jolly mean—excuse me—I think we'd better come and help you do the shopping," said Wharton.

"Come on, then!" said Fish, in delight.

Wharton and Nugent went down to the tuckshop with Fishy to do the shopping. Mrs. Mumble opened her eyes when Fishy ordered things right and left. He wasn't a very generous customer as a rule. He ordered things up to fifteen bob. He wasn't going to be let off so lightly as that.

"Better have another pot of jam," said Nugent thoughtfully. "It's rather a big party, you know."

"I—I say, those pots of jam cost one-and-six!" murmured Fish.

"And a pineapple," said Wharton.

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

"And a bag of biscuits," said Nugent.

"Look hyer, Nugent—"

"And another dozen cream puffs!"

"By gum!"

"And a couple of dozen jam-tarts," said Wharton.

"Look hyer, Wharton, draw the line somewhere!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, with perspiration on his brow.

"That's all right, Fishy. You do the handsome thing, and I'll get the duke to shake hands with you!"

Fisher T. Fish brightened up at that. He blued the whole of his twenty-five bob, though he looked as if he were losing twenty-five teeth. Then the parcel was carried to Fishy's study.

"You get tea ready," said Wharton. "We're going to meet the duke."

"It's a cinch, isn't it?" asked Fish anxiously. "You'll bring the galoot here?"

"He'll come with us, never fear. Mind you keep it dark about you being an American, though."

"Sure!" said Fishy.

III.

EVERYTHING was ready in Fishy's study when the duke arrived.

He came in with us, and Fishy, who was making toast, spun round as he heard footsteps. He stood quite gasping, as he looked at the duke, almost overcome with joy.

The duke was a very respectable-looking ducal chap. He wore a black frock-coat, and patent-leathers, and had a big diamond in a black tie. He looked about forty years old, and had some wrinkles, and a rather ruddy complexion, and a set of whiskers just tinged with grey. His head was bald in the middle, but had thick hair all round it. He carried a handsome topper in his hand.

What impressed Fishy most, I think, was his eyeglass. He wore a gold-rimmed eyeglass, jammed in his right eye, with his face

screwed up round it. His expression was very haughty. Fishy had a fixed belief that all real noblemen were haughty, and he wouldn't have believed the duke was a real duke if he had had good manners.

"Tea ready, Fishy?" said Wharton.

"Yep!" gasped Fishy.

"Will your Grace allow us to introduce my friend Fish?" asked Wharton, very respectfully.

"Haw!" said the duke.

"Come here, Fishy."

Fisher T. Fish came forward almost trembling. His eyes were fairly glistening. It was the dream of his life realised. At last he was meeting a duke! He would have lain down on the floor for the duke to walk over, if he'd been asked to.

"Your Grace, this is Fish."

"Haw!" said the duke. "Looks like fried fish—what?"

That was because Fishy had been making toast. Fishy grinned. He had never thought that a duke would make jokes like an ordinary mortal, and he thought it most affable of him.

"Yep, your Grace!" he gasped.

"Fishy, my friend the Duke of Peckham!" said Wharton, completing the introduction.

Fisher T. Fish nearly doubled up with a deep bow.

"Happy to meet your Grace!" he gasped.

To his delight, the duke held out his hand. Fisher T. Fish made a grab at it, but the duke only gave him two fingers. Still, two ducal fingers were worth more to Fishy than a whole fist of anybody else.

"I am glad of this opportunity of makin' your acquaintance, Fish," said the duke, in a stately manner. "Is this your study, Wharton?"

"No; this is Fishy's study. He's asked us all to tea, your Grace."

"Very good of Dish. Did you say his name was Dish?"

"No, Fish."

"Haw! My mistake! I beg your pardon, Fish."

"Not at all, your Grace," chirruped Fishy. "Not a bit! Will your Grace take a chair? Pray sit down, your Grace! Does your Grace like ham and eggs?"

"I am really not hungry," said the duke. He had a high-pitched, affected sort of voice which delighted Fishy, for Fishy couldn't have believed that a duke would not put on side. "However, I will taste a morsel. Haw!"

The duke sat down.

"What a dinky little room!" he said.

"Glad you like it, my lord—I mean, my Grace—that is, your Grace," said Fishy, getting a little mixed. "Please put this cushion behind your Grace, my back! It will make your back's Grace more comfortable."

"Thank you, Squish!"

"Not at all, your duke—I mean your Grace!"

We all sat down to tea, as solemn as owls. Squiff whispered to Bob Cherry to be quiet, as there was a nobleman present. Bob was as quiet as he could be; but that is not saying much.

We made a ripping tea.

After the stony state we had been in so long, we simply revelled in the supply of tuck Fisher T. Fish had laid in.

The duke had said he wasn't hungry; but, as a matter of fact, he did quite as well as any of us.

And Fisher was so delighted to have a duke at his table that he quite forgot to count the mouthfuls, as he usually does on the rare occasions when he has a fellow to tea.

Fisher T. Fish didn't bother about having any tea himself. He was too flustered and excited. He spent all his time watching the duke, and helping him, and looking after him, and calling him "your Grace," or as near it as he could get in his excitement.

The duke was a bit stand-offish with Fishy, all the same; which Fish put down to his exclusive aristocratic manners.

"I hope your Grace is making a good tea, your Grace?" said Fishy, for about the twentieth time.

"Thank you, yaas!" said his Grace. "Pass the whitebait, deah boy!"

"Ahem!" said Fishy, rather taken aback. "We—we're short of whitebait, but will you try the sardines?"

"Yaas, and a little caviare, please."

"Jerusalem! I—I mean, we ain't allowed caviare in the Remove," said poor Fishy. "Awfully sorry, your Grace!"

"Not at all, my dear Smish," said his Grace. "I'll have a little of the cotelette de la pingpong, if I may."

It was the first time Fishy knew that sosses were called cotelette de la pingpong in ducal circles; but it was plain he was making a

mental note of it, to tell them later in "Koo York."

The sosses and the ham and eggs went down rippingly, and the cake and the biscuits and the jam followed. There were plenty of fellows to clear the table, though it was a liberal feed—really wonderful for Fishy. The duke said the pineapple was dinky, which reconciled Fishy to having bought it, and he made a note that "dinky," which he had supposed to be American, was real ducal English!

We rather slacked down towards the finish, for fear of overdoing it. It was a long time since we had had such a feed.

The duke chatted very affably. He told us stories of the House of Lords, to which Fishy listened with his eyes and mouth wide open.

"Begad!" said the duke presently. "After lookin' after me in this ripplin' way, Dish, you must really allow me to make some—haw—little return! Would you care—haw—to hear a debate in the House of Lords?"

"Sure!" gasped Fishy, almost believing he was dreaming, at the bare idea of seeing a whole crowd of lords and dukes all at once.

"I'm introduc'in a little Bill shortly," said the duke. "A Bill for dealin' with rascally money-grabbers who corner wheat and put up the price of bread. It will be a rather interestin' debate, if you'd care to hear it, Master Squish."

"D-d-delighted!" gasped Fishy. He gave us all an imploring look, afraid that we might let out that he was from across the Atlantic, and that his father cornered wheat and things, and offend the duke.

"I'm startin' an inquiry, too, into the nature of the ingredients used in the manufacture of Chicago potted beef," said the duke. "That will be very interestin'."

"Yep!" stuttered Fishy.

"I'll send my car for you, if you like, Master Dish, when—the debate comes off."

"Your Grace is a regular corker!" said Fish.

"You needn't be afraid of trustin' yourself in my car; it wasn't made in America," added the duke reassuringly. "Now, my young friends, I think I must be movin', as I've ordered a special train at half-past six."

And the duke rose to his feet.

"I hope your Grace will be coming down again," said Fish. "It will always be a pleasure and an honour to entertain your Grace."

"Begad, you don't say so!"

"Yep! Sure! Honest Injun!" said Fishy.

"Begad!" said the duke. "As you're so hospitable, Master Fish, I won't go away at all. I'll stay in the Remove here, so as to be a neighbour to you, and drop in to tea whenever you like."

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Fish.

Fisher T. Fish's eyes nearly started from his head as the duke put up his hand to his face and took off his ducal whiskers.

"Waal, I swow!" gurgled Fishy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then the duke took off his frock-coat, and the astounded Fishy saw that he was wearing an Eton jacket underneath. Fishy's eyes were like saucers. He couldn't believe what he saw.

But when the duke dropped his eyeglass, and rubbed a damp handkerchief over his face, and his wrinkles and most of the complexion disappeared, then Fishy understood.

"Wibley!" he shrieked.

"Yaas, begad!" said Wibley cheerfully. "Awfully pleased with your little entertainment, Fishy."

"Spoofed!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, it was rathah a dinky spoof—what?" said the duke. "You can't write home to popper and mommer that you've that a duke to tea; but you can tell them that you stood a feed at your own expense, Fishy, and they'll think that still more wonderful! Good-bye! On second thoughts, I won't send the car; that debate won't come off for some time in the House of Lords."

And Duke Wibley walked out of the study, and we all followed him, laughing like hyenas.

Fisher T. Fish stood rooted to the floor.

He had stood the feed, there was no mistake about that, and there was hardly a crumb left. And he hadn't had his own tea. And his duke had turned out to be Wibley of the Remove!

Fishy's thoughts at that moment must have been very interesting to know. But he couldn't utter them. He stood and gasped like a landed fish—as indeed he was—and we left him gasping.