

GREAT STORY OF THE FAGS OF GREYFRIARS!



The Magnet $1\frac{1}{2}$ Library

No. 604. Vol. XIII.

September 6th, 1919.



THE FAGS' WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER!

(One of the Scenes in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.) 6-9-19



The Twelve Stamps

by Frank Richards.

A Magnificent Long, Complete School Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO. and the FAGS OF GREYFRIARS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Dicky Nugent Comes toorrow!

"I THINK we should wait—and I don't think we should wait!"

—Ed!"

"I think we should wait—and I don't think we should wait!"

—What?"

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said Bob Cherry of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, surveying Frank Nugent, also of the Remove, with a pitying glance. "I've noticed him like this before, though never quite so bad."

"You see—" began Frank Nugent.

"Yes, I see a howling ass!" agreed Bob Cherry. "Any news of importance in that note?"

Frank Nugent laughed.

"Yes; there is, and there isn't!"

He was sitting at the table in Study No. 1 in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, and he had just been reading a note which Dicky Nugent, his young brother—a fag in the Second Form—had brought in. Bob Cherry and Lord Maulverer, his chums in the Remove, had been waiting for him to finish it, and they had sat patiently at the study table, which had been all ready laid for tea. In fact, the spread was ready even to the teapot itself, which was steaming merrily away. Bob and Mauly were the guests to the little party, and whilst Frank was reading the note his minor had delivered, they improved the shining hour by chipping Dicky Nugent, who was standing between the door and his brother. Frank Nugent's sudden and somewhat mysterious exclamation had drawn all eyes upon him.

He threw the note upon the table.

"We ought to!" he exclaimed. "And we ought not to!"

"By Jove!" drawled Lord Maulverer, gazing in astonishment at his host. "I—I think that remark is somewhat cryptic, Nugent, my dear fellow!"

"You see, I think we should wait—and on the other hand I don't think we should wait!" explained Frank Nugent.

"I'm afraid I'm no wiser."

Bob Cherry leaned forward in his chair, and grasped the loaf of bread from the plate.

"Where will you have it, you duffer?"

he growled. "In your ear, or on the tip of your nose?"

"Don't throw that at me!"

"Explain yourself, then!" grunted Bob. "Why do you think we should wait?"

"And why do you think we shouldn't wait?" drawled Mauly.

"And why do you think we should do both?" added Bob Cherry.

"Yes, my dear fellow, I wish you would explain yourself."

"And I wish you would jolly well buck up!" snapped Dicky Nugent, the deliverer of the mysterious note.

"I can't wait all night to see whether Wharton wants an answer to his rotten letter!"

"You see," explained Frank Nugent, "this is a note from Harry Wharton."

"I know that by now," said Bob Cherry. "If you hold your blessed note under a fellow's nose he can't help seeing the fat."

"Well, then—"

"I wish you would explain, my dear Nugent, and then we can get on with the tea!"

"You're interrupting me!"

"Really, you know—"

"Shut up, Mauly, and let Franky go on with the washing!"

"Really, Cherry—"

"Oh, rug off! Go on, Franky!"

"But, my dear fellow," drawled Maulverer, "—"

"Dry up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Can't you see the tea's getting cold? Can't you see I'm jolly hungry? Go on with the explaining, Nugent, and if Mauly speaks again I'll buff him one!"

Maulverer opened his lips, but closed them again without speaking. Bob Cherry had clenched his fist, and he looked in deadly earnest. And Mauly, who would not have been daunted by any personal threat of violence from the average junior at Greyfriars, did not care to risk a tussle with Bob Cherry. Cherry was the daughtiest exponent of the noble art in the Lower school. In fact, Bob was so formidable that he had been specially selected to fill the position of Fighting Editor on the staff of the "Greyfriars Herald." So Mauly contented himself by giving Bob a withering look;

but as Bob Cherry was looking at Frank Nugent the scornful glance was quite wasted.

"You see, this note is from Harry Wharton—" began Frank Nugent over again.

"We've had that. Get on with the lastly!"

"He says he'll be another half-hour, at least; and that's why I don't think we should wait—"

"Oh!"

And he says that in spite of the fact that he has hid out the ten bob his uncle sent him in this jolly decent tea, we are to carry on, and not to wait for him. He wants me to say he's sorry he asked you two fellows to the spread, and then hasn't turned up, and as he's so decent about it that's why I think we should wait until he comes."

Bob Cherry's face went a slightly crimson colour.

"Oh!" he said, with a cough. "Of course, that makes it a bit different. What's Harry Wharton up to? Has he been detained, or is he playing cricket, or has he gone down to Courtfield?"

"He doesn't say why he can't turn up," replied Frank Nugent. "Where did he give you the note, Dicky?"

"He didn't give it to me."

"Well, how on earth did you come by it, you young ass?"

"Wharton gave it to Gatty, and Gatty gave it to Myers, and Myers gave it to young Sammy Bunter, and as I was coming on here, anyhow, I offered to bring it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to cackle at, you idiots!" snapped Dick Nugent. "If—if you're not jolly careful you'll find us chaps in the Third and Second refusing to fag for anybody at all!"

"Chuck it, Dicky!" laughed Frank Nugent. "You'll have to learn to do these kind little actions for your big brother!"

Dicky Nugent pouted.

"But that's just like you cads in the Remove!" he growled. "You want all the kind actions on one side!"

"Why, what do you mean, you young duffer?"

"Well, now I've gone to the fag of

bringing Wharton's rotten note here, will you do something for me in return?"

"All depends what it is, you fathead!"

"Will you lend me something?"

"Money, kid?"

"No."

"Well, what on earth is it?"

"It's a book," said Dicky Nugent. "I only want to borrow it for a bit to look something up."

"Want to find out how to keep a fag's neck clean without using soap and water?" suggested Bob Cherry genially.

"Oh, you shut up, Cherry!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent stoutly. "Well, will you lend me the book, Franky?"

"Yes, of course I will!"

"You promise!" said Dicky Nugent.

"Honest Injun?"

Frank Nugent laughed heartily.

"Yes, you young idiot!" he said, "I'm glad to see you've made up your mind to learn something at last. But of a change for some of you kids in the Third and Second Forms to start sniveling! You can have any blessed book you like in this study!"

"And take it and clear out, so that we can get on with the tea!" added Bob Cherry.

"And the better the quicker!" drawled Mauly.

"You'll lend me any book in the study?"

"Yes, you young idiot! Book up and say what it is!" yelled Frank Nugent.

"Blessed if I didn't think you wanted to eadge something when you brought in that rotten note from Wharton!"

"Well, I want to borrow Wharton's stamp-album for a bit," said Dicky Nugent, with a grin. "I'm fixing up my album now, and I want to check some stamps before sticking them in."

"But—but I—I—"

"You promised me!" interrupted Dicky, as his major began to stammer on some sort of remonstrance.

"I—I know I did," said Frank Nugent, after a pause. "But you know how proud Wharton is over his blessed collection. It's very valuable!"

"I know that, fathead!" snapped Dicky Nugent. "Can't you trust your own brother with a rotten stamp-album?"

"Yes; but Harry was only bragging about his stamps—his new set of war stamps this morning. He says they'll be worth a whole heap of money!"

"I know that," said Dicky. "I only wish I had them! He's a lucky bargee. I—I would give anything in the world to have that lot!"

"Jealous young bounder!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Frank Nugent rose from the table, and took Harry Wharton's stamp-album out of the bookcase.

"I shouldn't give it to your minor until they return," said Bob Cherry. "He'll only kick up a fuss over his blessed stamps."

Frank Nugent glared at his guest.

"I should hope that Dicky knows how to look after them all right!" he said, rather sharply. "You've often borrowed the album without asking Wharton!"

"That's different!" said Bob.

"Besides that, Franky has promised now," said Dicky Nugent. "My lighters in the Remove seem to think you can break your promises whenever it suits you!"

"Well, I wouldn't lend it!" said Bob. "But you do as you like. It's your blessed study, after all, and it's nothing to do with me!"

"No, nothing!" said Frank Nugent, with emphasis.

"Come on!" exclaimed the fag. "Don't keep me all right! Hand it over!"

Frank Nugent hesitated for a moment, and there was a dull silence in the little study.

"Well, here you are, kid!" said Frank at last. "Mind you take jolly good care of it, and bring it back here directly you're finished with it!"

"Right-ho!" said Dicky Nugent, with a grin, as he took the album. "Thanks, old bean!"

"Cheeky young rotter!" growled his major. "Clear out!"

The door closed on Dicky Nugent, and at Frank's suggestion the three Removers commenced an immediate attack on the much-delayed tea.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble Among the Fags!

DICKY NUGENT closed the door of Study No. 1 to with a bang, and, with Harry Wharton's stamp-album tucked comfortably under his arm, he marched proudly down the Remove passage, and made his way downstairs to the Second and Third Form's class-room.

This room was common property to the fags. Being without studies, they were obliged to shift the desks to the sides of the room as soon as classes were over for the day; and when this was done, and the room packed with fags, it was considered the noisiest apartment at Greyfriars, apart from the fact that it was the most untidy one.

Dicky Nugent flung open the door, and was greeted with an uproar that would have out-labeled Babel itself if that notorious city had been still in existence.

The class-room was packed to suffocating pitch, and Dicky could barely see across the room for smoke, which was rising from an old frying-pan that Tubb was holding over a little oil-stove stuck in the middle of the room.

"My guide aunt!" cried Dicky. "What a row! What a smell! Phew!"

George Tubb of the Third looked up from his cooking with a perspiring face. "Come on, Dicky!" he cried. "One kipper's done, and this one's well on the way!"

"Good egg!"

"Hang your beastly kippers!" exclaimed Bolsover minor. "They're a beastly nuisance!"

"Smell as though they're about a year old, too," said Gatty, with a cough.

"What do you mean, young Gatty?" snapped Tubb, hoisting the succulent kipper up with a penholder. "They're jolly good, and I got 'em cheap, too!"

"What was the damage, Tubb?"

cried Dicky Nugent, throwing Harry Wharton's precious stamp-album on to a desk by the window. "They smell jolly bon!" Quite a treat to have a good spread!"

George Tubb gave the frying-pan a good shuffle, an operation in which he was considerably helped by Sammy Bunter, the fattest fag at Greyfriars, and minor to his notorious brother, William George Bunter, who was in the Remove Form.

"Here, where are you coming to, you fat rotter!" shrieked Tubb. "You'll have the blessed oil-stove over in a second!"

"Oh!" gasped Sammy Bunter. "That silly ass Myers pushed me!"

"Well, go and bid him, fathead!"

Dicky Nugent pushed his way through the crowd, and gained Tubb's side.

"My aunt!" said Dicky enthusiastically. "They look AL, Tubb!"

"Yes, don't they?" replied the cook proudly. "I only gave a penny for 'em."

"—A penny for the whole blessed four!"

"A penny?"

"Yes, I've been fagging for that ass."

Under all the afternoon, and he gave me these cheap. Said they smelt so much they were bulging his cupboard!"

"Silly ass! They're jolly good!"

"Of course they are!" agreed Tubb. "He's only had them for about a week. They're so jolly particular and extravagant in the Sixth. Phew! My word, though, that one's a bit nifty!"

An extra thick cloud of smoke curled up to the ceiling, and there was a fresh uproar from most of the fags present.

"Why don't you take the beastly things outside?" gasped Bolsover minor.

"Kick his lamp over!"

"Throw that kipper out of the window, Tubb, you ass!"

Tubb glared at the remonstrators.

"I should like to see you try it on!" he cried. "If you don't like it, get outside!"

"You get outside yourself!"

George Tubb turned to Dicky Nugent. "How many are booked for our spread?" he said.

"Me," replied Dicky ungrammatically, "you, O'Rourke, Jucky Wingate, Conrad, and young Paget."

"Well, that lot's good enough to chuck these rotters out while I get on with the cooking. I've got some bacon and eggs to do yet, and I want to toast the buns."

"Right-ho!" said Dicky Nugent. "Come on, you chaps! Let's turn these other bounders outside!"

"Rather!" cried the volunteers called upon. "Come on!"

Dicky Nugent grabbed Bunter minor by the scruff of the neck and rushed him, squealing, to the Common-room door.

"Ow! Help! Rescue!" roared Sammy Bunter. "Leggo, Nugent, you cad!"

Dicky pulled the door open with a jerk, and Bunter minor was deposited on the floor of the passage with a loud bump.

"Come on!" cried Dicky excitedly.

"Charge, you chaps—charge!"

"Here's one!" roared O'Rourke. "It's Bolter!"

There was a shriek from the unfortunate Bolter as he was flung through the doorway, and another shriek from Sammy Bunter as Bolter crashed into him just as he was staggering up.

The two fags went down with a thump, the next moment Lunn, Castle, and Hop H, the Chinese junior, were deposited on to them, and there was a whirling mass of arms and legs in a cloud of dust.

"Next one!" yelled Dicky Nugent.

"Coming!" roared Jucky Wingate.

And Pettifer was whirled through the doorway, to be followed by Spring and Sylvester.

"Out 'em!" yelled the excited fags, their blood well up now.

"Come on, young Marsden, you rotter!"

"Ow! Leggo, you bounder! Ow!" shrieked Marsden, as he was whirled on to the mules on the passage floor.

Smith and Simpson minor followed in an instant, and at last the Common-room was clear excepting for the ejectors, who slammed the door to with a bang.

"Good bizney!" cried Dicky Nugent.

"That's the stuff to give 'em! Just hark at the row! Hallo! That's your major, Jacky!"

Jack Wingate grinned as he heard his brother's voice raised in anger in the passage outside.

George Wingate, the popular captain of Greyfriars, could be heard ordering the unfortunate fags outside to clear off. There was a hasty scurry to clear off along the passage, and then silence.

"My hat! That's a bit of luck!" murmured Dicky Nugent, after a pause. "We

shan't be troubled by those bounders for a bit, anyway!"

"Jolly good thing old Wingate didn't come in!" suggested Tubb. "He would have had something to say about this blessed stove!"

"Does make the place a bit smoky!" said Dicky Nugent, looking at the stove somewhat dubiously.

"Nothing to speak of!" said Tubb, throwing another paper into the frying-pan, and causing another dense cloud of only smoke to curl up into the room. "In case those rotters return, you had better better fix that door, though. Here, shove that fire-bucket up!"

"Good idea!" laughed Wingate minor. "Time it had some fresh water in it! Here you are, you chaps! Lend a hand with this blessed desk!"

The fags pulled out a desk, and the fire-bucket was handed up to Dicky Nugent when he had mounted it.

"Shove the door open a bit!" ordered Dicky. "Only about an inch! That's right!"

The fire-bucket was propped on to the top of the door, and made to lean lightly against the lintel.

"That's the idea!" said Tubb. "Makes a smashing booby-trap, and the first rotter who comes back to retaliate will get it in the neck!"

"And we needn't bother!" added Paget. "Life's made easy at last!"

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

"Come on!" cried Tubb. "Shove the tuck out now! Everything's ready!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Booby-trap's Victim!

"P" ASS the jam, Dicky!"

"Right-oh! Coming over. Have another toasted bun, Jacky?"

"Mmmmm!" went Jack Wingate. "Sorry, old bean," laughed Dicky Nugent. "Got your mouth full?"

The six fags were going it strong. They were seated at the improvised table, and making a combined attack on the tuck which George Tubb had placed before them. The kippers had gone west. The eggs had been reduced to the last few toasted buns and a plateful of sugared biscuits. But the "last-lap," as Dicky Nugent had termed it, wasn't going to give them any trouble, and by the steady munching that was going on Dicky's prophecy seemed likely to prove correct.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp!"

"Hallo!" whispered Conrad. "Here's somebody coming. Wonder whether it's those bounders returning to the counter-attack?"

"We're ready for them," laughed Wingate minor. "Sure you fixed that fire-bucket all right, Dicky?"

"Rather! Listen, it's only one chap!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The footsteps had got to within a few yards of the door, and the fags started intently at the booby-trap contrivance over the door.

"My only aunt!" hissed Tubb. "I hope to goodness it's not old Terigg!"

"My hat! Let's hope not," gasped Dicky. "It doesn't sound like Twigg's fairy footsteps. It's somebody wearing hobnails. I—"

"Shut up! It's stopped!"

The footsteps had come to a full stop outside the class-room door, and the fags could see through the chink that whoever the individual was he was leaning some sort of article against the passage wall before entering.

Dicky Nugent rose in his seat.

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"S-s-shall we warn him?" he exclaimed hurriedly. "After all, we only intended the blessed bucket for—"

But Dicky Nugent was not allowed to finish his remark. The individual in the passage had commenced to whistle a shrill sort of tune, and the next moment the class-room door was pushed open with a crash.

Swish! Bang!

The fire-bucket placed on the top of the door toppled over, and dropped through the intervening space like a flash of lightning, and the next instant there was a wild shriek from the unfortunate victim of the fags' booby-trap.

"Ow! Whatist!" came in muffled tones.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the fags.

The bucket had landed fairly and squarely on the head of the visitor, who was dancing wildly about with water streaming down him in a miniature waterfall.

"Ow! Take it horf! Oh, lor! What ever!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dicky Nugent, rolling with laughter, staggered across the class-room and caught hold of the bucket-battered visitor.

"Hold on!" he gasped. "I'll take it off if you stop making that blessed row."

"Ow! Take it horf!"

"All right, you fathead!" cried Dicky.

"Hold tight! Here she comes!"

Nugent minor gave a tug, and the bucket came off with a jerk, and a livid-looking face stood revealed to the fags of Greyfriars.

"My hat!" gasped Tubb. "What an ugly-looking boulder!"

"Doesn't he look croos?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The victim of the booby-trap stared angrily about him, and then caught Dicky Nugent by the arm in a vicious grasp.

"You—you young whelp!" he cried, in a choking voice. "I'll half pulverise yer for that there trick!"

"Let go!" roared the fag. "You're hurting me, you beast!"

"Urr yer!" yelled the man. "I'll urr yer all right! Alf Arkwright don't allow them sort of tricks without 'anding out a good 'iding to sich as you!"

"Oh!" gasped Dicky Nugent, as the man's nails dug deeply into his arm.

"Help! Rescue, you chaps!"

"Rather! Come on!"

The fags leaped across the room, and caught hold of Alf in a second. Alf Arkwright could not be considered too much of a handful for the fags to take on. He was fairly well built, with a broad pair of shoulders on him, and his white face now looked very pugnacious; but there were six fags altogether, and they were very sturdy fags at that, and were practised in the art of taking concerted action against people superior in height and weight.

"Have the boulder over!" cried Dicky Nugent.

The next moment Alf was bowled over by the weight of the attacking party, and he was rolled neatly on his back in the puddle of water formed by the contents of the fire-bucket.

"Let me go!" he roared. "I'll—I'll report yer! I'll—I'll—My eye, I don't know what I won't do with yer!"

"Shut up!" growled Wingate minor.

"Just because a blessed mistake has been made you don't want to lose your hair like that!"

"I'll teach yer!" roared Alf.

"Do you want another bucket of water?" asked Tubb. "If you do there's plenty more, and it's all free."

"You—you dare to try it on, you young whelps!"

"We'll do it all right," laughed Paget.

"What do you want here, anyway?"

Alf Arkwright stopped struggling, and glared up at his questioner.

"I'll teach yer to interfere with Alf Arkwright!" he gasped. "I'll report yer to the 'eadmaster, that's what I'll do. Do yer think a plumber's assistant wants to 'ave a bucket of water dropped on to 'im when he comes to mend a blessed winder?"

"My hat!"

"If I 'edn't 'ave propped that there glass against the wall outside you'd 'ave done a sovereign's worth o' glass in. Besides the damage yer 'ave done me!"

"My giddy aunt!"

"Hi'll jolly well report yer to the 'eadmaster!" roared Alf, in a paroxysm of rage, and making a fresh effort to get to his feet.

"That's enough!" cried Dicky Nugent.

"You're a boulder you are, and if you can't stand a bit of fun decently we'll give you something else to think about!"

"That's the idea," said Tubb. "This fellow's a bit too much. What's the good of making a fuss about a blessed bucket of water?"

"You let me hup!" roared Alf. "Don't you try no more of yer tricks on me, that's all!"

"What are you going to do?"

"Hi tell yer I've got to mend that winder there!" shouted Alf.

"That's the one young Gatty busted," said Conrad.

"My hat!" laughed Tubb. "It's about time the blessed thing was mended."

"And you jolly nearly busted the new pane of glass!" said Paget, wagging an admonishing finger at the prostrate plumber's assistant.

"Oh, let him get up!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent. "He's a nasty, bad-tempered rotter, and he's had a good washing. Now he can get on with his window-mending!"

"Right-oh!" laughed Paget. "Stand clear, you chaps!"

Alf Arkwright was released, and he staggered up in the midst of the grinning fags, and he glowered from one to another.

"I'll—I'll make you young brats pay for this!" he muttered. "You'll and Alf Arkwright will get equal with yer!"

"Oh, ring off!" said Dicky Nugent.

"Come on, you fellows! Let's leave the rotter to do his window-mending."

"Rather!" agreed the remainder of the fags; and they filed solemnly out of the Common-room.

"The young 'ounds!" muttered Alf Arkwright, wiping his face down with his red handkerchief, and sitting down on a form by the window.

"If I 'ad the chance of gettin' 'em one by one I'd—"

"I'd—Allo! What's this? One of their blessed books, I suppose!"

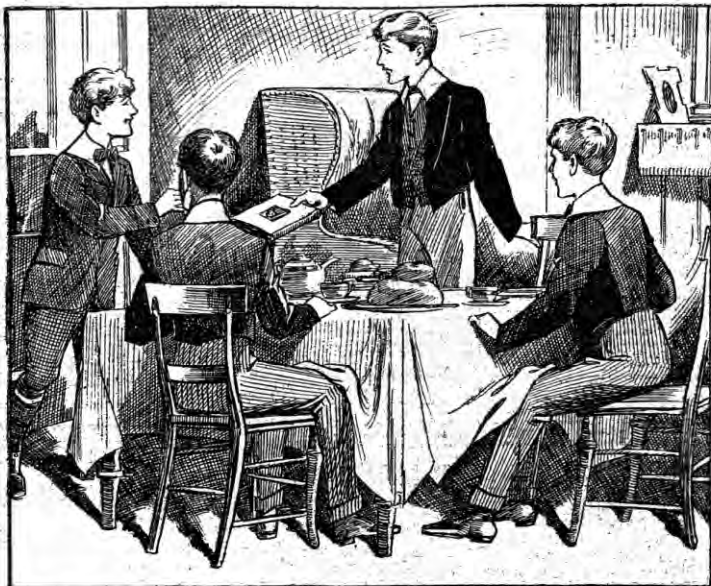
Alf stretched across the desk and reached for Harry Wharton's stamp album, which Dicky Nugent had carelessly thrown down when he had come into the room first of all.

"Stamp-album," muttered Alf, running through the pages. "My eye, ain't there a lot of 'em, too!"

Alf ran through a page after page, and became quite interested in Harry Wharton's precious collection.

"Allo! Wot's this new page stuck in 'ere? War stamps! My eye! I'll 'ave that lot!" And the next moment Alf had torn the sheet of stamps out of the book.

"They look a dozen good 'uns," said Alf, with a grin. "I only 'opes as how the book belongs to one of them whelps wet played that there trick on me!"



"Well, here you are, kid!" said Frank Nugent, handing Wharton's stamp-album to his minor. "Mind you take great care of it, and return it when finished with!" (See Chapter 1.)

And then he placed the stolen property carefully into his jacket-pocket.

"Well, I s'pose I 'ad better get on with that confounded window now," he muttered, throwing the stamp-album back on to the top of the desk. "I only wish I could 'ave those young whelps one by one! My eye!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Loss Discovered!

"NUGENT minor! Nugent! Nugent minor!"

George Gatty, of the Second Form at Greyfriars, came strolling down the passage on the ground floor, and about every five yards he stopped, and bawled out at the top of his voice:

"Nugent! Nugent minor!"
"Ring off, Gatty!" cried young Castle. "Don't make such a blessed row!"

"Nugent! Nugent minor!"
"Dry up! Dicky's just gone into the class-room!"

"Good!" said Gatty, strolling on. "Nugent! Nugent minor! Nugent!"

"Hallo-hallo!" called out Dicky, poking his face out into the passage out of the class-room door. "Somewhere a voice is calling me! What's it want?"

"There you are, you idiot!" exclaimed

Gatty. "Wharton wants you. Says you've got his stamps!"

"My hat!"

"He says he wants his album, and you're to take it back at once!"

"Oh dear!"

"Haven't you got his album?" said Gatty. "I thought he said you borrowed the book yesterday. As it's such a beastly wet afternoon I think those silly fatheads in Study No. 1 want to stick some more stamps in!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Gatty stared at Dicky Nugent.

"You haven't eaten his album, I suppose, have you?" he said. "Why don't you take the blessed thing back right away? He said I was to tell you he's waiting for it."

"Oh, all right!" said Nugent minor.

"As a matter of fact, my major lent me Wharton's album yesterday, and I brought it down here and forgot all about it until just now. I have just come in for it."

"Well, are you going to take it up?"

"Yes, all right, Gatty," replied Dicky Nugent. "I'll take it up now."

And Nugent minor, with the album tucked under his arm, trotted off to Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

He gave a good kick at Harry Wharton's door, and tugged the handle as a yell rang from the inside telling him to come in.

"Wharton here?" cried Dicky, looking round the crowded room.

Study No. 1 was not a bad-sized room, but just now it seemed to be quite full of guests—at least, that is how it struck Nugent minor as he looked from Bob Cherry to Frank, his own brother, and then to Johnny Bill, and, last but not least, Harree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, and one of the most popular juniors at Greyfriars.

"Yes; here I am, you young ass!" came Harry Wharton's voice from the region of the floor.

Dicky Nugent shut the door of the study and walked across the room, to find Harry Wharton and Maulverser, the schoolboy earl, on their knees, and both bending over a little bowl of water with stamps floating in it.

"Hallo!" cried Dicky. "What on earth are you fatheads up to now?"

Harry Wharton looked up, and fixed Dicky Nugent with an icy glare.

"Not quite so much of your blessed cheek!" he growled. "It's about time we took you fags in hand again, and taught you how to speak properly to your elders and superiors!"

"Hear, hear!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, ring off, Cherry!"

"I'll wring your head off, you young boulder!" said Bob. "Why, only this morning that cheeky young idiot Gatty

hugged into me and nearly sent me head-over-heels!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Dicky Nugent. "Serves you right for not looking where you're going!"

"Oh, shut up that silly cackle!" said Harry Wharton irritably. "Have you got my stamp-album?"

"Yes, here you are!" said Dicky, throwing the precious book on to the floor at Wharton's side with a thump, and nearly upsetting the bowl of water.

"Like your blessed cheek to borrow the book, and not return it until it's asked for!"

Dicky Nugent's face went a light tinge of pink.

"I—I'm awfully sorry, Wharton!" he said. "But I—I hadn't finished with it, until young Gatty came along just now and said that you wanted it!"

"Of course I want it, you young idiot!" growled Harry Wharton. "I want to show Mauly my war stamps."

The captain of the Remove scrambled to his feet, and placed the stamp-album on the study table.

"Here you are, Mauly," he said, running through the pages. "I bet you five bob to a penny you haven't got anything like this in your collection!"

Lord Mauleverer leaned over the table at Harry Wharton's side.

"By Jove, you know!" drawled Mauly. "I've only been collectin' for about five years. I can't have everything. But I shall be extremely interested to see these extra-special ones of yours."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Blessed if I can find them now!" he said, running rapidly through the pages again. "The sheet was in the section devoted to Great Britain. What have you done with them, young Nugent?"

"Oh, I've eaten them!" said Dicky, with a grin.

"This isn't a joke!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, after a pause, looking up from

the album, and staring across at Nugent minor with a very steely look.

"Why—why, what do you mean?"

"I mean, my war stamps have gone!" snapped Harry Wharton.

Dicky Nugent's face went crimson, and then suddenly went white.

"You—you mean they're—they're not in that album?" he almost shouted.

"Look through that book," said Harry Wharton, turning to Frank Nugent.

"They must be there, you duffer!" said Nugent major, taking the album up and running through it one page at a time.

"I say they're not!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, striding across to the study door and standing against it, with his arms folded across his breast. "And I know this young rotter is not going to leave until he's handed them over!"

Dicky Nugent whisked round in a fury. "You cad!" he yelled. "You beastly cad! Do you think I've taken your beastly stamps? Do you think I'm a common thief?"

Harry Wharton said nothing, but looked across to his study-mate, who had placed the album down on the table again during his minor's outburst.

"Well, we'll see what Franky has got to say," said Harry Wharton.

"They're not there. It looks as though the page has been torn out."

Dicky Nugent looked from his major to Harry Wharton with a bewildered sort of expression.

"Do you think I've taken them?" he gasped.

"Yes, I do!" cried Harry Wharton. "I know what you blessed fags are! You seem to think you can bone anything you jolly well like! But I'm jolly sure you're not going to leave this room before you hand over those stamps!"

"And you, Franky," murmured Dicky Nugent—"do—do you think I'm—I'm a rotten thief?"

Nugent major winced at the sadness

in his minor's voice, and he suddenly braced himself up.

"Of course I don't, Dicky!" he replied bravely. "And—anybody who dares say you are will have to deal with me!"

"Where are my stamps, you young rotter?" cried Wharton.

"I tell you I haven't got them!" shouted Dicky Nugent. "I don't know where they are! I'm not a thief! You're a cad to say I am! A cad—a C—A—D!"

"Steady, Dicky!" muttered Frank Nugent, catching hold of his minor by the sleeve of his jacket. "We don't want any of that sort of thing here!"

"Where are my stamps?" snapped Wharton. "If you don't land them over at once I'll jolly well search you!"

"That you won't!" exclaimed Nugent major. "You'll leave the kid alone! He says he hasn't got your stamps, and that ought to be sufficient!"

"He might have them," said Bob Cherry. "I remember he said he'd give anything in the world for them." He said that when you handed over the rotten album to him yesterday. I told you not to lend it. I know there would be a beastly row over it!"

"I tell you the kid hasn't got them!" snapped Frank Nugent. "And Wharton's jolly well going to let Dicky out of the study!"

Harry Wharton's face had gone very white.

"He's jolly well going to be searched first!" he said. "If I'm wrong, I'll—I'll apologise!"

"I tell you he's not going to be searched like a blessed low thief!"

"I say he is!"

"I say he isn't, you cad!" cried Frank Nugent, leaving across the study and swinging Harry Wharton violently away from the door.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We don't want to fight amongst ourselves!"

"Steady, my dear fellows!" growled Lord Mauleverer.

"The bifidness is not the proper caper, my esteemed Wharton!" said Harries Singh in his weird and wonderful English.

In the commotion and general noise Dicky Nugent seized the opportunity and flew for the door.

"You cad!" he shouted. "As if I would steal your rotten stamps!"

"Get out!" snapped his major.

"I—I—"

"Shut up, and get outside!" roared Bob Cherry. "Can't you see you've made Frank and Harry quarrel? Run away, you young rotter!"

"You—you cads!" stammered Dicky Nugent. "I'll—I'll make you pay for saying I'm a low thief! You rotters!"

And Dicky shut the door with a resounding bang.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Frank Nugent Appeals to His Minor!

HERE was an embarrassing silence in Study No. 1, and Dicky Nugent's footsteps could be heard quite plainly as he went along the Remove Form passage.

"I'll have another look through the stamp-album," said Bob Cherry at last. "I—I can't exactly think that that kid would pinch them."

"Of course he wouldn't!" snapped Frank Nugent. "And Harry Wharton's a cad for suggesting it!"

"You don't know what these fags will do when they make up their minds to it," replied Wharton, throwing himself into an armchair.

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"But Dicky's my own brother."
"Yes, I know that!" snapped Wharton.
"And I think you ought to keep a closer eye on the young rotter!"

Frank Nugent threatened round in a fury.
"What do you mean by that, you cad?" he roared.

"What I say, of course."
"Here, go steady, you two duffers!" said Johnny Bull. "You two don't want to fight over it. If young Nugent hasn't sneaked them there're sure to turn up!"

"I tell you Dicky hasn't taken them!" roared Frank Nugent.

"Then they'll turn up."
"How can they turn up?" snapped Harry Wharton. "Nugent was a silly fathead to lend the album, anyway, and the best thing he can do is to make his minor hand over the twelve stamps."

Frank Nugent glared at the captain of the Remove.

"Blow your beastly stamps!" he growled. "And blow you!"

"What?" gasped Harry Wharton, jumping up from his chair.

"Hang your twelve war stamps!" cried Nugent. "If you think Dicky would worry himself about your rotten stamp-album you're making a jolly big mistake."

"Then where are they?"

"Hang them!" cried Harry Wharton, stepping forward. "If you talk to me like that I'll throw you out of the room!"

"I should like to see you do it!"

"Very well, you cad!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "You shall see me do it, even if you do share the study with me."

"Hold on, Harry!" cried Cherry, catching hold of his own indignant chum. "You don't want to fight Franky, of all people in the world."

"Then he shouldn't call Dicky a thief!" muttered Frank Nugent between his set teeth.

"Harry didn't exactly say that," said Johnny Bull. "You've both lost your giddy wool, and the best thing you can do is to shake hands now before it gets any worse, and then we can investigate the matter in a proper way."

"That won't find my stamps!" said Wharton, crossly.

"You go and see your minor, Franky," said Bob Cherry quietly. "Perhaps he will be able to tell you something. The kid got excited just now, naturally, and if he thinks it over he may be able to give you a clue."

Frank Nugent frowned.

"All right!" he said, after a pause. "I'll go and see him. I'm sorry, Harry."

"So am I," said Harry Wharton. "Well, shake hands now, and don't be such howling duffers again!" laughed Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent shook hands in silence.

"Brrrr!" went Bob Cherry, shaking his curly head in relief. "Thank goodness your Uncle Bob was here to make the peace. Now, you go along, Franky!"

Nugent left the study, and hurried downstairs to the Second Form. Outside, the class-room door he found Gatty and Wingate minor-carrying on an altercation about the proper division of some marbles that had come into their possession.

"Have you kids seen my minor?" asked Nugent.

"What kids?" asked Wingate minor.

"You, you young rotters!" snapped Frank. "I want to see Dicky at once. Where is he?"

"He's just gone up to the dorm."

Frank Nugent glared at the two lads,

and then turned about and made his way up to the Second Form dormitory.

He kicked open the door with a crash, and strode into the long room, and then he stopped suddenly as he saw Dicky Nugent sitting on one of the beds with his face buried in his hands and sobbing quietly.

"Dicky!" said Frank Nugent tenderly. Nugent minor did not look up as his brother spoke his name, and Frank stepped forward and placed his hand with a kindly touch on his minor's heaving shoulders.

"Dicky," he said, "it's no good making a fuss. Harry Wharton's an ass to say what he did, and when he's thought it over he'll tell you that he's sorry."

"W-Wharton's a cad!" sobbed Dicky.

"But what have you done with the stamps, Dicky?" asked Frank Nugent softly. "You—you—you see, I am to blame as much as you if they're lost, because I lent you the stamp-album, and now that they're gone you must pull yourself together and help me to find them."

"I don't know where they are!" exclaimed Nugent minor. "I didn't even see the blessed things!"

"Then why did you borrow the album?"

"Oh, shut up!" cried Dicky, stepping off the bed. "I've just about heard enough of these rotten stamps. If you think I'm a blessed thief you can go and boil yourself!"

"Shut up talking like that, you young rotter! Hallo! What do you kids want?"

Gatty and Wingate minor had poked their heads into the dormitory, and then they stroled in.

"What's up, Dicky?" cried Gatty, ignoring Frank Nugent's remark.

"The rotten stamps in the Remove think that I'm a rotten thief!" replied Dicky Nugent. "And they've sent my major to spy things out for them!"

"My aunt!" gasped Gatty.

"What's Dicky done with Wharton's war stamps?" asked Frank Nugent. "He borrowed the album yesterday, and now twelve of the stamps are missing!"

"Phew!"

"I tell you I don't know where they are, and I—I jolly well don't care!" cried Dicky. "I know I jolly well haven't seen them!"

"Then one of those rotters in your Form must have taken them!"

"What's that?" cried Wingate minor and Gatty, in the same breath.

"One of you confounded young lads must have boned the stamps!" cried Frank Nugent. "And you've left it to Dicky to shoulder all the blame!"

"Do do, you think we're thieves just because we're lads?"

"Well, where are the stamps, then?"

"Hang your stamps!" roared Wingate minor. "If you think we know anything about them you're making a jolly big mistake!"

"You—you young bouncers!" said Frank Nugent. "It's just like you kids in the Third and Second Forms to do a thing like that, and then leave it to Dicky to take all the blame!"

"We'll jolly well make you pay for that!" cried Wingate minor. "Go and call the chaps up, Gatty! We'll teach these Remove rotters something!"

"Right ho!" cried Gatty, dashing to the door. "Sha'n't be half a tick!"

"Don't you try that sort of thing on me!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, after a pause.

"Well, get out!"

"Not until I have the stamps!"

"You looking dumpy?" cried Dicky Nugent. "How many more times do you

want telling that we don't know where they are?"

"Hand them over, and don't gas so much!" said Frank Nugent wrathfully. "If those young rotters dare to come up here I'll—I'll squash them!"

"Well, the squashing can start at once, you bouncer!" laughed Jack Wingate, as hurried, noisy footsteps could be heard coming up the staircase outside the dormitory.

"You young bouncers!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Rescue!" roared Jack Wingate.

"Help! Rescue!" Gatty burst into the dormitory, and a yelling crowd of excited lads followed closely on his heels.

"Charge!" yelled Gatty. "Here he is!"

"Hands off!" roared Frank Nugent.

The next instant half a dozen lads hurled themselves at him, and there was a whirling mass of arms and legs as the Remove struggled fiercely to shake the attackers off.

"Ow!" gasped Gatty, as Frank's clenched fist came into violent collision with the lad's nose.

"Let me go!" roared Nugent major, as another half-dozen lads pounced on to him.

"Sack him!" roared Tubb.

"Oh!"

Frank Nugent went down with a crash, and a howling mass of lads piled on to him. The Remove struggled violently, and O'Rourke and Bolsover minor went flying through the air as their victim lashed out with his legs, and caught each of them in the chest.

"Come on!" piped Sammy Bunter, sitting down on Frank Nugent's face.

"Let's—Ow! Yarcooh!"

Bunter minor leapt up with a roar as Nugent major's teeth penetrated the seal of his trousers.

"Sack him!" cried Pettifer. "Let him have it!"

"Yarcooh!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Lift him up!" commanded Wingate minor. "We don't want this sort of rubbish in our dorm."

The lads gripped hold of their victim by his arms and legs as Frank Nugent's struggles got weaker and weaker, and at last he was raised from the floor of the dormitory.

"Leggo!" he gasped. "I'll—I'll halt pulverise you for this!"

"Get him safe!" roared Tubb, ignoring Frank Nugent's violent threat of vengeance.

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

"Rather!"

"Out with the rotter, then!" cried Tubb. "Those cads in the Remove make good bouncers! You watch him!"

Frank Nugent, yelling at the top of his voice, was rushed down between the two rows of beds.

"Now, chaps!" roared Tubb, taking supreme command of the battle. "Are you ready?"

"Yes!" came the yell.

"Then let it go!"

Frank Nugent was sent whirling through the air, and he met the unsmiling pathetic passage floor with a violent crash which fairly shook the place.

Bump!

"Ow! Yarcooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the delighted lads. "How do you like it done?"

"Grooh!"

"Now clear off!" cried Jacky Wingate. "And don't you kids in the Remove try it on so much!"

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Nugent staggered up, and

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limped away down the stairs. His collar was gone. The remains of his striped jacket and his trousers were rumpled and dusty, and his tousled hair looked as though he had been put through a chaff-cutting machine. He felt too full for words.

"Come along, chaps!" cried the jubilant Gatty. "We'll hold a meeting now, and see how we stand. Come on, Dicky! We've dealt with your major all right. I can tell you we're fairly on the war-path now. We've dug up the giddy tomahawk, and buried the pipe of peace, and all that sort of thing, with a vengeance."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

The Fags' Meeting.

THE fags, flushed with victory, crowded into the dormitory. The uproar made in the tussle with Frank Nugent had attracted a large number of other members of the Third and Second Forms, and the leaders of the fags had considerable difficulty in clearing a space round one of the beds so that the meeting could be properly addressed.

Dicky Nugent clambered up on to a bed at last, and looked over the eager crowd, and cleared his throat with a little preliminary cough, as he had heard the Head do on occasions of speeches in Hall.

"Gentlemen of the Third and Second Forms—

"Hear, hear!" shouted Gatty.

"Gentlemen of Greyfriars!"

"Oh, get on!"

"Order!"

"Don't interrupt, you chaps! Dicky will go on talking all night if you give him a chance!" cried Jack Wingate.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up, young Wingate!"

"I sha'n't dry up! I—"

"Gentlemen of Greyfriars!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You are called together upon an occasion unprecedented in the history of the great and glorious school to which we belong," said Dicky Nugent.

"My hat!" gasped Bunter minor. "Say that over again, Nugent. Where does he get those words from?"

"I saw him looking them out in a dictionary in class this morning," said Tubb.

"You didn't!" roared Dicky Nugent indignantly.

"What were you looking out in that dictionary, then?"

"It was a French dictionary, and—"

"Oh, was it? My mistake! I thought you were looking out long words for a speech. Where did you get those stammers from?"

"If you want me to speak in words of one syllable—"

"I don't want you to speak at all, as far as I am concerned."

"Shut up, Tubby!" shouted Paget.

"I am not going to shut up for you!" replied Tubb.

"Then I'll jolly soon make you!"

"I'd like to see you do it!"

"Then I'll—"

"Hold on! Stop it, Paget!"

"I'm going to make him shut up!"

"Hold on! We don't want any fighting here!" said Dicky Nugent. "Tubby, shut up for a little while, there's a good chap! If you must go on talking, go out into the quad and talk there. It's raining like blazes, but that won't hurt you!"

"Look here, young Nugent—"

"You can't be allowed to interrupt the meeting. Gentlemen of the Third and Second Forms—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen of the Third and Second Forms—"

"Look here, Dicky Nugent, we've had that often enough," said Myers. "I'm not the chap to interrupt another chap when a chap is making a speech, but if the chap keeps on repeating himself, it's time a chap interrupted the chap to—"

"My hat!" gasped Bolsover minor.

"What a lot of chaps!"

"Don't interrupt me, Bolsover!"

"You're interrupting Dicky Nugent."

"Because he can't get finished. What I say is—"

"Really, young Myers, the meeting isn't interested in what you say, so ring off as soon as you like."

"I—"

"Dry up!"

"I—"

"Shut up!" roared the meeting.

"Now," said Dicky Nugent, "if you

"You are called together—"

"I warned you not to interrupt, you chaps! Now he's starting again at the beginning, and we shall have it all over again," said Wingate minor.

"Shut up, Wingate!"

"I sha'n't do anything of the sort! As a matter of fact, I don't see why young Nugent is making a heasty speech at all. I could explain much more plainly. It requires a fellow of—of—of tact, and all that sort of thing, on an occasion like this—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clique him, somebody!"

"Don't you touch me!" cried Wingate minor.

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"Don't interrupt me, Bolsover!"

"You're interrupting Dicky Nugent."

"Because he can't get finished. What I say is—"

"Really, young Myers, the meeting isn't interested in what you say, so ring off as soon as you like."

"I—"

"Dry up!"

"I—"

"Shut up!" roared the meeting.

"Now," said Dicky Nugent, "if you

"Gentlemen of the Third and Second Forms, you are called here to—"

"Look here, Dicky Nugent, we've had that often enough," said Myers. "I'm not the chap to interrupt another chap when a chap is making a speech, but if the chap keeps on repeating himself, it's time a chap interrupted the chap to—"

"My hat!" gasped Bolsover minor.

"What a lot of chaps!"

"Don't interrupt me, Bolsover!"

"You're interrupting Dicky Nugent."

"Because he can't get finished. What I say is—"

"Really, young Myers, the meeting isn't interested in what you say, so ring off as soon as you like."

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"Shut up!" roared the meeting.

"Now," said Dicky Nugent, "if you

"Gentlemen of the Third and Second Forms, you are called here to—"

"Look here, Dicky Nugent, we've had that often enough



Harry Wharton, in the passage outside, tapped furiously at the door. "What are you young bounders doing?" he shouted. "Searching for your blessed war stamps!" replied the leader of the fags. (See Page 10.)

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ragging the Removites!

"SSH! Don't make a row!" Dicky Nugent crept into Study No. 1, and the rest of the raiders crept after him in file. They had come along the Remove passage on tiptoe, and as they passed Study No. 13 they heard the voices of Harry Wharton & Co. quite plainly. Harry Wharton was evidently on a visit to Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Singh, and Wun Lung, who shared Study No. 13. Dicky could not distinguish his major's voice, and he concluded that Frank had retired to the Remove dormitory to clean himself up after the ragging he had received.

The raiders arrived in Study No. 1 safe and sound.

"Shut the door, Paget!" whispered Dicky.

"Right-ho!" "My giddy aunt! Just look at this lot!" cried Dicky Nugent, opening a basket on the study table.

The raiding-party looked into it, and exchanged glances of satisfaction.

"My hat!" said Wingate minor. "Pickles, ham, tongue! Good!" "And cold beef!" said O'Rourke. "And rabbit-pie! Oh, good!"

"This will suit us down to the ground," said Dicky Nugent, with a broad grin. "Look that blessed door!" "Then let 'em all come!" said Gatty. "They won't get into this room in a hurry. The door isn't quite so strong

as the old oak doors of the class-rooms, but I think it's strong enough to stand anything Wharton & Co. can do."

"I fancy so," said Jack Wingate, jamming the back of a chair under the lock for additional security. "Now for an early tea. These rainy half-holidays always make me feel hungry!"

"So they do me!"

"And I'm famished!" said O'Rourke. The food did not take long to prepare. Dicky Nugent had to light the fire, and, as there was no fuel at hand, he was compelled to break up a cage he found in a corner. The cage had once contained white rabbits, but it was untenanted now, and it served the purpose nicely.

"Very forgetful of these bounders in the Remove not to supply fuel!" Dicky Nugent remarked, with a shake of the head.

"Ha, ha! If you want any more fuel, here's a bookcase!"

"No! I think this will be all right. The kettle's nearly boiling."

The tea was soon ready. The six fags had settled down at the table when there was a hand on the door. The handle rattled, and as the door did not open there was a savage kick at the lower panels.

"Open this door!" shouted Harry Wharton from outside.

Kick! Bang! Thump!

"Open this door!" roared Bob Cherry's voice.

"Anybody there?" called out Dicky Nugent.

"Yes, you young bounder—I'm Cherry!"

"Sure!" asked Dicky Nugent.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Well, you might be plum, you know, or strawberry!"

The raiders giggled, and Bob Cherry, in the passage, muttered things. He kicked savagely at the door.

"Will you let me in?"

"Can't be did. We're having tea!"

"What?" roared Harry Wharton.

"Are you deaf? I should advise you bounders in the Remove to consult a specialist!"

"You—you—you—"

"Deafness can always be cured if taken in time. I should recommend—"

"Will you open the door?"

"Eh? The door? Oh no!"

Bump! Thump, thump!

"Pass the ham," said Dicky Nugent.

This tongue is ripping. Another cup of tea please, Tubby!

"Here you are."

"Thanks! Good tea, this."

"Yes, rather! And the ham—"

"Ripping!"

The clicking of knives and forks and teacups was quite audible through the study door. In the passage, Harry Wharton & Co. glared at each other in helpless rage. They were perplexed. If the fags did not choose to let them into the study they could not get in. They might have vengeance presently, but just now—just now the fags were enjoying a hearty feed.

Thump, thump, thump!

Harry Wharton bumped, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull kicked, and all of them raved; but all without effect. The door remained closed, and from within still sounded the merry voices, the click of crockery, and the various sounds of the feed.

"Another cup of tea, old dear!"

"Certainly."

"Pass the ham. What ripping ham!"

"Spiffing! Those Remove fellows do themselves jolly well. Hallo! Sounds like somebody making a row in the passage. I wonder if it's anybody wants to come in?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton's voice came rumbling through the keyhole. The captain of the livery was nearly choking with rage. Fellows were collecting in the passage to look on at the signs of the study. The raid of the fags excited curiosity; but not very much amusement. The Removites were quivering with fury.

"If you open this door now, you young bounders, I will let you off!"

"Eh? I'm not a cracker!" said Dicky Nugent. "I don't want to be let off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you open this door?"

"We're having tea."

"I'll—I'll give you a jolly good hiding!"

"Sorry we can't ask you in, Wharton! We really haven't enough for a guest; and, besides, this'll teach you not to call me a thief!"

"I'll squash you!"

"Did you speak?"

"I'll—I'll pulverise you!"

"Anybody there?"

"Open this door!"

Sounds like somebody in the passage, you fellows? Anybody there?"

Harry Wharton was almost suffocated with rage. There was a crowd up and down the passage now, Wharton stamped on the floor.

"I'll pulverise them!" he cried. "Oh, my word! If I could only get hold of them! Wait till I get the door open—that's all!"

It was a terrific noise within the study, and a crash of an upset table and smashing crockeryware.

Harry Wharton jumped.

"What on earth's that?"

Crash, crash!

Wharton stamped furiously at the door. "What are you young bounders doing?"

"Searching for your rotten war stamps!"

"What?"

"You told me to find 'em! You'll think I'm a blessed thief if I don't! We've searched the table, for a start. We've finished tea, thank you!"

"I—I—I—"

"I'm afraid some of the crocks are broken. That's through being so thorough in the search."

Harry Wharton gasped with rage. He knew that the fags were deliberately wrecking his study. Dicky Nugent seemed to be the ringleader. He seemed to be under a cloud, anyway, and so, no doubt, Dicky Nugent's idea was to avenge himself beforehand.

The fags had cleared the table by the simple expedient of tilting it over, and sending everything upon it into the grate. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent's crockeryware suffered, of course; but, as Dicky Nugent remarked, they had not induced matters in their accusations against him. If they thought that the fags were thieves and generally dishonest people, they must expect to take the consequences.

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"We'll search for those blessed stamps through the cupboard next," said Dicky Nugent. "Hand me that broom!"

Gatty handed him the broom.

Dicky Nugent searched the cupboard by the simple method of thrusting into it the head of the broom, and dragging out everything movable.

Crash on crash upon the floor warned the unhappy Removites that the cupboard was being searched through very thoroughly.

Jacky Wingate cocked his eye thoughtfully at the glass over the mantelpiece. "I suppose the stamps haven't been poked behind that!" he remarked. "We want to make a thorough job of it, and, of course, Wharton's war stamps might be behind there. Can you see how it's fastened, Gatty?"

"Yes; two brass-headed nails in the wall."

"Then it ought to come down easily enough."

Wingate minor thrust the poker behind the glass and wrenched. There was a yell from Gatty.

"Look out!"

"What's the matter?"

"You'll smash it!"

"Dang me!"

Crash!

The glass came down with a rum upon the overturned table. There was a smashing and a shattering that could be heard the length of the corridor.

Thump, thump, thump!

Harry Wharton was attacking the door again. The crashing in the study almost made him weep with rage. But the door was fast, and the fags in the study showed no disposition to open it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Ragers' Retreat!

NOW, what about the bookcase?" asked O'Rourke.

Well, the bookcase ought to be turned out, I suppose!"

"I suppose so. Load a hand."

The bookcase was tilted forward, and the books and papers shot out in a shower upon the carpet, along with a couple of drawers from which writing materials and ink and pens distributed themselves among the ruins.

The fags of Greyfriars looked round with much satisfaction.

"We're getting on," Dicky Nugent remarked.

"Hs, ha! Looks like it!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Hallo! That sounds like a gentle tap at the door! Anybody there?"

"Let me in!" came Harry Wharton's muffled voice through the keyhole.

"Can't be did, my son! We're searching for your rotten war-stamps."

"Stop it!" howled Wharton.

"Stop what?"

"Let the study alone!"

"But I'm searching for your blessed stamps."

Harry Wharton gnashed his teeth, and the crowd of Removites in the passage set up a howl of execration on the fags. "You can let it alone!" shrieked Wharton. "I don't want you to search for the stamps!"

"Now you're talking," said Dicky Nugent heartily. "Are you quite sure you don't want us to search for the stamps?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Are you absolutely sure?"

"Yes."

"You take back your accusation against me!"

"Yes!" roared Harry Wharton. It was the only way to save the rest of his goods, he knew; but it was a bitter pill

to swallow having to submit to the dictation of the fags of the Third and Second Forms.

"Good! And you won't bear malice for what we've done if you don't quite like the way we've searched for your twelve blessed war stamps?"

"N-n-n-n!"

"You won't go for us in any way when the door is opened?"

Harry Wharton was silent.

"Dead again, Wharton?" asked Dicky Nugent pleasantly.

"I'll—I'll pulverise you, you young cads!" howled Wharton.

"Oh! You won't make it pay?"

"No!" yelled Harry Wharton, shaking furiously at the handle of the study door. "Open this door, you young bounders! I'll give you such a whacking for this!"

Crash!

Harry Wharton gave a gasp. He knew that it was the smash of his bookcase, and he guessed that the table had been toppled over on it.

"Stop it, you young scoundrels!"

"Will you make it pay?"

"No!" roared Harry Wharton. "No, I won't!"

Crash!

It was the sound of a clock falling into the grate.

Harry Wharton roared in rage.

"Stop it! I-I-I'll make it pay!"

"Pax! Honour bright, Wharton!"

"Yes!" snapped Harry Wharton. "Open the door!"

"Half a tick, you fellows!" whispered Dicky Nugent, going to the window and flinging it open. He leaned out over the sill, and waved his hand to Myers and his party, who were standing below with Gosling's ladder ready for any emergency.

"It's all O.K.!" shouted Dicky Nugent. "Let 'em have the ladder back, and make for the Common-room. We'll be down in a jiffy!"

And Dicky bobbed back into the wrecked study, and slammed the window down with a bang.

"Open this door!" howled Harry Wharton.

"Right ho!"

The door was flung open, and Harry Wharton rushed furiously into the study, and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull followed closely on his heels.

"You young scoundrels!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Harry's given you his word not to touch you, and he'll keep it his word; but I'm not handing you any pax from me!"

Bob Cherry dashed across the wreckage with the intention of slaying the raiders, but he suddenly stopped.

Dicky Nugent and his chums had not been careless enough to trust to getting away from the Remore passage without some sort of retaliation being attempted by the indignant Removites. It was true Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remore, had pledged his word to make it pax, and the fags knew that Harry Wharton's word was his bond; and they felt a little happier now that they need not consider him as a likely foe. But it was best to be prepared, and they were right!

Dicky Nugent had the poker in his hand, and it had been between the bars for the last ten minutes, and so was glowing red with heat at the end. Wingate minor had the tong, equally red-hot at the tip. Gatty had armed himself with a second poker, O'Rourke was trusting to a hammer, and Tubbs had a shovel—all those implements were glowing red with heat. Pagot had armed himself with a large bottle of ink.

Bob Cherry rushed at them blindly.

and only stepped just on hand to save himself from the red-hot poker.

Dicky Nugent flourished the glowing tip before his face.

"Hold on, Cherry!"

Bob bumped back with a gasp.

"Put that poker down!" he roared.

"No fear!"

"Put it down, or—"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry gave his curly head a good shake, and then came forward again. The poker was lifted, and he receded. He grunted his tooth.

"Very well, I'll wait!" he said, nonplussed for the moment.

"Not much, you won't!" said Dicky Nugent, coolly. "You'll scold, or I'll warm you! Out you go!"

"What?"

"Get out!"

"I won't! I—"

"I'm afraid you'll get burned if you don't! There, I told you so! And there, again! If you get in the way of a hot poker you are bound to get burned!"

"Owl! Owl! Owl!"

"There, again!"

"Owl! Owl!"

"Come on!" cried Dicky Nugent to his loyal followers. "Stick together closely, and jab anybody who tries to stop you with something red-hot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!" gasped Dicky Nugent. "Look at this mob out here!"

The Remove passage was simply packed with Removites, who had been attracted to the spot by the uproar that had been going on on both sides of the door of Study No. 1.

"Out of the way!" yelled Dicky Nugent, brandishing his red-hot poker.

"Owl! Look out!"

"Catch hold of the rotters, somebody!" shrieked Harry Wharton.

"They've done my study in!"

"The catchfulness is the proper caper!" cried Hurtle Singh. "The ludicrous fags will get it in the neck punchfully!"

"Stand away!" howled Dicky, steering his way through the crowd, and brandishing the red-hot poker in wide sweeps.

"Stop him!" shrieked John Bull.

The Removites were kept at bay, but the crack in the passage was terrific, and the retreating fags could barely make any progress. They kept close together, and waved their red-hot implements to within a few inches of the howling Removites. This manoeuvre allowed them to move down the passage slowly but surely.

"Get ready to run for it as soon as we're through this lot!" muttered Dicky Nugent. "They won't half want our blood for this little show!"

"Catch those fags!" yelled Frank Nugent, who had evidently just come down from the dormitory, where he had been changing his clothes after his tussle with the fags. The sight of his study nearly gave Frank a fit.

"Stand clear!" roared Dicky, putting his red-hot poker to within an inch of Billy Bunter's face now.

"Oh!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"Get out of the way, you fat bouncer!" laughed Dicky.

Slowly they wended their way down the Remove passage, and at last, to Dicky Nugent's intense joy and relief, they were within a few yards of the staircase, which would lead them to the safety of their class-room.

"Now, you chaps!" shouted Dicky Nugent. "Make a run for it!"

"Hurrah!"

The fags flew down the stairs, and a howl of rage went up from the outraged Removites.

After them! roared Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.

"Rather! Scalp 'em!"

The fags had almost reached the foot of the stairs by the time the leading Removites gained the top, and they poured along to the Common-room, where Myers was waiting for them with a small army of fags.

"Come on, Dicky!" roared the fags. "This way!"

The raiding party arrived at the door panting for breath, and they were whirled into the room in a flash.

"Shut the door!" gasped Dicky. "And shove up a barricade. They are properly out for our blood, I can tell you. We've fairly done in Study No. 1 this time. This'll teach them to say I've stolen their rotten stamps! Hallo! Who owns this rag?"

And Dicky pointed to a coat and bowler-hat hanging up on a hook on the back of the door.

"Oh, that belongs to that bouncer who mended the window yesterday! Our friend Alf, you know! He's just come in again to paint the putty. You remember he's the fellow who got the fire-bucket in the neck, and then lost his rag!"

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Dicky's face went suddenly white. "Goodness!" he gasped. "I—I wonder! My hat! I wonder!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Gallant Defence!

"WHAT on earth are you mumping about!" said Myers.

"My was wondering."

"So you said; but what are you wondering?"

"I was just wondering—"

"So am I, you fathead!" interrupted Myers. "I'm just wondering whether you've gone off your rocker since you've been up against those odds in the Remove."

"Out of the way, there!" cried Tubb, pushing Dicky Nugent clear of the door. "We shall want to shove about a dozen of these blessed forms against the door."

"Here's another!" exclaimed Sammy Bunter. "He, he! I call this jolly exciting! A regular barning-out!"

Bang, bang!

There was a violent kick on the oak door outside, and Bob Cherry's voice could be heard raised in anger.

"They've barred themselves in!" he roared. "Come on, you chaps, lend a hand!"

"Crack!"

The door gave a tremor as the angry Removites piled themselves up against it.

"That's good enough!" said Dicky Nugent. "But we had better be on the safe side and shove another couple of forms against it."

The excited fags carried out Dicky's advice in a moment, and now there was a great pile of desks barricading the doorway door.

"Bump! Thump, thump!"

"Ever been had?" cried Dicky to the enraged Removites.

"Open this door, you young rotters!"

"Oh!"

"Open this door!"

"Rats!"

"Blessed if I can see what these bouncers can do!" said Dicky Nugent, as there was a period of considerable peace in the corridor outside. "They can't burst in the door, in the door. Even if they did, we could lam them one by one as they clambered in!"

"And we jolly well would, too!" said Gatty.

"Yes, rather!"

"Bob Cherry's up to something," said Dicky Nugent. "Keep your peepers open. Look out for the giddy Huns!"

"My hat!" gasped Wingate minor suddenly, looking out of the window. "Here they come! The windows! Quick!"

"Let 'em all come!" roared the fags, flying across to the windows.

The Removites had evacuated the passage, and had crept round the outside of the building, and had run a couple of ladders up to the windows.

There were three separate windows in the class-room. Alf Arkwright, the plumber's assistant was at one of them. He was supposed to be painting the putty-work which he had put in on the previous afternoon; but there was too much excitement in the air for Alf, and he was taking much more interest in the defence of the room than he was in the work he had on hand.

The Removites had advanced in force.

"Phew! This looks like bizney!" said Myers.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull had rushed the ladders forward, and they had been planted under two of the windows before the fags that an attack was to be expected from that quarter. They were not long ladders, and although the distance to the ground was only a few yards, the tops of the ladders did not reach quite to the window-sills.

The fags made a rush to the windows, and stood waiting. Dicky Nugent had seized a fire-bucket, and Myers had done likewise.

"There's another couple of these blessed things in the corner," cried Dicky. "Bring 'em up! We shall want a reserve."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fags stood waiting, with the two buckets ready, brimful of water. The aspect of those buckets did not look inviting to the Removites below, who were gnashing their teeth with anger now that the fags' had been discovered.

"I'll hold the ladder for you, Cherry," said Tom Brown.

"And I'll hold this one for you, Bull," said Fish.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull decidedly. "You go up first, Fishy, and we'll back you up."

"Back you up like anything!" said Billy Bunter bravely.

"Look here, I guess—"

"Of course, if you're afraid!" sneered Johnny Bull.

The American junior snorted.

"I guess I'm not afraid, you galoot!" he cried. "You hold this here ladder!"

The American junior mounted to the assault, keeping a nervous eye on Dicky Nugent, who was holding the bucket all ready to tilt.

"I guess you can surrender now, you cheeky young fags," said Fish. "Fish persuasively. 'You've done the damage, and now you've got to pay for it!'"

"I'm going to pay in water," said Dicky Nugent cheerfully.

"I guess you'd better give in—"

"That's because you're a Yank, then!" laughed Dicky. "Do Yanks always give in, Fishy?"

"No jolly fear!" said Fish promptly.

"Well, now do we! Keep back, Fishy: you're going to get wet!"

Fisher Tattleton Fish grunted as the ladder swayed a bit; but he came on, and now Bob Cherry was swarming up the other ladder to the accompaniment of loud cheers of encouragement from the crowd of Removites below.

"Give 'em beans!" yelled Dicky Nugent.

Swoosh, swoosh!

The two buckets tilted over, and Fish, with a howl, slid down the ladder and bumped into Johnny Bull and sent him flying.

Fish gave a roar. But the American junior had suffered worse than this before now, and he was not to be so easily beaten. Swimming in water, he came clambering on.

O'Rourke handed Dicky Nugent a second brimming bucket, and Dicky promptly swamped it over the American junior, whose head was now level with the window.

Fish spluttered and gasped and choked. But he came on, and his head was thrust in at the window.

Gatty caught up a big broom which Alf Arkwright had brought into the classroom to sweep up the rubbish with.

With an utter recklessness of results, Fishy charged at the Removite. If Fisher T. Fish had stopped to receive that charge he would have had cause to remember it. He dived in time below the window-sill. Gatty leaned over and jammed the broom on the top of his head.

"Gee-whizz!" roared the American junior.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yarooop!"

Flesh and blood could not stand it. The ladder swayed as the Removite wildly dodged the smites of the broom.

He went bounding down the ladder, and Gatty, skilfully hooking the head of the broom into the rungs, jerked the ladder away from the wall and sent it trundling down.

"Hurrah!" roared the fags.

"Back up!" yelled Myers from the other window.

At that spot the defence was not so fortunate. Bob Cherry and Bulstrode had come rushing up the ladder so swiftly that Myers' second bucket of water was caught by Bob Cherry and twisted over upon himself.

Myers backed away, drenched, and Bob Cherry clambered in at the window.

Dicky Nugent, Paget, and Tubbs seized him instantly, but he rolled right in, still struggling with the fags.

"Back up, Bulstrode!" yelled Cherry. Bulstrode was half in at the window when Gatty rushed up with his broom.

The rough head of the broom caught Bulstrode full on the chest. He went out of the window again like a shot, clinging to the sill.

"Yow-ow! Stop it!" he shrieked, as Gatty's broom hammered on his fingers.

"Yow! I shall fall! Oh, my hat! Help!"

Whack came the broom on Bulstrode's head. The burly Removite gave a wild shriek and slid down the ladder. He had had enough.

In the room a terrific struggle was going on between Bob Cherry and the fags.

Gatty did not heed it for the moment. He leaped from the window and hooked the second ladder away with the broom and sent it whirling, and the Removites below dodged it as it fell. The attack was repulsed—unless Bob Cherry could overcome the whole of the fags of the Third and Second Forms in single combat. It looked as if he could not.

The fighting-man of the Removite was going it hammer and tongs, hitting out with all his strength, and some of the fags had been knocked right and left, with grievous damage. But six or seven of them were clinging to Bob Cherry like cats, and they had got him down on the floor, and were scrambling and sprawling all over him.

"You—you young scallwags!" roared the indignant Bob. "Gerroff! I'll—get out! Let me get 'll! Go! Yow-ow! Wot! Oh dear! Get off! Yow!"

"Go him!" panted Myers. "I'll teach him to drench me, the boulder!"

Gimme, another pail of water for the rotter!"

"Hold on!" said Dicky Nugent.

"He's drenched me!" roared Myers. "I'm going to drench him!"

"Yes, but—"

"Rats! Gimme a pail of water!"

"Bathead! Put some soot in it first!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Myers. "Good! Hold the boulder tight!"

"That bloke's 'ad enough of it!" cried Alf Arkwright, pushing his way through the fags. He had evidently completed his job.

"What's it got to do with you, you boulder?"

"That bloke's 'ad enough!" said Alf. "And you ain't goin' to touch 'im with that soot!"

"You jest leave 'im alone!" said Alf.

"E put up a good fight, and wot you young rotters 'ave got you deserve, and a good bit more, too."

"Oh!"

"You leave that bloke alone, and let me get out of this 'ere, quick!"

"He's going to have the soot," said Dicky Nugent. "If they don't like it, they shouldn't say 'I'm a blessed thief!'"

"A thief, eh?" said Alf.

"Yes, he's a blessed stealer of stamps, too!" said Dicky angrily.

Alf Arkwright's mouth gaped open in astonishment.

"They—they thinks as 'ow you took the stamps, do they?" he said. "You as who played that trick on me yesterday! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you idiot?" roared Dicky Nugent, as Alf Arkwright went into peals of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! They thinks as 'ow you took the stamps, do they?"

"Yes, you silly ass."

"That's why they've been goin' for yer, is it?" Ha, ha, ha."

"My hat!" gasped Dicky Nugent, "I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's a good 'un, that is!"

"I—I think I can see through this, you chaps. Blessed if the idea didn't enter my noddle when I saw this chap's rotten coat hanging up on the door."

"What are you talking about, Dicky?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Alf Arkwright.

"That's the rotter who has got Harry Wharton's stamps!" cried Dicky, point-

ing an accusing finger at Alf, who was rocking with merriment. "I can see through it now. I left Wharton's album down here yesterday, and when this chap came into the room to mend that blessed window Gatty broke he must have boxed the stamps."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Seize him!" roared Dicky. "Have the rotter over!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Recovering the Missing Stamps!

"A NDS or!" yelled Alf Arkwright.

"Come on!" cried Dicky Nugent.

The fags hurled themselves at Alf, and in a moment he was bowled over, and he crashed to the floor with a bump.

"Ow!"

"Let him go!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, scrambling up from the floor now that the fags were preoccupied with their fresh victim.

"Look out!" cried Dicky Nugent. "Some of you chaps settle that Removite boulder! We've got this chap safe!"

Half a dozen of the fags obeyed Dicky's new order, and Bob Cherry, still puffing and blowing from his recent struggle, was quickly on the floor once more, with a victorious load of laughing fags sitting on his chest and legs.

"Leggo!" roared Alf Arkwright, struggling violently. "You young 'ounds, leggo, or I'll—I'll—"

"Dry up, you boulder!" snapped Dicky Nugent.

"You let me get hoit of this 'ere room at once!"

"Not if I know it!"

Bump! Thump, thump!

The attack from the Removites in the passage outside was being resumed, and the class-room door shook and quivered under the hammer-blows and kicks being showered upon it.

"Watch that barricade, some of you!" cried Fatty. "Lunn, you slacker, stand by the window and do sentry!"

"Alf right!" said Lunn.

"Now you rotter!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent to Alf Arkwright. "Did you sneak that page of stamps out of an album left in here yesterday?"

"You let me get up!"

"Where are those stamps?"

"I ain't goin' to say!"

"Search the boulder!" shouted Bolsover minor.

"I think we will," said Dicky Nugent. "He doesn't deny having sneaked them, and if he has got them we are quite justified."

"You let me go!" roared Alf, trying to dislodge the fags sitting on him.

"There's his coat," said Paget. "It's hanging on the door, Bunter. Take it down and have a look for the sheet of stamps!"

Sammy Bunter clambered up on the piled-up desks at the door and snatched down Alf Arkwright's coat.

"Buck up, you fat dummy!" cried Paget.

Bunter minor dived his fat hand into the side-pockets, and drew blank.

"Try his notebook!"

The notebook in the breast-pocket was taken out in a twinkling, and Sammy opened it, and Harry Wharton's precious sheet of war stamps was revealed, dumfily folded up, the back of the sheet showing obvious signs of Alf's greasy hands.

"My hat!" cried Dicky Nugent, "Got 'em!"

"Hurrah!"

"You let me go, you young scoundrels!" roared Alf. "You shouldn't 'ave played that trick on me yesterday! Let me go!"

"Not much, you bouncer!" cried Dicky Nugent, taking the precious sheet of stamps from Sammy Bunter. "You've caused all this trouble, so now you've got to see it through. My aunt! Just bark at those bouncers outside!"

The Removites in the passage were attacking the door with might and main, and it sounded as though the fouling against the sags was running higher and higher, as the defence of the class-room continued.

"They want our blood!" laughed Jacky Wingate.

"Open the door!" came a roar from without.

"Now's the time for a conference!" said Dicky Nugent. "If we don't bargain with those bouncers they'll just about spifficate us for all this! Here, pass over that stick, young Castle!"

Castle handed Dicky Nugent a stick lying on the floor, and the leader of the fags took out a grubby handkerchief from his pocket and tied it crudely on to the end of the stick.

"What's that for?" gasped Myers. "A blessed white flag. You're not going to surrender, are you?"

"Not much!" laughed Dicky. "A little armistice must be arranged first."

Dicky Nugent clambered up on to the barricade, and pulled open the fan-light over the top of the door, and poked his white flag through into the passage.

There was a gasp of surprise from the angry Removites outside, and then Dicky's voice rang out.

"Now then, you bouncers!" he cried. "Is Wharton there?"

"Yes, you young rotter!" shouted the captain of the Remove. "Do you cheeky bouncers want to surrender?"

"Not much!" replied Dicky. "But we're willing to call a conference. Your blessed war stamps have been found. A blighter sent to mend the window sneaked them yesterday."

"You've got them!" shouted Wharton, in obvious relief.

"Yes, old sport!"

"Then hand them over, and take your gruel for your blessed cheek! You're all going to get it in the neck for this! You've absolutely smashed my study in! Hand those stamps over at once!"

"Not much!" replied Dicky. "We've got the stamps, and we've got a hostage. Cherry's in here!"

"Rescue!" roared Bob Cherry, from the floor of the class-room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now," said Dicky Nugent through the skylight, "what's it going to be? Pax all round!"

"No!" roared the Removites.

"All right, then!" said Dicky. "We've still got the whip-hand over you bouncers. We'll try a little bargaining."

"Why—why—What—what do you mean?" spluttered Harry Wharton.

"I don't suppose you want your pal Cherry to get it in the neck any more, do you?"

"What are you getting at, you young rotter?"

"We're bargaining."

"B-b-bargaining!"

"Yes. If you make it pax now, and promise to let the whole binner drop, you can have Cherry back as he is, and the sheet of stamps as well."

"You—you—"

"Is it a go?"

"No!" roared Harry Wharton angrily. "You—you've done my study in, and goodness knows what! Do you think we're going to be dictated to by a lot of cheeky fags?"

"Is it a go?"

"No!" roared the Removites, and a

fresh attack was made upon the barricaded door.

"All right!" shouted Dicky. "We'll try our number one stunt first. Anybody out there with those blessed ladders, Lunn?"

The sentry stationed at the window peered out.

"Yes; there's still a few of the bouncers below."

"Then Cherry can join them!" said Dicky Nugent. "Now then, chaps!"

"Help!" roared Bob Cherry. "Rescue—rescue, Remove!"

Bob was helpless now. On each arm and leg there were two pairs of hands grasping him hard.

"Get the medicine!" cried Dicky. Conrad rushed forward with a bucket of water. Wingate minor seized a shovel and scraped out of the chimney a generous dose of soot. The soot was shovelled into the water, and mixed up till it was nearly as thick as glue.

"Ready?" sang out Dicky Nugent. "Stand clear!"

The fags crowded back as Dicky Nugent swung up the pail of sooty water. Bob Cherry sat up breathlessly just as the torrent came drenching down. A dismal howl came from the Removite. He was smothered. Two-thirds of the bucket of sooty water had swamped upon him, and he had changed with amazing suddenness into a negro, to judge by appearances, at least. His features disappeared under the blackness, and his clothes reeked with wet soot.

"Ooooooooh!" mumbled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now pitch him out!"

"Blessed if I like to touch him!"

"Kick him till he climbs out!" said Gatty.

"Good egg!"

Dicky Nugent started with the broom, Myers with the tongs, and Hop Hi with the shovel, and the rest with their boots.

The blackened Removite staggered up, and was driven to the window under a volley of kicks, shoves, and smites.

"Stop!" he shrieked. "The ladder's gone!"

"You can drop out!" grinned Dicky Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't! Oh! Yah! Ow!"

"Go!" shouted Dicky Nugent.

"Ow—ow!" moaned the unhappy Bob.

He dropped, and rolled over on the ground, followed by a wild shriek of laughter from the excited fags. Bob's cries for help and the swoosh of the sooty bucket had made the Removites without more inflamed with anger than ever, and kicks and thumps were being rained upon the door without ceasing.

"Now number two bargain!" said Dicky Nugent. "Where's that blessed white flag?"

"Here you are!"

Dicky Nugent clambered up to the fan-light, and the grubby handkerchief was again pushed out into the passage.

"Now then, you bouncers!" cried Dicky. "Not quite so much noise from your fatheads in the Remove! We've just posted Cherry to you!"

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

"You—you young scoundrels!" gasped Wharton. "What have you done to Bob?"

"Ask Cherry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll spifficate you, you young bouncers!"

"This flag's to call another conference!" explained Dicky Nugent coolly.

"We want peace. Will you make it pax!"

"No!"

"Then, now we've settled with Cherry, we'll settle with your rotten stamps!"

"Why—why, what do you mean?" gasped Wharton.

"Is it pax, or is it not?"

"Eh?"

"Pax or not?" repeated Dicky Nugent. "If it's pax, you can have your stamps back. If it's not pax, your blessed stamps are going to be consumed by fire!"

"You—you—"

"Here they are!" shouted Dicky, holding up the sheet of twelve stamps. "Light a match, Tubby, old sport!"

Tubby was standing up on the barricade, and peering through the glass of the fan-light, and he quickly complied with Dicky's command.

The match flared up, and Harry Wharton & Co. from below could see it quite plainly.

"Now," said Dicky, "is it pax?"

"N-no. Y-yes. N-no!" gasped Wharton.

"Make up your mind!" said Nugent minor. "Pax for us all and your stamps back; no pax, no stamps!"

"Burnee—burnee up!" shouted Hop Hi, the Chinese junior.

"You—you young rotters!" gasped Wharton.

"Well, what's it to be?"

The captain of the Remove looked helplessly around, and the crowd of Removites remained silent. They were non-plussed. Cheek such as this from the fags had never been dreamt of.

"Light another match!" ordered Dicky. "This one'll do it!"

Tubby struck a second match, and Dicky held up the sheet of stamps.

"Stop!" roared Wharton. "Stop!"

"What's it to be?"

"Pax, you young scoundrel!"

"Are you speaking for the whole of the Remove?"

"Yes," gurgled the captain of the Remove. "It—it's pax!"

"Right!" said Dicky. "Here's the twelve stamps!"

The precious sheet floated down upon the heads of the silent Removites, and Harry Wharton recovered it, and slowly the crowd dispersed.

Dicky Nugent clambered down.

"Now, where's that rotter Alf?"

"Gone!" said Pettifer, with a grin.

"Gone!"

"Yes; we dropped him out of the window whilst you were doing your blessed bargaining!"

"Oh!"

"Cheer up, you bouncer!" cried Wingate minor, slapping the despondent-looking Dicky Nugent on the shoulder.

"It doesn't matter about Alf now. We're top dogs! Those rotters in the Remove have been dished, duddled, and done!"

"Hurrah!" roared the fags again and again.

And in the studies in the Remove passage the voices of the triumphant fags could be heard in a pean of victory.

And there was weeping and gnashing of teeth in Study No. 1 as the captain of the Remove and Frank Nugent, his study-mate, stood regarding that wrecked apartment.

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"The—the young rotter!" muttered Harry Wharton. "But I'm glad I was wrong, Frank. I—I was wrong to think that that cheeky young minor of yours had sneaked my twelve stamps!"

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE GOLDEN CLUE!"—next Monday's "Grand Long Complete Story of Greyfriars School—by FRANK RICHARDS.")

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 604.

had ever seen him since, which is saying quite a lot.

Everything seemed to Larking to be in working order. He was Snipe about it all, though. It occurred to him now that there was next term to be considered. What would happen then?

Snipe did not appear to have thought of that. But Larking was not aware of something that had entered largely into the calculations of Snipe.

This was Snipe's last term at Ryecliffe. He had only gone that a week or two, and he had not told Larking.

It might be awkward for Larking when the school reassembled, but it would not trouble Snipe, two hundred miles away!

Fallen Into a Trap.

THE long, hot, busy day was over at last, and the Grammarians went up to their dormitories for the last time for some eight weeks or so.

Some of them were in riotous mood, and, as for much notice was taken of none on the last night of term. It was a considerable time before most dormitories settled down.

But in No. 29 there was no rioting. There was, indeed, very little talk.

Bugs and Tricks and Wagtail had all noticed that Goggles seemed to be beyond his wont. But they had no definite notion that anything was troubling him, and Wagtail had forgotten for the time being his suspicions of Snipe.

That Larking and Carpenter were having nothing to say to Snipe surprised no one—Snipe least of all.

Soon all but three in the dormitory were asleep. Goggles, Snipe, and Larking were the wakeful ones, of course.

It was close upon midnight when Snipe got softly out of bed and went over to where Goggles lay.

Are you awake, Goggles? he whispered.

"Yes, but you mean to go, then, Snipe?"

"It's the only chance for me," answered Snipe, lugubriously. "I've told you how things are. You're not going to back out, are you?"

"I am certainly not going to back out, Snipe," replied Goggles gravely. "But I think it rather a pity that your acquaintance, shall we say? for I take it that you hardly consider him a friend—could not have appointed a somewhat more convenient time for meeting us. And I really do not quite know what he expects to get out of seeing me, in any case."

"I suppose that you'd like to hand the over over to me and let me go alone?"

Snipe, with what seemed like real bitterness.

Larking, who could hear every word, thought that he could not have spoken more bitterly if he had actually felt aggrieved.

"That it seems to me, would answer every necessary purpose," Goggles answered.

"It wouldn't, then! And I'm not going alone. Besides, you couldn't trust a fellow of my sort with a fever!" sneered Snipe.

"The risk would certainly be a matter for consideration," replied Goggles coolly.

"Snipe doesn't get much change out of him in that sort of thing," Larking told himself.

Goggles had got out of bed, and was dressing while they talked. Snipe was also busy with the completion of his toilet. Larking drew some of his garments into bed with him, and began to put them on very carefully and quietly under cover of the bedclothes.

He did not want to be too far behind the other two. Somehow, he feared that Snipe might show the white feather at the critical moment.

But when the critical moment came Cutts came to have more to do with the game than Snipe. Snipe's task was merely to lure Goggles to the place where Cutts and his myrmidons waited for him.

Now Snipe and Goggles stole softly from the dormitory, and Larking tumbled out of bed and slipped on in hot haste.

Just as he had slipped on his jacket and was putting on a pair of tennis-shoes, a drowsy voice asked:

"Who's that? Is it you, Lark?"

It was Carpenter who spoke, but he was not more than half awake.

Larking stood still, saying nothing.

He did not want Carpenter to know that he was going out. But less did he want him to become aware of the fact that Goggles

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:
THE MAGNET. THE GEM. THE BOYS' FRIEND. GUCKLES. THE PENNY POPULAR.
Every Monday. Every Wed. Every Monday. Every Friday. Every Friday.
YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

A GOOD TIME COMING!

That remark refers most particularly to October, when the first number of the second edition of the "Grefyriars Herald" will make its appearance.

Things are now progressing at a great rate, and the first number is going to be a real "stunner." Of course, the succeeding numbers will be "stunners," too, but for the moment we are thinking only of No. 1.

LISTEN TO THIS!

I had a letter from a reader the other day in which he suggested something which I had quite forgotten during my busy days of the past two or three weeks. What do you think the suggestion was? Can you guess? Well, I'll tell you.

My correspondent said, "What about Tuck Hampers?"

"Tuck Hampers!" I exclaimed aloud, as I read the letter. "Of course; fancy forgetting the great feature! Tuck Hampers, by all means!"

I immediately began to set about the arrangements for starting a Tuck Hamper Competition, and I have now almost completed them.

Details of the scheme will appear in the first number of the "Grefyriars Herald," and every reader will have an opportunity of entering for one of the famous Hampers.

Just think of it! It does sound like old times to be talking about Tuck Hampers, doesn't it?

After the scarcity of all sorts of good things during the War, it quite makes one's mouth water to think about a "Grefyriars Herald" Tuck Hamper.

SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

Just remember, now, that if you be sure of getting No. 1 of the "G. H." and entering the competition, you may be one of the first to get one of these Hampers. You know, you have just as good a chance as any other reader, and by not entering for it you may be depriving yourself of a gorgeous treat. Just think it over for yourself, and make up your mind to be one of the first to secure No. 1 of the

"GREFYRIARS HERALD"

also a magnificent Tuck Hamper.

To your shame about this great opportunity, and let them know, without fail, that the "G. H." reappears in October.

I hope to be able to give you some more interesting information about the first number next week.

SPLENDID!

I received the other day a long and most interesting letter from a Manchester reader. I cannot possibly publish it all, but I must give the following extract:

"Dear Sir—I am sure you will excuse my encroaching on your valuable time, but now I have the opportunity I would like to air my views of those two splendid papers the MAGNET and the 'Gem,' which I have been wanting to do for some time past; also because I know you invite readers' opinions. First of all I must tell you I am an 'old boy,' being 30 years of age; and, with the exception of a few numbers which appeared during my nearly three years with his Majesty's forces—which I had sent to me to France, that 'went west'—I have read every number of both papers since their beginning, and I can assure you, sir, that I think there is nothing to approach these gems or excellence, and I enjoy every bit as much now as I did years ago, and look forward eagerly to Mondays and Wednesdays!"

Truly, a loyal reader! It does me good to receive such a letter. Just fancy! My correspondent was reading the MAGNET and the "Gem" before some of you were born. That seems a long time, doesn't it?

I wonder if any more of my readers have been taking the MAGNET and "Gem" since the first numbers. If so, I should very much like to hear from them.

My heartiest thanks to my Manchester reader for his long, interesting, and encouraging letter. I should like his address, if he will send it along to me.

A SCOTCH CRITIC.

I have received a letter from a reader of Ayrshire, who signs himself "A Friend of Bunter, and a Lover of Fair Play." My correspondent thinks we have been dealing too harshly with Bunter of late. He thinks that Bunter has a very hard life.

Well, perhaps he does. But I venture to think that some of those who live and study with Bunter have rather hard times occasionally.

I am rather doubtful whether Bunter ought to be pitted, for really he is a terror at times, isn't he?

I wonder what my Scottish chum would think of Bunter if he had to spend all his days with him. I am perfectly certain he would get just as angry and exasperated as the Grefyriars Juniors.

"Friend of Bunter," just think of what they have to put up with at times, and see if you don't come to the conclusion that he deserves, at any rate, most of what he gets.

YOUR EDITOR.

NOTICES.

FOOTBALL—Matches Wanted, etc.

MARLBOROUGH UNITED, 17-18: home and away—A. Brown, 64, Pownall Road, Dalston, E. 8.

DURHAM UNITED, 17-18: Two players desirous of becoming members of this club, outside-left or centre-half. Also matches wanted. Five miles.—W. J. FERRIS, 77, Durham Road, Holloway, N. 7.

C. Preston, 32, Vaughan Road, Camberwell, S.E. 5, would like to meet from Beas in South London, view to joining a league.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted.

G. Marks, 3, Connaught Gardens, Mowell Hill, N. 10, with readers interested in stamps. Miss Beattie Hoyle, 22m, Drury Boyle, Nottingham—wishes readers in America and France, 15-16.

D. Dickman, 27, Cannon Street, Cape Town, South Africa—wishes readers overseas.

E. Ingle, 20, Tinsley Street, Anfield, Liverpool, offers recipe, 6d, for making duplicators.

H. Makin, 12, Whitby Street, Tux Brook, Liverpool—with American readers, 15-16.

J. Joseph, 17, McKenna Street, Cape Town, South Africa—with readers overseas, 16-16.

Carlton Sharman, 14, Jervis Road, Fulham, S.W. 6, wants members for London and Overseas Rugby Club.

Miss Phyllis Astwood, 31, James Street, Workop, Notts—with readers, 17 upwards, interested in athletic sports.

J. T. Cully, 30, Villiers Street, Marston, Durham, wants someone to act as Assistant-Director of the Bureau of Photography, International Amateur Press Club. Age 15-17.

Miss May Welch, 62, Pasquier Road, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E. 17—with readers, 16-17.

Miss Ruby Overend, Lombard House, 55B, Huddersfield Road, Ravenshorpe, Dewsbury, Yorks—with good readers, 17 and upwards, anywhere.

