

STILL ATTRACTING READERS THE WORLD OVER!

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A black and white illustration at the top of the cover shows a young boy on the left and a young girl on the right, both dressed in school uniforms. The boy is holding an open book and looking towards the viewer with a smile. The girl is also holding a book and looking down at it. They are positioned on either side of the central title text.

BESSIE BUNTER IN THE BALL-ROOM!

(An Amusing Scene in the Magnificent Lona Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



For Next Monday!

"SQUIFF'S SECRET."

Mr. Frank Richards has provided us with a splendid story of Greyfriars for next week. It deals particularly with Sampson Quiney Illey Field, the Australian junior. Field, popularly known as Squiff, has a secret which he does not wish to share with anyone at Greyfriars. It is by no means a shady secret, for Squiff is one of the very best fellows in the school; but Skinner, one of the cads of the Remove, follows Squiff out of gates one afternoon, with the result that in the end the secret has to be revealed.

"SQUIFF'S SECRET"

is a stirring story, and one that all my readers will thoroughly enjoy. Be sure not to miss it!

OUR NEW SERIAL!

Another great attraction for next week is the first instalment of a magnificent new serial story. It is entitled, "The Secret of the Silent City," and I have no hesitation in saying that it will prove one of the most popular serials that has ever appeared in the MAGNET.

It will describe the adventures of a cheery party in their search for the Secret City, where they hope to obtain the finest cinema films that have ever been produced.

Thrilling interest is added by the fact that they are up against a rival party.

"THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY"

will delight all who read it, so do not miss next Monday's first grand long instalment. Order your copy of the MAGNET at once!

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC TOE!

Lots of learned folks always speak of the light fantastic toe when they mention dancing. There is no reason why they should not do ditto. Not that people who dance are always light. They may be fantastic. The twelve-stone variety who "takes off" from your own foot when he starts to waltz is very much so.

And that brings me to Bunter. All roads lead to Bunter. It seemed to be supposed that Bunter could not dance because he is fat. The fact is, fat people often dance the best. The lath slips into everybody's way and makes himself most unpopular, a thing Bunter never really managed, since his victims say, "Oh, it's only Bunter, you know!" and that ends it.

Now, in a recent number of the "Greyfriars Herald" there was a cheery little yarn about a ball at Cliff House, and a reader wants to know who tripped it with Tony, also with Tom Brown, and so on. Now, I can't say. I really can't. I was not shown the programmes; and, as

a matter of fact, these dainty little affairs with the pencil—which often will not mark well—dangle by a silken cord are regarded as confidential. Evidently, however, we must have more dance stories. This one was so popular. As the famous poet never said—

Through the gilded salon the music rolled,
And Bunter jazzed till the stars were cold.

FRANK NUGENT'S CARTOONS.

You will find them in the "Greyfriars Herald," and the clever portraits, or caricatures, will shed more light and lustre on the characters who come in for attention at the artist's pen. They are all there, or very nearly all—the leading figures of Greyfriars. You will appreciate the portrait of Dutton, whose name rhymes with mutton, and who carries not a button for those mistakes he makes in Study No. 7, when Peter Todd waxes wroth, and Bunter steals the ham—I mean the jam, but Dutton would think he said lamb, of course. You know his way.

Anyhow, keep a sharp eye on the "Herald." These cartoons will be a great draw, for Nugent knows how to draw! By the way, a reader asked me the other day how Dutton learned! Easily enough. Did you ever meet a deaf person yet who did not understand pretty well everything? Things seem just to come to them.

HOW TO STOP SMOKING!

I think my Bristol chum of fourteen years who wants to stop smoking had better just exercise self-control. He is far too young for the habit. Smoking seems to have got a firm hold of him, and he knows it is harmful, and says as much, which is frank and to the point. If he lights up without thinking, he should simply take himself to task, and as he begins to conquer the practice he could gradually overcome the taste for smoking by taking an acid-drop instead of a "fag."

Of course, there is no downright cure for smoking except the infallible remedy for all weaknesses which a fellow carries in his mind. An Army friend of mine told me the other day that all the time he was in France he never smoked a cigarette. He ate chocolate instead. The Bristolian might try this means—but let him go slow with that or he might upset his digestion!

NO REPLY!

A Lanarkshire lad is disappointed because he had no answer when he wrote to a reader who asked for correspond-

ence. I cannot help him, as he has not enclosed his address, but I will tell him that I think his idea that the advertiser in question was merely having a joke is a wrong one. The point is, that anyone who advertises, and who gets suited, simply does not worry about the others who write. This has always been so. If you could look up the files of the "Stone Age Weekly," you would find the same complaints. "Lanarkshire Lad" should send me a notice of his own.

GOOD NEWS FROM BLACKPOOL!

Mr. John Clough, of Blackpool, sends me a letter which I should like to print, but that being impossible owing to lack of space, I must just thank him for his kindness, and assure him that such a tribute from a valued correspondent is much prized. He has read the Companion Papers for years.

"Dozens of times in sickness various journals have been of priceless value to me in helping to fight off, and to some extent forget, my physical sufferings."

"Chuckles" is my friend's favourite comic to-day. During the war the Companion Papers went every week to his son in France. But my correspondent does not like serials. Still, we have plenty of completes. To me, this fine letter showed a great lesson in endurance. Perhaps, in the rush of the world, one is too apt to overlook the splendour of lives in which affliction is the daily lot. They offer an example and an inspiration to everybody. I am very sensible indeed of all this correspondent says.

ABOUT COMPETITIONS!

Competitions are far better left alone if they cannot be entered without a sportsmanlike spirit which takes into account that there must be many non-successes.

I have just seen an angry letter from a disappointed competitor, who says bluntly that his lines were far superior to those which won the prize. He says so! I am not sure that he knows! But what about the other fellow? Where does he come in? The individual who takes this view ought really to run his own competitions, and see that he gets all the honours. Then he would know all was fair.

Your Editor



Phyllis Howell's Brother!

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

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Very Special Occasion!

"WHAT luck!" It was Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove, who made that ejaculation.

Bob stood in front of the post-rack in the hall, and produced five letters in rapid succession.

"All for you, Bob!" asked Harry Wharton, in wonder.

"Have your relations been showering romances on you?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"There's a letter for each of us," said Bob Cherry.

"All addressed in the same handwriting, too," said Johnny Bull.

"What on earth—"

It was not often that every member of the Famous Five received a letter at one and the same time, and the juniors were naturally astonished.

Harry Wharton was the first to open his envelope. He drew out a half-sheet of notepaper, on which was written in a neat, girlish hand:

"Marjorie Hazeldene and her chums at Cliff House request the pleasure of Harry Wharton's company at a fancy-dress ball, to be held in the Common room at Cliff House on Saturday next, commencing at 7 p.m. R.S.V.P."

"Oh, good!" murmured Wharton. "Jolly good!" added Bob Cherry, a moment later.

"Stunning, in fact!" said Johnny Bull. "Our girlish chums have sent their invitations to the rightful and proper quarter," said Hurree Singh.

"They've taken the trouble to send a separate invitation to each of us," said Nugent. "Why couldn't they have said that they requested the company of Harry Wharton and friends? That would have embraced the lot of us."

"Girls don't think of these things," said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry thoughtfully regarded his invitation.

"What does R.S.V.P. mean?" he asked.

"Reserved seats very popular," suggested Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or really superb vocal performance," said Johnny Bull.

"As!" growled Wharton. "It's going to be a fancy-dress ball, not a concert!"

"But what—"

"R.S.V.P. means 'reply, if you please,' of course."

"It can't mean that," said Bob Cherry, "or it would be R.I.V.P."

"It's French, you silly chump!"

"Oh!"

"I must say it's jolly decent of the girls to single us out for special invitation," said Harry Wharton.

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"They evidently recognise, over at Cliff House, that the Famous Five are absolutely IT."

Harry Wharton & Co. soon realised, however, that they were under a delusion.

A crowd of Removites surged up to the post-rack, and there were letters for nearly all of them. Moreover, the letters contained invitations to the fancy-dress ball.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Squiff.

"This is awfully ripping of the girls!" said Peter Todd.

"Absolutely!" chimed in Dick Russell.

Even Skinner and Bulstrode major had been invited to Cliff House. And Harry Wharton realised that he had been very far wrong in supposing that the Famous Five had been singled out for special invitation.

"I say, you fellows!" said Billy Bunter, rolling up to the post-rack.

"Everybody seems to be having letters

this morning! Wonder if there's one for me?"

"Come to think of it," said Bob Cherry, "I saw one with a family crest on the back of the envelope."

"That would be mine, then," said the fat junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The uncle who keeps the Bunter Arms doesn't boast a family crest surely?" grinned Squiff.

"Oh, really, Field—"

The letters had been placed in alphabetical order on the post-rack, and Billy Bunter extended a grumpy hand towards the B's. He withdrew it a moment later, triumphantly clutching a pile of letters.

"Steady on, you fat thief!" roared Bulstrode.

"There's a letter for me there!"

"And one for me!" said Tom Brown wrathfully.

"Same here!" said Blundell of the Fifth, striding on the scene.

"Hand over my letter, you fat marauder!"

Billy Bunter was compelled to deliver up the letters. When all the chumps had been satisfied, the fat junior still retained one letter in his hand.

"Whose is that?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Mine, of course!"

"You beastly fraud!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You know jolly well you never get any letters! Hand it over!"

Billy Bunter held up the letter for inspection, and there was a gasp from the juniors. For the missive was really addressed to Bunter!

"My hat!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"The celebrated postal-order at last—complete with board and side-whisker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Trot it out, Bunt!"

"Let's see how much it's for!"

But it wasn't a postal order, after all.

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It was an invitation to the fancy-dress ball at Cliff House.

The invitation differed from the others. It was worded as follows:

"Miss Bessie Bunter renews the pleasure of her brother Billy's company at a fancy-dress ball, which will take place in the jeweler's room at Cliff House on Saturday evening, commencing at 7 p.m. R.S.V.P."

The juniors chuckled when Billy Bunter displayed the invitation to view. Evidently orthography was not one of the Bunter family's strong points.

"I knew Bessie would turn up (trumps)!" said the fat junior, with great satisfaction.

"Strikes me she's invited you off her own bat," said Johnny Bull. "Marjorie Hazeldene is in charge of the arrangements, and your sister's doing her best to barge in—as usual!"

"Rats!" said Bunter. "Bessie's mistress of the ceremonies. Nobody else at Cliff House would have the savvy to get up an affair of this sort. I say, you fellows, what do you think I ought to go as?"

"A sample of rolling-stock!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A kite-balloon!" suggested Squiff.

And there was a fresh burst of merriment.

"Falstaff's about your mark," said Harry Wharton. "If you'll undertake to be of good behavior, and not to spend all the time in the vestibule wolfing the grub, I'll lend you a Falstaff costume. We've got one among our theatrical props."

"Oh, good!"

The breakfast-bell rang at this juncture, and, as they trooped into Hall, the juniors discussed what they should wear, and whom they should represent.

Most of the fellows decided to don pierrot costumes, these being easily obtainable.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent made up their minds to present the "Three Musketeers."

Harroo Singh decided to go as a South Sea Island darkey, though not much in the way of make-up would be required for the part.

"I'm going as Mephistopheles," said Skinner.

"Then you won't need to disguise yourself at all," said Johnny Bull candidly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Some of the juniors showed queer taste. Belvedere major, for instance, stated his intention of going as a Bolshevik; and Bulstrode fancied himself in the role of a profiteer.

Stott declared that he would appear as the ex-Kaiser.

"If you do," said Bob Cherry, "you'll be torn limb from limb!"

And Stott wisely reconsidered his decision.

There was a great deal of excitement at the breakfast-table, and Mr. Quelch had considerable difficulty in suppressing the babel of voices.

During morning lessons, too, there was a perpetual wagging of tongues; and impositions felt as thick and fast as leaves in Valombrosa.

Notwithstanding the fact that most of the juniors received lines or lickings in the course of the morning, the Removites were in high spirits. And the fancy-dress ball at Cliff House was the topic of the hour.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Left Out!

Nobody outside the Remove Form had received invitations to the fancy-dress ball.

The high-and-mighty men of the Sixth professed a sublime indifference to what they described as junior revels. And the members of the Shell and the Upper Fourth also pretended not to mind being left out.

Coker of the Fifth, however, felt decidedly upset, and he poured forth his tale of woe to Potter and Greene, his two study-mates.

"Bliss if I can understand why I've been overlooked!" he said. "Marjorie Hazeldene seems to have forgotten my existence!"

"P'raps she regards you as a—abem—a rather clumsy dancer!" suggested Potter.

"Chimney?" hooted Coker, turning upon Potter in wrath. "Why, I can trip the light fantastic as daintily as anybody!"

"B'm!" granted Potter doubtfully.

"Don't you believe me, George Potter?"

"Hardly! Now, if it was a general meeting of cab-horses—"

"Or elephants!" said Greene.

"You'd be quite in your element, old chap!" concluded Potter.

Coker snorted and clenched his big fists. He looked for a moment as if he were about to commit assault and battery on his outspoken study-mate, but he restrained, and strode to the door.

"Whither bound?" asked Greene.

"I'm going to see Quelch."

"Quelch?" echoed Potter, in astonishment. "What are you going to see Quelch for?"

"To borrow his typewriter."

"But why?"

"Look here," said Coker wrathfully. "I'm not going to be re-examined like this! If you want to know, I'm going to type a letter to Phyllis Howell, at Cliff House. Phyllis and I are great chums, and I shall persuade her to send me an invitation to the fancy-dress ball."

"Perhaps!" said Potter.

"I can rely on Phyllis to do the decent thing," said Coker. "She wouldn't invite you fellows, of course. You're too coarse and unrefined to attend a function of this sort."

"My hat!"

"But I'm a lady's man, and that makes all the difference!"

And, with this Partisan shot, Coker retired.

After an interval of half an hour, he returned to his study, looking very red and flustered.

"What's happened?" asked Greene.

"I've had a few words with Quelch."

"Oh!"

"Wouldn't he let you use his typewriter?" asked Potter.

"Yes, I typed my letter to Phyllis, and just as I had finished it, I had the rotten luck to bust one of the keys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Greene. "That's your delicate touch, old man! You evidently don't know the difference between a typewriter and a treadmill!"

"Look here, you cackling idiot—"

"What did Quelch say?" inquired Potter.

"He told me I should have to pay for the damage, and he called me—me, of all people—a clumsy lout!" said Coker, nearly choking with wrath.

"Quelch's got a wonderful way of stating facts!" chuckled Greene. "May we have a look at the letter, Horace?"

Coker was angry. At the same time, he

was very proud of his handiwork. Not many fellows, he reflected, could use a typewriter, whereas he himself was a qualified expert—in his own opinion!

The great Horace handed over the letter, and Potter and Greene blinked at it in utter bewilderment.

For this is what they saw:

"gReYfriaRe sKool

fRiARdab.

"mY dear fllis,—maRjOrIo Hazeldene Evidently Overlooked ME when sending Out THE invitashuns TO THE funkshun in kvoshun.

"as you No, i am the Life and Sole of these partys, & the afaire will not be kompleat Without ME.

"i Shall expect to Receve your invitashun By Retern of post.—Thanking youmantispatshun.

"Iremanyoustreely,

"p.s.—this LetTelt is my own unAided wurk."

"Great pip!" gasped Potter.

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Greene. "What a frightful conglomeration!"

Coker glared.

"Could either of you two type a letter like that?" he demanded.

"No jolly fear!" said Potter.

"Only a prize comedian could do that sort of thing!" said Greene.

"Why, you—"

"You've got capital letters instead of small, and small instead of capital," said Potter. "And what, might I ask, is that horrible jumble at the end?"

"There's no jumble about it," said Coker. "It's perfectly clear and lucid, except to a fellow of your low order of intelligence!"

"Dashed if I can make it out!" said Greene. "It's like a jig-saw puzzle to me!"

Coker grew very red in the face.

"It's 'Thanking you in anticipation, I remain, yours truly,'" he said.

"Oh!"

"So long as we know," murmured Potter.

"The words ran into each other," explained Coker. "But that's due to my rapid typing!"

"Great Scott!"

"Phyllis Howell will go into hysterics when she reads this perperatation!" said Potter.

"Absolutely!" said Greene.

"Look here!" shouted Coker.

"What's wrong with it?"

"There's nothing right with it, as far as I can see!" said Potter. "In the first place, you've spelt 'Phyllis' with an 'P'!"

"Well?"

"Any ass knows that it begins with 'Ph'!"

"What rot!" snorted Coker. "You'll be telling me next that 'fool' is spelt 'p-h-o-o-l'!"

"Secondly," went on Potter, unheeding, "the spelling is chronic!"

"And the general appearance of the letter is enough to give a fellow creeping paralysis!" said Greene.

Coker's patience was at a very low ebb.

"Another word of criticism from either of you fellows," he said ominously. "and I'll bash your heads together!"

Potter and Greene subsided after that. Coker was a hoovy-handed fellow, and they had no desire to come to logger-heads with him.

"I'll post this letter right away," said Coker. "and I'm prepared to wager that I get an invitation to the fancy-dress ball by return!"



"Pause!" exclaimed Mr. Prout dramatically. "I know not who you are, or whence you came; but you shall not fight here! I will send for the police! I—" "Ha, ha, ha!" A peal of laughter ran through the study, and Mr. Prout paused, utterly bewildered. (See Chapter 3.)

So saying, the great Horace went out into the Close, and dropped the extraordinary document into the pillar-box.

The local post was a very swift affair, and Coker got his reply within twenty-four hours.

Potter and Greene were with him when Phyllis Howell's letter came.

"Ah!" said Coker. "Here we are! I knew Phyllis would turn up triumph!"

But, alas! the fair Phyllis had done nothing of the sort.

The Cliff House girls evidently had a poor opinion of Coker's dancing abilities. They regarded him—and rightly—as a bull in a china shop, and they knew that the fancy-dress ball couldn't possibly be a success with Coker present. He would constantly be treading on the toes of his fair partners, and he would commit numerous breaches of etiquette.

This being so, it was not altogether surprising that Phyllis Howell should decline to issue an invitation to Coker.

The Fifth-Formers' face fell as he scanned the letter. Potter and Greene, who glanced over his shoulder, felt an irresistible impulse to explode with mirth.

For Phyllis Howell's letter was worded thus:

"Cliff House Skool.

"Dear coker,—i regrett to say that i am unable to invite you to the fancy-dress ball. marjorie hazeldene is getting it up, and i kaunot invite people without her nollidge and konsent.

"I asked marjorie if there was any-

thing doing, and she replide in the neggettive; butt she said that whenever she wants sumboddy to come over to Cliff House to give a kome turn, she will not forgett you.

"I am having your letter framed, and hung in the koomon-room. It is indeed a work of art.—Believe me yours sincerely,

"PHYLLIS HOWELL."

Potter and Greene could contain themselves no longer. They simply yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"This is too funny for words!"

"Funny, is it?" roared Coker, nearly foaming at the mouth. "I'll show you something funnier! Take that—and that—and that!"

So saying, the incensed Coker let drive with his fists, and Potter and Greene continued to yell—but not with laughter.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Varoooooh!"

"Chuckit!"

"Stoppit!"

But Coker was in a royal rage, besides being bitterly disappointed. And he derived a certain amount of consolation by "wiping up the ground" with his study-mat.

That evening both Potter and Greene were too indisposed to appear in public. The former was nursing a swollen nose, and the latter a blackened orbit.

And both were of the opinion that Coker was a dangerous maniac, who deserved to be incarcerated in a padded cell.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry is Annoyed.

"COME hither, thou snarvy knave!"

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, waited outside the door of Study No. 1 in great astonishment. "Come hither, forthwith, and with my trusty blade I will despatch thee into the midst of next week!"

Mr. Prout stood rooted to the floor. Alarm was now mingled with his astonishment.

That fierce, stern challenge, which boomed through Study No. 1 in the Remove passage, appalled the master of the Fifth. He could scarcely credit the evidence of his ears.

As a rule Study No. 1 was tenanted by harmless juniors. It now appeared to be occupied by desperate men about to engage in a duel.

"Ha, ha!" prepare for the ring and clash of steel! This shall be a duel unto the death—and may the best man win!"

Mr. Prout fairly gasped. The perspiration stood out in beads on his brow, and his first impulse was to turn and flee.

But he conquered this impulse and pulled himself together. It had often been his boast that he did not know what fear was, and he would justify that boast. Even if he stood on the threshold of deadly danger he would not show the white feather. Had not he, Paul Prout, served his country as a Special

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constable in time of war? Could he possibly be guilty of cowardice? No—a thousand times no! He would prevent this duel from taking place.

Having formed this decision, Mr. Prout took his courage in both hands, and threw open the door of Study No. 1.

The scene which greeted his gaze was an extraordinary one.

Three handsome, adventurous-looking men, clad in the apparel of a bygone romantic age, were gesticulating fiercely amongst themselves.

One of the three flourished a sword. It was merely a dummy sword, but Mr. Prout did not detect this in the excitement of the moment.

"Pause!" he exclaimed dramatically. "I know not who you are or whence you came, but you shall not fight here! I will send for the police! I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter rang through the study, and Mr. Prout paused, utterly bewildered.

"Bless my soul! Who—who are you?"

"If you please, sir—"

"It's like this, sir—"

"We were rehearsing—"

"Dear me! I distinctly heard Wharton's voice, and Cherry's and Nugent's! Can it be possible?"

Harry Wharton, the wielder of the sword, stifled his laughter with some difficulty and explained.

"There's a fancy-dress ball at Cliff House this evening, sir," he said. "The Head has given us permission to go, and we're representing the Three Musketeers."

Mr. Prout understood at last, and he realised that he had jumped to an absurd conclusion.

"Am I to understand, Wharton, that you said, 'that you deliberately planned to play a practical joke upon me?'"

"Oh no, sir!"

"Not at all, sir!"

"We had no idea you were outside, sir!"

Mr. Prout was a fair-minded man, and, although he felt humiliated at having made a fool of himself, he took no action against the juniors.

"If that is a real sword, Wharton—" he began.

"It isn't, sir."

"Very well! I have nothing more to say, except to request you to make a little less noise! I trust you will spend an enjoyable evening."

"Thank you, sir!"

The master of the Fifth quitted the study.

"Prout's a brick!" said Bob Cherry warmly.

"Heav, heav!"

"Not many masters would have let us down so lightly," said Nugent. "Still, it was awfully funny to hear Prout threatening to send for the police, wasn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton consulted his watch. "Getting on for seven," he said. "Time we made a move."

And the Three Musketeers left the study, and swaggered down the passage arm-in-arm.

In the Close they were joined by all sorts of weird and fantastically-attired people. There were Perrots in abundance; there were Cavaliers and Round-heads; there was a person in a hideous black cloak and a crape mask—this was Skinner; there was a South Sea Island dorker; and there were Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, and many other celebrities.

"I say, you fellows!" said Falstaff, who was standing near the school gates munching toffee. "If we don't get a move on, the girls will have scoffed all the grub by the time we get there!"

"Silence, varlet," said Bob Cherry. "I'll dot you on the boko with my small-sword!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are we all here?" inquired Harry Wharton, peering through the gloom.

"All except Bolsover," said Peter Todd.

"What's happened to him?"

"He dressed up as a giddy Bolshevik, and he had to flee for his life! Temple & Co. of the Fourth are chasing him like a pack of hungry wolves!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a very merry procession that streamed out of the school gates in the winter twilight.

It was a very mixed procession, too, and Gosling the porter nearly fell down when he saw the motley throng.

"My heye!" he gasped. "Wot I says is this 'ere, I'm a-seem' visions an' a-dreamin' dreams!"

"Moral: take a little more water with it, Gossy!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He did not take the procession long to reach Cliff House, where a cheery welcome awaited them.

The Common-room at the girls' school had been converted into a ball-room. It was brilliantly lighted, and the girls themselves were resplendently attired.

Perhaps the Queen of the Ball was Phyllis Howell, who represented Joan of Arc. Bob Cherry voted her an easy first, anyway.

"I'm not greedy," said Bob, "but I must insist upon having at least half a dozen dances with Phyllis!"

But Bob's luck was out.

Dick Russell, who looked very attractive in his Cavalier garb, commanded Miss Phyllis for the first dance.

Russell danced superbly, and so did Phyllis, and the pair hit it off very well together. So much so that they remained in partnership for quite a long time.

Bob Cherry was disappointed, but he did his best not to show it. It would have afforded him some consolation if he had been able to dance with Marjorie Hazeldene, or Clara Trevlyn, or some other nice girl. But a harsh fate decreed that his first dance should be with Bessie Banter.

Billy Bunter's sister was plump and awkward and ungainly, and a good many more things besides. Of the finer points of dancing she knew little and cared less. She was quite content to roll to and fro like a stout craft on a tempestuous sea.

"I'm quite the star turn of the evening, you know!" she confided to Bob Cherry. "Everybody's looking at me!"

"I don't wonder at it!" growled Bob, who found it difficult to be polite.

Bessie Banter was supposed to represent Mary Queen of Scots, but anyone who did not know that would have taken her for a floundering porpoise. Twice she trod heavily on Bob Cherry's foot, and on each occasion the unfortunate Bob was hard put to it to keep himself under control.

Bob's misfortune would have been lessened had his schoolfellows sympathised with him. But they didn't.

Harry Wharton, who was dancing with Marjorie Hazeldene, laughed heartily. And Frank Nugent, who had Flap Derwent as a partner, was also amused at Bob's plight.

When the interval came, and the revellers adjourned for refreshment, Bob Cherry looked a very woebegone Musketeer, indeed.

"What about those half-dozed dances with Phyllis, Bob?" inquired Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry smiled ruefully.

"Russell's queered my pitch," he said. "Still, he's giving Phyllis a good time, and that's the main thing."

Dick Russell happened to overhear this remark, and he looked rather remorseful. "I'm a selfish beast," he said. "I didn't know you were so keen on dancing with Phyllis, Bob. I'll keep off the grass after this!"

And Russell kept his word.

But Bob Cherry's run of bad luck continued.

When the fun recommenced, he was in the act of approaching Phyllis Howell when he found himself forestalled by a slim, handsome-looking fellow in the attire of Sir Galahad.

Bob Cherry stopped short in dismay.

"Wonder who that beggar is?" he murmured. "I can't seem to fix him. He's slim enough for Mauly, but it isn't Mauly, and it isn't the Caterpillar from Highchiff. Whoever the merchant is, he's fairly cut me out!"

Phyllis Howell caught Bob Cherry's eyes at that moment, and she gave him a bright smile. Then her partner wheeled her round, and the pair of them whisked away across the floor of the improvised ball-room.

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"Won't you shake hands with Archie, Bob?" "Ye-es; certainly!" Bob extended his hand to the stranger. "Pleased to meet you!" he said. But he looked anything but pleased. Bob's crushing grip caused Archie to dance with anguish. (See Chapter 4.)

Bob Cherry stared after them with an expression of consternation on his usually sunny face.

For days he had eagerly looked forward to dancing with Phyllis; but it seemed that he was to be denied.

At that moment Bob espied Bessie Bunter floundering towards him.

Horried at the prospect of having to dance a second time with Bessie, Bob commenced to dodge frantically through the throng of dancers. Bessie pursued him, and there was a roar of laughter from the Greyfriars juniors as they witnessed the strange spectacle.

"Help! Preserve me from that poison!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fortunately, an interruption occurred at this juncture, causing Bessie to abandon the chase.

The door of the Common-room opened, and a burly-looking individual, in torn and tattered attire, lumbered in.

"Bolsover, by Jove!" exclaimed Wharton.

"My hat! What a wreck!" gasped Nugent.

Bolsover major bitterly regretted having donned the garb of a Bolshevik.

The bully of the Remove had received a very rough handling at Greyfriars. Temple & Co. of the Upper Fourth had nearly lynched him; and then Coker & Co. of the Fifth had taken a turn.

By the time his aggressors had finished with him, Bolsover realised that being an imitation Bolshevik was no joke.

All the same, he did not mean to miss the fancy-dress ball at Cliff House; and as soon as he had escaped from his captors he had hurried over to the girls' school.

A chorus of voices greeted Bolsover as he entered the Common-room.

"Buzz off, Bolsover!"

"We don't want any Bolsheviks here!"

"Clear off!"

"Get out of this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover did not budge. He stood his ground, and glared at Marjorie Hazeldean as that young lady advanced towards him.

"Would you mind retiring?" said Marjorie politely. "You may come back later, if you care to make yourself presentable."

Bolsover scowled.

"I've as much right to be here as piggy Wharton & Co.," he said rudely. "And I'm staying."

Bolsover had not troubled to lower his voice, and his remark had been heard by everybody present.

"Rush the cad!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Bolsover had been in the wars twice that evening already. And he now met with a third reverse.

Quite a crowd of Removes surged towards him, and he was hustled through the doorway and out into the quadrangle.

"Bump the beast!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

Bolsover found himself seized by many hands, and dumped on to the hard flagstones. He roared and struggled, but in vain.

Three times in succession the bully of the Remove descended to earth; and by the time his schoolfellows had finished with him he was like a pricked balloon. "Now clear off!" said Harry Wharton. "And if you try to burgle in again, you'll get another dose!"

"Yow! I've a perfect right to come to the ball!"

"But you haven't got a right to be rude to our hostess!" retorted the captain of the Remove.

"Is he going to buzz off, or does he want another bumping?" asked Johnny Bull.

Bolsover lurched to his feet, shook his fist at his Form-fellows, and limped painfully away. He was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

"Good riddance to bad rubbish!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

And the Cavaliers and Pierrots and Musketeers went back to the "ball room."

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Bob Cherry saw, to his intense annoyance, that Phyllis Howell was still in partnership with the slim and elegant youth who was uttered as Sir Galahad. "Confound the fellow!" muttered Bob. "He's got no right to monopolize Miss Phyllis like this! I mean to find out who he is!"

And, with this resolve, Bob Cherry advanced towards Sir Galahad and his fair partner.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Introduces Archie!

"GOOD-EVENING, Bob!" Phyllis Howell uttered the salutation with a smile.

"Good evening," Joan of Arc returned Bob. "Excuse my halting in, but I was wondering if there was any hope of a dance!"

Phyllis beamed.

"Afraid not, Bob," she said. "I should like to dance with you very much, of course, but—"

"But what?" said Bob, looking quite distressed.

"I'm booked up for the rest of the evening with Archie."

"Archie?" said Bob, raising his eyebrows.

"Yes," said Phyllis, indicating her slim partner, who was surveying Bob Cherry with a frank and pleasant smile.

"I'm afraid I haven't the pleasure of—" stammered Bob.

"Archie is a splendid dancer," said Phyllis. "And, what's more, he's a very fond of me. Aren't you, Archie?"

"Yaas, begad!" drawled Sir Galahad.

Bob Cherry's cheeks burned, and he clenched his hands.

Who was this boulder Archie? And what right had he to be "very fond" of Miss Phyllis?

Bob controlled himself with an effort; but he felt like dashing his fist into the face of his rival.

He would not have minded anybody having one dance with Phyllis Howell; but he strongly objected to his girl chum being monopolised for the remainder of the evening—and by a complete stranger!

Phyllis smiled.

"Won't you shake hands with Archie, Bob?"

"Ye-es; certainly!"

Bob extended his hand to the stranger.

"Pleased to meet you," he said. But he looked anything but pleased.

Bob's crushing grip caused Archie to dance with anguish.

"Ow! Wish you'd be a little less cordial, dear boy!" he gasped.

"You two have never met before, of course!" said Phyllis, smiling. "Archie is my brother, Bob."

"Your—your brother?"

Phyllis nodded.

"My brother Archie," she said. "He is staying in Courtfield for a week, under the care of his private tutor."

"Oh!"

Bob Cherry was relieved, in one way, to know that the languid and elegant Archie was Phyllis Howell's brother.

On the other hand, he felt sorry for Phyllis.

"Fancy having a brother like that!" he thought to himself. "I should have imagined Phyllis's brother to be a sturdy, athletic sort of kid. Instead of which he's a weedy, meek-looking specimen, who doesn't look as if he could say 'Bo!' to a goose."

Having recovered from the anguish caused by Bob Cherry's hearty handshake, Archie Howell beamed cordially at the Greyfriars junior.

"I shall be seem' quite a lot of you

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durin' the next few days," he said affably.

Bob Cherry groaned. The least he saw of the elegant Archie, the better he would like it. He had already sunned Archie up as an effeminate fop; and Bob Cherry had no use for fops.

"You're one of the leadin' lights of the Greyfriars Remove, so Phyllis tells me," continued Archie. "I should deem it an honour to be introduced to your pals, don't you know?"

Bob Cherry signalled to the other members of the Famous Five.

There happened to be a lull in the dancing, and Bob's chums came at once.

They regarded Sir Galahad with considerable curiosity. His identity had puzzled them all the evening.

"This is Miss Phyllis's brother Archie, your fellows," said Bob Cherry. Archie Howell shook hands all round, and the party remained in conversation for some moments.

No. 49.—GEORGE POTTER



A prominent member of the Fifth Form, Shares Study No. 4 with Cor and Greene, with whom he is on friendly terms, especially Greene. Quite a decent fellow, and a regular First Eleven man both at cricket and football. Both he and Greene appreciate the frequent tips from Coker's Aunt Judith, of which they reap a full share of benefit.

"You're not coming to Greyfriars, by any chance?" asked Harry Wharton.

Archie shuddered.

"No, thanks!" he said. "Couldn't stand the rough-and-tumble of a public school, you know. I prefer a private tutor."

"My hat!"

"It's much the better plan, I can assure you," said Archie. "When a Form-master annoys you, you've got to sit tight an' say nothin'. But when a private tutor gets your back up, you can tweak his nose!"

"Something in that," said Johnny Bull. "Do you play football—er—Howells?"

"Football?" echoed Archie. "What sort of game's that? Pray enlighten me, my dear fellow!"

The Famous Five gasped.

Archie Howell was the brother of one of the most athletic girls at Cliff House, yet he had never heard of football!

"It—it's a game of ball!" stammered Johnny Bull.

"Really? How jolly excitin'! Do you stand in a sort of circle, an' throw the ball to each other?"

"No," said Nugent. "You kick it."

"Where to?"

"Toward's your opponents' goal, of course!"

"Goal!" murmured Archie, in perplexity. "What's a goal?"

Frank Nugent darted a sympathetic glance at Phyllis Howell, as if to say, "It's hard lines that you've got such a porty brother!" Then he produced a football manual from the pocket of his musketeer's cloak, and handed it to Archie.

"Study it at your leisure, old chap," he said. "It contains all the rules of football, and it'll save us bags of time explaining."

"Thanks!" said Archie, slipping the manual into his own pocket. "After a diligent perusal of this booklet, I may blossom into a first-rate footballer. Who knows?"

"Do you box?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Archie raised a warning finger.

"Hush, my dear fellow!" he murmured. "Don't discuss such a brutal an' recidiv' pastime in the presence of ladies!"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bob.

At this juncture the dancing was resumed, and the Famous Five went in search of partners, leaving Phyllis and Archie together.

However big a duffer Archie Howell might have been in some respects, he was certainly a first-rate dancer. His movements were graceful, and apparently effortless; and he and Phyllis were far and away superior to any other couple in the room.

The proceedings did not terminate until close on midnight, when Miss Primrose, the headmistress, came in and ordered her charges to bed.

Harry Wharton called for three cheers for Marjorie Hazeldene, who had organised the affair, and the cheers were given with right good will.

Miss Primrose frowned a little at the demonstration; but when Vernon-Smith shouted "Three cheers for Miss Primrose!" the frown melted away.

Finally, three cheers were given for the Head for allowing the Greyfriars fellows to be out so late, and then the merry throng dispersed.

"Are we all here?" asked Wharton.

"Bunter's missing," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter! Where are you, Bunter!"

The fat junior failed to appear, and Harry Wharton grew alarmed.

"Hope he isn't raiding tuck from the girls' studies!" he said.

"If he is," said Nugent grimly, "we'll frog-march him back to Greyfriars!"

"Yes, rather."

A search-party was hastily formed; but the janitor did not have to search far.

"Billy Bunter was run to earth in the vestibule."

Whilst his schoolfellows had been finishing off the dances, the fat junior had been finishing off the refreshments. He lay curled up on the carpet, fast asleep, like a fat dormouse.

Bob Cherry inspected his boot into Bunter's ribs.

"Wake up, porpoise!" he growled.

Billy Bunter opened his eyes, and shut up like a Jack-in-the-box.

"Yow! Cherry, you boast—"

"Time to go!" rapped out Wharton.

"Buck up!"

"I—I don't think I can walk—"

"Well, joll, then, you fat gormandiser!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter had fed not wisely, but

too well. He wanted his schoolfellows to assist him on the homeward journey; but the only sort of assistance he got was supplied by Bob Cherry's boot.

Bob was not in a happy humour as the procession streamed back to Greyfriars.

"What's worrying you, old man?" asked Nugent.

"Every time I think of that fellow Howell," he said, "I feel sort of homicidal!" He had the cheek to keep Phyllis to himself for the best part of the evening; and, not only that, but he's about the silliest pop I've ever clapped eyes on!"

"Fear, hear!" said Johnny Bull. "A fellow not coming to a public school because he's funky of being knocked about!"

"It's disgusting!" agreed Wharton. "The conscientious objectors in wartime were jolly brave fellows by comparison with that weedy worm!"

"And he'd never heard of footie!" said Nugent.

"And he cannot boxfully fight with his fists!" added Hurrece Single.

The Famous Five had nothing but contempt for Archie Howell. He did not seem to be cast in the same mould as Phyllis. The latter was keen and athletic; but her brother appeared to be a mixture of Lord Mauleverer and Snoop.

"Dashed if I can understand Phyllis having a brother like that!" said Bob Cherry. "Her other brother—Dalton—who was killed in the early days of the war, was a tip-top fellow. But as for Archie—well, I could hardly restrain myself from wiping up the floor with him!"

"Wonder if we've seen the last of him?" murmured Nugent. "He's staying in Courtfield for a week," said Bob Cherry, "so we're bound to bump into him again. And when we do we'll jolly well tell him what we think of him!"

"Hear, hear!" From which remarks it will be gathered that Master Archie Howell was emphatically not popular!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Put to the Test!

THE next day being Sunday, the Greyfriars juniors had ample opportunity of resting after the exciting events of the previous evening.

In the afternoon the Famous Five put on their best bibs and tuckers, as Bob Cherry expressed it, and went for their usual Sunday walk.

In the old-fashioned High Street of Courtfield they encountered Phyllis Howell and her brother, and they raised their shining silk toppers politely to the former.

Phyllis did not seem inclined to stop and speak, so the Famous Five passed on.

"My only aunt!" gasped Johnny Bull, when they were out of earshot. "Did you see how that boulder was topped up?"

"Beau Brummel himself couldn't have broken it!" said Harry Wharton. "Beautifully-crossed bags, fancy waistcoat, spotless spats, and patent-leather boots!"

"Plus a gorgeous necktie," said Nugent.

"And a monocle!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Did you ever?"

"No, never!" said the others solemnly.

Archie Howell went down to zero in the estimation of the Famous Five.

Harry Wharton & Co. disliked slovenliness in a fellow; but they disliked foppishness even more. And Archie Howell seemed to be foppish to a degree.

"Now, if the fellow happened to be a jolly good all-round sport-man and a decent sort," said Johnny Bull, "nobody would mind him putting on a bit of side. But fancy a weakling like that strutting about as if he owned the earth!"

"Makes you feel ill!" growled Bob Cherry. "I shall be glad when the conceited ass clears out of the neighbourhood. I don't want to see him again!"

Neither did the others. But on the very next day they had the misfortune to meet Phyllis Howell's brother.

It so happened that the Famous Five were in funds, and when afternoon lessons were over Frank Nugent suggested that they should have tea in the

No. 50.—WILLIAM GREENE.



Petter's special place. Quite a good fellow in every way. Fond of cover, but does not sympathise with all his notions. Can only be led to a certain extent, and declines to be driven. With Peter in practically everything, their names nearly always occurring together. Something of a poet. Good at games. (Study No. 4.)

Elysian Cafe in Courtfield by way of a change.

Nugent's suggestion was carried unanimously.

The juniors cycled over to Courtfield, left their machines at a garage in the High Street, and trooped into the luxurious cafe, which had recently been opened by an enterprising business man from London.

"Tea and scones and cake for five, please!" said Bob Cherry, when the waitress appeared.

"Make it six!" interposed a calm voice.

And the next moment Archie Howell seated himself at the same table as the juniors.

The Famous Five glared at the newcomer, who, however, was not in the least perturbed.

"Toppin' weather for the time of year!" he remarked.

Silence.

"The wintry breezes have a most stimulant 'an' invigoratin' effect," continued Archie.

Still silence!

Archie regarded the Famous Five in some concern.

"Are you fellows hard of hearin'?" he inquired.

Harry Wharton spoke at last.

"We came here to discuss tea—not the weather!" he said frigidly.

"What's more," said Bob Cherry, "we're not exactly pining for your company!"

The juniors hoped that Archie Howell would take the hint. But he didn't. He remained where he was, and smiled cheerfully at his companions.

"By the way," he said, "I've studied that football manual, an' found it most entertainin' an' enlightenin'. With a little practice, I hope to be able to kick the ball a distance of two yards."

"I doubt if you'll ever be able to do even that!" said Johnny Bull scornfully. "You're nothing more nor less than a confounded tailor's dummy! Excuse my plain speaking, but I don't believe in minding my words."

A sudden gleam came into Archie Howell's eyes.

"You seem to regard me as a pretty helpless sort of individual," he remarked.

"We do!" said Bob Cherry bluntly.

"You haven't a very high opinion of my abilities—what?"

"No," said Wharton. "For the simple reason that you haven't any!"

"I'm not fit to be on the earth, I suppose."

"You're not fit to be Phyllis Howell's brother, anyway," said Frank Nugent warmly.

"Well, perhaps not," admitted Archie. "Phyllis is the best girl breathing, an' I should have to be jolly nearly perfect to account myself fit to be her brother. At the same time, I'm not quite such a soft-headed weaklin' as you fellows imagine."

"Fellows who worship dress are merely ornamental; they're not a scrap useful!" was Harry Wharton's comment.

"I'm not such a duffer as you suppose."

"Prove it, then!"

"I'm only too willin'!" said Archie.

He was not jesting now. He was in sober earnest.

There was a pause. The waitress appeared with a laden tray, and set it down upon the table. The juniors ignored it. They were not thinking of tea just then.

"Look here!" said Bob Cherry, at length, turning to Archie. "We'll put you to the test, and give you a chance to prove yourself, and if we find that we've done you an injustice we'll apologise handsomely. I can't say fairer than that!"

"Toppin'!" said Archie. "How are you going to put me to the test?"

"We'll give you a task to perform, and—"

"Three tasks!" interjected Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry nodded.

"We'll set you three tasks, and if you accomplish them all, then proving that you're made of the right stuff, we'll climb down and apologise."

"That's the idea!" said Harry Wharton. "Now, what sort of tasks shall we set him?"

"Hadin' you better discuss it durin' tea!" suggested Archie.

And he filled five cups from the teapot and handed them round.

The Famous Five looked very thoughtful as they commenced tea.

Presently Harry Wharton looked up. "Task number one, Howell!" he said.

"Well!"

"You must do something which we, the Famous Five, would find it impossible to do!"

Harry Wharton regarded the first task as being a sufficiently tough proposition for Phyllis Howell's brother. But Archie did not look in the least abashed.

"Go ahead!" he said.

"Task number two!" said Wharton. "You must lick Bolsover major!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other members of the Famous Five, in chorus.

There was something decidedly comical in the notion of Archie Howell licking the burly Bolsover.

In the opinion of Harry Wharton & Co., the elegant Archie would not be able to stand up to Bolsover for more than a few seconds at most.

Archie looked bewildered.

"Who is Bolsover major, pray?" he inquired.

"The biggest and heftiest fellow in the Remove," said Johnny Bull, with a grin. "The chap who came to the fancy-dress ball disguised as a Bolshevik."

"An' I've got to lick him?"

"If you can!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very well," said Archie, jotting something down in his notebook. "Now, what's the third test to be?"

The Famous Five held a whispered conversation, at the conclusion of which Harry Wharton announced:

"You must do something which will place all five of us, at the same time, at a disadvantage."

Archie nodded, and made a further entry in his notebook.

"Well, you've certainly given me something to do!" he remarked.

"And you've got to accomplish all three of the tests within a week," said Nugent.

"I'll do my best. And if I succeed—"

"You won't!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "But if by some miracle you did we should vote you a fellow in every way worthy to be Phyllis Howell's brother."

"Hear, hear!"

"I've a pretty stiff programme to carry out," said Archie, consulting his notebook, "but I'm not going to despair. First of all, I've got to do something which you fellows would find it impossible to do. Secondly, I've got to lick Bolsover major—I mean, Bolsover major. An' last, but by no means least, I've got to place all five of you, at the same time, at a disadvantage. Is that correct?"

"Quite correct!" said Bob Cherry.

"And you'll deserve the V.C., D.S.O., and hundreds of O.B.E.'s if you succeed!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

At that moment a fellow in Etons, and wearing a Greffiar's cap, strolled into the cafe.

"Talk of angels!" said Nugent.

"Here's Bolsover!"

The bully of the Remove was evidently in funds, and he had come over to Courtfield with the intention of doing himself well. He advanced towards a small table at the far end of the cafe, and to reach his objective he had to pass the table at which the Famous Five and Archie Howell were seated.

Bolsover scowled at the juniors, and as he passed their table he deliberately shot out his elbow, and sent Archie Howell's teacup spinning. The hot liquid splashed over Archie's fancy waistcoat.

The Famous Five held their breath, wondering what the victim of Bolsover's rudeness would do.

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Archie Howell produced a cambric handkerchief, and dabbed at his waistcoat.

"Beastly cad!" he muttered.

Bolsover halted, looking very aggressive.

"Eh? What did you call me?" he demanded.

"A beastly cad!" said Archie, rising to his feet.

The Famous Five, expecting a scrap, looked on breathlessly.

Bolsover major glared at Phyllis Howell's brother.

"Take those words back," he muttered, "or I'll wipe you off the floor with you!"

For a moment Archie hesitated.

Then, to the utter amazement and disgust of the Famous Five, he said, in faltering tones:

"I—I apologise!"

"Good!" said Bolsover. "You've just saved your skin!"

And he passed on.

As for Archie Howell, he put on his hat, paid his bill, and, without another word or a glance at the Famous Five, quitted the cafe.

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent for some time.

Bob Cherry was the first to speak, and he expressed the sentiments of them all.

"My only aunt! Of all the white-livered finks, that fellow Howell takes the biscuit!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Rival Performers!

TWENTY-FOUR hours later the Famous Five were seated at tea in Study No. 1, when Trotter, the page, entered with a letter.

"For me?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"No, Master Wharton."

"Then it's for me?" said Bob Cherry.

"No, Master Cherry."

"Hand it over!" said Frank Nugent.

"It is mine, of course."

Trotter shook his head.

"Then who the merry dickens is it for?" demanded Wharton.

"For everybody!" said Trotter.

He laid the message on the table, and the juniors saw that it was addressed as follows:

"To Messrs. Harry Wharton, Robert Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh."

"Strange!" murmured Nugent, when Trotter had taken his departure. "Open it, Harry!"

Harry Wharton did so. He drew out a sheet of notepaper, and his cheeks crowded round to see what was written thereon.

This is what they read:

"Courtfield.

"My dear fellows,—I think you will all agree that I have successfully accomplished the first of my three tasks."

"At the Elysian Cafe in Courtfield last evening I did something which you fellows would have found it impossible to do. Bolsover major insulted me, and I ate humble pie to him, and apologized. I venture to say that not one of you could have done the same!"

"Now that my first task has been achieved I will devote my attention to the remaining two."

"Cheerio!"

"Sincerely yours,
"ARCHIE HOWELL."

The Famous Five were almost overcome on reading that letter.

"The—the cheek of the fellow!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The brazen nerve of the bounder!" exclaimed Wharton.

"But he's quite right in saying that he's accomplished his first task," said Nugent slowly. "Not one of us could have apologised to Bolsover like he did."

"No, rather not!"

Amazed though they were at the colossal nerve displayed by Archie Howell, the Famous Five were forced to admit that he had successfully carried out the first of his three tasks.

However, he still had a couple of very stiff hurdles to negotiate. It was highly improbable that he could defeat Bolsover major in fair fight; it was even more improbable that he would be able to place the Famous Five at a disadvantage. Indeed, the labours of Hercules were as nothing to the gigantic tasks which confronted Phyllis Howell's brother.

"The bounder's tricked us this time," said Bob Cherry, "but he won't be able to do it again!"

"No jolly fear!"

"Oh, how Howell!" granted Johnny Bull. "The fellow's getting on our nerves! Let's talk about something more interesting—amateur theatricals, for instance. It's high time the Remove Amateur Dramatic Society gave another show."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"We seem to have faded away into oblivion. What's your opinion, Harry?"

"I certainly think it's time we came out of our shell," said Wharton. "It would be ripping if we could hire the Public Hall in Courtfield one evening this week and give a show."

"This week?" echoed Nugent.

"Why not? A few weeks ago, if you remember, we intended to give a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's 'H.M.S. Pinafore,' but it somehow fell through. However, we've scouted up the parts, and we've got the costumes, so what's prevent our giving the show this week?"

"Nothing!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's go ahead! Lemme see. I'm playing Ralph Rackstraw—the humble tur who turns out in the end to be the captain of the Pinafore."

"And I'm Admiral Sir Joseph Potter, K.C.B.," said Wharton.

And he promptly burst into song, as follows:

"When I was a boy I served a term As office-boy in an attorney's firm. I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor.

And I polished up the handle of the big front door.

I polished up the handle so carefully, That now I am the ruler of the King's Navee!"

"Stow it!" said Nugent. "You may be the Admiral of the Fleet, but you've no right to kick up a row like that!"

"Look here—"

"B-r-r! Do you know your part, Johnny?"

"Like a book!" said Johnny Bull.

And he, in turn, burst into song:

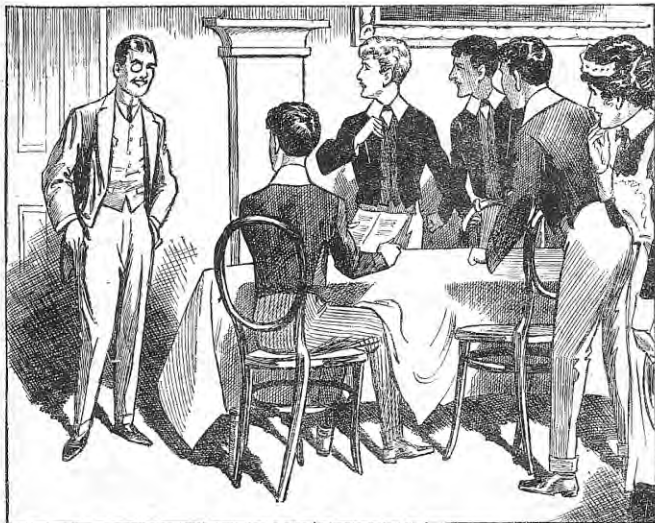
"I am the captain of the Pinafore, And a right good captain, too!"

Johnny got no further. Four separate and distinct glares warned him to desist.

"I've got the best part of all," said Nugent. "I'm the captain's daughter. Pity poor old dinky's complexion won't allow him to take a leading part. He's merely a coloured sailor."

"But I have sweetly learned all the esteemed songs," said Hurree Singh.

"Good!" said Wharton. "How does the opening chorus go?"



"Tea and toasted scones and cake for five, please!" said Bob Cherry, when the waitress appeared. "Make it six!" interposed a calm voice. And the next moment Archie Howell seated himself at the same table as the juniors. (See Chapter 5.)

Inky cleared his throat, and began:

"We sail the ocean bluefully,
And our saucy ship's a beauty;
We are sober men and truefully
And attentive to our duty——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're departing slightly from the original text, Inky!" chuckled Wharton. Harree Singh looked surprised.

"How so, my worthy chum?"
"It has to be sung in English, my worthy chum—not in Hindustani!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Try again, old chap!" said Bob Cherry.

And Inky had another shot:

"We sail the blueful ocean,
And our saucy ship's a beauty;
We make no wild commotion,
But performfully do our duty."

"Oh, help!"

"Worse and worse!" said Wharton. "I don't think you'd better be a sailor, Inky. We'll appoint you stage-manager."

"Hear, hear!"

Anyone passing Study No. 1 in the course of the next hour would have heard strange vocal sounds within.

The Famous Five—with the exception of Harree Singh—were assiduously practising their parts; and the juniors

felt convinced of their ability to render a delightful performance.

Later on that evening, Harry Wharton cycled over to Courtfield, and made arrangements for the hiring of the Public Hall.

On his return to Greyfriars, the captain of the Remove drew up the following announcement, which was displayed in a prominent position on the notice-board:

"NOTICE!

A FIRST-RATE PERFORMANCE

of

'H.M.S. PINAFORE'

will be rendered at the Public Hall, Courtfield, on Friday evening at 8 sharp, by the Remove Amateur Dramatic Society.

The principal characters will be as follows:

Admiral Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. ... H. Wharton.
Ralph Rackstraw ... R. Cherry.
Captain of the Pinafore ... J. Bull.
The Captain's Daughter ... F. Nugent.
Dick Deadeye ... P. Balsever.
Battercup ... S. Q. I. Field.

"Doors open at 7.30 p.m. Bars of accommodation! No charge for admission!

"Members of the flag fraternity are expected to appear with clean collars and snowy necks! Members of the Fifth Form are expected to preserve due order and decorum!"

"Roll up in your thousands!"

"(Signed) HARRY WHARTON,
"President, Remove Amateur Dramatic Society."

That notice was the subject of a good deal of comment throughout Greyfriars.

The fact that admission was free acted as a tremendous incentive to all the fellows to turn up.

"I'm going along to see the fun," said Skinner.

"Same here!"

"I'm going, too," said Billy Baister. "It's a jolly shame that a born actor like me should have to sit in the audience, though. I'd make a ripping captain of the Pinafore."

"And a right chump captain, too!" said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth strolled up to the notice-board with Potter and Greene; and the great Hornes frowned when he perused Harry Wharton's announcement.

"This is like the Remove's cheek!" he exclaimed. "We are going to give a performance of 'H.M.S. Pinafore' ourselves!"

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"And we jolly well will!" said Potter.
"What's more, we'll give it on Friday evening!"

"Hear, hear!" said Greene. "Those fags have got no right to queer our pitch! We've been practising the 'Pinafore' for weeks now, and we're not going to let Wharton & Co. give a performance over our heads!"

"No fear!"
Coker produced a pencil, and scrawled across Harry Wharton's notice the word "Kanselled!"
"What on earth does that mean?" gasped Greene.

"It means that there's no performance—not on the part of the Remove, anyway. We'll go along and see Blundell, and arrange to cut the Remove out."
"Good!"

Besides being captain of the Fifth, George Blundell held the exalted position of President of the Fifth Form Amateur Dramatic Society.

When Blundell heard that Harry Wharton & Co. were contemplating the production of "H.M.S. Pinafore," he was decidedly wrathful.

"They're bagging our idea!" said Coker.

"Precisely!" said Potter.
"And we're not going to stand it!" added Greene.

"I should think not!" growled Blundell. "Instead of the Remove giving this show, we'll give it ourselves."

"And I'm to be captain of the Pinafore, I suppose?" said Coker.

"There's something wrong with your apposer, then!" grunted Blundell. "I'm taking the captain's part, and you're merely a common or garden sailor."

"Look here—"

"Can't it be a strain on the crescent?" The Fifth-Formers continued to wrangle between themselves concerning the parts they were to play.

But they were all agreed upon one point—namely, that they would outwit the Remove.

And when bed-time came, Harry Wharton's announcement on the notice-board was still disfigured by the novel word:

"Kanselled!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Archie Scores Again.

DURING the next few days there was considerable excitement at Greyfriars.

Rehearsals were the order of the day, both in the Remove and Fifth Form.

Harry Wharton had swooped up the part of Admiral Sir Joseph Porter to perfection; and Wharton's chums had been equally industrious.

The Removes knew, of course, that Coker & Co. intended to try and eat them out, but they didn't worry. They had hired the hall in Courtfield; and, moreover, Harry Wharton had arranged for half a dozen cars to call at Greyfriars and convey the performers to their destination.

On the Friday evening, shortly after seven o'clock, the cars arrived.

There were scenes of great animation in the Class, where the members of the Remove Amateur Dramatic Society had assembled in their costumes.

"Here we are!" said Bob Cherry gaily. "Hop in, you fellows, and we'll be at Courtfield before Coker & Co. have tumbled to the fact that we're gone!"

"Yes, rather!"

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The six cars had halted in a line, and the Famous Five made a dash for the first vehicle.

The chauffeur—a weedy-looking fellow, with his hat jerked down over his eyes and a muffler twisted round his neck—respectfully opened the door.

"You know where to take us, I suppose?" said Harry Wharton.

"Back to the Public 'All."

"Yes, up, then!"

The chauffeur clambered into his seat, and the car rolled away towards the school gates.

The Famous Five were in high spirits. Gosling, the porter, who caught sight of them from the door of his lodge, little suspected that they were the Famous Five. Harry Wharton was attired as an admiral, Johnny Bull as a sea-captain, Bob Cherry as an able-bodied seaman, and Frank Nugent as the skipper's daughter.

Hurree Singh, the stage-manager, was in Etons, but Gosling failed to recognise him.

The car fairly leapt along the road, leaving the others far behind.

"This chauffeur of ours knows how to put the pace on!" said Johnny Bull.

"As he has," said Bob Cherry. "We shall be in Courtfield in a couple of ticks!"

The car sped on through the darkness, and the Famous Five chuckled to themselves as they pictured the wrath of Coker of the Fifth.

"Coker will find himself badly left this journey!" said Harry Wharton.

"Absolutely!"

"Wonder if we shall get a crowded house?" murmured Nugent.

"Sure to!" said Bob Cherry. "All the nobility and gentry are coming along. I've even heard it rumored that the Head's coming."

"Plus the Prince of Wales, and half a dozen of the Royal Family, I suppose," said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The car travelled faster and faster, and then came a sudden gleam of lights, which signified a moment later.

Harry Wharton sat bolt upright in his seat.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

"What's up?" asked Bob Cherry.

Wharton gripped his chum by the arm.

"You saw those lights a minute ago?"

"Yes!"

"Well, they were the lights of Courtfield High Street!"

"Great pip!"

"Where are we now, then?" asked Nugent in perplexity.

"Nearly a mile beyond Courtfield!"

The lights which the juniors had seen were unquestionably those of Courtfield's main street. Yet the car had not slowed up, nor did the chauffeur appear to have any intention of so doing. The vehicle was plunging along the dark road at an alarming pace.

"This chauffeur must be potty!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Either mad or drunk—or both!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

And the captain of the Remove thrust his head out of the window.

"Hi, stop!" he shouted.

The chauffeur did not even turn his head.

"Stop, you madman!" roared Wharton.

But there was still no response.

"This—is is awful!" panted Wharton, withdrawing his head. "The fellow's taking us miles and miles beyond our destination! What shall we do?"

That was a question which admitted of no solution.

The Famous Five were furious and dismayed.

Harry Wharton looked at his watch, and gave a groan.

It was nearly eight o'clock—almost time for the performance to commence!

"This is the giddy limit and the last straw rolled into one!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Why, we shall be over the Sussex border in a jiffy!"

"We're over it already!" said Wharton, recognising a familiar landmark.

"This road leads to Burchester."

"Where's that?" asked Nugent.

"It's a small town not many miles from St. Jim's."

"Oh, help! Can't we force the fellow to stop somehow?"

"Too late!" said Wharton lugubriously. "The mischief's done. We should never have been back in time for the show."

"And Coker & Co. will give it instead!" said Bob Cherry, almost gnashing his teeth with rage and vexation.

"With four of the leading characters absent, our fellows will have to chuck the idea; and that's where the Fifth will stop!"

"It's awful!" said Johnny Bull.

The car slowed up at last in the High Street of the little market-town of Burchester.

The Famous Five clambered out of the vehicle at once, and, heedless of their quaint attire, which was attracting the attention of passers-by, they rushed towards the chauffeur, who seemed to be enjoying the situation.

"What does this mean!" demanded Harry Wharton heatedly.

The chauffeur affected surprise.

"This 'ere is the Public 'All, sir," he said.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"Chump! Dolt! Imbecile! It was the Public Hall at Courtfield that we wanted—not at Burchester! Have you got lots in your belly, or what?"

The chauffeur gave a low chuckle.

"I rather think, dear boys," he said, with a startling change of voice, "that this is where I score!"

The Famous Five blinked at the speaker, and at each other, in utter bewilderment.

"Archie!" muttered Bob Cherry at last.

"Archie Howell, by Jove!" ejaculated Nugent.

"He's spoofed us!" roared Johnny Bull angrily. "Let's haul him down, and give him the bumping of his life!"

"One minute!" interposed Harry Wharton. "Why did you play this idiotic prank, Howell?"

Phyllis Howell's brother, who was easily recognisable now in the light of the street-lamp, chuckled again.

"I think you fellows will agree," he said calmly, "that I've successfully carried out the third of my three tests."

"My hat!"

"Test number three, if you remember, was this: I had to place all five of you, at the same time, at a disadvantage. Am I rather think I've succeeded! All that now remains for me to do is to carry out Test number two, by lickin' Rover over major."

The Famous Five were so completely flabbergasted by Archie's coolness and impudence that they quite forgot their original intention of giving him a sound bumping.

"How on earth did you manage to work this stunt?" gasped Wharton.

"It was perfectly easy, dear boy—as easy as fallin' off a form. I knew that you intended to give a show in Courtfield to-night, an' it occurred to me that if I prevented you from carryin' out your

object, I should win the third test. So I signared the genuine driver of this car, an' changed togs with him. Then I collected you all at Greyfriars, an' brought you here. Are you satisfied that I've placed you all at a disadvantage?"

"Quite!" said Wharton. "But I wish you'd chosen another way of doing it. You've wrecked our evening, and Coker & Co. will gloat over us till the end of the term!"

Archie laughed.

"Cheer up!" he said. "The Fifth will make a hash of their performance. From what I can make out, they generally do. An' you fellows will be able to give your show to-morrow night instead, an' make a thumpin' success of it!"

Archie Howell's words had quite a stimulating effect upon the Famous Five.

They had been thoroughly and completely spoiled, and there would be no performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore" that evening, so far as they were concerned. But on the following evening they would be able to make amends.

"An' now," said Archie, "all parties bein' satisfied, I suppose I'd better run you back to Courtfield? I promised to return this car to the garage by ten o'clock. She runs ripplin', doesn't she?"

"Well, you've got some nerve, I must say!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If a bobby ordered you to stop—"

"I wouldn't stop for fifty bobbies!" was the reply. "Hop in, dear boys!"

The "dear boys" obeyed, and a moment later they were speeding away on their return journey.

"I'm beginning to think," said Harry Wharton, "that we've made a mistake in our summing up of this fellow Howell. He may be a lop, but he's no fool."

"And he's only got one more test to accomplish," said Nugent.

"But he'll never lick Bolsover!" said Bob Cherry, with emphasis. "Not in a thousand years! Why, Bolsover would simply make shavings of him!"

"Of course!" said Wharton. But his tone was rather doubtful. After the exploits of the evening, he would never be surprised at anything Archie Howell did.

And the prospect of having to apologise humbly to Phyllis Howell's brother was galling in the extreme.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Winning His Spurs!

ARCHIE HOWELL slowed up at length outside the Public Hall in Courtfield.

The evening was well advanced by this time, and from within the hall came sounds of cheering and jeering.

Evidently Coker & Co. were well under way with their performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore."

The Famous Five stepped out of the car, and went round to the back of the hall, leaving Archie Howell to return the car to the garage.

Quite a commotion was taking place behind the scenes when Harry Wharton & Co. entered.

The members of the Remove Amateur Dramatic Society were indignantly discussing the absence of the Famous Five.

"The rotters!" roared Bolsover major, who looked a repulsive object in the attire of Dick Deadeye. "They've deliberately let us down!"

"They've played into the hands of the

Fifth!" exclaimed Peter Todd indignantly.

Then, glancing towards the door, Peter caught sight of the Famous Five.

"Why, here they are!" he ejaculated.

"A veritable host of protest arose."

"Where have you bondsmen been?"

"You've left us in the lurch!"

"And the Fifth are giving the performance!"

"Shame!"

It was very humiliating for the Famous Five to have to explain that they had been spotted by Archie Howell; nevertheless, Harry Wharton related the facts.

"We've been disabled, dabbled, and done, you fellows," he said. "Phyllis Howell's brother charged togs with one of the chauffers, and took us miles and miles beyond Courtfield—to Burchester, in fact. And we've just this minute returned."

Bolsover major gave a scornful laugh. "I don't believe a word of it!" he exclaimed.

Wharton flushed.

"Are you trying to imply—"

What Australia thinks of the "Penny Popular."

"Dear Editor,—This letter is a message from Australia, just to let you know how we like the dear old P.P. out here in Queensland. I am a girl, and I have two sisters and three brothers, and we all love the POPULAR."

"All our friends read the stories, and old John Walsh, an old-man on the farm, would, too, but he can't read, being rather too old to learn, though he is frightfully intelligent, just as some of the aborigines can be."

"We all watch for the English mail, and we hope the POPULAR shall go on giving such splendid stories as yours."

"AN AUSTRALIAN READER."

"That you're telling a pack of lies! Certainly!"

"You said!" shouted Bob Cherry, pushing his way forward. "If you don't believe Wharton, how and where do you suppose we've been spending the evening?"

"It's my opinion," sneered Bolsover, "that you've been over to Cliff House to flirt with that saucy miss Phyllis Howell!"

A hush followed Bolsover major's heated words.

Everyone realised that the bully of the Remove had gone too far. He had brought a base and unfounded accusation against the Famous Five, and he had insulted their girl chum.

Bob Cherry promptly removed the jumper he was wearing, and turned to Bolsover.

"Put up your hands!" he said quietly.

Bolsover began to bluster.

"If you think I'm going to start scrapping like a pig—"

"You've got no choice in the matter!" retorted Bob Cherry. "Come on! I'm waiting!"

"Excuse me," interposed a quiet voice from the doorway. "But I think this is my affair. I'll trouble you to stand aside, Cherry."

All eyes were turned to the doorway, where Archie Howell was standing. He was no longer in chauffer's garb, but he wore a perfectly cut suit of indigo blue serge, and looked as big a dandy as ever.

"Keep off the grass, you chump!" said Bob Cherry.

Archie Howell ignored this injunction, and moved to the crowd of juniors.

"I claim the right to be allowed to tackle Bolsover," he said. "As Phyllis Howell's brother, it's up to me to avenge that sad's insult."

"You fool!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You'll be shirty pulverised!"

"In that case, Cherry can tackle Bolsover afterwards."

"That's fair enough," said Peter Todd. "Heave, heave!"

"Howells got first claim!"

"Stand back, Cherry!"

For a moment Bob Cherry hesitated. Then he shrugged his shoulders, and turned his back on Bolsover.

"You're a champion idiot, Howell," he said. "You won't stand an earthly against this brute; but you can go ahead."

"Thanks!" said Archie. And he removed his coat and rolled up his shirt-sleeves.

Bolsover major remained in full dress. He chuckled to himself as he surveyed the slim form of his opponent. There was no comparison between the two, and the odds were all in favour of the bully of the Remove.

At that moment there was a sudden stampede close at hand.

Coker & Co. had been rendering "H.M.S. Pinafore" in such an atrocious manner that they were being given what is known in theatrical parlance as "the lift."

All sorts of missiles were hurled at the performers.

The Fifth withstood the bombardment for a moment; then they were compelled to turn and flee. They stooped wildly through the wings, and joined the Removes at the back of the stage.

"Oh dear!" gasped Coker, surveying the damage done to his clothing by numerous prehistoric eggs.

"It's all your fault!" hissed Rhinoceros. "Your acting was enough to make the angels weep!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, dry up!" snapped the captain of the Fifth. "I wish to goodness I'd never taken part in this sorry show. It's all fixed out in a ghastly failure!"

"What are these fags up to?" asked Peter suddenly.

"Looks like a scrap," said Grempe.

Ignoring the Fifth-Formers, Harry Wharton rapped out a sharp command, and Bolsover major and Archie Howell threw themselves into fighting attitudes.

It was to be a fight to a finish with bare fists. There were to be no intervals, no seconds, and no formalities.

"Pile in, you two!" said the captain of the Remove.

Bolsover lowered his head, and charged like a bull at his opponent.

Archie Howell, whose clever footwork had already been in evidence at the fancy dress ball, skipped nimbly to one side, with the result that Bolsover overbalanced, and went with a crash to the floor.

There was a roar of laughter from the onlookers, and the bully of the Remove picked himself up, crimson and furious.

He swung out his left, but Archie ducked just in time, and the blow sailed harmlessly over his head.

"By Jove, the fellow's got plenty of ring craft!" said Nugent admiringly.

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"But" as soon as he stops one of Bolsover's hefty punches it will knock all the stuffing out of him," was Johnny Bull's comment.

The first real blow of the fight, however, was struck by Archie.

It appeared to the onlookers to be an effortless blow—a mere tap; but the recipient of it thought otherwise. He staggered back, and Archie Howell promptly followed up his advantage.

A sharp bout of in-fighting followed, in the course of which Archie beat a merry tattoo on his opponent's ribs.

Bolsover broke away, paused for breath, and then lunched a fierce attack. One of his sledgehammer blows took effect, and Archie went down; but he was up again like a Jack-in-the-box.

"Good man!" said Wharton approvingly.

For the next three minutes Archie Howell had a very sorry time of it.

Bolsover was on top, and he exerted his great strength to good purpose. Sheer strength of will enabled Archie to keep his feet and withstand that hurricane attack.

"He's jolly plucky, and no mistake," said Vernon-Smith. "But he'll be floored sooner or later."

Bolsover summoned all his strength for a knock-out blow, and his left shot out, straight from the shoulder.

Archie dodged swiftly, and then, whilst Bolsover was tottering, he sailed in with a terrific upper-cut.

The blow was so sudden, so forceful,

and so unexpected, that it felled Bolsover major like an ox.

The bully of the Remove measured his length on the floor, and he made no motion to rise.

For the moment the onlookers were too astonished to do anything but gasp. But presently Bob Cherry found his voice, and started to cheer, and the cheer was taken up with great enthusiasm by Renovites and Fifth-Formers combined.

Archie Howell had avenged the insult to his sister. Moreover, he had successfully accomplished the three tasks which had been set him by the Famous Five.

Harry Wharton & Co., like the good sportsmen they were, made their apology there and then, in public.

"We're a set of cuds, Howell," said the captain of the Remove. "We regarded you as a good-for-nothing top—we said you weren't fit to be the brother of Phyllis—and we made the biggest blunder of our lives!"

"That's so!" said Bob Cherry humbly. "We jumped to conclusions. We sized you up as a weak-kneed, chicken-hearted dandy, and now you've proved otherwise. And we should like to apologise to you in public for the injustice we've done you."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh together.

Archie Howell smiled as Wharton assisted him into his coat.

"It's quite all right, dear boys," he said. "I hear no malice for what's happened. You made a triflin' mistake, an' we're all liable to mistakes, aren't we?"

At this juncture Bolsover major rose to his feet, and advanced rather unsteadily towards his conqueror.

"I've got an apology to make, too," he said. "I was a low-down cad to insult your sister, Howell."

"You were!" said Archie candidly. "But it's very decent of you to stand up an' admit it. Will you shake it?"

Bolsover major promptly shook hands with the fellow who had defeated him, and then Archie Howell bade the Greyfriars fellows good-night, and passed out of the building.

"There goes a fine sportsman and a jolly good fellow!" said Bob Cherry.

And he echoed the opinion of all present.

Next day a bumper repast took place in Study No. 1. And the principal guests of the evening were Phyllis and Archie Howell.

The latter's brief holiday had expired, and he announced that he was about to return to London with his tutor.

The Famous Five were very sorry indeed to have to bid farewell to Archie; but they each and all expressed the hope that they had not looked their last upon Phyllis Howell's Brother!

THE END.

(Another grand story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "SCUFF'S SECRET!" Order your copy EARLY.)



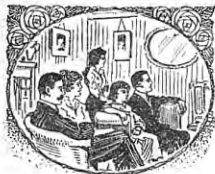
This is a small line drawing of the Plate to be Given Free. Actual size of Plate with engraving is 7½ inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy in Class, JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL, V.C. The Battle of Jutland, May 31st—June 1st, 1916. From the Picture by F. O. Bolsover, painted for the Admiralty on board H.M.S. Chester." The closing date of this offer will be published in this paper in a week or so. No application will be accepted after that date.

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WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO SECURE A BEAUTIFUL ART PLATE :: :: ::

We reproduce here a small line drawing of a magnificent coloured plate which every reader of THE MAGNET has an equal chance of securing. All you have to do is to secure the names and addresses of SIX of your friends who are non-readers of THE MAGNET. When you have done this, write them down on a postcard and post them to the Editor of THE MAGNET, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4. All postcards should be marked "Free Plate" in the top left-hand corner. Names and addresses of regular or occasional readers must on no account be sent, otherwise your application for a Plate may be rejected. Before sending in your list, make sure that the names are of non-readers.

Only one plate will be sent to any one reader.



SAFE SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.



A PECULIAR CANDLESTICK.

Water supporting a lighted candle seems a very peculiar form of candlestick, and yet, despite this, it will be found quite as serviceable as any other.

To make the candlestick is quite easy. All you have to do is first to weight the end of a piece of candle—previously used—with a nail or a piece of metal, in such a manner that, when placed in a vessel of water, the liquid will be flush with the edge of the candle without wetting the wick.

Next light the candle, and announce that, in spite of the unfavourable sur-

roundings, your candle will burn to the end.

This may at first seem extraordinary, but a little reflection will show that your statement is correct, for this experiment is only a striking example of the law of Archimedes, which states that "when a body is immersed in water it loses in weight an amount equal to the weight of the water displaced."

Now, whilst the candle is being consumed it is becoming shorter; but, on account of its diminution in weight, it rises in the water at the same rate at which it is consumed. (Fig. 10.)

MAKING A PAPER FISH SWIM.

The title of this experiment suggests something rather wonderful indeed, for it seems impossible to impart motion to a paper fish.

It may be done, however, and quite easily, as will be seen from the following.

From a piece of ordinary paper cut out a fish like that shown in the diagram, and of the size of an ordinary fish. In the centre make a circular hole (A), communicating with the tail by a narrow

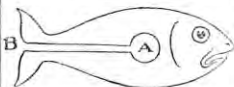


Fig. 11.—The Swimming Paper Fish.

canal (A B, Fig. 11). Having done this, fill an elongated vessel with water, and place the fish on the surface of the liquid in such a manner that the underneath face is completely moistened, while the other remains quite dry.

You are now ready to set the fish in motion; but, to add to the interest of the experiment, challenge any of your friends to make the fish move without touching or even blowing upon it.

This may seem to them impossible. This is how it is performed.

With great care pour one drop of oil into the opening (A); the oil at once tries to spread over the surface of the liquid, but that is only possible if it escapes by the narrow passage (A B).

This it does, and, owing to the reaction, the fish is thrust in the direction opposite to the flowing of the oil—i.e., it will be



Fig. 12.—The Swimming Fish.

thrust forward, the movement lasting long enough for the spectators to view with astonishment the unusual sight of a paper fish swimming. (Fig. 12.)

FLOATING PINS AND NEEDLES.

If a drop of water is placed on glass it will at once spread; but if the same thing is done with a drop of mercury, the liquid will not spread, but remain in the form of a bead.

These two different results are due to the fact that whilst the water wets the glass the mercury does not.

Now, take a pin which has been well dried; it is a body which water will moisten, but, owing to its smooth surface, not so easily as in the case of glass.

Suppose, then, that by some means or other you can place the pin so gently on the surface of the liquid that the water does not make it wet, you will notice that the water takes on either side of the pin a convex shape, and in this way a sufficient volume of water is displaced to allow the pin to float as if it were a match.

The experiment may, of course, be as easily performed with a needle; nor must



Fig. 13.—The Floating Pin.

it be thought it is confined to pins and needles, which are thin, for, with care, you may even succeed with big darning-needles.

It has not yet been shown, however, how to place the pin on the water in such a manner that it is not made even wet.

There are several ways of doing this, some requiring considerable practice.

The following is the simplest:

Float on the surface of the water a cigarette-paper, place the pin upon it, leave the paper to sink to the bottom when it has become soaked, and the pin will float without any difficulty, for on either side of the pin the water takes the convex shape before mentioned, thus displacing sufficient water to allow the pin to float.

In order to hide from the spectators the stratagem you have employed, gently remove the paper before showing them the floating pin. (Fig. 13.)



THE MINERS' CHAMPION

A Stirring Tale of the Ring.

By PERCY LONGHURST.

SYNOPSIS.

Harry Rhodes, a miner and amateur boxer, of Lextonburgh, a mining village, meets Joshua Martin, the manager and principal backer of Anthony Hanna—“Cast-Iron Tony”—a wonderful Scottish light-weight boxer, who had come to Lextonburgh to train. Harry lives with an uncle, James Rhodes, who has trained him, and who had himself been a boxer years before. He had left the ring through some tragedy of which Joshua Martin knows the facts, much to James Rhodes' alarm.

Hanna, who is a thorough scoundrel, becomes Harry's sworn enemy.

Bertram Godfrey, a friend of Mr. Durham,

the owner of the mine at which Harry worked, interests himself in Harry Rhodes.

Harry learns that James Rhodes is his father, and that he was responsible for the death of a boxer some years previously.

Harry, his father, and Bertram Godfrey go to London, where Harry defeats Jules Meunier, Parisian light-weight champion, in a private contest, which is witnessed by a Royal Prince. An attempt to kidnap the Prince afterwards is frustrated by Harry.

In a return match between Harry and Jules Meunier, the Frenchman makes an unintentional foul, and is disqualified. Harry generously suggests another fight, which sometimes shortly afterwards.

(Now read on.)

Harry's Victory.

IT was a sight to provoke any man to excitement; the Frenchman's passions it brought to a state verging upon delirium. The traditions of the club were forgotten, and, unable to contain themselves, men yelled and cheered themselves voiceless as they saw the English boxer swept to the ropes and pinned there, unable to escape—so overwhelmed that he was powerless to do more than parry the avalanche of blows hurled at him.

The face of James Rhodes grew suddenly white and strained, his eyes haggard. Never in all his varied experience had he seen such fighting; for the moment his heart sank.

Flesh and blood, not even his own, could bear up under such a battering. With every second he expected to see Harry drop helpless upon the floor.

"By the Lord Harry, but the Frenchman's done him!" whispered Bob Durham to Bertram Godfrey, who had found a seat beside him.

"Hope not," returned the other, but with mighty little confidence.

"So do I, but—" Durham stopped expressively. "But, man alive, what else could you expect? It's miraculous, such hitting!"

Yet the seconds passed, and still Harry Rhodes was on his feet, battered and beaten, half-dead, helpless, as he appeared, he had not been touched vitally with sufficient force to collapse. He was

half-blind, an eyelash having been driven within the eyelid by the passing flook of a partly-parried glove. His breath was beaten from him; he had no chance to get in a return blow; and yet his splendid courage had not failed him a jot. Through one hundred and twenty seconds of such fierce attack as the club had never before witnessed it sustained him. But it was with a gasp of relief that he heard the warning gong bringing the awful round to an end.

"The next round you have him, Jules!" panted Delahaye exultantly, as his principal staggered to his corner. "Name of a name, but your fighting, it is superb—incredible. Ah-h-h! But now, my brave fellow, you take your revenge—eh? You conquer this English boy!"

Meunier, panting, made no reply. In spite of his heroic exertions, he was sickly pale, and he shook from head to foot like a man with the ague. No man may use up his nervous force with such terrific energy as had he during the past two minutes without feeling some effect.

Wordless, with something in his throat that threatened to choke him, James Rhodes gently waved a towel in front of his son—not with that furious energy of the inexperienced second whose ministrations are calculated to do far more harm than good. There was a world of agony in his eyes, as he stared into Harry's flushed and reddened face. So occupied was he with his own dismal fears he failed wholly to note the light of confidence still burning in Harry's eyes, the effort the lad still made to smile. Harry had no breath to waste in words, but he nodded, as though to convey assurance he was not yet done with.

Nor was he. Stumbling from his corner, his ageing eye had traversed the seats, and it had fallen upon a face with anxiety and pity written large upon it—a clean-shaven, boyish face, pale but composed—and across Harry's dizzy brain flashed the recollection of the last occasion that he and that boyish-looking young man had been together, and of the words of hope and confidence he had listened to.

"He thinks I'm faked!"

And if that actually were in the mind of the Royal youth, it was a thought shared by nearly everyone else present.

"The towel not gone in yet!" muttered Lord Shorthill wonderingly.

Sir William Berryford turned towards him.

"I don't think you'll see that happen," he said quietly. "The lad Rhodes doesn't look the sort. He can still walk and see, and, unless I'm a poorer judge than I believe, Harry Rhodes is of the type that chucks up no sponges while he is still alive."

"But it's hopeless. He can't last another round!" protested the peer.

"You wait, my friend!"

But it was the general conviction that the next round would see the finish of Harry Rhodes.

His vision clear again, Harry walked slowly to the centre; but he was there as quickly as his opponent, who moved with short, jerky strides. For two seconds the two gladiators eyed each other; then, with an obvious gathering of his powers, the Frenchman leaped forward, fisting at the body with his left and swinging his right for a devastating blow at the jaw almost simultaneously.

"Oh!"

From all sides of the ring sounded the gasp of pure wonder.

Meunier was staggering back, an expression of horror in his widely-dilated eyes, his body doubled forward at the waist, about which both arms were tightly clasped.

Harry, disregarding the *frat*, a shade quicker than even the tiger-like Frenchman, had countered with a right at the stomach. The glove that should have put him down and out had swung harmlessly in front of his face.

"Jules!"

The shout of amazed consternation was from Delahaye, hardly able to believe the evidence of his eyes.

Still backward went Meunier, and after him went Harry; but he did not attempt to strike again, waiting until his opponent should have placed himself in a position of defence. But of this Meunier seemed incapable. Back to the ropes he went and leaned there, Harry, alert, on guard, following him.

"Box on!" ordered the referee, arousing himself to the performance of his duty. "Meunier, box on!"

With twisted face the brave Frenchman sought to obey; mechanically his arms were slowly lifted, and he lurched forward. And Harry, stopping quietly within reach, hit him lightly on the chin—a blow such as would hardly have upset a child of ten.

But it was enough. Jules Meunier dropped in a heap to the floor. And there he stayed while the gong toll all the strokes that indicated his defeat.

"Harry Rhodes the winner!" announced the referee, and left the ring.

But it was a full half-minute before the amazed spectators actually realised the fight was ended.

"The most wonderful fight I've ever seen!"

Such was Lord Shorthill's pronouncement, and there was no one to disagree with him.

"Or you're ever likely to see, my lord," returned Conrad Downman, who had over-

heard the remark. "That lad Rhodes is a wonder!"

"He's the coming champion of the world!" declared the peer. "And there's a thousand pounds of mine to back the opinion any time it's disputed. And you can tell Rhodes so, Bowman!"

The Spoils to the Winner.

THE following morning Bertram Godfrey met Harry with a face expressive of the highest gloom.

"My dear chap, your fortune's made!" he cried enthusiastically. "Look at this!" And he held out a copy of the foremost London sporting daily.

Harry took it, glanced at the page with its big lettered headlines, and his cheeks flushed with pleasure.

He had done well in beating so decisively such a fighter as Jules Meunier, and he knew he had done well, and he wasn't going to be such a prig as to pretend that he wasn't pleased to find himself spoken of in terms of high praise. "I'm jolly glad," he said delightedly. "I meant to win that fight. I wanted to win on my merits; and it does make me pleased to know that there are others who think I did well in winning!"

"Did well!" echoed Godfrey. He laughed. "That's rather a mild way of putting what this boxing writer evidently thinks of your performance. I know the man who wrote it, too. He's an acknowledged authority—recognized as such by everybody—and his word carries some weight. Moreover, he's one of the men who say just what they mean, and neither more nor less than they mean. If you'd done badly last night, James J. Pearson—that's his name—would have said so very emphatically. J. J.'s a chap who calls a spade a spade. He doesn't run a boxer down just because he happens to lose a fight; and, on the other hand, he doesn't try to make people believe that a winner's a blessed little man, such as this world has never seen before, so that make J. J. known to you one of these days."

James Rhodes entering the room at that moment, Godfrey threw the journal to him.

"Have a look at that, Jimmy, and tell me if it isn't reading to you your heart good. If you didn't feel proud of your boy before, you will after reading what Pearson has to say about him."

"But I did, Godfrey," protested Rhodes energetically. "If I hadn't thought he was just about the best going, I'd never have been persuaded into letting him go into the game."

He began to read, and it was an account to do a man's heart good.

"DEFEAT OF JULES MEUNIER. A CLEAR-CUT VICTORY GAINED OVER FRENCH CHAMPION BY A FIGHTING PITBOY. HARRY RHODES' CLEAR TITLE TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP."

Followed a brief account of the first contest, with a plain and authoritative statement that the French champion had no one but himself to blame for the disqualification he had suffered.

Then came a description of what the writer styled "the most chivalrous act that the modern Ring has known"—the giving to Meunier of the opportunity of redeeming himself before the public and his opponent:

"The boxer who sets no value upon a victory that comes to him through the fault or carelessness which leads to well-deserved disqualification is a novelty of which the modern Ring up to now has

been innocent. When, going further, the nominal victor actually permits his defeated opponent to compete again, and in the same ring, during the same evening, that he may have the chance of proving his superiority as boxer and fighter, that novelty becomes nothing short of a miracle.

"Except I had been a witness of last night's extraordinary performance at the National Boxing Club, had I not actually seen and heard for myself what took place, I should have said that the incident was either a highly-imaginative piece of writing or a fake—a happening arranged beforehand.

"No one who was an eye-witness could possibly believe the alternative. To feel even doubtful would be a gross insult, both to Jules Meunier and Harry Rhodes.

"One may be permitted to feel pleased that the hero of this extraordinary performance is an Englishman—a thoroughly good and honest man. No variety athlete ever gave proof of a higher conception of the true meaning of the word 'sport.' Harry Rhodes has added a lustre to the title of 'sportsman' which can never be dimmed.

"Yet Harry Rhodes is, or was, by occupation a pitman, or, as he has not yet reached man's estate, should one not rather write 'pitboy'?"

"In any case, he is England's champion, and a champion of whom all England should be proud."

Other testimonials were still more flattering, and, as Godfrey remarked, they would have been some excuse if Harry had required a larger size in hats.

During the next two or three days there were callers galore at the Highgate house, a perfect avalanche of telegrams and letters of congratulation, and letters of a different kind.

One of the former kind, signed by old Ben Moseley, came from Lexboro', and the receipt of it gave Harry more pleasure than others from better known people.

"All Lexboro' be main glad," he liked 't' Frenchman," wrote Ben. "We are proud to belong to the village. For a hundred years Lexboro' have been working 't' turn out a champion, and we done it at last. All old friends wishes to be remembered to ye."

To the other sort Harry gave little attention. They came from boxing promoters, some with most extravagant offers—all offering to stage matches that would bring him in pots of money. Not a few were from managers, and every one displayed his ability to handle Harry's business to his financial profit better than anyone else. Offers were made him for trips to the United States, to Australia, where gold was to be picked up for the asking by such a boxer as he had proved himself to be. There were one or two from broken-down, long-forgotten fighters, asking for small monetary loans. There were invitations from other gentlemen—cleverly-written letters—pointing out to him the advantage to him of accepting their advice in investing his winnings in various undertakings. There were requests for charitable contributions.

Harry would never have suspected there were so many people in the world acquainted with him; and those who weren't waiting to help him make money were anxious to assist him in spending what he had made.

Advertisers and cranks of a dozen species wrote to him. There was a letter from a lad at a public school asking him if he would be so kind as to go down and give the writer a few boxing lessons. He—the writer—had an enemy at school to whom he was anxious to give a sound

thrashing, and he hoped that with Harry's tuition and assistance this might be accomplished.

Bertram Godfrey suggested that the whole collection should go on the fire; and this was the fate of the majority of the communications—the fate they deserved.

James Rhodes smiled grimly.

"There wouldn't 've been so many folk anxious to write to you, lad, if you'd been the loser against Meunier," he said. "But you're a winner, so make the most of it."

"The would-be managers' offers Harry declined. The promoters who offered him big purses he referred to his father and Mr. Godfrey. To the broken fighters down on their luck he, without saying anything about it, sent a few pounds' worth of postal-orders. But to the public school boy, whose letter he had rather liked, he wrote saying he'd like to hear further."

Back came a reply promptly. The writer gave his name—Gerald Jervis, and he was headier at a school in Essex, not a great distance out of London. It was a real boy's letter. Master Jervis was jolly glad Harry had written to him, proving himself a real sportsman. He—Jervis—was sixteen, and in the Fifth Form. He was jolly fond of boxing—always had been; but the boxing-instructor at the school was an ardent champion, couldn't teach anybody anything. He hated football; and his enemy, Daniel Warren, was skipper of the football team, a hefty brute, and a genuine beast. He was nearly twelve stone, while Jervis was a bare ten. Still, if only Harry could come and give him a few tips, he felt sure he would be able to make that rotten bully, Warren, who booed him because he didn't care a rap for football, and wasn't able to play it, bite the dust, and ask for pardon.

Harry felt strongly inclined to go far to see Master Gerald Jervis. At the same time, he didn't see the necessity of troubling either his father or Godfrey in the matter. Master Jervis wasn't wanting them.

His opportunity came when Conrad Bowman rang him up the following day, and said he'd received a cable from the manager of Ed Walker, the negro Galveston Terror, who claimed the world's title at his weight, and had contemplated a trip to Europe to fight out if it held anyone worth his grinding toe.

"I think, Rhodes, Walker would find you well worth his 'phone," said Bowman, over the 'phone. "And I think, if it could be fixed up, you'd find it worth while listening to what Walker has to say. Outside Europe he's looked upon as the champion; but it's my impression you'd have something more than a good chance with him. Come and talk things over."

"We'll go—oh, lad!" said James Rhodes, when told of this.

"You go, dad," replied Harry. "You know something about making these kind of matches—I don't. But you won't want me with you, if Walker were along I would go, for the chance of seeing him. As he isn't there, I might just as well stay away."

James Rhodes thought the same, and Harry seized the chance to go down to Liverpool Street Station, and thence to Baintree, to find Master Gerald Jervis, whose school was within a couple of miles of the town. He was a wire announcing his coming, and asking Jervis to try to meet him at the railway-station. He suggested luncheon together in the town.

On the platform at Baintree Harry looked about him, but could see no one.

corresponding to the "five feet-eight, and barely ten stone," as Master Jervis had described himself; and, giving up his ticket, Harry made for the booking-office. That, too, was innocent of any young man suggesting the one whom he had come to meet. So, with a newspaper to help him pass away the time, Harry found a seat, and prepared to wait for a quarter of an hour. If by then Gerald Jervis hadn't turned up, Harry meant going to the school.

Ten minutes passed. No one spoke to Harry. When, looking up from the paper, Harry noticed a short, stockily-built man between thirty and forty years of age, regarding him with some attention.

Seeing himself observed, this man, after some hesitation, came towards Harry. He was fairly well dressed, wore a golf-cap well over his eyes, and Harry was not slow to notice about him various features suggesting the professional boxer.

"Scuse me, sir," the man said, in a hesitating, lousy voice—"scuse me, but ain't you Mr. 'Arry Rhodes? Don't mind 't' liberty I take, sir, in askin' you the question?"

"Yes, that's my name."

"'Arry Rhodes what whipped Jules Meunier, t' French champion, a week ago?"

"Yes, I'm he. And you?" questioned Harry.

The stocky man nodded, and looked at Harry with careful, respectful curiosity.

"Scuse me, sir," he said again. "Don't mean to be rude a-starin' but—well, I reckoned as 'Arry Rhodes looked a bit different like."

"Well, it's my name. What is it you want?"

The man glanced round carefully, lowered his head, lowered his voice, and said:

"No name's Rafferty—Mike Rafferty."

Harry smiled, and shook his head.

"Don't think I've ever heard it before," he rejoined.

Mr. Rafferty seemed a shade disappointed.

"Then 'e didn't mention my name?"

he asked.

"Who didn't? Of whom are you speaking?"

In a still lower and more confidential voice Mr. Rafferty answered:

"The young gen'lman you come 'ere to see."

Trapped.

HARRY looked at his questioner rather more carefully before speaking again.

"You mean Mr. Jervis? Did he send you here?"

"Well, not send 'xactly," grinned Mr. Rafferty. "Ye see, sir, I been a-teachin' in Mr. Jervis, an' so I come 'ere—"

"You're the boxing-instructor at Hillstead School?" asked Harry, at length, seeing an opening. "Is Mr. Jervis coming here to meet me?"

"'E said as 'ow 'e was meanin' to, sir. Yes, you got me off all right, sir. I teaches th' young gen'lmen boxin'." 'E—that's Mr. Jervis—says 'e meant comin', an' would I come, too."

And Rafferty winked confidentially.

"Oh!" said Harry.

But it wasn't clear to him for what purpose Mr. Michael Rafferty was wanted.

There was a pause.

"Big fight that o' yours, sir, at the National," observed the instructor conversationally. "You did it all right. I 'ard about it. Wish I'd bin there, only I wasn't. I—"

And then, suddenly breaking off, he punched himself violently in the chest.

"Blowed it I 'adn't forgot!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Jervis, 'e said as I was to meet 'im at th' Lamb 'Otel—either there, or along th' footpath what leads up from th' common to th' school. Clean forgot it."

He glanced expectantly at Harry.

"Maybe, sir, 'e's waitin' for you at the Lamb," he suggested respectfully.

"Where is that?"

"Tigh Street, Mr. Rhodes: 'bout two minutes from 'ere. I am gettin' a thick-headed fool!"

"I'll go and find out," decided Harry, rising from his seat.

He suspected nothing. This man Rafferty seemed genuine enough. It was quite possible he had arranged with Gerald Jervis to put in an appearance.

But at the Lamb nothing was known of Mr. Jervis. He wasn't there, neither had he left any message.

"Then 'e'll be at the footpath," said Rafferty, with conviction. "Intended comin', I desay, an' then found 'e couldn't. Got kep' in, I expect. What d'ye say, Mr. Rhodes?"

Harry, after a moment, said he thought it likely. He would go to the

footpath, anyway. Mr. Rafferty, asking permission to go along with him, said he knew the way.

Half a mile beyond the outskirts of the town, Rafferty indicated a road leading to the common. They turned into it, and from a road it quickly degenerated into a rutty lane, which presently became a mere cart-track, overhung with tall elms, and thickly bordered with brushwood. It seemed a favourite spot for the gipsy folk, three or four of whose encampments were quickly passed.

"Common's 'bout a 'undred yard a'end, Mr. Rhodes," volunteered Mr. Rafferty, breaking the silence.

Twenty yards more were covered, Harry a trifle in advance. Then a whistle sounded, and immediately Harry felt a stinging blow on his head, behind the ear, and found himself sent spinning to the ground, where he fell heavily, partly dazed.

As he dropped, four men, who had evidently been hidden among the bushes, came running swiftly along the track towards Rafferty, who, with fists clenched, was staring at Harry with much satisfaction.

"Don't fall asleep there, ye fool!" shouted one of the runners in an angry voice.

It pierced the dizziness enveloping Harry's brain, startling him into consciousness, for it was a voice he recognised.

It was the voice of Tony Hanna.

It told Harry he had been trapped, and it filled him with a sudden and passionate anger. With swimming head he scrambled to his knees, hearing the dull thumping of the running footsteps. How many there were he could not know; he did not even look their way. He had first to deal with the original cowardly assailant.

As he was about to rise he saw Rafferty's arm already swinging for a blow that would have completed the success of his treacherous assault. But that blow never found its mark. Harry ducked automatically, and the great fist went swinging over his head. Without checking his movement, Harry shot forward and upward his right fist, rising to his feet, albeit unsteadily, as he struck.

And with that mighty drive he took full revenge for the coward's blow that had struck him down.

Fairly and squarely upon the mark his fist landed, and it was with a grim satisfaction he saw an expression of awful agony flash across Rafferty's ugly face as



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he staggered back, mouth agape, body bent double.

And Harry was after him like a tiger. Leaping forward, he drove in a left upper-cut that literally buried the ruffian upon his back, finishing him. His jaw was broken.

Then Harry put up his hands to meet the foremost of the other assailants, already upon him. It was Hanna, his lips twisted into a grin of savage exultation.

He did not wait for the others to join him. Brute as he was, Hanna did not lack courage; and, although he was bare-handed—the other men were armed with heavy sticks—he did not hesitate to attack the lad who had already most thoroughly proved himself his fighting master. With the speed and force of a locomotive he drove in, regardless of defence, and landed a mighty blow.

Harry, still uncertain on his legs, made no attempt to duck or side-step, but stepped in to meet him, concurring with his right. He caught Hanna at the lower part of the throat, but such was the other's impetus that the force of the blow failed to check him, and the two bodies met in violent collision. Harry's knees weakened, and he staggered under the shock.

Before he could recover himself the three men, with sticks, were upon him. Down they came, all striking at once. Two he guarded with his right arm, and the three pain that shot through the limb made him fear that it was broken. The third man's weapon crashed on his shoulder. But he had leaped slightly forward, and it was this movement, faint though it was, that saved him a broken collar-bone; the stick alighting on the thick pad of muscle behind the ridge of the shoulder.

Whirling to his left, he sent his right direct into the unprotected face of the striker, who fell back.

Then began a savage battle. Harry, with the shorter, effective reach, attacked, darting first at one, then at the other. But the men would not stand, relying upon the length of their bludgeons, with which they struck again and again.

Suddenly one bent low, sweeping a smashing cut at the outside of Harry's knee. But Harry was too quick. He jumped forward, not aside, and the man was taken by surprise. Before he could retreat Harry's hands were upon him, and he was held fast.

It was then that the lad found use for one of the few wrestling tricks that he had learned. His right hand slipped about the man's neck, his left seized his right arm, thus checking any attempt to make further use of the stick. Immediately he turned in, thrusting his right hip under the other's body, and, with a swift, cutting movement of the leg, brought the other off his feet and over his back.

It was a cross-buttock of the type that the ring-fighters of old knew so well, that had decided more than one uncertain battle within the roped arena. With a hard substance beneath him, the ruffian would have been stunned as he met the ground, but the soft soil saved him from no worse than a shaking. Winded, he lay where he had fallen.

As he delivered his man, Harry received a violent stroke across the back. Turning upon this fellow, he was assailed again from behind by the man whom he had hit in the face.

As the fight progressed, and it was well for Harry that he was in good condition. Again and again he was hit, but he had the satisfaction of getting some blows

home himself. Both men were badly marked, and there must have been the promise of good pay awaiting fulfillment if they did their job to cause them to stand up to the punishment inflicted by the fists of a trained fighter.

All at once the man who fronted Harry flung his weapon at the lad's head, and immediately dived in to take him about the knees. Again Harry was too quick. He dodged the stick, stepped aside, and struck downward at the attacker's head, sending him flat on his face. Then he heard an oath.

"Cut it! They're comin'!" shouted the man behind warningly—he with the damaged face.

And he began to run.

The man last knocked down heard the warning, scrambled up, and was at once levelled again by a clip on the head that sent him down for keeps. Then Harry, his anger unabated, and determined that the ruffians should pay to the full for their attack upon him, ran after the one he had cross-buttocked, who, still short of wind, was making a slow attempt to follow the example of his fellow who had already noticed the coming of a couple of pedestrians along the lane.

"No you don't! You're staying here!" panted Harry, grabbing him.

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The newcomers, a couple of jokers in mud-stained garments, came to a standstill, gaping open-mouthed at the survivor of the conflict.

"Been 'avin' a fight, meester?" asked one.

"Looks rather like it!" was the grim reply. "Where's the nearest policeman to be found?"

The two looked at one another as though the question were a problem quite beyond them. At last, the question put again, one recollected where a man in blue was to be found.

"Then one of you go and fetch him at once!" ordered Harry sharply. "I can't take these three men along into the town by myself. One of you stay here and give a hand!"

Without much eagerness, one departed. "You laid out aw three on 'em, meester!" the other inquired with much awe, after a prolonged survey of the victims.

"Yes, there was another, but he bolted."

"Four on 'em?"

The countryman's eyes grew bigger, his mouth wider. He said nothing more until, perhaps half an hour later, his friend returned with a policeman. And

then he told his friend that "the bloke was an awful liar!" One man couldn't possibly get the better of a fight with four.

Due to the necessary time he had to spend at the police-station—and half an hour with a local medical man, who was able to assure him that the bone of his arm had not been broken—it was late in the afternoon when, having seen the three prisoners under lock and key, and learned what he would have to do when they came to be charged, Harry was escorted from the station by a respectful police sergeant and caught the train for London.

"Depend upon it, sir," declared the official, who had not been able to conceal his amazement when he learned Harry's identity—"depend upon it there's more in this than meets the eye. This isn't ordinary highway robbery. There's someone behind these chaps."

And Harry knew it without telling. So did James Rhodes when he came to learn of the escape. And Bertram Godfrey agreed with them. Hanna's lust for revenge no doubt had prompted the assault, but neither James Rhodes nor Godfrey doubted for one moment that there was another who had made the attempt possible. But Hanna would say no more than he chose, and there was no means of putting the saddle on the right horse by bringing it home to Joshua Martin.

"But it was him who's at the bottom of it!" declared James Rhodes emphatically. "I know Josh—no one better. He hates me, and he hates Harry worse! Why? Why, because both of us has made him lose money."

"Well, it's a good thing, Harry, my lad, that Martin didn't pull off this affair with you," said Godfrey. "If he'd succeeded in getting you lamed for life or disabled, it would have meant a fine state of things."

"It would," agreed Harry. "I don't want to be crippled yet."

"Not with this match with Ed Walker coming off."

"Eh? What's that you say?" demanded Harry.

"Quite right, Harry," replied Godfrey, smiling. "You told your father to go ahead, and we have. Bowman's fixed it up. Walker doesn't care whom he fights, so long as he does fight. He's the kind that isn't happy unless he is fighting, apparently. You'll have to keep an eye on him, my boy. So it's fixed up. Are you satisfied, Harry? Of course, your signature is wanted to complete the matter. Title of World's Champion, and £1,000 stake, and a £5,000 purse."

"And if you win, Harry, you're made for life!" added James Rhodes.

"Oh, he'll win right enough!" asserted Godfrey confidently.

"No fight's ever won till it's lost, sir!"

"Well, until I see it happen, I'm not going to believe Harry can lose," laughed Godfrey, with a glance at Harry.

"And if he doesn't, he's Champion of the World," said James. "Well, that's more than your father could ever say for himself. It's the proudest title in the whole world."

"Better even than that of Minor's Champion—eh, Harry?" asked Godfrey, slapping him on the back.

"Maybe." And Harry smiled. "But I don't think I'll ever so enjoy a battle as the one that brought me that title—and settled the strike!"

