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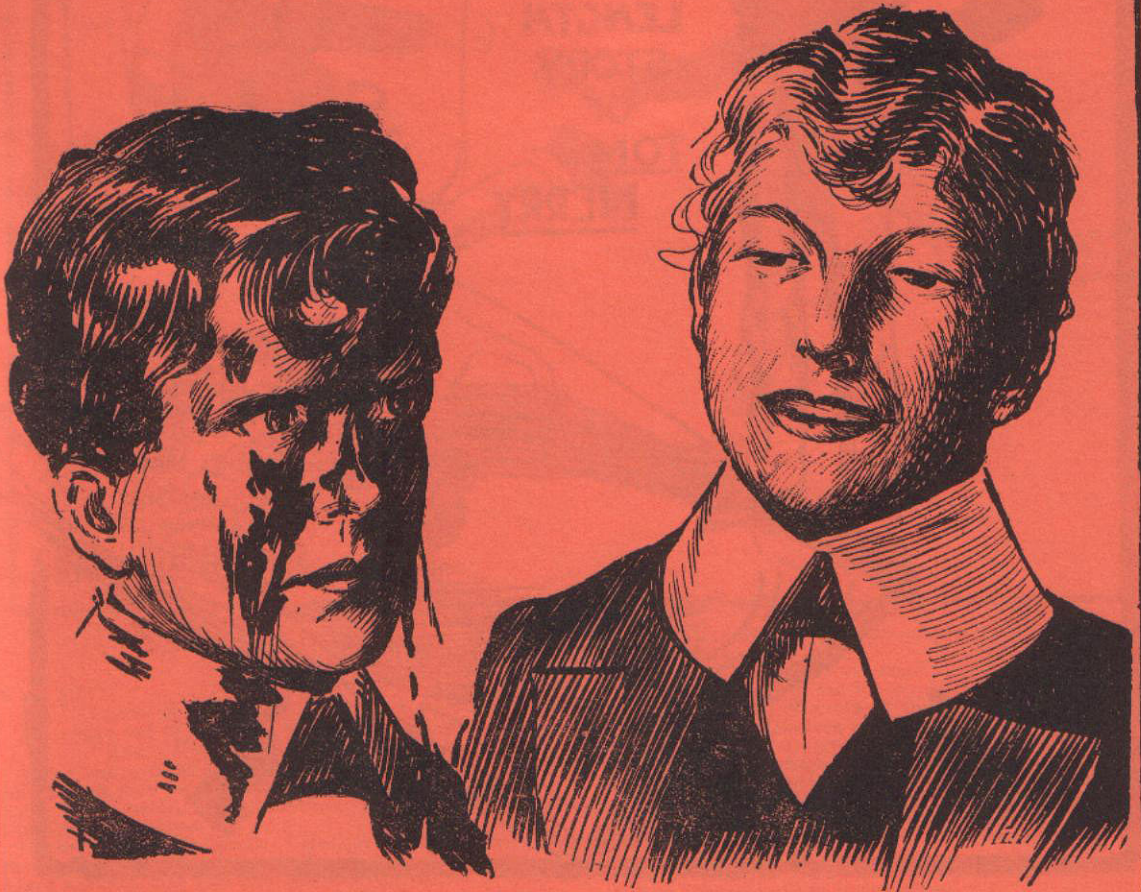
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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fag Wanted!

FAG!" Carberry, of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars, put his head out of his study and bawled along the passage. "Fag! F-a-a-g!"

There was a faint sound of scurrying feet at the nearest corner, and then no other sound save the echo of Carberry's voice in the wide, flagged corridor upon which the Sixth Form studies opened.

Carberry frowned darkly. He knew perfectly well that that scurrying of feet was made by some junior who had heard his call, and who had immediately cut off to get out of sight, to avoid being called upon for fagging duties.

"F-A-G!" shouted Carberry again, his rather coarse face growing red with anger. "I'll be among you in a minute if you don't come, some of you young rascals!"

A footstep rang on the flags.

Carberry looked along the passage, and calmed down

somewhat as he saw a junior coming from the direction of the staircase.

"Here, Wharton, I want you!"

Harry Wharton, of the Remove at Greyfriars, stopped and looked at him. Wharton of the Remove was a well-built, handsome lad. His face was very calm and quiet in expression, his manners reserved; but there was a half-slumbering fire in his eyes which showed that he could be very passionate when aroused. His habitual expression would have told an observer that his temper was hot and hasty, and might be obstinate, but that he had it as a rule well in hand.

"Did you call me, Carberry?"

"Yes; come here."

Harry Wharton did not stir to obey the order of the Sixth-former, imperiously as it was given.

"What do you want?"

"Come here!" shouted Carberry.

"I can't fag for you, if that's what you want," said Wharton quietly. "I didn't come along in answer to your calling, Carberry; I am going to Wingate's study."

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KINDLY FILL IN THE ORDER FORM.

Carberry came out of his room with a glitter in his eyes. "You are not going to the captain's study, Wharton; you are going to fag for me!"

Harry Wharton's face set very hard.

"I am not."

"I've had an eye upon you ever since you came to Greyfriars," said Carberry, who had a reputation in the Sixth of being a good deal of a bully, and deserved it. "I've been thinking that you put on a little too much side for a youngster in the Lower Fourth Form. You have been really asking for a hiding for some time!"

Harry Wharton stepped back a pace, his eyes burning.

"You had better not touch me," he said quietly.

The Sixth-Former grinned.

"You will hurt me if I do, I suppose?" he sneered.

"You'll wipe up the passage with me, and knock me into the middle of next week, won't you?"

Harry compressed his lips.

"I shall try."

"You'll try, will you?" ejaculated Carberry, glaring at him in sheer amazement. "Are you aware, you cheeky young blackguard, that you are talking to a Sixth-Former and a prefect, and that you are a worm in the Remove?"

Harry Wharton did not reply, but his eyes were watching the Sixth-Former without once leaving his face, and there was a glitter of grim defiance in them.

"I've had an eye on you," the prefect repeated. "You're an unlicked cub. You'll want a good many lickings, I expect, before you settle down to the collar. I've decided to take you in hand, as much for your own good as anything else. Stop where you are, Wharton—where are you going?"

"I am going to the captain's study to fetch a book for him."

"Oho! You can fag for Wingate, and not for me, hey?"

"I'm not fagging for Wingate. He asked me to fetch the book."

"More fool he; I should have told you to!" sneered Carberry.

"And I should not have fetched it," said Harry quietly.

"You—you cheeky young villain! By Jove, you want a lesson even worse than I thought! But I'll put you through it!"

"I'm not going to fag for you," said Wharton; "I am not going to fag for anybody. I did not come to this school of my own accord, and I am not going to be made a fag. That is settled."

"By Jove! Now I've listened to you, Wharton—"

"Will you let me pass? Wingate is waiting for his book!"

"No, I won't let you pass! Stand where you are. I've listened to you, and now you listen to me. You are my fag from this moment; you understand?"

"I am nothing of the kind."

"You will now go into my study, and get my tea. That young rascal, Hazeldene, has not turned up—by the way, do you know where young Hazeldene is?"

"Yes."

"Where is he, then? I owe him a licking!"

Harry Wharton did not reply.

"Where is he?"

"It is not my business to tell you."

"I order you to."

"I will not."

The Sixth-Former turned red with rage. He raised his hand and pointed to his open study door.

"Get in!" he said.

Wharton did not stir.

"Get into that room!"

"I won't!"

Carberry wasted no more time in words. He sprang at the junior and seized him by the shoulders, and, with a mighty heave, sent him whirling towards the door of the study. In the grip of the powerful senior Harry Wharton, strong lad as he was, was helpless, and he crashed against the study door with stunning force. He slid from the door to the floor inside, and Carberry followed him in and kicked him brutally as he lay dazed upon the carpet.

"Get up and get to work!"

Harry Wharton slowly rose to his feet, but he had not the slightest intention of obeying the prefect. His eyes were blazing dangerously. He stood gasping for a moment or two, his hand resting upon the edge of the table.

"I will not fag for you!" he said thickly. "You shall kill me first!"

Carberry gritted his teeth.

"I'll break you in," he snarled; "I'll give you a lesson you've long wanted! I'll teach you the place of a Remove fag at Greyfriars!"

He started towards the junior. Wharton's eye roved wildly round the study for a moment, and fell upon a

heavy inkstand on the table. In a second he caught it up and whirled it above his head. The inkpots rolled off it, and splashed over the books lying on the table.

"Stand back!"

The words, hissed through clenched teeth, backed up by a white, furious face and flaming eyes, daunted the prefect.

Like most bullies, he was a craven at heart. He knew from Wharton's look that he would strike, and a blow from the heavy metal inkstand might be a serious matter.

"You—you young cub!" he hissed.

"Keep your distance."

"I'll—I'll break your—your neck for this!"

Harry did not speak again, but his burning eyes were eloquent of scorn and his lip curled. The craven heart of the bully peeped out even in his savage words. The curl of the junior's lip maddened Carberry. He made a movement forward, and Harry's hand came swiftly towards him. The prefect sprang back.

"What—what do you mean by this?" he gasped. "Do you think you can defy a prefect, you young fool—you, a brat in the Remove?"

"I will not fag for you."

"You shall, by—"

The prefect broke off. There was a footstep in the passage, coming along towards the study door. Harry's attention was for the moment diverted, and Carberry did not lose the chance. He sprang forward, and a blow on the wrist sent the inkstand whirling from the junior's hand. It crashed heavily into the fire-grate, and the next moment the grip of the senior was upon Harry Wharton.

"Now, you young cub—"

Harry returned grip for grip, and youngster though he was, in the senior's hands he was strong and determined, and for a moment Carberry reeled back. The next, and Harry Wharton would have been whirled off his feet, but an amazed face looked into the study from the passage, and a voice called out to the prefect to desist.

"Hold on, Carberry! What the dickens are you doing?"

It was the voice of Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and Carberry, in spite of himself, stopped, and released the junior. Wharton, white and breathless, but determined still, reeled away, and leaned heavily upon the table.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Knocked Down!

WINGATE looked at the two with a curious expression upon his rugged, honest features. From the angry, savage face of the bully, his glance turned to the sullen junior, and then it travelled back again to Carberry.

"What is this about?" he asked quietly.

Carberry made a savage gesture.

"Is that any concern of yours, Wingate?"

"Yes, certainly it is. As captain of the school, I have every right to ask the question; and to expect to have it answered, too."

"He refused to fag for me."

"Did he tell you I had sent him to my study?"

"Yes, but—"

"Then you had no right to call upon him, when you know he was doing something for me. You have your own fag!"

"Hazeldene did not come when I called."

"That is your own business. You should keep your fag in order. You know that I oppose this indiscriminate fagging of the juniors. It is not fair to them."

"Are you going to stand by this insolent cub in checking me, then?"

"In this instance you were in the wrong."

"He refuses to fag for anyone, on any account," sneered Carberry; "and he would say the same to you yourself."

"I don't think so."

"I will not fag," said Harry Wharton, between his teeth; "I will be killed first. I said so to Carberry, and I will say so to anybody."

Carberry burst into a harsh laugh.

"You hear him?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I hear him," said the captain of Greyfriars calmly.

"I shall speak to you again on this matter, Wharton. If that is the line you intend to take, you are booked for a rough time at Greyfriars, I can tell you. At present, you can go and fetch the book I sent you for, and take it to the common-room."

Wharton nodded, and left the study.

Wingate remained behind, his eyes fixed sternly on the quailing face of the bully of the Sixth.

"That is an unruly and obstinate lad, Carberry," he said.

"He has had a bad home training, I should say, and has been spoiled for years. But he has the makings of a fine

follow in him, as he proved by risking his life to save Nugent of the Remove from drowning the day he came to Greyfriars.

Carberry sneered, but did not reply.

"For that reason," resumed the captain, "I want to be as patient as possible with him, and give him a chance."

"If you are going to back him up against the Sixth—"

"I am going to do nothing of the kind. But I am not going to have him bullied, Carberry. You were using him in a brutal manner, which could not be justified under any circumstances. And you know that you had no right to call upon him when he was already occupied, doing something for me. I don't want to have any words with you, Carberry. But I warn you that you're going on the right road to find trouble, and you'd better take care."

And, without waiting for the bully of the Sixth to reply, Wingate turned on his heel and walked out of the study.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton had gone to the captain's room. His face was still white, a red spot burning in either cheek, and his breast was heaving with the passion he was trying to control. Of late he had been growing more reconciled to life at Greyfriars, but the experience in Carberry's study had roused up again all the old passionate hatred and resentment that had lain dormant in him.

He found the book he had been sent for, and took it to the seniors' common-room, and left it in Wingate's chair there. Then he went into the close, his heart still throbbing, his face still pale.

"Hallo, Wharton, did you catch it hot?"

It was a silky, insinuating voice. Harry Wharton turned round abruptly, and looked at Hazeldene of the Lower Fourth—or Remove, as the Form was termed at Greyfriars.

Hazeldene was rather a curious character. A greater contrast to the hotheaded, passionate boy he confronted could not be imagined. Hazeldene was slim and slight, with light hair and light eyes, a smooth face, and insinuating manners. There was something almost eel-like in his quietness and silkiness; and though he could, when he liked, make himself pleasant enough, few would have trusted him. In fact, he was known in the Remove by a corruption of his name which was far from flattering, and which was supposed to express the peculiar oiliness of his nature. But Hazeldene, who never resented anything, showed no sign of resenting his nickname of "Vaseline."

Wharton looked him grimly in the eyes.

"Did you speak to me?"

"Yes; I did. I asked you if you had caught it hot? I scooted when I heard Carberry call for a fag," explained Hazeldene, with a grin. "I thought you might as well do whatever it was he wanted."

"Well," said Wharton, with a curl of the lip, "I did not do it!"

Hazeldene grinned.

"You refused, I suppose?"

"Yes, I refused!"

Hazeldene winked expressively. The colour mounted into Harry Wharton's cheeks.

"You can tell that to the marines," Hazeldene remarked.

"I know exactly how much a Remove fellow would dare to refuse a prefect—"

"Do you mean that you doubt my word?"

"My hat, mustn't his word be doubted now?" grinned Hazeldene. "Do you happen to be the Emperor of Germany, or any relation of the great Panjandrum?"

Harry compressed his lips.

"You are not worth quarrelling with!" he said contemptuously.

"Go hon! My dear kid, I know that what you told me just now was a fib—"

Biff! Harry Wharton's hand clenched and shot out, and Hazeldene, much to his amazement, sat down suddenly in the close.

He sat there rubbing his nose, and staring up at Harry with an expression of bewildered surprise that was almost comical.

"Do you want any more?" asked Harry quietly. "You are bigger than I am, and—"

"No, I don't!" ejaculated Hazeldene, scrambling to his feet. "What a beastly spitfire you are! Keep your paws off me, please!"

"Then you'd better measure your words next time you speak to me," said Harry Wharton disdainfully. And he walked away. A sunny-faced junior came out of the cloisters and passed an arm through his.

Harry Wharton's face cleared at once. The new-comer was Nugent of the Remove, the only lad at Greyfriars for whom the proud and solitary lad felt anything like friendship.

"You're looking in the dumps, Harry," said Nugent, looking at him. "Anything gone wrong?"

"Only a row with Carberry."

"What did he do?"

"What he's always doing—bullying and fagging."

"H'm! I saw you dot young Vaseline on the nose just now. What was his high crime and misdemeanour?"

Wharton gave a quick glance at his friend. He felt that

Nugent was poking fun at him. But Nugent's face was perfectly grave.

"He doubted my word."

"Then you were right to lay him. But, I say, Harry, you ought to be a little less handy with those fists of yours, you know—at least, until you have learned to box," said Nugent seriously. "Vaseline, for instance, is bigger than you are, and if he had the pluck of a mouse, he could knock you into a cocked hat. He can box."

"He's welcome to try."

"He hasn't the grit," said Nugent coolly. "But there are plenty of fellows in the Greyfriars Remove who have. Bulstrode, of our study, for one."

"I'm not afraid of Bulstrode."

"I never said you were. But, I say, come along into the gym, and have the gloves on. It will do you good."

Harry nodded, and the chums walked into the gymnasium. There was a serious shade upon Nugent's face. Harry Wharton was a difficult fellow to deal with, very difficult, and although Nugent had patience and tact, and liked Harry very well, he found it sometimes hard to bear with his new chum. Harry had been brought up by a maiden aunt, and allowed to run perfectly wild, and at nearly fifteen he was headstrong, reckless, and determined, the last fellow in the world to knuckle under peaceably to even the most necessary discipline.

Nugent and Wharton shared the same study, with Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, and little Billy Bunter of the same Form. And Study No. 1 was, as often as not, a scene of strife and discord, and much of it was due to Harry's hard and unyielding temper. But Nugent, even in the most trying moments, could not forget that Harry Wharton had plunged recklessly into the deadly grip of a whirlpool, and saved his life at the imminent risk of his own. That remembrance kept Nugent patient; and he needed it.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Arrives at Greyfriars.

"THE—the beast!"

Peter Hazeldene of the Remove stood rubbing his nose, which was very red and a little swollen. There was considerable pain in the nose, for Harry Wharton's knuckles had rapped hard there. Peter's nose was a prominent feature upon his face, and it looked now like a little beetroot.

"The beast! I'll make him sit up for that, some time!" muttered Peter, ruefully caressing his damaged organ. "The absolute beast! Fancy dotting a fellow on the nose for nothing!"

"Hallo, kid, anything gone wrong with the boko?"

Peter Hazeldene started and looked round at the sound of a new voice. A lad of about his own age had just walked in at the open gates of Greyfriars. In nothing but his age, however, did the new-comer bear any resemblance to Hazeldene. He was a finely-built, nimble lad, with shoulders well set back, and head well poised. His hair was thick and curly, and he wore his cap stuck on the back of it. His face would not be called exactly handsome, but it was so pleasant and cheerful that it did you good to look at it.

"Who are you?" asked Hazeldene, stopping the caressing of his nose in his curiosity. "You don't belong to Greyfriars."

"Your mistake," said the stranger coolly. "I do."

"I haven't seen you before."

"Nothing remarkable in that, as this is the first time I have been here."

"Oh," said Hazeldene, with an inflection of disdain in his voice, "a new kid!"

"Exactly. A new kid."

"And what may your name be?"

"Oh, any old thing! But I was christened Robert, and my surname is Cherry, of that ilk. Bob Cherry for short."

"Well, Master Bob Cherry, you've got altogether too much cheek for a new kid," said Hazeldene, "and the sooner you chuck it, the better."

The new-comer shook his head.

"Can't be did! You must love me as I am, or not love me at all. But what's the matter with the boko? Is that a new idea in colour design, or have you been running it up against a football boot?"

"Mind your own business!" growled Hazeldene.

"Certainly!" said Bob Cherry, with unabashed cheerfulness. "May I ask you the way to the headmaster's quarters?"

"You may ask," said Peter. "But whether I tell you or not depends."

"Oh, come, don't be a cad!" said Bob Cherry. "I want to know where to put my box, too. There's a chap at the

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gate with it. I was told to report myself to the Head upon my arrival. Where is he?"

"Oh, I'll show you, if you like," said Hazeldene, with a sudden assumption of cordiality, which would have put anybody who knew him on the alert at once. But Robert Cherry did not know him yet. "I suppose one ought to do all one could for a new fellow. I was new once myself."

"Were you?" said Bob Cherry curiously. "You're looking a bit shop-soiled now, I must say. But lead the way, and I will follow on. As the poet says: Lead on, Macduff!"

Hazeldene, with a curious twinkle in his narrow eyes, led the way. Bob Cherry followed him into the great greystone building, little abashed by his new surroundings. He looked about him with perfect coolness, and asked questions every moment. They ascended the stairs to the corridor upon which the Sixth Form studies opened, and Hazeldene pointed to the door of Carberry's room.

"There you are; that's the Head's study."

"Not much of a place for the Head of a school like this, I should say," remarked Bob Cherry, with a whistle of surprise.

"Have you ever been to a school like this before?" snapped Hazeldene.

"No, I haven't."

"Then don't be so ready to make remarks on things," said Hazeldene. "As a matter of fact, the Head has his study in this corridor so as to keep an eye on the Sixth-Form fellows, to keep them from getting intoxicated in their rooms of a night."

"My word, do they do that?"

"Of course they do! The Sixth would be tipsy all night long if the Head didn't keep a sharp eye on them," said Hazeldene coolly. "Well, there's the study. If the Head isn't there, wait for him. If you find a fellow there, tell him that Wharton wants him, and that he's to buck up and come to the gym. I'll look after your box."

"Are you Wharton?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Of course I am! Harry Wharton, of the Remove!"

"Right-ho! I'll give him your message; and thanks!"

And, with a nod of the head, Bob Cherry walked on to the Sixth-Form study, tapped at the door, and entered it. Hazeldene, with a grin upon his face, beat a rapid retreat.

Carberry was seated in his chair, working, when Bob Cherry entered. He glanced up far from amiably.

"Well, what do you want?" he snapped.

"Nothing," said Bob Cherry calmly, looking round the study. "I came here to see the headmaster."

"The Head! What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about the Head."

"You came here to see him? Are you mad?"

"No, not quite. Quite sane, in fact, I believe. I'll wait. And, by the way, Wharton wants you."

Carberry could hardly believe his ears.

"Wharton! Wharton wants me?"

"Yes—Harry Wharton of the Remove. He wants you to go to the gym., and you're to buck up!" said Bob innocently.

Carberry turned perfectly crimson.

"You young hound!"

"Hallo! What's the matter now?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "I believe I've given you the message correctly."

"You cheeky reptile—"

"I say, draw it mild, old fellow!" exclaimed the new junior. "I'm not accustomed to being called names like that, you know. I don't like it."

"You—you don't like it! I'll—I'll— Get out of this room!"

"What for?"

"Get out!" roared Carberry.

"Rats! I've come here to see the Head."

"You utter idiot! He is not here."

"I know he isn't; but there's no reason why I shouldn't wait for him."

"Fool! He is not coming here. This is my study."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Come, that won't do, you know. I know that this is the Head's study."

Carberry glared at him in sheer astonishment.

"You—you utter young ass! Do you think the Head of Greyfriars College has a little study like this in a row with the Sixth-Form studies?"

"I know that he has to hang out here to keep you fellows from getting drunk of a night!" said Bob Cherry, with a nod.

"You—you—you—out you go!"

Carberry seized Bob Cherry by the shoulders and swung him into the passage, and slammed the door behind him. Bob reeled against the opposite wall, and then righted himself. There was a puzzled look upon his frank face.

"Looks as if there were a mistake somewhere," he murmured.

He opened the door again, and looked in.

"I say, aren't you going to the gym.? Wharton wants you."

Crash! Bob closed the door quickly, as a heavy Greek lexicon came hurtling towards him, and it crashed on the oak.

"Certainly a mistake somewhere!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That fellow Wharton must have been rotting. Hallo, kid!"

This remark was addressed to Bulstrode of the Remove, who happened to come along the passage at that moment. Bulstrode, who was the oldest and biggest fellow in the Form, and considered himself cock of the Remove, stopped and stared at Bob Cherry.

"Who are you?"

"A new kid," said Bob cheerfully. "I want to ask you a question. Can you tell me whether that is the Head's study?"

And he pointed to Carberry's door.

"No, you young ass, of course it isn't!" said Bulstrode. "What do you mean by asking me such a fool's question?"

And he turned away.

"Then that kid Wharton was pulling my leg," muttered Bob Cherry. "I'll punch his head for it when I see him again!"

Bulstrode stopped at the sound of the name.

"Did Wharton tell you it was the Head's study?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, it isn't; it's Carberry's. You were slung out, weren't you?"

"Quite so."

"That's why he sent you there, I suppose. A joke on the little stranger," grinned Bulstrode. "Wharton is an utter rotter, in my opinion. If you want to get your own back, you'll find him any time in Study No. 1, in the upper corridor. I'll show you to the Head's quarters if you like."

"Thanks awfully!"

Bulstrode led the way. This time Bob Cherry was guided to the right place, and Bulstrode tapped at the door for him, and left him there.

In response to a "Come in!" in a deep voice, Bob Cherry entered the study, and found himself in the presence of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Free Feed.

"RING that box in!"

Hazeldene had hurried to the gates of Greyfriars immediately after leaving Bob Cherry in the Sixth-Form corridor. He had told Bob that he would look after his box, and he intended to do so, in his own way.

A porter from the station had wheeled up Bob Cherry's box, and he wheeled it in at Hazeldene's order, and carried it into the house, but not upstairs. Hazeldene guided him into the junior common-room.

There were a good many fellows of the Fourth Form and the Remove in the room, and they looked round curiously at the sight of a box being brought in by a porter.

"What's that?" exclaimed little Billy Bunter, peering at the box through his big spectacles. "What have you got there, Vaseline?"

"A few little presents for distribution to the Form," said Hazeldene, grinning. "Set it down here, my man. Drop it. I want to bust the lock, as the key is lost."

The porter stared, and hesitated; but Hazeldene gave the box a tap with his hand, and sent it crashing to the floor. The concussion burst the lock, and the lid flew open, and the box lay on its side, and half the contents rolled out at once on the floor.

The porter, who had been paid at the gate by Bob Cherry, grinned and retired, and the Greyfriars juniors gathered round the wrecked box.

"What's the little game?" asked Trevor of the Remove.

"Is it a new kid's box?" inquired Billy Bunter.

Hazeldene nodded.

"Exactly. I told him I would look after it for him. I am going to do so. Let's see if there's any tuck in it. He looked rather a well-fed sort of bounder, and I'd bet almost anything that he has cakes and things here."

"Let's look!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

Hazeldene was right. There was a considerable quantity of "tuck" packed away in the box. Cakes, and apples, and tarts, and pies were soon forthcoming, and several bottles of currant-wine, one of which had been broken in the fall on the floor. The red liquid was staining the shirts packed there, but no one heeded it.

"My word!" said Hazeldene. "This is all right! Who says plum-cake?"

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"Plum-cake!" howled a dozen voices.

"Who says currant-buns?"

"Currant-buns!"

"Jam-tarts?"

"Shove 'em over!"

The juniors were soon all feasting gleefully. It seemed a ripping joke on the new boy, though probably no one but Hazeldene, in the first place, would have ventured to open another fellow's box.

Bulstrode came into the room, and stared about him in astonishment at the sight of half the Remove feeding away as if they had never eaten anything before, and as if expense were not to be regarded. Tuck was in plenty, and of the best quality.

"Hallo—hallo!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Has anybody here come into a fortune? Where did all this come from?"

"It's a new fellow standing a feed," said Hazeldene.

"Well, that's ripping of him! Where is he?"

"Blessed if I know. Last I saw of him he was searching in the Sixth-Form studies for a headmaster. Don't know whether he's found one yet."

"Ha, ha! But did he tell you—"

"You see, the box fell on the floor and busted open, and, of course, he can't object to us sampling the tommy, can he?"

"You're taking jolly big samples!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Hand over some of that cake. I'm on in this scene. I know. He's standing the feed, but he doesn't know it."

"Quite so."

"Well, it's quite right that he should. He must pay his footing, like anybody else. I like this cake. I'll have some more."

"The tarts are pretty good, too," said Hazeldene, handing them over.

The cad of the Remove was very anxious to keep on the right side of Bulstrode, in case of a row with Bob Cherry over the breaking of the box.

"You're right; they're good!" exclaimed Bulstrode, digging his teeth into one. "This chap's people had a fine taste in pastry, I must say."

"But, I say, you fellows—" began Billy Bunter.

"Well, what have you got to say, Owl?"

Billy Bunter was called the Owl in the Remove, on account of his big spectacles, which gave him an owlish appearance, but did not seem to assist his vision very much. He was always making ludicrous mistakes through his short sight. He was standing now blinking at the feasters doubtfully, but not joining in the feed.

"I say, you fellows, won't the new kid object to his grub being wolfed up like that?" he exclaimed.

"Shouldn't wonder!" said Bulstrode.

"I mean, won't he make a row about it?"

"Very likely."

"Well, and what are you going to do then?"

"Lemme see. Oh, I shall explain to him that it's one of the things a new fellow must expect to have to put up with," said Bulstrode; "and if that doesn't satisfy him, I shall wipe up the floor with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Hazeldene. "That's the style! You can trust Bulstrode to keep up the honour of the Remove, and shove a new-comer into his proper place."

"Rather!" said Bulstrode, with a satisfied grin.

"Yes; but, I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, don't say anything more, Owl! Have a tart?"

"Well, I don't mind if I do. I may as well have one, I suppose, as I can see that you don't mean to leave any."

"Here you are! Anybody say tarts?"

"Tarts!"

"Help yourselves. Bob Cherry is standing this feed, and—"

"Hallo—hallo!"

Bob Cherry was looking in at the doorway. He gazed over the feasters, and his glance fell upon the broken box, and he recognised it as his own. For a moment the sunny good-temper vanished from his face, and a blaze came into his blue eyes.

"Is that my box?"

He came quickly into the room.

"Yes, I believe so," said Bulstrode, as no one else seemed inclined to answer. "I believe it is your box, Blackberry, or Cherry, or whatever your name is. Have you got anything to say about it?"

"Lots!" said Bob Cherry. "In the first place, I am to belong to the Remove, and I was told to come to this room, where I should meet my Form-fellows; but I didn't expect to find them burgling my box!"

"It burst open, you see," said Hazeldene.

"Because you shoved it over on the floor," said Billy Bunter.

"Hold your silly tongue, Bunter!"

"Sha'n't, Vaseline!"

"And, of course, we thought you wanted us to have a feed at your expense," said Bulstrode. "That's the proper caper for a new kid in the Remove, you know."

The anger faded out of Bob Cherry's face. He looked the kind of lad who could never be angry for long.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "I don't much mind your scoffing the grub, though you might have asked permission first, merely as a matter of form."

"Quite right!" exclaimed Trevor. "And I for one don't mind saying I'm sorry, Cherry. It was rather a caddish thing to do."

"Oh, it's all right!" said Bob. "You're welcome! I intended to stand a feed, anyway, and you've only been a bit previous, that's all."

"Well, you're a good sort!"

"But I didn't want currant-wine spilt over my shirts," went on Bob; "nor my valuable articles of wearing apparel scattered over the floor and trodden on. I didn't want the lock of my box busted. And if the chap who had the confounded cheek to bust it will have the decency to own-up about it, I shall be very pleased to give him the hiding of his life!"

Hazeldene had been gliding towards the door, and as Bob finished speaking he vanished. But Bob Cherry had seen him go. Billy Bunter pointed to the door.

"That's the rotter; he's gone!"

"You may as well finish the grub while you're about it," said Bob. "I'm going to have a little talk to that amateur burglar."

And he left the junior-room.

"Well, he's a jolly good fellow!" exclaimed Trevor. "And if he gives Vaseline a hiding, it won't be any more than he deserves. It was a bit thick, breaking the lock of a fellow's box, and no mistake!"

Bob Cherry went quickly out into the passage. Hazeldene had disappeared, but in front of the notice-board in the hall Bob found Nugent, of the Remove. He did not know Nugent, but he tapped him on the shoulder as coolly as if he had known him for fifty years at least. Nugent looked round.

"Have you seen Wharton?" asked Bob Cherry. "I suppose you know him? He's in the Remove."

Nugent grinned.

"Well, yes, I fancy I know him," he said.

"Well, have you seen him?"

"Certainly!"

And Nugent turned to the notice-board again, and recommenced reading. Bob Cherry gave him another tap on the shoulder.

"I asked you if you had seen Wharton!" he exclaimed.

"Well, and I told you I had."

"Well, you ass!" exclaimed Bob. "I want to know where he is."

"Oh, do you? You should have said so before, then. If you want him, he's in Study No. 1, on the upper corridor."

"Thank you!" And the new boy at Greyfriars ascended the stairs.

It did not take him long to find Study No. 1. The numbers were painted in white on the dark oak, and there was no mistaking them. The door of Study No. 1 was half open, and Bob caught a glimpse of a fellow in an Eton jacket sitting at the table, with his back to the door. The junior was alone in the study, and though Bob Cherry could not see his face, he had no doubt that Nugent's information was correct.

Quietly, on tiptoe, Bob Cherry stole into the room. Without making a sound, he stepped behind the chair of the junior, who was busily writing, and suddenly reached over his head and picked up the inkpot. The movement made Harry Wharton look up suddenly, and as he looked up the inkpot was inverted over him.

A yell rang through Study No. 1 as the contents of the inkpot, which happened to be quite full, splashed over the upturned face of Harry Wharton. He sprang to his feet, with such violence that his chair went crashing backwards, and whirled round, and then he stood glaring at Bob Cherry, with rage in his eyes and the black ink running in streams down his face and collar.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's the wrong kid!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Catches a Tartar.

HARRY WHARTON was too enraged to speak for a full minute. He stood glaring at the new boy, his face convulsed with fury, but his aspect, with the black ink streaming over the crimson face, was so ludicrous that Bob Cherry could not help grinning.

Bob, although he had a weakness for practical jokes, would never have played such a trick for the kind of fun it afforded. He had regarded it as a tit-for-tat, in return for the breaking open of his box, and the "scoffing" of his supply of tuck. He was utterly dismayed to find that he had drenched a perfect stranger with ink.

"I—I say—I'm sorry—" he stammered.

He was really sorry, but he could not help grinning. No one, looking at Harry Wharton at that moment, could have helped it. Harry found his voice at last.

"How—how dare you?"

"It was a mistake," said Bob penitently, though his lips were twitching, and his eyes sparkling with fun. "I thought you were—"

"You have drenched me with ink!"

"I thought you were Wharton."

"I am Wharton!"

"Eh? Are there two Whartons at this school, then?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I asked a fellow in the hall where Wharton was, and he told me here, and I didn't see your face, you see."

"You utter idiot!"

"Well, I suppose I was a bit of an ass for not making sure; but, you see, I thought you were Harry Wharton."

"I am Harry Wharton!" roared Harry.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Are there two Whartons in the Remove?" he asked.

"No, only one, hang you!"

"Then you must be mistaken. You can't be Wharton!"

"Fool! You have smothered me with ink!"

"Yes, you do look rather smothered; and, I tell you, I'm sorry, really sorry, as you're not Wharton!"

"You dummy, I am Wharton!"

"Well, if you're Wharton, you've only got what you've been asking for," said Bob Cherry. "If you're Wharton, you're the right passenger."

"I'll knock your confounded head off!"

"Here, hands off! I tell you, I'm sorry for the mistake; perhaps the chap didn't tell me his right name, after all."

"You dummy!"

"Draw it mild! I don't like being called names. When a chap calls me names I generally kill him. Now—"

Harry Wharton wiped the ink out of his eyes. His face was as black as a nigger minstrel's, his collar was soaked, and the ink was running over his jacket and waistcoat. Wharton was about as enraged as he could possibly be. His exercise, on which he had spent ten minutes, was ruined, too. He looked daggers at Bob Cherry as he wiped away the ink.

"You dolt!" he snapped. "You ought to be put in a lunatic asylum! I've a good mind to take you by the neck and rub your face in this muck you've made on the table!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"You'll excuse me," he remarked, "but I really don't think you could do it. Don't get into a temper. It was a mistake, and I've apologised. That ought to be enough for any decent fellow. Now, keep your paws off! I don't want to quarrel with you."

"Get out of this study!"

"You might put it a little more civilly—"

"Get out, or I'll kick you out!"

Bob Cherry's eyes flashed.

"I think you'd better kick me out, then," he said quietly. "I've never obeyed an order put like that in my life, and I don't intend to start now."

Harry Wharton wasted no more time in talk. He reached out to seize the intruder, and was surprised to find his hand knocked aside as easily as if it had been a feather. With a savage glance, he hurled himself straight at Bob Cherry, and caught hold of him.

"Now, out you go!" he panted.

Bob Cherry returned his grip, and for a moment they struggled chest to chest. The ink that smothered Wharton came off on Bob's face and chest, till he was almost as inky as Harry. Beyond that, Wharton was unable to damage him. Instead of hurling Bob from the study, he found himself in an iron grip he could not escape from.

He struggled desperately to whirl the new junior towards the door, but in vain. Bob Cherry stood like a rock. With all his efforts, Harry Wharton could not shift him one inch. Bob was probably not the stronger of the two, but he evidently had had more experience in personal encounters. There was a slight smile on his inky face as he gripped with Harry Wharton and held him fast.

Breathless, almost exhausted, Wharton gave up the attempt, and strove to release himself. But he found that equally impossible. Bob Cherry's strong arms were round him like bands of iron, and he could not unloose their grip.

"Let me—let me go!" he panted.

Bob grinned in his face.

"Will you behave yourself if I do?"

"Hang you! I will—I will half kill you!"

"Well, you're a nice, good-tempered lad to chum with, I should say," Bob Cherry remarked coolly. "Haven't you ever had a licking in your life, to teach you to keep your rotten temper in better order, eh?"

"Let me go!"

"No hurry. I'm not going to have you running at me like a wild beast. I told you I was sorry for the mistake I made, and that ought to have been enough for a decent fellow. You would have licked me if you could."

"I'll lick you yet!"

"Get on with it, then," smiled Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton made a desperate effort to tear himself loose. This time he succeeded, and he went reeling away from his unmoved adversary. He leaned back against the mantelpiece, exhausted, white as death, breathing heavily. Bob Cherry watched him warily. He was curious, too. He had never met a lad quite like this before. The exhibition of savage temper in a lad so young was something like a shock to a good-natured, sunny-tempered fellow like Bob.

It was only for a few moments that Harry Wharton leaned there, recovering his breath. Little as he knew of the art of boxing, Harry had never shrunk from any encounter, and he did not shrink now. The moment his breath came back he simply hurled himself at Bob Cherry.

Bob's temper was rising now; but, in any case, he had no choice but to hit out—and hit out he did, straight from the shoulder. Harry Wharton caught the blow on his chin, and it almost lifted him off his feet. Back he went, staggering helplessly, and down with a crash; and there was a thud as his head dashed against the fender.

He lay dazed, and in an instant the brief anger faded out of Bob Cherry's countenance. With an anxious look he ran forward, and knelt by Wharton's side.

"I say, I hope you're not much hurt. I didn't mean—"

Harry did not reply. A big bruise was already forming under his thick, dark hair, and the concussion had almost stunned him.

Bob Cherry's face was very anxious.

"Let me see it."

Wharton pushed him dazedly away.

"Leave me alone!"

"But you're hurt."

"Leave me alone!"

Wharton sat up blindly. His head was aching horribly, and the pain of the bruise was for the time intense. His face was white, but more with passion than with pain. Bob Cherry drew back, a shadow on his frank brow.

"I didn't mean to hurt you?" he said quietly. "It was an accident, your head striking the fender."

Wharton did not speak, but his burning eyes told of volumes of revenge. He staggered to his feet. Bob involuntarily put out a hand to help him, but it was rudely dashed aside.

"Harry, what's the matter?"

Nugent came in at the door. He stared at Bob Cherry and at Wharton in absolute amazement.

"What have you been doing?"

"Just a little scrap," said Bob Cherry. "Wharton knocked his head against the fender, when he fell, that's all."

"You're hurt, Harry?" Nugent came anxiously towards his friend. "What on earth were you rowing about? What's this new kid doing here, anyway?"

"I came to look for a chap who told me his name was Wharton," said Bob. "I suppose he took me in. I inked this chap by mistake, and then he cut up rusty. I'm sorry he's hurt, but it was his own look out. I couldn't do more than apologise for a mistake."

"Well, that's right enough," said Nugent uneasily.

He liked the frank face of the new boy, and he could not help feeling that Harry's passionate temper had placed him in the wrong again, as it had done many times before.

"I say again that I'm sorry," said Bob Cherry. "It was a mistake, and I'm willing enough to be friends."

And he held out his hand to Harry Wharton. Wharton did not make any move to take it.

"Harry," muttered Nugent—"Harry, a fellow can't say any fairer than that. Take his fist."

Wharton's face assumed a sullen, dogged look.

"I won't!"

Bob Cherry's hand dropped to his side. He was hurt, but he was more scornful than hurt. His glance showed his feelings plainly enough.

"As you like," he said shortly. "If you choose to bear malice, have your own way." And he walked out of the study.

Harry Wharton gritted his teeth. There was something noble in Cherry's manner at that moment—something which made Harry realise quite clearly that he had wounded a generous nature, and that he was deserving of the contempt he had read in the new boy's glance.

"I wish you had shaken hands with him, Harry."

Nugent spoke quietly, and Harry Wharton's face immediately hardened again. At a hint of criticism, he was like a hedgehog—impenetrable.

"Well, I wouldn't; and I won't!" he said.

Nugent was silent. Harry Wharton rubbed the bruise on his head. It hurt him, and he was still somewhat dazed. And the look on Nugent's face did not please him. There was silence in the study for some minutes, and Wharton broke it.

"You offered to teach me boxing, Nugent."

Nugent brightened a little.

"So I will, Harry. You've had a lesson this afternoon, and you picked up wonderfully. I'm glad to see you taking to it."

"I want to learn as quickly as I can."

"That's right. You'll be able to tackle Bulstrode in a week if you stick to it. You're so quick on your feet, and you've got plenty of driving-power. And, of course, pluck has a lot to do with it, and you've plenty of that. I've said from the first that if you set your mind to it, Bulstrode would not remain cock of the Remove much longer."

"I don't want to fight Bulstrode."

Nugent stared.

"But you said you wanted to get on with the boxing lessons."

"So I do."

"Whom do you want to fight, then?"

"That new fellow—Bob Cherry."

Nugent compressed his lips. He had sworn to be Harry Wharton's friend, and to help him on at Greyfriars, but the task was turning out harder than he had reckoned upon.

But in that moment of impatience came a remembrance of a whirling, swirling chaos of wild waters, of himself struggling, sinking, succumbing in the midst of it, and of a hand that had drawn him from doom, of a voice that had whispered encouragement in the shadow of grim death, and the impatience vanished; but Harry Wharton would probably never know how much he owed to Nugent's gratitude.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Hazeldene's Sister.

"STOP! Here, stop!"

Bob Cherry, as he left Wharton's study, suddenly caught sight of Peter Hazeldene in the passage. He did not know Hazeldene's name, but his face was not easily forgotten. Bob dashed towards him at once, and Hazeldene, changing colour a little, turned and sped down the staircase.

"Stop! Stop, you rotter!"

But Hazeldene did not stop. Bob Cherry looked as if he meant business, as indeed he did; and the cad of the Remove had not the slightest intention of paying the piper if he could get out of it.

"Stop!"

Hazeldene heard the shout, but did not heed it. He went down the stairs three at a time, bounding like a stag. But Bob Cherry knew a quicker way—a way that required more nerve than Hazeldene possessed, but which was quite in Bob's line.

He flung himself in a sitting posture on the broad banisters, and went sliding down at a terrific rate. The staircase made a turn in the middle; but Bob was used to that mode of descent, and he steered himself round the bend without turning a hair, and shot onwards down the sloping polished oak.

But he had not seen who was at the bottom of the staircase, owing to the turn; and as he reached the bottom, one of his outstretched legs plumped full upon the chest of a gentleman who was just ascending the bottom step.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

He slipped off the balustrade, and stood upon his feet. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was not upon his feet. He was upon his back in the wide, flagged hall, and his mortar-board was on one side of him, and his glasses on the other.

Bob Cherry's first impulse was to fly unrecognised, but he did not follow it. He stepped forward to pick up the cap and spectacles, and to help the amazed master of the Remove to his feet.

"Tha-thank you, my boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as Bob's hand assisted him to rise. "Thank you!"

"Here are your glasses, sir."

"Thank you again! I was knocked down," said the master of the Remove. "Somebody came flying down the

banisters, and collided with me with a great shock. I was knocked down."

"I hope you are not hurt, sir."

"I am not very much hurt," said Mr. Quelch, rubbing his bones ruefully; "but I am very much annoyed. Did you see the boy who came down the banisters? It happened so suddenly that I could not see whom it was, especially as my glasses were knocked off."

"Well, I saw him, sir," said Bob reluctantly.

"Ah! And who was it, my lad?"

"I am a new boy here, sir," said Bob Cherry diplomatically. "I do not know the fellows by sight, sir—only a few of them."

"Ah! Yes, I see. But you can tell me whether it was a junior. Of course, it must have been. A senior would not descend the banisters in that absurd and reckless way."

"I think it was a junior, sir."

"Ah! Have you seen him before?"

"Yes, sir."

"You would know him again?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"Then you shall point him out to me."

"If you please, sir, may I say—"

"Well, go on!"

"I believe there is a great rule against sneaking in public schools, sir," said Bob Cherry demurely. "I am a new boy, and if I started by giving a fellow away, however much he deserves it, they might be down on me. Of course, I must do exactly as you tell me, sir; but, if you wouldn't mind, I'd rather not tell."

Mr. Quelch frowned for a moment; but then his face cleared, and he gave a short nod.

"Perhaps there is something in what you say, my boy," he said. "I should be sorry to be the cause of your starting here on bad terms with your Form-fellows. I will not ask you to point out the delinquent."

"Thank you, sir! You are very kind!"

"Not at all."

And Mr. Quelch ascended the stairs. Bob Cherry's heart smote him a little. The master's unsuspectingness made his little stratagem look very much like deception, and deception was more repugnant to Bob Cherry's nature than any other vice.

"If you please, sir—" he exclaimed impulsively.

Mr. Quelch looked back at him.

"Have you anything to say to me, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir. It was—it was I who slid down the banisters and biffed you on the chest, sir," said Bob penitently. "I'm very sorry, sir. I didn't see you were there, and—"

"You! It was you?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry—"

The Remove master gave him a curious look.

"Well, I am glad to see that you can be so truthful, Cherry," he said. "Under the circumstances—especially as you are new here—I will overlook your fault, but mind that nothing of the kind occurs again."

"Thank you, sir!" said Bob joyfully.

He had certainly not suffered by his truthfulness. He was tapped on the shoulder as he walked away, and turned to see Wingate looking at him. The captain of Greyfriars had a curious smile upon his face.

"Do you usually come downstairs like that, Cherry?" he asked.

"As a rule," said Bob demurely.

Wingate grinned.

"Well, I really think you had better learn some other method—such as walking—while you are at Greyfriars," he said. "But what made Mr. Quelch let you off? That's what I want to know. If you had landed on my chest, I should have wiped up the floor with you on the spot! What made Quelch let you off?"

"I told him I did it with my little hatchet," said Bob innocently. "I mean, I owned up; and he seems to be an old sport, doesn't he?"

"You'd better let him hear you call him an old sport," said Wingate, laughing; and he walked away.

Bob Cherry had lost track of Hazeldene, but he went out into the close to look for him. For a time his quest was unsuccessful, but presently he caught sight of the practical joker of the Remove standing under the elms, talking to Billy Bunter.

Hazeldene, who seemed to have eyes everywhere, caught sight of Bob, though he was not looking towards him, and suddenly quitted Billy Bunter.

"I say, what's the matter?" exclaimed Billy, blinking in amazement as Hazeldene darted away. "Where are you going, Vaseline?"

Hazeldene did not reply—he was in too great a hurry. Bob Cherry stopped as Hazeldene vanished round a corner of the cloisters, and tapped Billy Bunter on the shoulder.

KINDLY FILL IN THE ORDER FORM.

"I say, kid——"

"Hallo, Wharton!" said the short-sighted Billy, blinking at him. "Where did you spring from? You weren't in the common-room when we scoffed the new kid's grub, were you? I was against it, but I had half a dozen of the tarts. Thought I had better, to save them from being wasted. Rather a cool sort of rotter that new chap—don't you think so?"

"I don't know about the rotter part of it," said Bob, shaking him. "You see, you owl, that I happen to be the new fellow, not Wharton. Who was that chap you were talking to just now?"

"That! Oh, that's Vaseline!"

"What the dickens do you mean by Vaseline? That can't be his name!"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"No, his name's Hazeldene; but we call him Vaseline, because he's such a slippery beast, you know."

"The rotter told me his name was Wharton. I'll Wharton him!"

And Bob Cherry ran into the cloisters in search of the cad of the Remove. His intentions towards Hazeldene were not very violent, but he thought he ought to give him some instruction on the subject of opening another fellow's trunk. But Hazeldene knew what he deserved, and he was very anxious to keep out of the new boy's way. Bob Cherry caught sight of him disappearing from the cloisters, and put on a burst of speed that brought him close upon the track. In physical fitness Hazeldene was nothing like a match for Bob.

Hazeldene panted as he heard the footsteps close behind him. He ran on harder, and slipped over a stone, and stumbled. Something fell from his pocket and tinkled on the ground as he recovered himself and ran on.

Bob Cherry stopped himself just in time to avoid treading on the dropped article. He stooped and picked it up, and, somewhat to his surprise, saw that it was a photograph; and he gazed in amazement and admiration at the fair face and laughing eyes that looked at him from the frame.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob. "What a stunning face! What on earth is a rotter like that doing with this? Hallo, halo!"

He started, and lowered the photograph, as Hazeldene came running back, with excited face and flashing eyes.

"Give me that photograph!"

Bob Cherry did not immediately obey.

"Wait a minute," he said coolly. "No hurry, you know."

"Give me that photograph!"

"Rats! I've got a bone to pick with you, and now's the time. You burst open the lock of my trunk——"

"That was an accident——"

"And that's a whopper," said Bob coolly. "I had an idea of wiping up the ground with you, and I really think I ought to do it; but——"

"Give me my sister's photograph, you cad!" shouted Hazeldene.

Bob stared at him in astonishment.

"Your sister!"

"Yes. Give it me."

"There you are!" Bob Cherry handed over the photograph at once. "I didn't know it was your sister. Blessed if I know how a worm like you came to have a sister like that! But there you are! And I'll let you off that licking, you young rotter; but if you bother with my things again——"

Hazeldene restored the photograph to his pocket, and his usual manner returned to him at once. For a moment he had shown a glimpse of a better self, the redeeming trait in a mean nature. Now he was the slippery customer again whom the boys of the Remove had contemptuously nicknamed Vaseline.

"I say, I'm sorry about that lock," he said. "It couldn't be helped, you know; it slipped down from the porter's shoulder——"

"Oh, I know all about that! No good trying to gammon me. You made me get into a row with a chap named Wharton through telling me that was your name."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you chuckle at me, you image——" began Bob indignantly. But Hazeldene did not wait for him to finish. Bob looked like getting angry again, and Hazeldene hastily walked off. Bob Cherry returned to the School House in a thoughtful mood. He was thinking, not of the trick Hazeldene had played upon him, nor of its result, the quarrel with Harry Wharton. Somehow it was the laughing face of the photograph that was haunting his mind.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Study Tea, and Ructions.

TEA in Study No 1 at Greyfriars was not, as a rule, a peaceable meal, nor a cheerful one. Discord reigned in the study, the only really placable member of the company of four being little Billy Bunter, who blinked upon everybody with equal good humour.

Bulstrode was on the worst of terms with Harry Wharton, and Nugent backed up his friend so that he was hardly on speaking terms with the bully of the Remove. At the same time he had an uncomfortable feeling that even Bulstrode, the bully, would not have been so hard to get on with if Harry's temper had not been so extremely uncompromising. Bulstrode had good points, and when in a good temper, was very good-natured; but Harry Wharton had a way of saving up resentment for things said and done days before, which did not make for harmony.

Wharton and Nugent were alone on this particular afternoon when tea-time came round, and Nugent jammed the kettle on the fire, and Wharton cleared the table, each with the hope that they were to have the study to themselves. They didn't object to Billy Bunter, who was too harmless for anybody to object to him. Billy's only fault was a perennial impecuniosity, and he would share cheerfully in anything that was going, and owe his "whack" with equal cheerfulness, explaining on all occasions that he was in a stony state, which he hoped would soon be relieved by the arrival of a postal order, which, by the way, very seldom arrived.

"I fancy we sha'n't have Bulstrode here," Nugent remarked, as he cleaned the china teapot, preparatory to making tea. "He was very low in cash yesterday, and had only some sardines left for his tea. Unless we stand him a tea, he can't have it in the study."

"Jolly good thing, too," said Wharton. "There's no peace when that fellow's here. It's snacking all the time."

Nugent grinned as he bent over the grate. He couldn't help thinking that the blame for the endless "snacking" that went on in Study No. 1 was not all on one side.

The door opened as Nugent was making the tea. He looked round in a cloud of steam, and sighted Billy Bunter coming in.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, his usual commencement to any observation whatsoever, "you don't mind my having tea with you, do you? I'm stony."

Nugent grunted.

"My postal-order hasn't come yet," said Billy. "That's rather singular, too, as I've been expecting it for nearly a week now. I say, the tea in the hall is simply beastly, you know—weaker tea than ever, and the bread-and-butter like slabs of cement. You don't mind my having tea with you. I see you've got cake and some salmon. You know how to do things, and no mistake."

"Oh, we don't mind, Billy!" said Nugent, grinning. "When that postal-order of yours arrives, I think we'll put it in a frame and hang it up on the wall."

"It's really coming, I believe, Nugent," said Billy. "I believe I owe you two fellows several little accounts. The trouble is, that the order won't be big enough to settle them all. But we must do the best we can. It's jolly nice of you to ask me to tea. When you are stony, I'll do as much for you—if I'm able."

"That's all right, Billy," grinned Nugent. "You'll never be able, but we'll take the will for the deed."

"You may have Bulstrode, too," said Billy. "I hear he's broke, and he was going into the hall for the school tea; but he said to Cherry that he couldn't stand it. He's suck-

Please Order in Advance.



"Leave me alone, leave me alone!" said Harry Wharton.

ing up to that new fellow, I believe. Do you know whether Cherry's people are rich?"

"Don't know, and don't care," said Wharton, to whom the inquiry was addressed.

"Well, no need to be grumpy about it. I don't like a fellow who sucks up to a chap because he's rich, you know. Still, a chap who can stand feeds is always worth knowing. I must find out," said Billy, with a sage nod of the head.

Billy Bunter's information was correct on one point. Bulstrode, of the Remove, was making himself agreeable to the new fellow. When the tea-bell rang, Bob Cherry had been feeling a little lonely. He was accustomed to making himself at home wherever he happened to be; but in a big school like Greyfriars, a junior was only a speck, so to speak, and Bob as yet had made no friends. He had not yet been assigned to any particular study, that being left for his Form master to consider and settle. The only fellow he had yet seen whom he was at all inclined to take a fancy to was Nugent, and Nugent was the chum of the fellow who had become his enemy. When the bell went for tea, about half the Remove flocked into the hall. They never had the tea provided by the college if they could afford to furnish it themselves in their own studies; but when funds were wanting, they had no choice.

Bob Cherry was getting hungry, and feeling a little solitary. He went with the crowd of his Form fellows towards the dining-hall, and met Bulstrode in the doorway. Bulstrode was looking into the room with an expression of extreme disfavour upon his face.

"Going in to tea, kid?" he asked, with unusual agreeableness, as Bob Cherry came by. Bob stopped.

"I suppose so," he said. "No good missing meals that I know of. There don't seem to be many fellows here, though," he added. "Don't they turn up to tea?"

"We're allowed to have tea in our studies if we like."

"That's jolly."

"Of course, in that case, we have to buy the things ourselves."

"Naturally. It's jolly, though. It's pretty cold in the

hall, and the grub doesn't seem to be first-class. You wouldn't take this for the Carlton."

"I can't stand the tuck here," said Bulstrode. "If I weren't stony, I shouldn't be coming here, I can tell you."

"You usually have tea in your study, then?"

"Yes; there are four of us there."

"And all stony?" asked Bob sympathetically.

"Oh, no! But I'm on bad terms with two of them, and I'm not going to ask them to let me share their tommy," said Bulstrode. "As for the other, he's always stony, and sponging on somebody. I'm left out. By the way, what study have they put you into?"

"I haven't been told yet."

"Then you'll have to feed here."

"I suppose so," said Bob.

"I'll tell you what!" exclaimed Bulstrode, as if struck by a really good idea all of a sudden. "If you like to stand a tea, we'll have it in my study, cosy and comfy. It's ever so much better than pigging in here."

Bob Cherry's face brightened. He didn't particularly take to Bulstrode, but as a new-comer and a stranger he was glad to be with someone, and the suggestion was certainly a good one.

"Right-ho!" he exclaimed. "It's a good idea! But where can we get the tommy?"

"In the school shop. I'll show you."

"Is there a shop here, then?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"Yes, come on, and I'll show you the way. It's kept by Mrs. Mimble, the gardener's wife," Bulstrode explained as he led the way. "It's open out of school hours. You can get really ripping grub—if you can pay for it. Are you in funds?"

"Yes, pretty well."

"That's all right, then."

The two juniors were soon in the school shop.

Mrs. Mimble was glad to welcome a new boy to the list of her customers. New boys usually had cash to spend, and all was grist that came to Mrs. Mimble's mill. And Bob was certainly liberal in his purchases. Bulstrode pointed out various articles that he said he could recommend, and

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Bob sampled them all. By the time the shopping was finished, Bob Cherry found that he had five shillings to pay, but he paid up cheerfully enough. Laden with their purchases, the two juniors left the school shop.

"This way," said Bulstrode, when they were in the School House again; and he led the way upstairs, and along the upper corridor, to the door of No. 1 Study.

Bob Cherry halted.

"I say, is that your study?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Bulstrode, looking at him. "What's the matter with it?"

"That chap Wharton hangs out here, doesn't he?"

"Yes; Wharton and Nugent are the two fellows I told you of. They're at tea now, I fancy; I can 'niff the salmon. They haven't asked me!"

"But I had a fearful row with Wharton this afternoon!"

The bully of the Remove grinned.

"Well, that doesn't matter, kid; this is my study, not Wharton's. Wharton is only a new-comer himself, and he was shoved in here against my will. If he says anything, I'll jolly soon shut him up!"

Bob Cherry still hesitated.

It did not seem to him exactly the thing to go into this study to tea, after the scene with Wharton earlier in the afternoon; yet, as Bulstrode said, it was not Wharton's room, and Bulstrode certainly had a right to take in any guest he pleased. If Wharton thought that Bob had returned there simply out of defiance, let him think so! Bob did not like the position; but there he was, with his arms full of groceries, and Bulstrode waiting for him. He had promised to stand that tea, and he was hungry himself. There was evidently nothing to be done but to go in and make the best of matters.

"Aren't you coming?" demanded Bulstrode, opening the door of the study.

Bob Cherry nodded.

"Yes, I'm coming."

They entered. Wharton, Nugent, and Bunter were just commencing their tea, and there was a fragrant odour of tea and salmon—fragrant at all events to hungry lads. The three looked up at once as the new-comers entered, and a dark frown settled over Harry Wharton's face, giving warning that there was trouble to come.

"Hallo," said Bulstrode; "I see you're having tea, and you've forgotten to ask me whether I wanted any! Luckily, I've found a friend!"

"You know very well you're welcome," said Nugent quietly. But Wharton did not speak. To him Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, was never welcome, and he had not the easy, tolerating nature, of Nugent.

"Well, I don't want any of your measly tea," said Bulstrode graciously; "all I want is a little room for a feed. There's the kettle, kid. Fill it and shove it on the fire, and I'll see to getting room for our grub."

Bob Cherry picked up the kettle from the grate, and looked round the study.

"Where am I to fill it?" he asked.

"There's a tap at the top end of the corridor."

Bob left the study, kettle in hand. Wharton turned a scowling glance upon Bulstrode, his eyes glowing with rage.

"What have you brought that fellow here for?" he asked angrily.

"He's standing me a tea."

"I had a row with him this afternoon."

"You're always having a row with somebody, I think."

"I'm not going to have that fellow in this study."

"Your mistake; you are."

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"I tell you I won't put up with it."

Nugent tapped him on the arm.

"Quiet, old fellow! We've no right to object to anybody Bulstrode brings in, so long as he behaves himself."

Wharton shook Nugent's hand from his arm impatiently. His sullen temper was fully aroused now.

"That fellow's not going to have tea here," he said obstinately.

Bob Cherry was just entering the study again with the filled kettle. The colour flushed into his face as he heard Wharton's rude words, but he went quietly to the grate, and put the kettle down upon the glowing coals.

"Well, he is," said Bulstrode, who was not blessed with an especial delicacy of feeling, and regarded the matter simply as one to be settled with the strong hand. "He's my friend, and he's standing me a tea. He stays here."

"Ahem!" said Bob Cherry. "If it's all the same to you, Bulstrode, I think I'll go. I don't want to stay anywhere where I'm not welcome."

"Rot!" said Bulstrode, who was already clearing a part of the study table, and getting out the recent purchases from the packets. "You've got to stay. What are you going to do for tea, I'd like to know?"

"I suppose I can have it in the hall?"

"After just laying out five bob in grub?" exclaimed Bulstrode in astonishment. "Well, I really think you must be off your rocker, Bob Cherry!"

Bob Cherry hesitated.

It was certainly "hard cheese," but he did not feel inclined to sit down to tea with one of the owners of the study glowering at him; even if it stopped at that. But it was not likely to stop at that. Wharton was evidently looking for trouble. To make a row in another fellow's quarters was very repugnant to Bob's feelings.

"Oh, don't go," exclaimed Nugent; "it's all right! You've no right to start ragging the new kid, Wharton. If you want to have it out with him, with the gloves on, well and good; but for goodness' sake don't begin henpecking!"

Wharton turned a sullen red.

Nugent spoke impatiently, but the only effect of his impatience was to make the wayward lad more obstinate than ever upon the point.

"I tell you I'm not going to put up with it," he said doggedly. "The fellow can go—"

"Oh, I'll go!" said Bob. "I couldn't eat my tea with a face like that in front of me, anyway. I don't envy you your friend, Nugent. If I had to pig in with him it would turn my whiskers grey."

"You're not going," said Bulstrode, crossing to the door and closing it. "Do you think I'm going to have you turned out of the study like that? There's the grub, for one thing."

"Oh, I'll leave that there!" said Bob indifferently.

"Well, of course, that makes a difference; still, I'm not going to have an outsider like Wharton turning a guest of mine out of the study!"

"Yes, but—"

"Hang it all, you're my guest, ain't you? Well, then, it's an insult to me to go!" said Bulstrode. "You can go if you like, of course, but if you do I consider that you are a rotten pig!"

Bob Cherry turned red.

"Well, if you put it like that—" he said.

"I do put it like that. I can't eat your grub and see you turned out!"

"Oh, that's all right, Bulstrode," said Billy Bunter; "I'll eat it, if you like! I don't mind in the least!"

"Shut up, you greedy young codfish! You see, Cherry, you can't go. Sit down and make yourself at home. If Wharton doesn't like my friends, he can go himself."

Bob Cherry looked across the table at Nugent and Wharton.

"You see how it is?" he exclaimed. "I came here as Bulstrode's guest, and I must stay if he makes a point of it!"

"You sha'n't stay!" said Wharton.

"I must!"

"You won't!"

"Then it comes to a question of chucking out," said Bob Cherry, his eyes flashing, "if that's how it stands; then I tell you plainly that I won't go. I'm here by Bulstrode's invitation; and he had every right to invite me, and I to come—"

"I should say so," said Bulstrode.

"And so I am going to stay," said Bob. "That settles it!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. Nugent tried to pull him back into his chair, but Wharton angrily shook away his detaining grasp.

"Are you going, Cherry?" he asked, between his teeth.

Bob's eyes met his furious glance steadily.

"No, I'm not going."

"Then you'll be thrown out."

"Who'll throw me out?"

"I will!"

Bob Cherry quietly pushed back his cuffs.

"Very well," he said; "I'm ready. Begin!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Not Thrown Out.

WHARTON stood for a moment, his hands clenched hard, his eyes blazing. The remembrance of his former encounter was in his mind, and he knew how little of a match he had been for the new boy at Greyfriars.

But this was not the first time that his passionate temper had hurried him into an unequal encounter, and he possessed at least one undeniable quality, that of courage; that he had never lacked.

Bulstrode, who was sorting out tarts from a paper bag, looked on at the scene with a grin. He disliked Wharton intensely, equally for his good and his bad qualities, and he was rather pleased than otherwise to see him come to blows with the new boy. If Bob Cherry got the worst of it, Bulstrode was quite ready to interfere upon his behalf.

Nugent looked red and ashamed—ashamed of his friend,

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As for Billy Bunter, he did not look on the scene at all. He was busy finishing up the cake while his companions were otherwise occupied.

"You had better go," said Wharton, in a low, strained voice, which seemed to be wrong from him. "I tell you, you had better go."

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Go ahead with the chucking out," he said. "You didn't make such a good job of it before that I've any reason to be nervous now."

Wharton made a spring forward.

Bob Cherry's clenched fist went up, but the blow was not struck; for Nugent sprang forward at the same moment, and caught Wharton by the shoulder, and swung him back.

Harry glared at him fiercely.

"What do you mean by that, Nugent?"

"I mean that you shall not attack Cherry while I'm here," said Nugent resolutely. "You're in the wrong, Harry."

"Mind your own business!"

Nugent bit his lip hard.

"This is my business, since I've been fool enough to make you my friend," he said, with hasty bitterness.

"I don't ask for your friendship."

"No need to talk about that. I say you sha'n't touch Cherry. You are in the wrong, and you ought to own up like a decent fellow."

Wharton breathed hard.

"Stand aside, Nugent."

"I will not."

For a moment it looked as if Harry Wharton would attack the only lad at Greyfriars who had ever offered him the hand of friendship.

But enraged as he was, some glimmering of right feeling remained which kept him from that step, savage and reckless as his humour was. He drew back, quivering with passion.

"Very well," he said thickly, "if you take his part, Nugent, I am done! But I won't remain if he does!"

And Harry Wharton swung sullenly out of the study.

"Good riddance," said Bulstrode indifferently. "What you can see in that sulky brute to make a friend of him for, I can't imagine, Nugent!"

"That's my affair!" said Nugent, with unusual tartness. And he, too, left the study.

Bob Cherry looked uncomfortable. For Wharton he did not care a pin, but he already liked Nugent, and he felt that he had driven him out. Billy Bunter looked round, and blinked owl-like at the juniors.

"Hallo! Is that fellow Cherry gone? What the dickens did you want to bring him here for, Bulstrode, making a fuss? He's too cool by half; and if he were here now, I'd be very much inclined to sling him out myself."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"You'd better start, then, old kid," he remarked genially.

Billy Bunter gave a jump.

"Hallo! I thought you were gone out. I suppose it was Nugent went? It's a great affliction, not being able to see. I suppose, as Wharton and Nugent are both gone, they won't want any more of this cake, so I may as well finish it."

And Billy Bunter did finish it.

"Let's get to tea," said Bulstrode. "Hallo! What are you looking down in the mouth for? You're not afraid of Wharton, are you?"

"No; hardly," said Bob Cherry, laughing. "But—Never mind. Let's have tea. I'm fearfully hungry, anyway."

"The kettle's boiling. It only wants making. I'll do it, while you open the sardines. There's a tin-opener on the table."

"Right you are!"

"I'll have a cup of tea with you if you like," said Billy Bunter. "I always like tea that's fresh made. Those tarts look ripping, too. If you don't mind, I'll have tea with you fellows."

"You've had your tea, you young pig!" said Bulstrode.

"Only some salmon and cake," said Billy Bunter disparagingly. "You've got a good feed there. I'd like to have a snack with you, just to show Cherry that I don't object to his presence in the study, like some people."

"Why, you were going to chuck me out just now?" exclaimed Bob.

Billy Bunter was abashed for a moment.

"Oh, that was only—a figure of speech!" he stammered. "You see, what I really meant was that I wished you were going to chum up in this study with us for good. That's what I really meant. Of course, I'll stand you a feed in return when I'm in funds again. I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Feed away, kid!" said Bob Cherry. "There's enough, anyway. Feed away, and don't tell me any more fibs!"

"They're not exactly fibs, Cherry," said the unabashed Owl, starting on the sardines. "I always tell the truth, except sometimes; and then it's really not my fault. You see—"

"My word!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You're like the little brook in the poem—you go on for ever. Can't you shut up at times?"

"Certainly," said Billy Bunter. "I don't want to force my conversation on anybody. But, as I was saying—"

"Dry up!" said Bulstrode. "Here you are, Cherry. This is jolly good tea. I thought we'd have the best Mrs. Mumble keeps, as you were in funds."

"Good wheeze," said Bunter. "Always have the best of everything when another fellow is doing the paying part of the business!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Certainly! I say, you fellows, I wish Cherry were going to study in here, instead of Wharton. Do you think we could get Wharton to change out?"

"Wish we could," said Bulstrode, as he helped himself very liberally and started his tea. "He's an ill-tempered beast. He broke my camera when he first came to Greyfriars, and the Form ordered him to pay for it. I'd like to see him sacked from the school. Can't see what Nugent wastes so much trouble on him for."

"Nugent seems a decent sort of chap," Bob Cherry remarked.

"Oh, he's all right!" said Bulstrode. "Not enough spirit, you know. He seems to take everything from Wharton. Wharton pulled him out of the river once; but that wouldn't make me stand his cheek, I can tell you."

"I dare say it wouldn't," agreed Bob.

"I'm a bit different stuff from Nugent, you see."

"Yes," Bob Cherry assented; "I can see you are."

Bulstrode looked at him quickly, to see if he meant anything more than his words implied of assent. But Bob Cherry was eating sardines, and his face was grave as a judge's.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

In the Gym.

DUSK had fallen on the close at Greyfriars. The long shadows of the elms mingled with the growing gloom, and the great school buildings faded into a dark mass.

A thin rain was beginning to fall, blurring the windows from which the lights gleamed out into the dim close.

Under the elms a figure paced bareheaded. It was Harry Wharton's. With his hands thrust deep into his pockets, his face white, and his eyes savage, Harry Wharton paced there, unconscious of the rain. The drops pattered on the leaves of the elms, and came scattering down over him, but he did not heed them. A footstep sounded in the silence of the close, and a shadow loomed under the elms.

"Are you there, Wharton?"

Harry stopped his restless pacing. He knew Nugent's voice, but his heart did not respond to the anxious tone of his friend.

"I am here!" he said coldly.

Nugent came towards him.

"I thought I heard somebody," said Nugent, with a cheerfulness of manner he was in reality far from feeling. He did not quite understand Harry Wharton, and he never quite knew to what lengths the boy's intractable, ungoverned nature might lead him. "Aren't you coming to the gym for the boxing lesson, old chap?"

Harry bit his lip.

"I forgot," he said. "I thought you came to look for me because—because—"

Nugent knew perfectly well what was in Harry's mind. He thought Nugent was coming to look for him because he was sulking, as a matter of fact, though he would not have put it in those words. Nugent was too tactful to let the touchy lad know that he had guessed correctly.

"It's time for the boxing-lesson," he said; "unless you want to miss it. That would be a pity, as you are getting on so well with the gloves."

"I'm going to fight Bob Cherry to-night," said Wharton abruptly.

"Not to-night, old fellow. You're no match—"

"How do you know I'm not?"

"Well, I don't mean exactly that," said Nugent, who hardly knew what to say. "I mean, he looks the build of a fighter, and your boxing is hardly up to the mark yet for you to take on an unknown quantity like that."

"I'm going to do it, all the same."

"I don't see what you've got your knife into Cherry so much for," said Nugent, looking puzzled. "He's a bit lively, and thundering independent for a new kid; but I believe he's a decent, good-natured chap."

"If you want to chum up with him—"

"I don't; though I might do worse." It was on Nugent's lips to say that he had done worse, but he refrained. The

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singular patience of his kind nature was equal to the strain Wharton put upon it. "But I don't see what you hate him for."

"I don't hate him."

"Well, you've managed to get to daggers drawn with him, anyhow," said Nugent. "As for your idea of fighting him, there's no reason why you shouldn't, if you feel inclined to. A round or two with the gloves on won't hurt either of you; but leave it till you've picked up a little more boxing. There's no sense in standing up to be licked."

"I don't see why you should assume that I shall be licked," said Harry Wharton doggedly.

"I fancy he's a bit above your weight at present, old fellow. In a week's time, though, you may be able to stand up to him."

"I'm not going to let him think I'm afraid of him for a week."

"I don't suppose he thinks so. I don't suppose he's thinking about you at all."

It was rather an unfortunate way of putting it. Wharton flamed up into sudden anger at once.

"No; you suppose he regards me with contempt, because he got the better of me this afternoon!" he exclaimed savagely. "I don't thank you for your opinion."

Nugent was silent. He did not know how to deal with the perverse lad, and everything he said seemed only to make matters worse.

"I'll show him, at all events, that I'm not to be despised!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "I tell you I'm going to fight him to-night. We can have it out in the gym. I'm ready for that round with the gloves, if you are."

"Come on, then."

They went into the lighted gymnasium. There were a good many fellows there, and some of them glanced curiously at the two juniors. Harry's looks showed that he was in what the Remove fellows usually alluded to as his "tantrums." Others, beside Bulstrode, had wondered what made Nugent so patient with his perverse chum.

"Hallo, kids!" said Hazeldene, coming up to them. "Did you pick that up after a circus had passed, Wharton?"

"Did I pick up what?" snapped Harry.

"That face!"

There was a snigger from the fellows standing round, and Harry's white face went red. He clenched his fist, but Nugent pulled him away.

"You don't want to fight with the whole Remove to-night, do you?" he muttered impatiently. "Come on, and let's get going."

The chums soon had the gloves on. Much to Harry's annoyance, a ring of Remove fellows gathered round them to watch the glove practice. Harry was fully conscious that his boxing was not quite up to form, and he was sensitive on the point of showing any clumsiness before an audience, especially an unsympathetic one. His hard reserve made him many enemies, and the boys were not backward in showing their resentment.

"Slip into him, Nugent!" exclaimed Trevor. "What are you playing with him for? You won't teach him to box by missing him every time."

"I should say not," said Hazeldene. "Besides, you all know that that fellow wants a licking. He has been asking for trouble ever since he came to Greyfriars. He needs a licking. He requires one badly. He cries aloud for a licking, as it were. And I think that Nugent, as his friend, ought to give it him."

The Remove sniggered. Harry pretended not to hear what was said; but the tips of his ears were burning, and the tightening of his lips gave his feelings away.

"Nugent won't hit him," remarked Owen, shaking his head. "Nugent wants to train him gently by wrapping him in cotton-wool."

"And soothing him with syrup," said Trevor.

"And kissing him nighty-nighty on his baby brow," said Hazeldene. "Very nice and very touching. But a licking would do the business better. That new chap—Cherry—gave him a licking to-day, and, in my opinion, he's all the better for it."

Harry Wharton went scarlet. He lost his guard, and Nugent's glove came home on his nose harder than Nugent had intended. Harry staggered back, and an unfeeling giggle went round the ring of Removites.

"That's one for his boko, at all events," commented Hazeldene. "Nugent looks as if he could weep over him. I really don't see why he shouldn't for that matter. Trevor, old chap, fetch one of the fire-buckets yonder for Nugent to weep into!"

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

Harry Wharton swung round like a tiger upon Hazeldene. He was in no mood to be ragged, and the cad of the Remove saw that he had gone a little too far. He felt it, too, the next moment, as Harry's right-hand boxing-glove came with

a sounding thwack upon his prominent nose. He staggered back against Trevor.

"If you want any more," said Wharton savagely, "you've only got to say so. I'll fight you, if you like, or any fellow in the Form!"

The Remove growled. The challenge was not much to their liking, and several showed a keen desire to take Harry at his word.

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Trevor instantly. "I'm your man!"

"And I!" exclaimed Owen.

"After you, then," said Hazeldene, rubbing his nose. "I'll be your second, Trevor. I fancy that sulky rotter has bitten off more than he can chew this time!"

"Oh, shut up, all of you!" cried Nugent, as Harry glowered round upon the circle of unfriendly faces. "Why can't you let the fellow alone?"

"He challenged us!" growled Nugent.

"He's got a fight on his hands already for to-night. Now, do leave us alone for a bit," said the worried Nugent. "As for you, Hazeldene, you'll get it in the neck if you don't shut up. I can tell you!"

"Got a fight on already, has he?" said Hazeldene. "And who is he going to fight?"

"The new chap, Cherry."

"Hallo, there comes Cherry, with Bulstrode!" ejaculated Owen. "Let the sulky rotter alone, kids. If he's going to fight Cherry, I fancy he's got all his work cut out. We'll see him licked, and serve him right!"

"Come on, Harry," said Nugent.

Harry Wharton was quivering with passion. But he turned to the boxing again. He knew that he had taken a difficult task in hand, and that there was no avoiding it now, and the better fitted he was for facing it, the better it would be for him.

Hazeldene strolled across to the doorway, where Bob Cherry and Bulstrode had just appeared. There was trouble in the air, and in troublous times—unless it came home to himself—Hazeldene was happy.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight to a Finish.

BOB CHERRY glanced round the gymnasium with his usual coolness as he entered. He saw that his entrance had excited general interest in the Remove, and he wondered why. He was feeling very comfortable and contented after a good tea, and Bulstrode, in unusual good humour, had offered to show him round the school. They had come into the gym. on the way round.

"Seems to be something on," Bulstrode remarked. "I say, Hazeldene, what's in the wind? Anything going on, Vaseline?"

"Yes; don't you know?" asked Hazeldene, looking at Cherry.

Bob Cherry stared at him.

"I certainly don't," he replied. "How on earth should I know, Cold Cream, or Vaseline, or Lanoline, or whatever your name is?"

"Well, a chap generally knows when he's got a fight on his hands, I suppose," said Hazeldene.

"Yes, I suppose so; but I haven't got a fight on my hands, that I know of."

"Then you don't know that Wharton is slogging away with the gloves yonder for the purpose of staggering humanity with his fistical prowess, and that you are to be the giddy victim?"

"No," said Bob shortly. "I didn't know it, and I'm not going to take your word for it, either, Lanoline."

Hazeldene shrugged his shoulders.

"You needn't," he said carelessly. "Any of these fellows will tell you the same, and I suppose Wharton won't leave you in the dark long."

"It's a fact, Cherry," said Trevor. "The sulky brute's got his knife into you for something. Have you had a row with him?"

"We've had a little disagreement."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Bulstrode. "I say, Wharton wanted to chuck him out of Study No. 1 when I took him in to tea. Cool, wasn't it?"

"Just like Wharton," grinned Owen. "How did it end?"

"Well, Wharton would have got chucked out himself, only he preferred to walk. I suppose he wants to get his own back now. You'll stand up to him, Cherry?"

"I don't want to fight him," said Bob.

"Not afraid, are you?"

"You'd better not ask that question twice, Bulstrode. I don't want to quarrel with you, but I don't like that sort of remark."

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"Oh, keep your wool on! You'll have to face Wharton, whether you like it or not, if he's made up his mind. He's the most obstinate brute at Greyfriars."

"Rather!" said Hazeldene. "He couldn't lick Cherry in a dog's age; but he'll try—oh, yes, he'll try! That's his style."

"Come along, Cherry," said Bulstrode, pulling the new boy by the arm. "Let's go over to them and have it out."

Bob shook himself free.

"I'm not going to pick a quarrel with anybody," he said. "If he chooses to pick one with me, that's a different matter."

"Hallo, what are you kids jawing about?" asked Carberry, of the Sixth, coming into the gym. "Plotting some mischief, you young rotters, hey?"

"Oh, no, Carberry!" said Hazeldene. "It's only—"

"You oily young scoundrel, I've been looking for you! You haven't fagged for me to-day at all, and—"

"I've been ill, Carberry," said Hazeldene, dodging out of the bully's reach—"I have, really. You know I like fagging for you—"

"You lying young rascal!" said Carberry. "But what was that you were saying just now? Is this kid going to fight Wharton?"

"Yes, that's the programme."

"Good!" said Carberry. "I'll keep time for you. Come along, youngsters, and I'll see to it, and if it's a good fight, I'll let you off your next licking as a reward."

Carberry strode towards the spot where Nugent and Wharton had been boxing. They had left off now, Nugent deeming it advisable for his friend to get a rest before the encounter with Bob Cherry, which seemed destined to come off at once.

"Hallo, here!" said Carberry. "I hear that Wharton is going to fight Cherry, and I'm going to referee for you, and keep time. Get a couple of sponges, Hazeldene. You can draw a basin of water, Bulstrode."

such a thing as discipline here, Wharton, as I hope you will learn in time. And I fancy that before you are finished with Cherry, you will be glad that you have the gloves on."

Wharton looked sullen. But Bob Cherry stepped into the ring briskly, with the gloves on his hands, and Wharton had no choice but to follow suit.

"Just a minute," said Bob Cherry quietly. "I want to speak to you, Wharton. I haven't sought this quarrel with you, and I don't want to go on with it. It rests entirely with you."

"You can't back out now!" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Hold your tongue, Hazeldene!" said Wingate sternly, while Bob Cherry remained apparently unconscious of the remark of the cad of the Remove.

Harry Wharton's eyes met Bob Cherry's with a steely glance.

"I am going to fight you, and lick you if I can," he said, between his teeth. "Get on with it!"

"Very well; I've said what I had to say."

The two juniors mechanically shook hands, and then immediately the fight commenced.

The Remove, and a good many fellows in other Forms, crowded round, looking on with great interest. Bob Cherry looked like a fighting man, and Wharton, although not great in the boxing line, was known to be obstinate and determined, and so the encounter was pretty certain to be a well-contested one.

And, in fact, in the very first round, Bob Cherry showed that he was the superior of the two, in boxing skill and in quickness of movement, and, in fact, in everything but in bodily strength, in which, perhaps, Harry Wharton had a slight advantage.

IT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE!

"Right you are, Carberry."

"Chuck those gloves aside," went on the senior. "You're not babies; you don't want those—knuckles are good enough."

"I'd prefer the gloves," said Bob Cherry quietly.

"Afraid of getting hurt?"

"No; but I prefer the gloves."

"Well, you're not going to have them."

"Excuse me," broke in the voice of Wingate—and the captain of Greyfriars came quietly into the ring—"you are mistaken, Carberry. They will have the gloves on."

Carberry glared at the captain.

"I don't see what you want to interfere here for, Wingate."

"I do," said Wingate. "There's not going to be a prize-fight in the gym here if I can help it. There's no objection to two juniors settling their differences with a mill, but they've got to have the gloves on."

"I don't see—"

"Well, it's not really necessary for you to see, Carberry," said Wingate, with a smile. "I'll take this matter in hand myself."

Carberry scowled, and drew back. He had promised himself the treat of something in the style of a prize-ring encounter, and he was disappointed. But he knew that it was useless to oppose the captain of Greyfriars.

"Now, off with your jacket, Cherry, and on with the gloves," said Wingate cheerily. "I'll see you through this."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry; and he was quickly peeling off his jacket and vest, which he handed to Bulstrode, who was to be his second.

"I don't want the gloves on," said Harry Wharton.

The captain of Greyfriars gave him a quick glance.

"You've got to do as you're told," he said. "There is

His guard was not perfect, but it was very good, and very few of Harry's blows came anywhere near the mark, while almost every counter of Bob's came home with telling effect upon Wharton's face or chest.

Ere a couple of minutes had passed, Harry realised quite clearly that had the contest been with the bare knuckles, it would not have lasted long for him. As it was, the incessant raps and taps of the boxing-gloves were dazing him.

"Time!" called out Wingate, his eye on his watch.

The combat ceased for a minute rest. Wharton was breathing hard, while Bob Cherry seemed as fresh as a daisy.

Bulstrode patted him on the shoulder.

"You'll do, kid," he said. "You've a fine style about you. I verily believe that you would be able to stand up to me for a few minutes."

"Really?" said Bob Cherry, looking him up and down.

"Do you know, I think that's very likely, and even for more than a few minutes, too. As a matter of fact, I think I could last you out, you know, and feel quite all right afterwards."

"He, he, he!" cackled Hazeldene.

Bulstrode looked rather taken aback. He had not expected his kind patronage to be received in this spirit.

"Hand us that sponge," said Bob cheerfully, before Bulstrode could reply, and he wiped his warm face with it.

"Hallo, there's time!"

"Time!" said Wingate.

The combatants faced each other again. More keen than ever grew the contest in the faces round the ring. Boys were standing three deep to look on.

"Go it, Cherry!"

"Most of the fellows there had never spoken to Bob Cherry, even; but the cries were all: "Go it, Cherry!" No

KINDLY FILL IN THE ORDER FORM.

one said "Go it, Wharton!" Harry noticed the difference, and a more hard and spiteful look grew upon his face. He would win yet; and he would defeat his adversary, if only as a blow to the Remove.

They went at it hammer and tongs. Some of Harry Wharton's blows, planted with fierce strength, came home, in spite of watch and wariness. But for every one that touched the face of Bob Cherry, at least two crashed upon Harry Wharton.

At the end of the second round, Wharton was breathing heavily, and he sank upon the knee his second made for him, to rest. Nugent sponged his heated face.

He did not speak. He knew that whatever he might say, it would be received in ill part; but perhaps his face spoke plainly enough for him. He knew perfectly well that his chum was no match for Bob Cherry.

"Time!"

Harry Wharton stepped up to the line again. His face was white, his eyes burning. Bruises were showing on the white skin, but he did not feel the pain.

Bob Cherry was calm and cool, and not in the least danger of losing his judgment. But the anger was mounting like wine to Harry Wharton's head.

The third round was as keen as the previous ones, but it ended more badly for Harry Wharton.

After a little sparring, a terrible right-hander caught him full upon the jaw, and though his feeble counter came home on Bob Cherry's nose, he was finished for that round. The blow flung him fairly upon his back, and he lay gasping.

Wingate began to count.

"One, two, three, four, five——"

At ten Harry Wharton would have lain there a beaten man; but at six he staggered to his feet unsteadily, but with his eyes ablaze.

pluck; and he held back the punishment he might have given him if he had chosen.

"Go it, Cherry!" sang out Hazeldene, ever ready to make mischief. "Don't let him 'off! You can't hang it out all night, you know!"

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth. At that moment he would gladly have had Hazeldene before him instead of Harry Wharton.

Wharton's face was black. He realised as he heard the words that his enemy was sparing him, and the humiliation was bitter to the proud, sensitive lad.

He rushed on savagely, forcing the fighting with such fury that Bob Cherry's tactics had to change speedily.

Two or three blows came home on Bob's face, and he staggered, and then he roused himself and struck out with equal fierceness.

Right and left, left and right!

The blows came home upon Harry's face like hammer-thuds, blinding in their force and terrible swiftness. He staggered back, and fell helplessly to the ground, and lay there upon his back, too utterly dazed and exhausted to move.

Wingate snapped his watch shut.

"It's over!"

Harry Wharton made a frantic attempt to rise.

"It's not over! You haven't counted! I can stand up yet! Lend me a hand, Nugent—hang you, lend me a hand!"

"It is over," repeated Wingate sternly. "You have had as thorough a licking, Wharton, as I've ever seen a fellow have, and I must say that it serves you right. Even if you could go on, I should not allow you to do so, as I think this affair has gone quite far enough."

"I will go on! I will——"

"Hold your tongue!"

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A single blow would have sent him reeling to the earth again, but Bob Cherry did not strike it. He stepped back, with the evident intention of allowing his adversary time to recover, and Hazeldene indulged in a laugh.

"Why don't you finish him, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry did not reply.

He filled up the rest of the round with sparring, and when time was called Harry Wharton was glad to sink upon his second's knee.

Nugent's face was very serious now as he tended his principal. Wharton was to all intents and purposes licked, but he evidently intended to go on. He was full of dogged pluck, and did not know when he was beaten.

"Better chuck it now," Nugent whispered at last. "You can tackle him again later, you know; but now——"

Wharton shook his head.

"I'm not licked yet."

"But the next round will finish you. Better——"

"You'll see."

Nugent was silent. It was useless to argue with one so obstinate, and the only thing to be done was to let Wharton have his way, and allow the fight to go on to a finish. The finish could not be very far off now!

"Time!"

With his head reeling, and lights dancing before his eyes, Harry Wharton stepped into the ring; but so determined was he to keep on, and control the weakness he felt stealing over him, that even Wingate could not see how bad a state he was in.

Bob Cherry faced him, and the fourth round commenced. It did not take the new boy at Greyfriars long to discover that his adversary was quite at his mercy, and that Wharton was in his hands to defeat or to spare. Little as Bob liked the sullen nature of Wharton, he could not help feeling something of admiration for his grit and dogged

"I won't touch you again, Wharton," said Bob Cherry. "I think you're a spiteful rotter, if you want to know my opinion. If you want to have this out over again another time, you'll only have to say so, that's all."

And putting on his jacket with Bulstrode's assistance, he walked away with the latter.

Harry Wharton stood alone with Nugent. Slowly and painfully he donned vest and jacket. He had never felt quite like this in his life before. He had had some rough times since coming to Greyfriars, but nothing like this. But for the gloves—which he had not wanted—he knew that he would have been knocked out to a mere wreck; even as it was he was aching all over, and his brain seemed to be in a whirl. He leaned heavily upon his chum's arm.

"Let's get out of this, Nugent," he said huskily; "I—I'm feeling rotten. I—I suppose I have been a confounded fool, but—but we'll try again some day."

"Come along, old chap," said Nugent quietly; and he piloted his injured chum out of the gym.

Curious glances followed them, and more than one hiss. Harry Wharton's defeat had not caused a single regret throughout the whole Form.

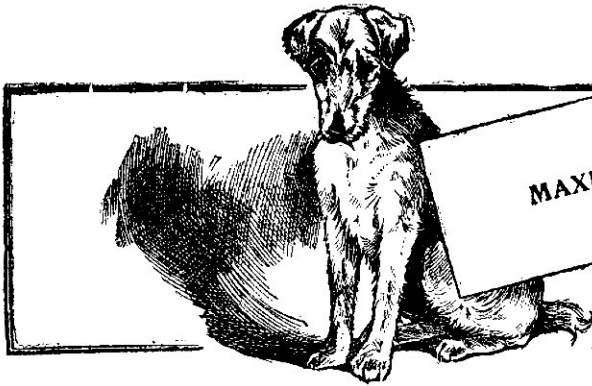
He realised it, and, not for the first time, a sense of his wrongheadedness smote him as he looked back from the rainy close into the brightly-lighted gym., and saw his victorious adversary surrounded by the fellows of the Remove, and on the best of terms with all of them. Then he went out sullenly into the gloom.

Harry Wharton had yet to learn that pluck must be allied with chivalry.

THE END.

(Another long, complete tale dealing with Harry Wharton, Nugent, Bob Cherry and Vaseline next Tuesday, entitled "The Mystery of Greyfriars," by Frank Richards. Please fill in the Order Form.)

KINDLY FILL IN THE ORDER FORM.



NEW STORY SHOWING HOW TWO BOYS BECAME DETECTIVES.

By LEWIS HOCKLEY.

GLANCE OVER THIS FIRST.

Frank Dennis and Bob Lomax, two City clerks, are thrown out of employment. But Grip, their dog, finds a purse containing certain heirlooms. "We're going to find the owner of this purse," declared Bob.

Lomax Puzzles His Chum.

Robert Lomax spoke with such determination and seriousness that his friend looked at him attentively. Surely Bob, who had always laughed at his own predilection for the reading of detective stories, and had so often derided him for the admiration he felt and expressed for these marvellous masters in the art of detecting crime and unravelling mysteries, could not be really meaning to assume the character himself.

And yet Robert did not have the appearance of indulging in a joke; there was resolution in his close-shut lips, his brows were knitted, and his grey eyes alight with a sober enthusiasm.

"D'you mean it, Bob?" Dennis asked.

"Mean it? Why, of course I do!" Lomax replied. "Never more serious in my life."

"But you've always made game of that sort of thing."

"No, I haven't. What I have laughed at is the rot of believing your Sherlock Holmes and such-like as wonderful beings such as the world has never seen before. Of course, it looks all right in a book; a chap has got to put down something wonderful or people don't want to read about him, and that's where the rot comes in. Now, I don't say that I'm as clever as Sherlock Holmes, or know as much, but, all the same, I believe that what most people look upon as wonderful and not to be understood would look a mighty lot different to them if only they'd think about it a bit. My idea is that the working out of these mysteries only wants a fair amount of common-sense thinking. Don't the police do some wonderful bits of work? Yet no one puts them into books."

"But the police," objected Frank, "are always such fools; they can't see things which a Sherlock Holmes does; or, if they do see 'em, they don't know what to make of 'em."

"Of course, in books," Lomax said impatiently, "it's got to be like that, or the detective wouldn't be made to appear so clever."

"Well, let's see what your common-sense is going to do with finding the owner of this purse," Dennis retorted, with a mischievous grin.

"We will," Robert said decidedly; "and you're going to help me, Frank. Two heads are always better than one, even when one of 'em's yours, Frank."

"Right you are! And I vote we go home to think it over. It's just a bit too chilly to stand about here squinting at that purse; besides, a policeman may come along and want to know what we've got hold of."

Home, to these two young fellows, was represented by a big double-bedded bed-sitting-room in a lodging-house in the neighbourhood of Guilford Street, and thither they went.

The friendship between Bob and Frank dated from the day of the latter's first acquaintance with the dirty, dingy office of Driver & Driver. Their acquaintance had quickly ripened into a close friendship, and it was at the suggestion of Lomax that the two had combined to share a single lodging together. Robert was a Yorkshireman, with a keen eye to the value of money; and for the pair to live thus, as he pointed out to Dennis, would be economical for both.

In their lodging they were very comfortable, and had so far succeeded in getting into the good graces of the land-

lady as to obtain permission for the keeping of Grip with them; though, as the lady assured them very frequently, such a concession was partly due to Grip himself, he bearing such a close resemblance to a wonderful member of the terrier family which she herself once owned.

But the real homes of both the young men were far from London. Lomax was from Yorkshire, where his father was a farmer of some consideration, and blessed with a big family; whereas Frank Dennis's home was in Somersetshire, not far distant from the town of Minehead, where his father was in practice as a doctor. The summer holidays—one week's respite only from the work which neither found interesting—gave the only opportunity for a visit to their people; for six days of each of the other fifty-one weeks of the year they were at the beck and call of Mr. Worritt or his chief clerk. The law might be a profitable profession for some, but neither Bob nor Frank had any great liking for the law.

Once in their room, with Grip squatting down on Robert's foot, the two young fellows surveyed the terrier's find with the closest attention. In turn they examined the purse itself, the clipping from the newspaper, and the visiting-card.

"George E. Percival, 114, East Sherman Street, Pittsburg, U.S.A.," read Dennis, aloud. "Well, that's all right; he's the same chap who married Ivy Grace Whincop, as it says here, but that's not much help to show us where he is now. That's a fine yarn. Bob, you've built up out of these things, but it may be miles away from the truth."

"Perhaps it is; I think it isn't," Lomax replied doggedly.

"Well, how d'you mean to find out where George E. Percival is now?"

"I've an idea. Have you? What'd you do, Frank? How would you go to work? What'd Sherlock Holmes do now? You've read so much about him—what'd he do?"

"Don't know," Dennis admitted.

"I do!"

Frank Dennis looked up quickly.

"What?" he cried; and then, still more carefully, again examined purse, card, and clipping.

"Well, Sherlock Holmes, Esquire—so I judge from what you've told me—would just look at these bits of things out of the corner of one eye, put his finger-tips together, and tell us off-hand George E. Percival's age, weight, appearance, condition of health, what is the colour of his hair and eyes, whether he's knock-kneed, narrow chested, or squints; whether he's a millionaire, and, if so, if he made his money out of oil, pork, coal, or railways, and a bookful of other bits of information, in addition to his present whereabouts in London. He'd tell—"

"Shut up," yelled Dennis, "or I'll give you that Cornish heave again, and bang all the breath out of you!"

"He'd tell us all we wanted to know and more," went on Lomax heedlessly. "And now I want to know what you'd suggest we should do as we haven't got him here. You oughtn't to have read so much about him for nothing."

"Bite a bit out of his leg, Grip, and stop his rotting!" Dennis suggested to the terrier. "But, seriously, Bob, I knew one thing we could do that'd find this Percival's whereabouts."

"Go ahead! What is it?"

"Costs a lot of money, that's the drawback," Dennis said; "and we haven't any to spare. But if we were to cable to his address in—where is it?—oh, yes—Pittsburg, someone there'd be likely to know where he's stopping in London."

"Not bad," Lomax said encouragingly. "Still, we haven't got the cash, and he might not have told anyone where he's staying."

"Be no good, I suppose," went on Dennis, after a pause, "making inquiry at the address he was at when he married.

KINDLY FILL IN THE ORDER FORM.

It's probably his father's house, and if his father's still living he'd be likely to know where his son's staying now he's back again.

"H'm! Suppose his father is dead, or the house is pulled down, or empty? We can't tell how many years old that newspaper-cutting is."

Further silence. Lomax stared into the fireplace; his chum, head in hands, stared at the purse, etc. Then the latter looked up again.

"We could look through the Agony column of all the newspapers," he remarked. "If it's something valuable, as you say, perhaps the owner will have advertised for it, offered a reward, perhaps. Or we could put in an advertisement ourselves."

"Takes up too much time: means several days' delay, and I'm going to get this stuff back to Mr. Percival to-night, at the very latest."

"What d'you mean?" Frank demanded.

"Precisely what I say. I'm going to give Mr. Percival his purse to-night."

"Although you don't know his address!"

"But I do know."

"Well, what is it?" cried Dennis, after a pause.

"Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross."

For a full minute there was dead silence in the big room; the two friends eyed one another, the elder imperturbable beneath Frank's blue, wonder-filled eyes.

"Do you mind saying that again?" Frank said at last.

"Certainly I will. Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross."

"And that is where George E. Percival is now, you say?"

"No, I don't say that. I say that is the address at which he is staying in London; that's where I'm going to take the purse and its contents back to him."

"Don't make yourself such a silly ass, Bob!" Frank said indignantly. "I'm not a child to be guyed in such a tom-fool's way! This isn't the first of April."

"I know it isn't," was the quiet, smiling answer. "I'm not guying you, Frank. You shall come with me to the Golden Cross, and you'll see for yourself I'm not making a fool of you."

Frank stared hard, shook his head, and declared he couldn't understand it. Lomax laughed, and inquired if Frank thought his beloved Sherlock Holmes could have done any better.

"But how on earth could you have found it out?" the bewildered Dennis asked again; and he fell to making a fresh examination of the various articles the purse had contained, as if he expected the address his chum had just given to be concealed somewhere upon them, but so cunningly that his previous overhauls had failed to reveal it.

Finally he sat down, and gaped at Robert as if he were some new and exceedingly hideous monstrosity. The more he thought, the more puzzling it seemed; the further he got away from any reasonable explanation of Robert's quiet, matter-of-fact declaration. Was it a fake? Nothing more than an elaborate hoax that Robert was playing on him? A carefully arranged joke for the purpose of bringing ridicule upon him, and his faith and belief in the detective heroes of fiction? Frank was almost inclined to think so.

And yet it could not be so. He had seen Grip find the purse; it would be impossible that that could have been arranged. He recalled Lomax's first expressions of genuine surprise and ignorance of the meaning of the find, and when he came to contrast this with his present assurance and confidence he was still more bewildered.

"Say, Bob," he said at last, raising his head and regarding his friends with a sheepish sort of a smile, "have you turned a blessed magician, or what? Otherwise, I don't see how you could have found out what you have."

"No," Robert answered tranquilly, but secretly enjoying his friend's bewilderment. "There's nothing magical about it; just observation, common-sense, and a decent memory, that's all."

Frank Dennis made a ges-

ture of despair; he was further off than ever from comprehending; the belief that Lomax was guying him again awoke.

"Tell me!" he howled. "I give it up; it's beyond me, and you're driving me crazy! How did you find out?"

"Common-sense, observation, and a good memory," repeated Robert, putting a hand in his jacket-pocket and bringing out a folded-up newspaper. "Did you see the 'Mail' this morning, Frank?"

"'Mail'? Yes; had a look at yours before old Worrit turned up. What on earth's that got to do with it?"

Lomax had been carefully unfolding his paper and running his eye down its columns, by way of reply to his chum's question he passed the paper over to him, indicating with his thumb a particular paragraph.

"Did you read that?" he asked curtly.

The paragraph was headed, in large type: "An American Visitor in Trouble." It ran—"George Edward Percival, giving an address at the Golden Cross Hotel, Charing Cross, was charged at Bow Street with disorderly conduct. Constable J. O'Mara stated that Percival, who is said to be a naturalised American, but of English birth, was creating a disturbance at 10.35 p.m. the evening before in the neighbourhood of Russell Square. Percival, who was drunk, or labouring under great excitement, was directing some twenty or thirty men and boys who were searching in the gutters and in the roadway for a purse which, it was alleged, he had lost; the traffic around the square being greatly interfered with thereby. Prisoner admitted this to be correct, although he was not drunk, and had offered a sovereign to the person who should find his purse—one of faded green leather—it containing some personal belongings of the greatest value to him. He was discharged on payment of the customary court fees. The purse has not yet been found."

"Well," observed Lomax, when his chum had read this, "now do you understand?"

"Yes; but—Why, you—"

"I read the case this morning, and while we were walking back home from our walk the name on the card was running in my head. It seemed familiar; and five minutes after we sat down here I recollected where I'd seen it before. Perhaps you recollect I left off to look at the paper while you were puzzling over the cutting? And it just proves what I've said, that the detective business isn't what such chaps as Conan Doyle and the rest of 'em make it out. And now are you coming with me to Charing Cross?"

Disillusioned or not, Dennis did not decline, and without further loss of time the friends walked down to the Golden Cross Hotel and inquired for Mr. George Percival. That gentleman was out, but after they had waited half an hour he returned to dine, and when he learned that visitors were awaiting him concerning his lost purse, he asked for Lomax and Dennis to be shown up to his private sitting-room. And when the purse was laid in his hands, and he was assured its contents were safe and intact, the relief and delight which were expressed in his hard, shrewd-looking

face were sufficient to prove of what value were to him the cutting and the miniature.

Later on Lomax and Dennis went straight to Simpson's, in the Strand. "You paid half-a-crown, and you got all you wanted," as Robert explained; for they felt that they had got to celebrate, in some way or other, the possession of the bill Mr. Percival had insisted upon them accepting, and which they changed into two crisp five-pound notes.

They didn't talk much over their meal, but as they left the entrance to the restaurant Dennis, speaking almost in a whisper, said to Robert:

"What do you say, Bob, to taking this up in dead earnest?"

And Lomax's reply, also very low, was:

"It's worth thinking of, Frank."

(To be continued next Tuesday.)


For Next Week

The Editor, "MAGNET" Library, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, will be glad to hear from you.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU AGAIN!

When I repeat that I am pleased to meet you, I hope that all who read these words last week are pleased to meet me again. It's a bit mixed this, but you know what I mean. Next Tuesday's story, "THE MYSTERY OF GREYFRIARS," will deal with the further adventures of WHARTON, CHERRY, NUGENT—and Vaseline!

THE EDITOR.



NEXT TUESDAY'S COVER
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The ball flew from Harry Wharton's foot and smacked fairly in Bulstrode's face.

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