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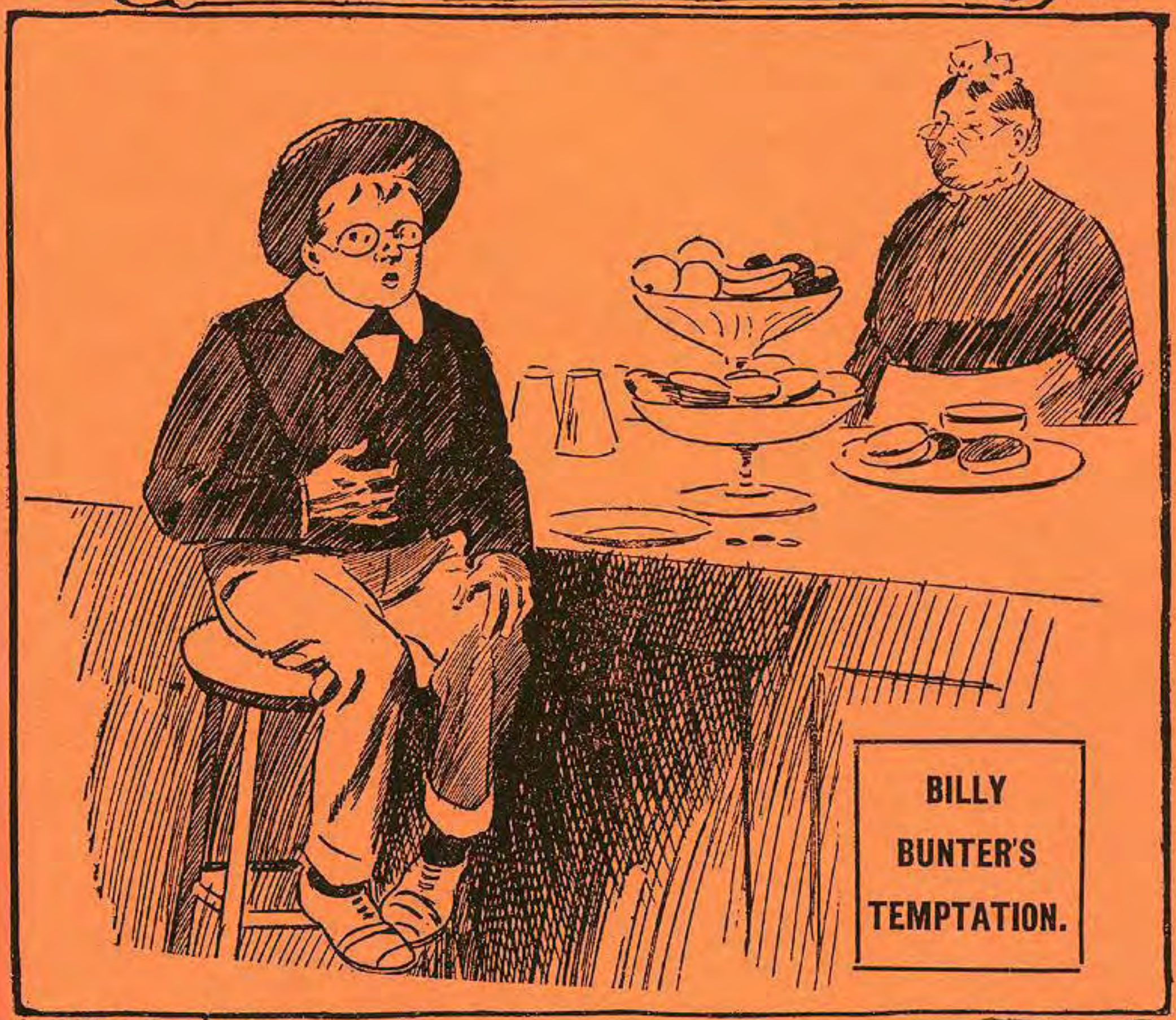
COMPLETE STORY FOR ALL.

A GRAND TALE OF SCHOOL LIFE.

By FRANK RICHARDS



BILLY BUNTER'S TEMPTATION.

BILLY BUNTER EYED THE MONEY AND THE PILES OF TEMPTING TARTS WISTFULLY. "NO, I WON'T!" HE EXCLAIMED HEROICALLY. "IT'S MR. RANDALL'S MONEY, AND IT WOULD BE DISHONEST TO SPEND IT. I'LL GET OFF!"

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton and his Chums,

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

The Reformation of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The Return of Randall Secundus.

"SAY, youngsters!"

The words were spoken in a drawling voice, with a slightly nasal twang. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, who were chatting at the gates of Greyfriars School, looked round at the speaker.

He was a young man, not more than twenty-four or five, but he had the assured manner of a fully experienced man of the world. He wore a soft felt hat, slightly tilted to one side, and was smoking a cigarette. He took the latter from his lips, and held it between two fingers as he nodded coolly to the boys.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, in his cheerful way. "Did you speak to us?"

"I guess so," said the stranger, glancing at the two juniors, and then at the green Close and the grey old buildings visible through the gateway. "I guess you belong to Greyfriars?"

"You've guessed right."

"Same old place," drawled the young man with the cigarette. "same old sleepy spot. Same old one-horse village, same old drowsy school."

"Are you speaking of Greyfriars?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I guess so."

"And do you want to be bumped into the ditch over the road?"

The young man stared.

"I reckon not."

"Then you had better speak a little more respectfully of this school," Harry Wharton remarked. "We don't allow outsiders to come along and sniff at Greyfriars, I can tell you."

"Same old place, and no mistake!" exclaimed the stranger, without appearing in the least put out of humour by Harry's plain speaking. "Same old cheeky kids in the Lower Forms!"

"Do you know Greyfriars, then?" asked Bob Cherry curiously.

"Well, I guess so. I'm an old boy!"

It was the juniors' turn to stare. They had seen a variety of old Greyfriars boys at various times, but they had never seen one anything like this."

"You're an old Grey Friar?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "I suppose that's a little joke, isn't it?"

"Fact. You don't think I look like one?"

"No, I don't! You look more like——" Wharton paused.

"Like what? Go on, and don't mind me."

"Like a Yankee tourist bounder," said Wharton.

The young man chuckled.

"I guess I am about as American as they make them," he remarked. "I've been over the pond——"

"The what?"

"The Atlantic, you know, for nearly ten years, and I guess I've woke up. Come over to this sleepy old potato-patch on business."

"This what?"

"The Old Country. We have potato-patches as big as this country over yonder. I had to come over on business, so I reckoned I would look up Greyfriars while I was here. I have three days, two hours, and forty-seven minutes to spare from business, so I am putting it in at renewing old acquaintances. I guess I'm glad to see the old place again, too. It makes one realise how much he's woke up. I left the school asleep ten years ago. It's asleep still."

"If you start waking us up," remarked Bob Cherry, "you may find that we can make things lively at times, you Yankee bounder!"

The young man blew out a puff of smoke from his cigarette, and chuckled again.

"I guess you kids belong to the Remove," he remarked.

"How did you guess that?"

"From your cheek. The Remove was the cheekiest Form at Greyfriars in my time, and I suppose it's still keeping up its reputation. I was captain of the Remove ten years ago. I guess I was bound to come to the top, anyhow!"

The juniors looked at him with interest. They were proud of belonging to the Remove, the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars and the most reckless set of young scamps in the school. Their hearts naturally warmed towards an old Removite.

"Is Dr. Locke still Head?" asked the American visitor, flicking the ash from his cigarette. "He was top dog in my time."

"He is Head still."

"Good! He'll be glad to see me again, I calculate. I was Randall secundus in his time—now I am Herbert P. Randall, of New York and Chicago. A bit of difference there, my boys!"

"Yes, a change, and not for the better," said Bob Cherry.

"I guess I'll walk right in and see the Head," remarked Herbert P. Randall. "I reckon I know the way. There's one advantage about these sleepy hollows—you know your way about if you come back after fifty years. Nothing's changed. My only hat! Look at that fence. That top bar was loose when I left Greyfriars. It's loose now! Well!"

The young man from New York walked into the Close with an easy saunter. The two Removites, grinning, followed him in. They were curious to see more of the man from the land of the hustlers, who seemed to have become more American than the Americans themselves during his stay in the States.

Gosling, the porter, looked out of his lodge, and Mr. Randall stopped and looked at him, and nodded pleasantly.

Gosling stared.

"Same old Gossy, by James!"

Gosling stared harder. To be addressed as Gossy by a complete stranger surprised him.

"Same old chump," said Mr. Randall. "Same old red nose. Same old bottle of gin behind the almanac on the mantelpiece, I daresay."

Gosling turned crimson.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," he remarked. "I think——"

"You don't remember me, Gossy?"

"No, I don't."

"Not Randall secundus—Randall, of the Remove, who left Greyfriars ten years ago just after getting into the Upper Fourth?"

"Which I don't remember. Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"Don't you remember that I told you, by way of a joke, that if I came back to Greyfriars rich I'd give you a half-sovereign?" said Mr. Randall.

Gosling thawed visibly.

"Now you speak of it, sir——"

"You remember?"

"Yes, sir, now you mention it. Awfully glad to see you again, sir. It's so pleasant to see old faces. You was a young scamp in them days, sir; but, bless you, I bears no malice. Wot I says is this 'ere, boys will be boys. Which I congratulates you, sir, and I remembers your promise perfectly."

"Keep on remembering it," said Mr. Randall, wagging his cigarette at the school porter. "I dare say I shall come back rich some day!"

Gosling's jaw dropped.

"And then I shall remember you, and you'll be certain of that half-sovereign," said Mr. Randall. "I'm glad you're pleased to see me again, Gosling."

And he walked on. He left Gosling standing quite still, looking after him with a curious expression upon his face. The porter's feelings seemed too deep for words. Wharton and Bob Cherry chuckled, and Gosling looked at them.

"I suppose that young man has come from America?" he said.

"That's it," said Bob Cherry.

"Then wot I says is this 'ere, that I wish the ship had founderated and drownded him!" said Gosling. And he retreated into his lodge, and shut the door with a slam.

"That Yank seems to be rather a coughdrop," grinned Bob Cherry. "I can't imagine him as an old Greyfriars chap. If he stays here all the three days, two hours, and forty-seven minutes he has to spare, he will get jolly well ragged, I know that."

"Yes, rather!" said Wharton, with emphasis.

The Close was pretty full of fellows, afternoon lessons being over. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was standing by the senior cricket pitch, looking on at the play, when the man from New York strolled up. Wingate's first intimation of his presence was a puff of cigarette smoke which made him cough. The captain of Greyfriars looked round and stared at the new-comer.

Herbert P. Randall nodded pleasantly.

"I guess that's a bit played out as a game," he remarked.

Wingate stared.

"What are you talking about?"

Mr. Randall jerked his cigarette towards the pitch.

"That!" he said tersely.

"Oh! And who may you happen to be?" asked Wingate, with a look which implied that he did not rate either Mr. Randall or his opinion at a very high value.

"Herbert P. Randall, of New York," said the young man, "formerly known as Randall secundus, of the Remove at Greyfriars. I'm an old boy."

"Oh, you are, are you?" said Wingate.

"Yes. I've been to America and woke up."

"Have you?"

"Yes; I'm wide awake now. I can give you some points, I guess. That game is played out. I've got"—Mr. Randall drew a watch from his vest, and looked at it with a calculating eye—"I've got fifty-six hours fifteen minutes to spare before I have to get back to business in London, and in that time I will put you up to a few things."

"Will you?" murmured Wingate.

"I guess so. This game is played out. I will show you how to play baseball."

"You—you will!"

"Certainly. I hope to wake up this coll. considerably, with the Head's permish."

"With—with what?" said Wingate dazedly.

"The Head's permish. Permission, you know; life short, and we make the long words short in proportion. That saves time."

"I see."

"Time is money. I'm really doing an unbusinesslike thing in wasting fifty-six hours and fifteen—or, rather, thirteen minutes now—in waking up this old place. But something is due to old associations."

Wingate looked at him.

"You learned to wake up in America?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"Did you learn to shut up, too?"

"To—to what?" asked Mr. Randall, rather taken aback.

"To shut up," said Wingate grimly. "Because if you didn't learn it in America, you will very likely learn it at Greyfriars."

And the captain turned abruptly away.

Herbert P. Randall smiled indulgently. He expected a rebuff or two in the course of waking up Greyfriars. He turned away to see Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grinning, but he grinned too, nowise perturbed.

"Same old sleepy place," he remarked. "Same old stick-in-the-mud tortoises. But I am going to wake them up. I guess I'll go and see the Head. Same house, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Shall I show you the way?"

"I guess I remember the way."

And Herbert P. Randall strolled off in the direction of the Head's house. Many curious glances were cast towards him by the Greyfriars fellows. The light tweed suit and soft hat and cigarette, and Mr. Randall's extremely easy manner and condescending smile, drew more glances towards him as he strolled through the Close. He had reached the steps of Dr. Locke's house, when there was a patter of feet behind him.

"I say!" gasped a voice.

Herbert P. Randall looked round.

He saw a fat junior with a round face and an enormous pair of spectacles, puffing from his exertions.

"Say," drawled Mr. Randall, "do you want to speak to me, kid?"

"Yes," gasped the fat junior. "I hear that you are an old Removite, sir—a chap who belonged to our Form."

"Oh, you're in the Remove, are you?"

"Yes, I'm Bunter—William Bunter, of the Remove," explained the plump youth. "I wanted to tell you that we're all awfully glad to see you, sir. It's a great pleasure to see an old boy at Greyfriars."

"I guess that's polite of you."

"Not at all. I should be sincerely sorry if you thought we weren't really glad to see you, Mr. Randall. By the way, it's a custom for old boys revisiting the school to look in at the tuckshop, and—and stand a feed."

"Is it?"

"Yes; and if you'd like me to show you the way to the tuckshop, sir, I'd be only too willing. I'd do anything to oblige an old Removite."

Mr. Randall chuckled.

"I guess you would. You look as if you had been to the tuckshop already, too."

"No, that is quite a mistake. I haven't had anything to eat since tea, nearly half an hour ago, and——"

"Well, you'd like to go, I suppose?"

"Yes, rather!" blinked Billy Bunter.

"You'd like to have a jolly good feed, I see—ham and eggs, jam-tarts and cream puffs, lemonade and ginger-beer."

"Yes, certainly," beamed Bunter. "I should really. I take this as very generous of you, Mr. Randall."

"Not at all. You can have the feed——"

"Oh, thank you!"

"If you can pay for it——"

"Eh?"

"And welcome."

Mr. Randall turned to the Head's door and rang. Billy Bunter gazed at him as if he could hardly believe his spectacles. He had counted his chickens too soon, and Mr. Randall's little joke appeared to him absolutely heartless.

"But—but really, sir——"

"That's the posish," said Mr. Randall, throwing away the stump of his cigarette. "I hope you will enjoy that feed. So long!" And he walked into the Head's house.

"The—the utter beast!" murmured Billy Bunter. And he drifted disconsolately away.

A few minutes later Mr. Randall was shown into the Head's study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
A Hustler at Greyfriars.

DR. LOCKE rose with a smile of welcome to greet his visitor. The Head of Greyfriars was always glad to see an Old Boy, and, as it happened, Mr. Randall's father had been a great friend of his. But the smile died from his face as he looked at his visitor. Herbert P. Randall was not in the least what he had expected to see.

"Er—Mr. Randall," he said, glancing at the card in his hand.

Mr. Randall smiled.

"Yes, sir. Randall secundus, of the Remove."

"Then—then you are really young Randall."

The doctor mechanically shook hands with his visitor. Mr. Randall gave him a grip like a vice, and the Head winced. Then he adjusted his gold-rimmed pince-nez, and looked more closely at the new-comer.

"I guess I'm young Randall, doc."

The Head gave quite a jump. He had never been addressed as "doc." before in all the course of his career.

"I've changed some," Mr. Randall remarked.

"You—you have," murmured the Head dazedly.

"I guess I've woke up. You remember when my popper died I went out to America to my uncle. I've been there ever since."

"Ah, yes, so—so I should imagine."

"Got the traces of it about me—eh?" chuckled Mr. Randall.

"Ye-e-es."

"A bit more businesslike and up-to-date than you had expected to see me?"

"Er—ye-e-es."

"We live quick over there," said Mr. Randall airily. "I'd like to see you live quicker at Greyfriars. As a matter of fact, that's my mish."

"Your—your what?"

"My mish—mission, you know. We save time on words over there."

"Ah, your mission: I see.

Mr. Randall glanced at his watch.

"I have fifty-six hours and two minutes to spare before getting back to business," he explained. "With your permish I shall remain at Greyfriars."

"I shall be delighted."

"Good! In that time I hope to show you that I am grateful for the care you took of me when I was a nipper."

"Oh, not at all!"

"Yes, you did; you were very kind, and your intentions were excellent, though perhaps a little antiquated in idea. You are rather slow in this old country. I should like to see Greyfriars modernised—brought right slap up to date, and run on sound business lines."

"Heaven forbid!" gasped the doctor.

Mr. Randall smiled an indulgent smile.

"You'd find it pay, sir. For instance, how many pupils have you in the school?"

"I—I think there are a hundred and twenty."

"Good! Now, by a system of advertising that I can explain——"

"But—but—but——"

"Let me explain. By a system of advertising——"

"But I have not offered you a chair, Mr. Randall. Pray sit down."

"Certainly," said the new-comer, taking a seat. "May I smoke?"

"I—I have no objection."

"Then I will smoke. I think more clearly with a cig. in my mouth. Don't think that is a wasteful habit. On the contrary, I have calculated the matter up, and find that the assistance given to the brain is of much greater value than the cost of the cigarettes in the first place. You have the pleasure of smoking thrown in for nothing. That's business."

"But—but suppose the effect upon the brain is detrimental——"

"Oh, it's no good supposing that! As a man of experience, I maintain the contrary," said Mr. Randall.

The Head smiled. Perhaps he thought that at twenty-four Mr. Randall's experience might be somewhat limited, in spite of his excellent opinion of himself. But he did not say so.

Herbert P. Randall lighted a cigarette.

"Now, my dear doc., if you've ten minutes to spare——"

The Head glanced at the papers on his desk regretfully. But, after all, Herbert P. Randall was an old boy, and had come home to his own country and his old school after an absence abroad for ten years. And the Head remembered that Randall senior had been his college chum. So he sighed an assent.

"I really want to do you a service," explained Mr. Randall, stretching out his long legs, and blowing out a cloud of smoke. "I should like to see my old school go ahead. You have a hundred and twenty pupils. I can easily double the number for you during the fifty-six hours I have to spare."

"But there is no accommodation at Greyfriars for anything like that number."

"My dear doc., accommodation can be provided. I will see to that—some structural alterations. I should recommend having the ruins cleared away."

"What!"

"The ruins. They cover up a great extent of ground, and are absolutely useless, having no commercial value whatever."

"Those ruins, sir, are relics of the ancient abbey of Greyfriars."

"Yes, but the place isn't run as an abbey now."

"They date partly from the reign of the first Edward, and partly from that of Henry the Fifth."

"Both very unbusinesslike men, from what I remember of English history," said Mr. Randall. "What use is all that rubbish now?"

"In reverence for the past."

"Mere sentiment, I assure you."

"Nothing would induce me, or any of the governors of Greyfriars, to lay a sacrilegious hand upon the ruins, if they stood upon a goldmine," said the doctor, with some warmth.

"Amazing!" said Mr. Randall.

"What is amazing?"

"The stick-in-the-madness of the Old Country. But let it pass. I know that it is impossible to argue an old-fashioned Englishman out of a prejudice in fifty-six hours. There is plenty of ground belonging to the school. There's that old tract between the Cloisters and the river."

"A building is being erected there to accommodate Herr Rosenblaum's Foreign Academy."

"H'm! Well, say the gardens between your house and the chapel. Now I think of it, that is the exact spot. The buildings could be run up temporarily of wood, to accommodate the inrush of pupils——"

"But——"

"And the work of building could go on simultaneously with the school work by employing night workmen. During the vacations double shifts could work, night and day, till the wooden buildings were replaced by strong brick structures."

"But really——"

"I will telephone for an estimate for the wooden buildings as soon as we have finished this chat," said Mr. Randall. "They can wire it to-night, and the workmen can start by daylight in the morning. Then as to the advertising——"

"But——"

"How do you advertise now?"

"There is the usual notice in 'The Times,'" said the Head feebly.

"Is that all?"

"That is all."

Mr. Randall smiled pityingly.

"No wonder the school doesn't grow. You give a good education here, according to English ideas."

"Can you suggest improvements?" asked the Head, with a touch of sarcasm.

"I guess so. But that's no matter. I could run the show on greatly improved lines, but that isn't what your customers want."

"My—my what?"

"Your customers—the people who send their sons here, you know."

"I have never regarded them in the light of—er—customers before."

"Then the sooner you take a correct and businesslike view of the posish., the better it will be for your business," said Mr. Randall. "That's my mish., as I explained, to wake things up here. As I was saying, your customers don't want the up-to-data, brand-new, and improved education I could design for them. They want the old-fashioned thing, and as they are willing to pay for it, they ought to have it. That's business. Give the people what they want, and you get on. Don't waste time trying to improve their taste. Give 'em what they want."

"Really——"

"That's the way to make a business pay. I want to see this school run on sound business lines. Will you give me a chance?"

"Really——"

"I can double the size, and treble the profits, in a week. What do you think of this for an advertisement—something new—eh?"

Mr. Randall rapidly sketched with a pencil on a leaf of his notebook, and handed it to the Head for inspection.

"That's only a rough draft," he said.

The Head looked at the rough draft, and his hair stood almost on end.

"WHAT YOU WANT!

"You want your boys educated! I want to educate them! Let us come to terms!

"I have qualifications—to be enumerated—and I can give your boys just what they need. Send them to Greyfriars. I will send them back to you with the largest possible quantity of the best possible quality of education for the very reasonable fees charged.

"Fees for single pupils—so-and-so. Reduction for brothers. Special reduction for more than two of same family. Parents introducing fresh customers will be granted a liberal discount!

"All fees payable cash with order. We provide the best goods at the lowest price, and there is no margin for credit!

"Send for our prospectus. It will interest you. Mailed free to any part of the world on receipt of postcard!"

"Dear me!"

That was all the doctor could say.

He sat staring at Mr. Randall's sketch of an up-to-date advertisement through his gold-rimmed glasses, the picture of dismay and amazement.

"Well, what do you think, doc.?"

"My dear sir——"

"Crisp and businesslike, I guess."

"A little too businesslike for Greyfriars, I think, Mr. Randall," said the Head, in his most stately manner.

"Not at all, doc. That advertisement, inserted in all the big dailies just before the beginning of the term, would bring in a host of orders—I mean, pupils. You must put it straight at them, you know. No beating about the bush."

"It is impossible!"

"Not in the least. Give me a blank cheque to send along, and I'll have the advert. shoved in a score of papers to-morrow morning. Keep 'em well before the public, and slam them in specially big before each term or half-term begins, and——"

"You think this would bring a great influx of profit to the school?" asked Dr. Locke, with a slight twinkle in his eye.

"Dead certain!"

"And we should realise a large sum very quickly?"

"I guess so."

"More than sufficient to pay the cost of advertising?"

"Three times as much!"

"But that cost will be considerable."

"Two or three hundred dollars to start with."

"But the return is certain?"

"Quite certain."

"Then if I were to suggest to you that you should finance the scheme, and pay for all the advertisements——"

"Eh?"

"And indemnify yourself from the extra profits that would result——"

"What?"

"Of course, as a business man you would jump at the idea?"

"Well, I guess not!" said Mr. Randall slowly. "You see, it's a mighty good investment for your money, but——"

"But not for yours?"

"Ye-es, but——"

"Dear me! It is nearly dinner-time!" said the Head, glancing at the clock. "You will dine with me, of course?"

"I guess so, doc. But it might be run without advertisements, you see. It would be just as efficacious to circularise the parents of the boys here, and ask them to pass the circulars on to their friends. Rain circulars on 'em, and offer liberal commission for getting new customers——"

The Head burst into a laugh.

"Really, Mr. Randall——"

"That's the way. I guess——"

"We shall really be late for dinner. I must have a room prepared for you, too. Pray come with me!"

And the Head almost bolted from the study, to escape hearing anything further of the far-reaching plans of the American hustler.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Mr. Randall Talks Business.

"HAVE you seen the new merchant?"

That was the question Bob Cherry asked, as he came into Study No. 1, and found Nugent and Hurree Singh there, engaged in a game of chess. Harry Wharton came in with him, with his cricket bat under his arm. Tea in hall was long over, but the chums of the Remove had been busy out of doors, and they had not had tea yet.

Nugent looked up.

"New boy?" he asked.

"No; old boy."

"Mate!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh softly.

"So it is, by George!" said Nugent. "I ought to have moved the bishop when I pushed that pawn up, Inky."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled. What Frank Nugent did not know about chess would have filled a large volume; and, like many beginners, he had the way of attributing the loss of a game to some totally unimportant move which he had or had not made.

"The check is mateful, at all eventfulness," he remarked. "If you had moved the esteemed bishop, I should have taken it rookfully."

"Perhaps you're right. Still, I think things would have ended better if I had moved the bishop," said Nugent, gathering up the chess. "I'm getting hungry. Where's that lazy young villain, Bunter? Why isn't he getting tea?"

"Here I am, Nugent!" said Billy Bunter, entering the study with a filled kettle in his hand. "Some of you fellows, lay the cloth."

"Buck up with the tea! What's that about a new merchant, Bob?"

"There's an old boy come back to Greyfriars."

"Good! The last old boy we saw was Wharton's uncle, the colonel, and he was a ripper! What's this one like?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Nothing like Colonel Wharton. He says he used to be Randall secundus, in the Remove. Never heard of him, or of Randall primus, either, for that matter."

"By Jove, I know the name! There's H. P. Randall cut in the oak behind the chapel door," said Nugent.

"That's the ass, then, I suppose! He's been to America and learned to hustle. He's going to stay a few days at Greyfriars, and show us how to do things."

Nugent's eyes twinkled.

"Is he? Perhaps we shall show him how not to do things, about the same time!"

"It is probable that the showfulness will be a boot on the other foot," purred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in the English taught by the best native masters in Bhanipur. "The cheekfulness of the honourable rotter is terrific!"

"He's a beast!" said Billy Bunter, looking up with a scarlet face from the fire of sticks he was lighting under the tea-kettle. "I say, you fellows——"

"He's lectured Wingate on cricket already," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose he's been lecturing the Head, too. I hear that he's dining with Dr. Locke. By Jove——"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Is that kettle boiling, Bunter?"

"No, of course, it isn't, Cherry! I've only just lighted the fire. I say, you fellows, that new merchant is a beast!"

"What's the matter with him, Billy?"

"I pointed out to him that an old boy was expected to stand a feed——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, Colonel Wharton stood a ripping picnic when he came down, and I don't see why this hustling rotter can't do the same!"

"The wheezefulness is a good idea!"

"But he didn't! He wouldn't! Not a sniff of it! He's a beast!"

"Put the cloth on, Nugent! There isn't much for tea, only some bloater-paste and bread-and-butter. Might as well have had tea in hall."

"I'm jolly hungry, too!" said Harry Wharton, feeling in his pockets. "No tin!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"None here, either!" said Bob Cherry. "Inky, you black tulip, have you got any of your superabundance of tin left? You are usually rolling in filthy lucre!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur shook his head.

"The rollfulness is a thing of the past," he observed. "The lucreful cash is conspicuous by its absence from the honourable pocket. The brokefulness is wide."

"Well, if Inky's broke, there's no hope. We shall have to do with the bloater-paste and bread-and-scrape," said Bob Cherry philosophically.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Boil the kettle, Billy, and don't jaw! We may as well have some tea to wash down this hard tack."

"But I say, I'm fearfully hungry, and I'm afraid my constitution will suffer if I don't have a good meal. I've never really recovered from what I suffered at the hands of that ass, Chesham. It's impossible for me to eat nothing but bread-and-scrape and that rotten bloater-paste!"

"Then go and eat coke!"

"I'm ready to cook the grub!" said Billy Bunter, in an aggrieved tone. "It's up to you fellows to provide it! Provide it, then!"

"Oh, cheese it, Billy! The want of cash is terrific, as Inky says."

"The cashfulness will not resume its sway till the horn of plenty of the pocket-moneyfulness is again poured forth!"

"You see how it stands, Billy. Buck up with the tea!"

"That's all very well——"

"Of course, it is; so don't jaw!"

"If you can't stand a tea, you ought to raise the wind somehow. I heard Bulstrode say that he wanted a bat, and he would give five shillings for Wharton's, I know!"

"Let me catch you selling my bat, that's all!" said Harry Wharton.

"I don't think you ought to be selfish! I'm not a greedy boy, only I like a lot! I think we ought to be able to strike this Yankee bounder for a feed somehow. An old boy ought to stand a feed. Now, this rotter, Randall——"

There was a knock at the half-open door, and the man from New York looked in. He nodded to the juniors. Billy Bunter blinked round. He was too short-sighted to see who was at the door.

"I say, you fellows, that rotter Randall ought to stand a feed! I don't see——"

"I guess I'm the rotter you're speaking of, youngster!"

Billy Bunter gave a jump.

"Dear me! I thought that was Hazeldene standing there," murmured the Owl of the Remove. "Is that you, Mr. Randall?"

"I guess so."

"We're glad to see you, sir," said Bunter. "We——"

"Glad to see a rotter, are you?"

"Oh, I didn't mean that! That was only a—a figure of speech," explained Billy Bunter. "What I meant was that we all respected you very highly—very highly indeed. We're glad to see you; and if you'd like to have tea in the study—— Ow!"

Billy Bunter stopped short as Bob Cherry trod forcibly on his foot. There was a half-loaf, a fragment of butter, and a tin of bloater-paste on the table, and Billy's hospitality was untimely.

"I wish you'd keep your great hoofs off my feet, Bob

Cherry. You've hurt me. As I was saying, sir, if you'd like to have tea with us here, we should all be very pleased. Unfortunately, the grub has run short, and the cash at the same time; but if you'd like to have anything fetched from the tuckshop——"

"Shut up, Billy!"

"I sha'n't shut up, Nugent! I don't see why I shouldn't oblige a fellow I respect as much as I do Mr. Randall. He's an old boy, and we don't see old boys every day at Greyfriars."

"I guess——"

"I should be very pleased indeed to go down to the tuckshop for anything Mr. Randall fancied."

"You cadging young villain!"

"I don't think you ought to call me names, Cherry, for trying to be obliging to a visitor. And don't shake me. You may make my spectacles fall off, and if they break you will have to pay for them."

"I guess——"

"Besides, Mr. Randall wants me to go to the school shop. Don't you, sir?"

"I guess you can go if you like, youngster. I'm not standing any feeds."

"We wouldn't let you stand one here, anyway," said Harry Wharton.

"Good! Then we shall agree on that point. Still, I can help you, if you like, to get the best of pastries and sweets and things at a low price. I looked in here to speak to Wharton, who I am told is the captain of the Remove."

"That's right."

"I should like to help you on a bit, for the sake of old times," said Herbert P. Randall. "Now, I suppose you fellows buy all your grub, outside the school fare, at the tuckshop—the one here at Greyfriars, or the other in the village?"

"Yes. What about it?"

"How many profits do you pay? There's the tuckshop keeper's profit, the supplying agent's profit, and two or three other middlemen's profits. Deal direct with the manufacturer, my boys—that's the secret of success."

The juniors looked interested.

The accounts at the tuckshop formed a very serious item in the disposal of a junior's pocket-money, and they knew, of course, that the system upon which their wants were supplied led to considerable over-charging. There was something rather taking in Mr. Randall's idea of dealing directly with the manufacturer.

The hustler looked pleased as he saw that the juniors were interested. He came into the study, and Bob Cherry politely placed a chair for him. Mr. Randall sat down in his favourite attitude, with his long legs stretched out, and his hands in his trousers pockets.

"Now," he went on, "you pay a penny or twopence for a tart. Take a penny tart——"

Billy Bunter looked up quickly.

"Certainly," he said. "Where is it?"

"Where is what?" asked Mr. Randall, staring at the fat junior.

"The tart."

"What tart?"

"The tart you were speaking of. You said, 'Take a penny tart——'"

The juniors chuckled, and the American visitor grinned.

"I was speaking figuratively," he said. "Take a penny tart——"

"Oh!" said Bunter, looking disappointed.

"Take a penny tart—a shilling a dozen is what you pay for them——"

"Thirteen for a shilling in the village!" said Nugent.

"Very well. Take thirteen for a shilling. The manufacturer supplies them at less than half that cost—and nice and fresh and new, mind, not stale."

Billy Bunter's eyes sparkled at the thought of nice, fresh, and new tarts. The Removites waited for the American to go on.

"Deal directly with the manufacturer, and you get that saving yourself. Why should it go to the middlemen? Why shouldn't you have it?"

"Echo answers why," said Bob Cherry.

"That is not correct," said the nabob gently. "Echo answers lastwordfully, not firstwordfully, my worthy chum!"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Go on, Mr. Randall! This is getting interesting."

"It's business," said Mr. Randall. "Business from the word 'go,' as we say on the other side of the pond! Deal directly with the manufacturer, and save the middleman's profits. That's the idea. The only difficulty is that the manufacturer wouldn't look at an order for a few shillings, and the saving wouldn't pay the carriage down."

"Ah, I see!"

"But by combining together, and ordering a lot of goods

at once, you overcome that difficulty," said Mr. Randall. "I can give you the name of a manufacturer. He will supply you with the best goods at a reasonable price for any sum upwards of two pounds."

"Phew! That's a lot to be spent in tuck!"

"I think that, if you inquire through the Form, you will find that the whole Remove spends as much as that in tuck every week."

"The probablefulness is great!"

"And, anyhow, there's no need to bolt all the grub at once. You can have part of the order in the shape of bottled lemonade and ginger-pop, and materials for making cakes—if you ever make cakes."

"We do, when we get the stuff," said Billy Bunter.

"There you are, then. Only a certain proportion need be perishable goods, which it will be necessary to eat at once."

"Good!"

"By the whole Form clubbing together, and the order being sent off with a postal-order enclosed, you get the goods down the next day. Say you save, roughly, half the usual cost—and you will save quite that—then the carriage down costs you, say, five shillings, and the carrier another half-a-crown, there is a clear profit of one pound twelve and six on the goods you order to the value of two pounds."

"My hat!"

"That sounds all right," Harry Wharton remarked. "If it works out as well as it sounds, we shall save money, and improve the quality of the grub."

"Exactly. And it is infallible."

"It will be a lesson to Mrs. Mimble at the School shop, too," said Billy Bunter. "She has lately refused to let me have credit in a cynical way, though I have explained to her that my constitution needs building up after the sufferings I underwent under that ass Chesham when he was here! She refused to advance me anything this morning on my postal-order, which I am expecting this evening. It would do her good to have a lesson, I really think."

"Well, that's the dodge," said Mr. Randall. "If I can help you in any way——"

"There's one difficulty," said Nugent.

"What is that?"

"I don't suppose you could remove it."

"I guess I could, some. What is it?"

"We're all stony!"

Mr. Randall smiled a sickly smile. Excellent as he undoubtedly considered all his business ideas, he had a strange reluctance to risk any of his own money in them. But that is not at all uncommon among sharp business men.

"I guess that's unfortunate," he remarked; "but the idea is to raise a fund from the whole Form, you see. It's worth trying, I guess."

"It's all right," said Harry Wharton. "Mr. Quelch would make me an advance on my pocket-money if I asked him."

"Then you might have asked him in time for tea, I really think, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, in a very aggrieved tone.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's not sufficiently important, Billy. I should have to tell Quelch that I wanted the tin for a very particular purpose, you see. This wheeze of saving one pound twelve and six is a good one, if it works."

"I guess you can't point out how it can possibly fail," said Mr. Randall.

"Well, it sounds all right."

Mr. Randall rose.

"Take it for what it is worth," he said. "I'm going to have a look round now, to map out the ground for the new buildings."

"New buildings?"

"Yes; there are going to be extensive alterations at Greyfriars, under my practical superintendence."

"But I thought you had only forty-nine hours seven minutes nine seconds to spare?" said Bob Cherry, with a perfectly grave face.

"Fifty-four hours, my boy. Quite enough to set this coll. on its legs, and give it a good start," said Mr. Randall. "That's what I'm going to do, I guess."

And the American visitor nodded and left the study.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Harry Wharton Saves Billy Bunter's Life.

THE chums of the Greyfriars Remove looked at one another as the door closed behind the American visitor.

Bob Cherry thoughtfully opened the tin of bloater-paste.

"Well, what do you think of him?" said Nugent.

"I say, you fellows——"

"I think he's a hustler," said Bob Cherry, grinning, "and a rather windy and blowy sort of jawing-machine, but there's something in the idea. What do you say, Harry?"

"Well, I don't see why it shouldn't work," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "There's a great deal in what he says, you know. We do pay fearful prices for the stuff, and there is a heap of profit made somewhere."

"The question is, can we save it?"

"The tryfulness is the wheezy good idea, my worthy chum! As your English proverb says, the proof of the cake is in the pudding."

"Ha, ha! I suppose you mean the 'proof of the pudding is in the eating,' Inky?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh shook his head gently but firmly.

"No, my worthy chum; I do not mean anything of the sort. When I was studying English under the best native masters in Bengal, I made a study of English proverbial expressions, and I am quite sure that I have that one correctfully."

"Oh, good! Anyway, it's agreed that we try the wheeze, isn't it?"

"Agreed!"

"The agreefulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Then we had better raise the funds among the Remove, and send the order off to-night," said Bob Cherry. "Pass the bread and apology. If we get the grub down to-morrow, we can stand the hustler a feed as a reward for putting us up to a good thing."

"It will be too late to get a postal-order."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Well, we'll make Randall ask somebody to give us a cheque," said Bob Cherry. "One of the masters would do it, if we handed over the cash, you know."

"Yes; that's all right."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Did you speak, Billy?"

"Yes, I did, Cherry; and I can't help thinking that you heard me before, too. What I was going to say is, that Wharton can raise the wind by borrowing something of Mr. Quelch——"

"Getting an advance of my week's pocket-money?" said Harry.

"It's the same thing. You can raise the wind. Well, I think you ought to go and do it at once, so that we can have a decent tea."

"Rats!"

"I've nearly finished," said Bob Cherry.

"But I haven't started, Cherry, and I think——"

"You'd better jolly well start, then," said Bob Cherry, "or there won't be anything left for you to start on. The bloater-paste is nearly all gone, and there isn't much bread and butter left."

"Really, Cherry——"

"There's no butter," said Nugent, "and precious little bread. Better make hay while the sun shines, Billy."

"What I think, is——"

"No bloater-paste," said Nugent. "You're too late, Billy. Your last chance is with the bread; and there won't be any of that left long."

"That is correctful, as I am taking the lastful fragment."

Billy blinked in wrathful indignation at the bare board and the grinning chums of the Remove.

"Well, of all the rotters——"

"That's what comes of jawing when it's time to eat," said Bob Cherry, shaking his finger at Billy Bunter. "You'll know better next time."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Come along! There's no need to waste time; we want to get that order posted off to-night."

"Right you are!"

"I say, I suppose you're not going to leave me to starve. It will injure my constitution if I don't have my tea; and besides, it will probably bring on a fresh attack of somnambulism——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That will never do, Billy. I'm not going to lasso you off any tower-tops again. It's too thrilling."

"Well, it's certain to happen if I don't have my tea——"

"Come along!"

"Where?" asked Bunter suspiciously.

"To the tuck-shop," said Harry, laughing.

"But you haven't got any tin!"

"Mrs. Mimble will trust me."

"Now you're talking, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, brightening up. "Mrs. Mimble says she will trust you at any time, I know—though she won't trust me. There's no telling what curious things women will say and do. If you like to stand a ripping good feed, I'll let you have every penny back out of my postal order when it comes to-night——"

"Cheese it, and come along!"

The chums of the Remove left the study.

"But I say, Wharton, I mean it, you know! I'm expecting a postal order this evening, and if it doesn't come this evening, it's bound to come by the morning's post——"

"Yes, I know that postal order!"

"I will settle up when it comes, so you may as well make it a good feed," said Bunter, as they entered the school shop. "Mrs. Mimble, Wharton is standing a feed——"

"I want you to let me owe you two shillings, Mrs. Mimble," said Harry Wharton.

The good dame nodded.

"I know I can trust you, Master Wharton. You could have two pounds if you like. It's different with Master Bunter; he never pays his debts."

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble——"

"Two shillings is enough, thank you——"

"Oh, really, Wharton, you can't stand much of a feed for two shillings——"

"It's all I can afford, Billy, and you can have it all to yourself; and you can take it or leave it."

"Of course I shall take it, Wharton. But as I'm going to settle up first thing in the morning, or to-morrow night at the latest, I think you might as well make it five bob."

"Two shillings, Mrs. Mimble," said Harry. "Let Bunter have anything he likes up to that, and not a farthing over, and put it down to me."

"Very well, Master Wharton!"

"I suppose it's better than nothing," said Billy Bunter. "I have a feeling that I should have another attack of somnambulism if I didn't have a feed: and then I might break my neck. You have probably saved my life, Wharton, and that——"

"Cheap at the price," remarked Bob Cherry.

"It's not a laughing matter, Cherry. Wharton has saved my life——"

"Then he'd better keep it dark, or the Form will send him to Coventry," grinned Nugent. "Come away, you chaps. If I watch Billy bolting those sardines it will make me hungry."

And the chums of the Remove walked away, leaving Billy Bunter to work out his two-shillings'-worth—which he was not long in doing. When he had come to the end of his tether he found Mrs. Mimble inexorable, and no amount of entreaty or expostulation could move the good dame. Even the absolutely certain prospect of a postal order by the evening's post could not tempt her to extend his credit, and Billy gave it up at last, and disconsolately drifted out of the tuck-shop.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Wheeze That Did Not Work!

BOB CHERRY felt in all his pockets, one after the other, without apparently finding what he wanted.

Wharton, Nugent, and Hurree Singh stopped, and looked at him. One pocket after another was searched in vain.

"Are you looking for something?" said Nugent, at last. "Or is that a new system of gymnastics?"

"Or is it a harmless and necessary whilefulness of the esteemed time?" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I'm looking for my pocket-book."

"What do you want it for, now?"

"We've got to make a list of subscribers to the new wheeze. Every chap has got to contribute a certain sum, and we must keep a list. Where has that confounded pocket-book got to? I felt it in my breast-pocket as we came out of the tuck-shop. I brushed against that chap Levison at the door——"

"Perhaps you dropped it?"

"Well, I must find it. I keep all my postal orders, money orders, banknotes, and cheques in that pocket-book."

"Let's look round," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I say, Levison, have you seen anything of a pocket-book?"

Levison, the new, and not very popular boy in the Remove, was standing leaning against the door-post of the little school-shop. There was a rather curious smile upon his face as he looked up.

"What kind of a pocket-book?" he asked.

"Black leather," said Bob Cherry; "with the initials 'R.C.' jabbed in it with a penknife."

"You've lost it?"

"Yes. It was in my breast-pocket a moment ago."

"Perhaps Nugent has seen it?"

"I?" exclaimed Nugent. "If I had seen it, I should have told Cherry. What the dickens are you driving at, Levison?"

"Well, look in your pocket," said Levison carelessly. "There's something bulging it out, anyway."

Nugent glanced down at his pocket. There certainly was something bulging it out. He put in his hand, and drew out—Bob Cherry's pocket-book! He stared at it in blank amazement.

"That's it!" said Bob.

There was a curious silence for a few moments. Then Nugent's face went scarlet.

"Bob! Harry! You don't think I knew—that I——"

"Don't be an ass!" said Harry quietly. "Of course, we know this is a trick; and I suppose we can put it down to Levison."

Nugent turned wrathfully towards the new boy in the Remove, who had his hands in his pockets, and was looking away.

"Did you put that book in my pocket, Levison?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I didn't know you were a giddy conjurer, Levison," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose it's beastly clever to be able to play tricks like that. But if you play one of that kind on me again, there will be a damaged conjurer picked up somewhere about here, and so I warn you."

And the chums of the Remove strolled away. Nugent was still looking uncomfortable, and Bob Cherry was looking into his pocket-book. He found a blank page, and wetted his pencil.

"Here's Skinner," he said. "We'll settle Skinner first. I say, Skinny, old chap, do you want to come into a new wheeze?"

"Certainly!" said Skinner.

"Sure, and I'm on, too, darling!" said Micky Desmond, of the Remove. "What is it intirely?"

"It's a new idea we've got from that Yankee bounder, to save half the cost of standing a feed. We send an order of not less than two sovereigns, direct to the manufacturer, and save half-cost."

"Faith, and it's a good idea."

"Every chap who wants to come into it will have to fork out eighteenpence," said Bob Cherry. "That's how it works out."

"And what will he get back for it?" asked Skinner.

"Three-shillings'-worth of grub of all sorts."

"Good!"

"You like the idea?"

"Yes, rather! I wish I had eighteenpence."

"Haven't you?"

"No; I'm sorry. I'll borrow it of you——"

"I haven't any to lend. What about you, Desmond?"

"Faith, and if ye'll let me have a quarter-share for fourpence-halfpenny, I think I can manage it," said the Irish junior, turning out his pockets. "Sure, and it's only fourpence I've got, too! Skinner will lend me a ha'penny——"

"No quarter-shares allowed," said Nugent.

"Certainly not! It's the whole hog, or none."

"Then I'm afraid ye'll have to leave me out; and it's a pity, for sure, I loike the idea intirely."

The chums of the Remove walked on. They looked out for Removites, and the next they met was Hazeldene.

He listened to their explanation with great interest, and handed in one-and-sixpence, the first contribution received.

Bob Cherry entered the sum in the book, and wrote him out a receipt.

"Keep that," he said. "When you give it up, you'll receive three-shillings'-worth of goods in exchange."

"What-ho!" said Hazeldene.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bulstrode!" called out Bob Cherry, as a burly Removite passed them. "Are you coming into this?"

"What is it?"

"New scheme for saving half-cost on grub. You contribute one-and-six——"

"Rats!"

"You contribute one-and-six, and——"

"No fear!"

"You contribute one-and-six——"

"Catch me!"

And Bulstrode walked away. The chums of the Remove grinned at one another rather uneasily. The idea, ripping as it was, did not seem to be catching on in the Remove. And as they went further they fared little better. Russell would have come into the idea, but he was stony, and Carew had too little. Benson and Harris did not like the idea. Then came a contribution from Smith minor, which raised the spirits of the canvassers a little. Smith minor's receipt was duly made out and handed over. The next junior to be interviewed was Fritz Hoffmann, the German member of the Remove. Hoffmann listened patiently to the famous four while they expatiated upon the merits of the new scheme.

"I tinks it is a goot idea," he assented.

"Good! You contribute one-and-six——"

"I tinks you saves money. It is a goot idea."

"I'm glad you like it. You contribute one-and-six——"

"Mein gott! I vould joomp at it, mein friend. But I have not te cash."

"Eh?"

"I have not at te present moment te cash, unless you lends him."

Bob Cherry looked daggers at the amiable German.

"You shrieking ass, if you haven't the cash, what have you let me run on for, wasting my valuable time explaining to you?"

"Ach! I tinks it is a goot idea, you know."

"Oh, come on!" said Bob Cherry. "There's Meunier yonder; let's see if he's got eighteenpence to spend on a really good idea."

Adolphe Meunier, the French Removite, willingly listened to Bob Cherry's explanation. Nugent chimed in with details, and Harry Wharton added a word or two. Hurree Singh added a dozen or two. Meunier listened with Parisian politeness.

"What do you think, Meunier?"

"I zink zat ze idea good," said Meunier. "I zink I pays ze one-and-seex, and takes share in ze scheme."

"Good! Hoffmann won't come in, but you've got more ——"

"Hoffmann! You ask zat Sherman?"

"Yes; but he won't——"

"Zen I vash hands of ze vheeze!" said Meunier. "You ask ze Sherman before you ask me. Zat is insult to France!"

"You utter ass——"

"Ze Frenchman must always come before ze Sherman. I have no dealings viz you who insult ze glory of France."

And Adolphe Meunier walked away.

"The shrieking ass!" said Bob Cherry. "The screaming duffer! It looks to me as if we're going to have some difficulty in getting this subscription list filled up."

"Oh, don't give in," said Nugent. "It's a really good idea, and it would be a shame for it to fail for want of backers."

"The shamefulness would be terrific."

"Well, we'll have another try. Let's speak to this crowd."

A group of Removites were chatting near the cricket field. It was getting too dark for play. The chums of the Remove walked towards them, and at once saw that there was a general grin going round. Bulstrode and Levison were there, which perhaps accounted for it.

"I say, we've got a new scheme on," said Bob Cherry. "It's an idea for saving half the cost of the grub——"

"Oh, we know all about it!" said Fisher. "Bulstrode has told us."

"The subscription is one-and-six——"

"No fear!"

"You needn't come into it unless you like," said Bob Cherry loftily. "We're not going around begging for subscriptions."

"Blessed if I know what you are doing, then," remarked Bulstrode.

"Oh, you shut up, Bulstrode! By sending an order for two sovereigns' worth of grub to the wholesale manufacturer ——"

"The what?"

"The wholesale manufacturer——"

"Ever heard of a retail manufacturer?" asked Levison, looking round.

There was a giggle.

"Well, the manufacturer," said Bob Cherry, turning red. "The wholesale supply chap. You send him an order for two sovereigns' worth at a time, and you get as much as we pay four pounds for at the tuckshop."

"Perhaps!"

"Oh, there's no doubt about it! We've worked it out in figures."

"You'll have to go into decimals to work out the profits," said Levison. And the Removites giggled again.

"You can keep out of the scheme anyway, Levison."

"I intend to."

"But you others, you pay one-and-six, and——"

"Who pays the carriage down?" asked Levison.

"We do, out of the profits."

"Who pays the carrier to bring the stuff from the station?"

"We do."

"Who loses breakages?"

"Er—we do."

"Who takes the risk of the stuff not being rotten as well as cheap?"

"Let me see. Oh, we do!"

"We do a lot, it seems to me."

"You don't; you're out of it. Now, you fellows, how many of you are coming into the scheme? We want at least thirty to work it."

"Not good enough," said Fisher.

"Hardly!" agreed Yates. "You're a good sort, Cherry, and you can play cricket, but you can't run a grub business, you know."

"That's it," said Bulstrode. "It's all rot. That's what I say."

"We might subscribe the two pounds among us," said Levison. "That's easy enough. But who guarantees that we see any of the profits? There might be some made."

Harry Wharton turned scarlet. He took a step towards the new boy in the Remove so quickly that Levison changed colour and started back.

"What do you mean, Levison?"

"Nothing in particular," drawled Levison, recovering himself.

"You hinted that we were getting up this scheme to get hold of the fellows' money and make a profit for ourselves."

"I only say what it looks like."

"It wouldn't look like that," said Harry Wharton, "to anybody but a mean, crawling cad, Levison. And that's my opinion of you!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!"

"Oh, keep your wool on, Wharton!" said Fisher. "Levison doesn't mean that. Anyway, we don't. Only the scheme is a bit far-fetched. It comes from that Chicago bounder, and I don't trust things that come from Chicago."

Levison put his hands in his pockets and strolled away. Bob Cherry tore the leaf out of his pocket-book, whipped it into pieces, and scattered them with a wave of the hand.

"There goes a good wheeze," he said. "Two pounds clear profit wasted! You fatheads can go and eat coke!"

And the group broke up. Bob Cherry took the few subscriptions out of his pocket and rattled the coins in his hand.

"Rotten!" he remarked. "We'd better return this tin to the subscribers. The wheeze won't work. It was a good wheeze, all the same."

"We may work it another time," Harry Wharton remarked. "Some time when we are in funds, and can do it without a Form subscription. But at present it won't work, that's certain."

And no more was heard of the brand-new American scheme for saving half profits on tuckshop supplies.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Something Like Hustling.

CLINK, clink, clink!

The rising-bell had sounded, and the Remove had risen in the bright morning, and as they performed their ablutions, the continuous clinking from the Close came floating to their ears through the open windows.

"What on earth is that row?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Sounds like a lot of fellows hammering away."

"That's what it is, too," said Harry Wharton. "But I'm blessed if I know what they're up to. They're hammering in the Close."

"Who can it be?"

"What are they doing?"

"Well, we'll soon see."

The Remove were down in record time that morning. They found fellows of the other Forms crowding into the Close in equal curiosity. The hammering rang almost without cessation through the crisp morning air.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in amazement.

"Look there!"

"Great Scott!"

In the gardens between the Head's house and the chapel fifty workmen were slaving away busily, under the orders of a shouting foreman. Huge masses of timber lay about, and these were being run up into a temporary wooden building. Great rolls of felt, and zinc roofing were piled about, with drain-pipes, and weather-boards, and planks and beams. And through the gates of Greyfriars came at intervals dusty contractors' carts laden with building materials.

Near the scene, with a cigarette in his mouth, stood Herbert P. Randall, of New York and Chicago.

The gentleman from America was surveying the operations with a satisfied smile. He glanced round as the chums of the Remove came up, and nodded pleasantly.

"I guess we're waking up this place!" he remarked.

"You are!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"The wakeupfulness is terrific."

Clink, clink, clink, clink!

"What on earth are you doing?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Running up a temporary building to accommodate a hundred new boys. Where the permanent building will be erected is not yet decided, but there is no time to waste." Herbert P. Randall looked at his watch. "I have thirty-nine hours fourteen minutes before I have to return to business in London. I want to get the whole thing into full swing before then, you bet."

"My hat!"

"We are getting on. Telegrams last night to three firms for estimates. Lowest estimate accepted by return wire. Stuff sent down by earliest train. Carts at the station ready.

Harry Wharton, with a black eye, led the procession of baseball players. Then came Nugent, holding a handkerchief to his nose; and after him Bob Cherry, with a cut lip.

Work commenced at daylight. That's the American way of doing business, sonny!"

"I suppose you have the Head's permission?" said Wingate, who had come along to see what the extraordinary clamour was about.

"You bet! I had the Head's permish.; he saw reason."

"You wouldn't have got it if I had been Head!" growled the captain of Greyfriars, walking away.

Herbert P. Randall laughed.

"Amazing lot of stick-in-the-mud prejudice in this effete old country," he remarked. "What John Bull wants is to wake up! Yes, sir! You want to wake up! My! To think of the dollars that have run to waste here for want of a little energy. By the way, how did your scheme work out, kiddies?"

"Rotten!" said Wharton.

"Haven't you made it pay?"

"The fellows wouldn't subscribe."

"Might have been expected. Point out to a man in this country how he can save money, and he thinks you're getting at him. Might have been expected."

"Bless my soul!"

It was the voice of Dr. Locke. The Head, like the boys, had been attracted to the spot by the unusual clamour in the Close. He put up his glasses, and surveyed the scene of busy labour in utter amazement.

"Wh-wh-what does this mean?"

Herbert P. Randall smiled.

"We've started, doc."

"Eh?"

"We're getting to work."

"But—but——"

"You didn't expect it to start so quickly when you gave me your permish. for these improvements yesterday, I guess?"

"I—I gave you permission?"

"Yes. You remember?"

"I—I—I——"

"This building will be finished to-night," said Mr. Randall, with a wave of the hand. "I have had enough workmen brought here to do it. And, mind, it will accommodate a hundred new boys."

"A—a hundred new boys!" stammered the Head, who did not quite seem to know whether he was awake or dreaming.

"Exactly."

"I—I—I don't quite——"

"During the morning we must make arrangements for getting in the crowd," said Mr. Randall. "Excuse me now, doc., I'm rather busy. I'll join you at breakfast."

The Head stared blankly at the busy workmen, and at the self-satisfied Herbert P. Randall. Then he walked dazedly away. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was coming out, and the Head joined him.

"Is all this by your orders, sir?" the Remove master asked.

"Er—I—Mr. Randall seems to understand that I gave permission——"

"But surely——"

"I—I don't know how to deal with this, Mr. Quelch. Herbert Randall is an old Grey Friar, and the son of an old friend, to whom I was under obligations, and who is now dead. Otherwise——"

"I understand, sir. But this—this utter absurdity——"

"I must think it over. Come to breakfast with me this morning, Mr. Quelch."

The Head and the Remove master went in. The boys remained watching the busy operations until the bell rang for breakfast, and then they crowded in, excitedly discussing the new departure. The clink, clink of the hammers continued.

Mr. Randall came in to breakfast with the Head, in high spirits. He was waking up Greyfriars, and he was well satisfied with himself and his progress. He had a few more prejudices to clear away, however.

"The building is getting on splendidly," he said. "This

is the American way, you know. It will be finished by dark. In our country——"

"I thought England was your country," the doctor remarked mildly.

"My dear doc., I've lived longer in ten years in America than in fifteen in England," said Mr. Randall. "Life is measured by the amount of business you can cram into it. Now, in my new country, a contractor gets an order to put up a street of houses, say, at nine in the morning. At ten o'clock a hundred men are on the scene, and by noon the foundations are laid. By dark the framework of the houses is up; by the end of the second day the street is built, the houses roofed, windowed, papered and painted, and on the third day——"

"They fall down again, I suppose," said Mr. Quelch.

Herbert P. Randall smiled a rather sickly smile.

"They fall down sometimes, certainly," he assented. "But the contractor has been paid for his work, so it doesn't worry him. But, as I was saying, that is the American way of doing business. Now, about those ruins——"

"Ah, yes, the ruins!" murmured the Head.

"As far as I remember them, there's the remains of an old ivied tower, part of a refectory and chapel, and some odds and ends," said Mr. Randall. "They are of no use to anybody, except as building materials. Now, the site would be excellent for the new extension of Greyfriars——"

"Never!"

"And the clearing could be done at practically no cost," said Mr. Randall, emphasising his remarks with taps of his egg-spoon. "Practically no cost, as the lumber could be used to help in building this temporary edifice we are now engaged upon."

"Mr. Randall!"

"That would save something in materials, and would clear the site of the new permanent erection."

"You make me shudder!"

Herbert P. Randall smiled indulgently.

"Very well, then, I have another plan for putting the ruins to practical use. I quite understand your prejudices, though I cannot sympathise with them, my dear doc. They are shared by a crowd of folk in this effete country. That fact can be turned to a business use. I should advise you to put up a strong fence round the ruins——"

"A—a fence!"

"Exactly. A strong fence, with a turnstile and a ticket-keeper's office, and charge sixpence admission for people who want to see the famous Greyfriars ruins."

"Dear me!"

"You could advertise them in the papers and the tourist guides. You could shove in relics of the ancient manners and customs of Greyfriars—the skull of the Abbot Hildebrand, who defied King John——"

"But there never was an Abbot Hildebrand, and King John never had anything to do with Greyfriars, so far as I am aware."

"What does that matter?"

"Eh?"

"You could get a skull cheap, and any old skull would do. In fact, it would be a good idea to have a gross of them, as you could get them cheaper by taking a quantity, and they could be labelled in the catalogue—better have a catalogue—as the skulls of the monks who were slain in bravely resisting Henry the Eighth, at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries."

"Dear me!"

The Head could only murmur those words. Mr. Quelch was looking at the young man from New York with a very peculiar expression on his face. Mr. Randall took a hasty gulp of hot tea, gasped, and went on.

"In a case like this, it's usual to have a collection of ancient weapons and armour, dug up in making alterations near the ruins. I can give you an address in Birmingham where they're made, including rust and bloodstains, and by mentioning my name you would get a discount."

"Dear me!"

"A small stock of them, and some old parchments, would make the ruins well worth a visit from any tourist in the neighbourhood. It would be pretty certain to pay, by skilful advertising. And there's another point. A weekly lecture to the boys of Greyfriars on antiquities, and so on, given in the ancient refectory, and a charge of one guinea a term made extra for it. What do you think of that?"

"Dear me!"

"The lecture would be a valuable one, given in the ruined abbey, surrounded by the ancient weapons and parchments of the days of yore——"

"Manufactured for the purpose," said Mr. Quelch.

Herbert P. Randall smiled.

"My dear sir, most antiquities in such cases are manufactured for the purpose. I have shares in a firm in Philadelphia which is wholly employed in manufacturing antiquities from the dead cities of Mexico. They do a thriving business, and their customers are quite satisfied. This idea of working up the Greyfriars ruins is a really good one, and by arrangement with the governing body, the Head ought to manage to rake in half profits. The idea might be extended if it paid well—some more ruins could be put up very cheaply, and——"

"Mr. Randall, I suppose you believe you are talking business?"

"Dead business, doc.—business from the word 'go.'"

"You are proposing nothing short of vandalism."

"My dear doc.——"

"I am sorry to offend you, but that——"

"I guess you don't offend me. I'm after the dollars, not looking round for trouble," said Mr. Randall, with a beaming smile. "I suppose you won't work the idea, so I'm wasting my breath. This country will never wake up till it gets a shock of some kind."

"I hope the country never will wake up," said Dr. Locke, "if that is what is implied by waking up."

"'Nuff said. If you won't take up the scheme, you won't, and it's no good wasting breath. Now, about getting those new pupils."

"But——"

"I really want to do you a good turn, doc. You were kind to me here, and my father was your friend. Of course, sentimental considerations are rather out of date; still, I can't but remember that I was a Greyfriars boy, and I should like to see the old place booming. Besides, if I make your fortune here, you would allow me a commission, say, ten per cent. on extra profits?"

"Dear me!"

"That is reasonable, and, mind, I take nothing till the cash comes in. Now, about the advertisements. I hope you have thought that over."

"I could never——"

"Take your time, doc. Take to-day to think it over. One minute would be enough for me; one day ought to be enough for you. That's the difference between American time and English time, I guess. I can send the adverts. in by wire to-night, in time for the morning papers. So take your time."

"But really——"

"I must get back now. The master's eye, you know. I'm going to make those pesky fellows hustle, or know the reason why."

And Herbert P. Randall, having bolted a couple of eggs and several chunks of bread without noticing what he was eating, gulped down his tea and rushed off.

The doctor gasped for breath.

"Dear me, Mr. Quelch! If that is a specimen of the American business man, they must lead a very rapid life over there."

The Remove master laughed.

"I think Mr. Randall out-Herods Herod, in his business methods," he remarked. "He has become more American than the Americans. His scheme of advertising——"

"It is the extreme of undignified absurdity. I could never consent to anything of the sort. Why, the governors would ask me to resign."

"But about the building—the expense——"

The doctor rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"Well, I think all the materials can be used, Mr. Quelch. The same materials are required for the erection of Herr Rosenblaum's academy, and so nothing need be wasted. If the temporary building is put up in one day, I have no doubt that it will fall down in another day, and then the stuff can be carted away."

"Ha, ha! And the hundred new boys?"

"That is all nonsense, of course."

And the Head of Greyfriars and his right-hand man went to their daily work. But in the class-rooms they heard, without cessation from the sunny Close, the clinking of the hammers, and the gruff tones of the shouting foreman. Herbert P. Randall was still on the scene, and he was making the workmen hustle.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Bunter Takes a Telegram.

AFTER morning lessons, the chums of Greyfriars hurried out to see how the new building was getting on. The indefatigable Herbert P. Randall was still there, but the workmen had knocked off at the call of the hooter.

The progress had really been immense. The ground had been cleared, the framework of the building put up, and part of the roof was on. Mr. Randall was surveying it with a satisfied eye. He looked round as the Removites came up.

"We're getting on, you see," he observed. "This will be ready for furnishing to-morrow. That reminds me; I must send off an order for the furnishing. Can one of you fellows cut down to the village with a wire? If I were running this

place, I should have a private wire to the post-office; or at least a telephone. But there's no knowledge of business in this country."

"I can go to the village if you like, Mr. Randall," said Billy Bunter. "Do you want anything fetched from the tuckshop?"

"No, I don't, sonny; I want a wire sent!"

"I shall be passing the tuckshop——"

"Pass it, then. You can spend the change of this florin at the tuckshop after sending the wire."

"Certainly, sir. I shall be only too pleased to oblige you in any way," said Bunter, beaming through his big spectacles.

"Here you are, then."

Mr. Randall wrote down a message on a leaf of his pocket-book.

"There, that's twenty words—that will be tenpence—and you can blue the change on tarts. Mind you get the address correct. That's a firm I have dealings with; they know what's wanted, and they supply the stuff at rock-bottom price. The things will be down this evening. Cut off!"

"Certainly, sir."

Bunter took the message and the two-shilling-piece and walked away. Nugent followed him quickly.

"Hold on, you young ass!"

"What's the matter, Nugent?"

"You know you can't go down to the village without a pass. You'll get into a row."

"I am going to ask Wingate for one."

"You won't get it."

"Well, a fellow can only try. If I can't get the pass, I can't go down to the village, and I sha'n't be able to send the wire. I can go to the school shop instead——"

"Eh?"

"One-and-twopence of this belongs to me, you know; and if I can't send the wire it's not my fault."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at. That's business—and Mr. Randall is a business man. I don't see why I shouldn't be business-like."

And Bunter hurried away in search of Wingate. He found the captain of Greyfriars going down to the nets, and stopped him.

"I say, Wingate, may I speak to you?"

"Yes, if you buck up."

"I want a pass."

"Oh, don't bother!"

"I want a pass to go down to the village."

"Just before dinner, ass? You can't have one. Go away and play!"

"It's important."

"Buzz off!"

"Mr. Randall wants me to send a wire for him."

"Oh, he does, does he?" said Wingate.

"Yes; he's ordering a lot of furniture for the new building, and if I send the wire now, it will be down to-night."

Wingate grunted.

"Will it? Well, you're jolly well not going to have a pass, then! Understand me; if you go out of the gates of Greyfriars I'll skin you alive!"

"Of course, I shouldn't think of disobeying your orders, Wingate; I should be sincerely sorry to do anything of the kind; but——"

"Mind you don't, then," said Wingate. "Cut off!"

And the captain of Greyfriars strode on. Billy Bunter blinked after him, and then turned his steps in the direction of the tuckshop.

"I've done my best," he murmured; "I can't do more. I'd better spend my part of the two-shilling-piece and take Mr. Randall back his tenpence."

Billy Bunter entered the tuckshop. Mrs. Mimble greeted him with a far from cordial smile. Bunter's visits usually meant an attempt to obtain credit, when he came alone.

"I want some tarts and cream-puffs, Mrs. Mimble," said Billy Bunter loftily; "and I can pay for them, too."

"You won't have them without," said Mrs. Mimble.

"I don't want them without; I'm in funds."

"You don't mean to say that that postal-order has come!" exclaimed the good dame in astonishment.

"I don't see any cause for surprise if it has," said Bunter. "However, as a matter of fact, it hasn't. I've got a two-shilling-piece to change. I've been disappointed about the postal-order; there's been a delay somewhere I can't account for. But look here, will you change this? One-and-twopence of it belongs to me, and I shall order things to that amount. I want tenpence change first."

"Very good."

Mrs. Mimble's tarts and cream-puffs were good. Billy Bunter did not take long to travel through them to the value of one shilling and twopence. Then he eyed the tenpence lying on the counter, and eyed the piles of tempting tarts wistfully.

"No, I won't!" he exclaimed heroically. "It's Mr. Randall's money, and it would be dishonest to spend it. I'll get off!"

He rattled the change into his pocket and left the tuckshop. With a more contented look, and a smear of jam on his fat face, he went in search of Mr. Randall. But the gentleman from New York and Chicago had gone in. Bunter did not take the trouble to look for him. He was certain to see him presently, and presently would do.

Mr. Randall lunched with the Head, and expatiated upon the progress of the great improvements at Greyfriars at such length that the doctor had no time to get in a word.

Dr. Locke bowed his head to the storm, as it were, and Mr. Randall rattled on at express speed, uttering something like thirty words to the minute at an average, and leaving the doctor at the finish very hazy as to what he had been talking about.

Mr. Randall bolted his lunch, as he did all his meals, and hurried off to get on to something more important; and after dinner the chums of the Remove found him fuming in the Close because the workmen were still resting.

"I guess you want electrifying in this country, or something!" he exclaimed, as he saw Harry Wharton. "Look at those pesky, lazy wasters!"

"It's their dinner-hour, isn't it?" asked Harry.

"Dinner-hour be jiggered! Who wants a dinner-hour? I've had eleven minutes seventeen seconds for my lunch."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"But you are rather keener than they are on the business, sir."

"Yes, that's the fault of everybody and everything in this effete country—nobody's keen!"

"But why should they be keen on your business?" said Nugent. "I dare say they're keen enough on their own."

"The sensibleness of my worthy chum's remark is great."

"Quite right," assented Mr. Randall, his business instincts thus appealed to; "it's a waste of capital to put keenness into any business but your own. But I've offered these pesky wastrels overtime rates for working quicker!"

"Perhaps they'd rather digest their dinner."

"Hang their digestion! They can digest their dinner while they're working. Hang it; I never trouble about my digestion!"

"Then your digestion will trouble you some day," said Bob Cherry oracularly.

Mr. Randall sniffed.

"We live too quick in America to think about digestion! It's better to snuff out than to go slow! These fellows must have their hour, and I've offered them overtime rates to make a half-hour do! Pah!"

"I jolly well don't blame them!" said Nugent.

"Pah! I am wasting time! In my office in New York every second is allotted and filled up. Here I am wasting time while a set of pesky wasters sit in the shade and guzzle beer and sandwiches. Pah, I must do something! I told you youngsters that I would show you how to play baseball."

"We're going down to cricket."

"An effete, played-out game! Baseball is the thing to keep you alive! We play hard as well as work hard in America. There's a friend of mine who got all his front teeth knocked out at baseball——"

"That's a jolly good recommendation, and no mistake!"

"Pooh; he doesn't squirm! He had a new set of teeth put in, and got a reduction for the quantity and a discount for cash. The other fellows got up a subscription to pay the dentist's bill. My friend pocketed both the reduction and the discount. That's business! He'd be glad to have the new teeth knocked out on the same terms! Still, if you're afraid of the game——"

"Afraid?" said Harry Wharton.

"I guess that——"

"We'll play!" said Bob Cherry. "Come along!"

"Good! The game is a good deal like rounders, you know, but you count a run only when you get right round to the home base. Come on, and I'll put you up to it. You'll want nine a side, and I'll umpire."

The novelty of the idea caught on, and it was easy to make up a couple of nines from the Remove. And so the cricket-field was deserted, and eighteen Removites played baseball under the direction of Herbert P. Randall—and he made them hustle!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Baseball—Hustling a Hustler.

"WHAT—what—whatever has happened?"

Mr. Quelch gasped out the words.

The master of the Remove was in the Form-room, and the Remove were marching in for afternoon lessons.

Harry Wharton entered first, and Mr. Quelch contracted his brows a little as he saw that the captain of the Remove had a black eye. Then came Nugent, holding a handker-

chief to his nose, the said handkerchief being rich in hue with the oozing "claret"; and after him Bob Cherry, with a cut lip.

Mr. Quelch stared, as well he might. Hazeldene came in with a streak of red running down from his left ear, and Micky Desmond had a swollen nose. Russell twisted his leg painfully as he walked, and Skinner had two black eyes. Perkins and Smith had cuts on their faces. And so on, till the number of wounded heroes astounded the Form master.

"Whatever has happened? Have you been fighting among yourselves?"

"No, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Ah, I think I can guess the cause of this disgraceful exhibition!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "It is a Form quarrel with the Upper Fourth, I presume?"

"No, sir."

"Then what has happened?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Nonsense! I suppose you did not come by these injuries by accident? How did you get into such a state? What has happened?"

"Nothing, sir; we've only been playing."

"Playing what?"

"Baseball."

Mr. Quelch started.

"I did not know that baseball was one of the games played at Greyfriars!" he exclaimed.

"It isn't, sir. Mr. Randall was kind enough to show us——"

"Mr. Randall?"

"Yes, sir. He umpired for us, and put us up to the game. It's very like rounders, only—only more so, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you have been injured like this in a game of baseball?"

"Oh, we don't mind, sir!"

"Not a bit," said Bob Cherry. "A few hard knocks don't count. Mr. Randall was umpire, sir, and we had to play up for the honour of Greyfriars. We weren't going to let a Yankee bounder crow over us."

"Go to your places, boys," said Mr. Quelch, dropping the subject.

But lessons that afternoon received little attention from the heroes of the baseball match.

They were hurt. They had played up splendidly for the honour of the school, and Herbert P. Randall had been pleased to commend them. But black eyes and swollen noses and bruised cheeks and cut lips were not comfortable things to get on with, nor were aching limbs and twisted fingers.

Mr. Quelch, who perhaps liked the spirit the Remove had shown, was very lenient with them. But all were glad when afternoon lessons were over.

"I feel pretty used up," Nugent remarked, as they left the class-room; "I've got an ache in my right leg that makes me simply squirm when I walk."

"And I've got a bruise on my arm that won't come off," grinned Bob Cherry, "to say nothing of this extra gap over my mouth."

"It's a jolly good game, but you want to be careful," said Harry Wharton. "You want to wear some protection, too, and we hadn't any. It doesn't come up to our own game, in my opinion."

"Say, youngsters!"

It was Herbert P. Randall. He was strolling in the Close, having just gone down to the gates to see if a new cartload of zinc roofing was in sight yet. He grinned at the sight of the damaged Removites.

"Feeling much worse for the game?" he asked.

"Only a bit knocked about."

"That's nothing. I have a quarter of an hour to spare, and I should be glad to umpire in another game."

The Removites looked at one another dubiously.

"Well, you're very kind, Mr. Randall, but——"

The hustler laughed.

"You don't want to get hurt?"

The juniors turned red. It was not pleasant to be made the objects of the outsider's derision, and they felt that Mr. Randall's gibe was not just. A gleam came into Harry Wharton's eyes.

"If you'll umpire, sir, we'll play another game," he said.

"Good! Come on! We'll make you hardy before we've done with you!"

And Mr. Randall led the way. The Removites looked at Harry doubtfully.

"I say, I'd rather go down to cricket," said Nugent. "Besides, we've got to keep in practice for the Form match."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"This game won't last long, I think. I've got a wheeze for shutting up Mr. Clever Randall. It's jolly easy for a chap to umpire with a cigarette in his mouth, while fellows are getting knocked about; but why shouldn't he have a share of the knocking about?"

"But if he's not playing?"

"The pitcher might miss the bat every time, and hit him by mistake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The catcher might let the ball fly out of his hand and clump him on the head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The batsman might get near him and let him have a clump now and then."

"Good wheeze!"

"I think we shall be able to make him tired of umpiring before we are tired of playing," said Harry Wharton.

The Removites giggled gleefully. It seemed an excellent idea for getting their own back on the bumptious American.

Mr. Randall, with all his Transatlantic keenness, did not guess that anything was on. He took up his position, and the nines took up theirs. Harry Wharton was first of the batting side, and Nugent took the ball.

Mr. Randall noticed a grin on several faces, but did not guess what it meant. He took his cigarette out of his mouth.

"Go it, youngsters!" he said. "We'll make men of you yet! This is the game to do it! Play up!"

Nugent pitched the ball. Wharton made a cut and missed, and the ball missed the catcher, too, and caught Mr. Randall full on the chest.

"Ow!"

The blow was a smart one, and the Hustler staggered back. The ball dropped to the ground, and the catcher picked it up.

Mr. Randall recovered himself. He rubbed his chest ruefully.

"Do you call that baseball?" he asked, in withering accents.

"It's the way you showed us to play, sir," said Bob Cherry innocently.

"Pah! Nugent was pitching better than that in the first game. You gave me a fearful knock. But we Americans don't mind hard knocks. Play up!"

"Right-ho!"

"He doesn't mind hard knocks," murmured Nugent. "We'll see."

The pitcher sent the ball in again. The batsman missed it as before, but this time the catcher was more skilful. He caught the ball, and then it flew from his hand like a flash, and knocked Mr. Randall's hat over his ears.

Herbert P. Randall gave a yell.

"What are you up to?"

"Eh?"

"You've nearly busted my head, and quite busted my hat. Do you call that baseball?" roared the exasperated Herbert P. Randall.

"It's the game as you showed it us, sir," said the catcher innocently.

"You clumsy young asses!"

"Oh, we've not practised yet, sir! We shall improve!"

"You'd better," growled Mr. Randall, "or you won't get me to umpire for you, I can tell you! You've made my head ache."

"I thought you Americans didn't mind a few hard knocks."

"Oh, get on!"

Harry Wharton hit the third ball, and dropped the bat, and ran for first base. Hurree Singh took his place at the home plate.

In the previous game Hurree Singh had made a good show as batsman and base-runner. But now all his skill seemed to have deserted him—or else he was too skilful. He hit the ball when it came, but in such a way that the bat deflected the ball, and it whizzed on with a slight change of direction. Mr. Randall saw it coming, but he jumped too late. It came upon his nose, with a bump, and Herbert P. Randall sat down.

The yell he gave could have been heard over half Greyfriars. And the yell of laughter from the Removites that followed, rang through the Close more loudly still.

Mr. Randall sat rubbing his nose, and glaring at the Removites.

"You—you—you young villains!" he gasped.

The nabob turned towards him with a contrite face.

"Is it possible that the esteemed ball has rudely assaulted the honourable nose of our worthy rotten instructor?" he exclaimed. "If the hurtfulness is great, the apologise is terrific."

"You black villain!"

"The painfulness of the honourable sahib's esteemed nose is a sufficient apology for the rudefulness of his rotten remarks."

"I guess you did that on purpose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, unable to contain himself. "I thought you didn't care for a few hard knocks, you giddy American bounder!"

"I don't," said Mr. Randall, getting up slowly, and rubbing his nose with his handkerchief. "If I had time I'd

go on with this, and make you hustle, too. But I've got to go and see to that pesky building."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, we're sorry you're hurt, sir," said Harry Wharton. "But that bump on the nose isn't half so bad as some that we've had."

"I guess it's time I was off."

"I guess you're off already!" murmured Bob Cherry—"off your giddy rocker!"

Herbert P. Randall hastily walked away, still rubbing his nose, and he left the Remove laughing themselves almost into hysterics. The lesson had perhaps been a rather severe one, but it was something to have shut up the Hustler for once.

"I kinder guess and calculate that we've had enough pesky baseball," Bob Cherry remarked, with a grin. "Let's get down to cricket."

"You are rightfully correct, my worthy chum. The goodness of the baseball is great, but the excellence of the cricketful game is terrific."

Instructor and pupils had both had enough of baseball. The Remove went to their cricket practice, and Mr. Randall resumed his inspection of the rapidly-growing building, from time to time furtively mopping his nose with his handkerchief.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.
No More Hustle!

"I GUESS it's finished!"

The clink-clink of hammers had ceased in the old Close. Dr. Locke had strolled out with Herbert P. Randall after dinner to look at the building. The Hustler had indeed done wonders.

The building was not exactly finished. But the main part of it was up; and, as the Hustler said, it could be made ready for occupation on the morrow.

At all events, it could be quite ready before the influx of new boys set in. And in this, at least, the Head fully agreed with him.

"I guess it's finished," said Mr. Randall. "Only a few touches wanted now. Now, my dear doc., about the new boys. I've got twenty-six hours seven minutes to spare before I have to return to London, and I want to have the whole biz in full swing before then. What do you think of the adverts?"

"Impossible!"

"It is a splendid and up-to-date idea——"

"Out of the question!"

"Then we shall have to fall back upon the dodge of circularising the parents and guardians of your present pupils, and writing to all your acquaintances offering bonuses for the introduction of new business—I mean new pupils."

"Dear me!"

"You see, you must have the boys. The place is practically finished, and the furniture will be down to-night."

The Head stared.

"What!"

"The furniture will be down to-night—desks, blackboards, books, electric light fittings, everything."

"Dear me!"

"I wrote the order to the firm yesterday, to save time, and explained that, if wanted, I would confirm it by telegram to-day," explained Mr. Randall. "If not confirmed, it counted for nothing. That's an American way of saving time."

"But, really——"

"The furniture will be delivered to-night—indeed, it ought to be here by now. I am surprised that it hasn't come. Hallo, there's the lad I sent with the wire! I will speak to him. Come here, sonny!"

Billy Bunter came. As a matter of fact, he was looking for the Hustler.

"I say, Mr. Randall——"

"Did you send that wire all right?"

"I couldn't get a pass to go out, sir," said Billy Bunter. "Here's your tenpence."

Herbert Randall took the sixpence and four pennies mechanically.

"My—my tenpence! What do you mean?"

"The money you gave me for the telegram, sir."

"I gave you two shillings."

"Yes, but you told me I might keep the change for myself. I was to spend it in the tuck-shop in the village."

"But——" gasped Mr. Randall.

"As I couldn't get a pass out, I spent the money in the school shop instead," Billy Bunter explained. "Of course, as I couldn't send the telegram, I have brought you tenpence back, sir. I was looking for you when you called to me."

"You—you young——"

"Aren't you satisfied, sir? That's business, isn't it?"

Herbert P. Randall burst into a laugh.

"You young scamp! But it's true enough, and you're the only businesslike person I've met since I came back to the old potato-patch! Cut off!"

"I'm glad you're pleased!" said Billy Bunter. "I

thought it was business, you know; and if you'd like me to oblige you again——"

"Thanks, no! Buzz off!"

And the Owl of the Remove buzzed off. Dr. Locke had listened in silence, but with a visible expression of relief on his face.

"Now, Mr. Randall, I must speak to you seriously!"

"Ah, yes, about the circulars!" said Herbert P. "I'll draw them up this evening, and wire an order for the printing at the same time that I wire to the furniture firm. That young rascal has caused a delay, but it is really immaterial. The place will be fitted up in time for the new pupils."

"There will be no new pupils!"

"Quite a mistake; they will come in crowds! My dear doc., nobody will be able to resist a real American advertiser. I'm going to make your fortune here; as I have said, that is my mish. Now, what do you think of a circular beginning with a striking sentence something like this: 'Think school, and you think Greyfriars!' That will rather fetch 'em, I think!"

"Dear me!"

"Or a sentence like this: 'Take them away and send them to Greyfriars'? No need to be more explicit. They'll know what you mean—the boys at the other schools, you know, who would do better here."

"Really——"

"These are only rough ideas, but they give you a general conception of the scheme. Circulars like these, sent to all your old customers and as many new addresses as you can find——"

"Impossible!"

"Eh? Why is it imposs.?"

"Because I could not dream of degrading Greyfriars!"

"My dear doc., there is no degradation in real business!"

"Because—because—— Oh, it is no use arguing! The fact is, Mr. Randall, I can manage this college without assistance!"

"Oh, that's only a foolish old prejudice, you know! You can't, really!" said Mr. Randall, with perfectly unabashed coolness.

The Head gasped.

"Well, I prefer to think that I can," he said. "And, as for this ridiculous building——"

"Do you mean to say that you won't consent to the circularising?" asked Mr. Randall, looking rather downcast.

"Certainly not!"

"Nor the advertising?"

"Never!"

"But, in that case, there will be no new pupils to occupy this building?"

"Quite correct! I am only too glad that Bunter failed to send that telegram."

"I guess it's lucky, under the circs.," agreed Mr. Randall. "But, of course, the time and trouble expended on this place can't be wasted. Let me see——"

"I was thinking——"

"That's all right; I'll think it out! You're quite sure that you won't come into the advertising or circularising idea?"

"Quite sure, thank you!"

"The place could be turned into a boarding-house for visitors to this part of the country, and by advertising the healthy surroundings you could——"

"Impossible!"

"Well, I will think of something else, I guess!"

"Really, Mr. Randall——"

"Oh, leave it to me, and I'll think it out!" said Herbert P. Randall.

And he walked away, with his hands in his pockets, and a thoughtful frown on his face.

An hour later he looked into the Head's study.

"Can you spare a minute, sir?"

"Certainly!" said Dr. Locke patiently.

"I've only got twenty-five hours and three minutes odd seconds before I have to take the train back to London, so there's no time to waste. I've thought of a profitable use to which the new building can be put."

"Really——"

"It shall be turned into a private asylum for boys. You can advertise for boys of weak intellect to be received at moderate fees, under fatherly care, and taken as much loving care of as in their own homes. Private asylums pay when they are run on business lines. What do you think of the idea?"

"Nonsense!"

"You—you think my idea's nonsense?"

"Yes. And really——"

"Oh, very well; I'll have another try! But I can't guarantee that the whole expenditure of money will be

retrieved, if you carp at every idea like this. It looks to me as if I'd taken on too big a job in trying to wake up Greyfriars. There are some places so sleepy that you can't wake 'em up, and I'm beginning to think that this coll. is one of them."

And Mr. Randall retired, looking discouraged for the first time since he had started his awakening campaign at the old school.

The Head did not see him again till the morning. Mr. Randall had looked discouraged the previous night, but he had slept on it, and now the expression of his face told that he had a new idea.

"I've thought it out," he announced.

"Have you really?"

"Yes. Will you take a stroll in the Close before breakfast, doc., and I'll point out to you how the building can be used?"

The Head politely assented.

"You see, I have only fourteen hours five minutes before I have to get back to business, and I want to get the thing settled," explained Mr. Randall.

The Head breathed a sigh of relief at the prospect. In fourteen hours five minutes the storm which had so disturbed Greyfriars would have passed over.

"You see," said Herbert P. Randall eagerly, as they went out into the sunny Close, "I've thought the matter over in every aspect, and I've come to a conclusion that I think you will agree with me is simply ripping."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. The new building can be used for egg-raising——"

"What?"

"Egg-raising. You see the point? There's the building all ready—that's an asset. There's the Close; you can have half of it fenced off for a big chicken-run——"

"Dear me!"

"Hallo, there seems to be something the matter!" exclaimed Mr. Randall, noticing a giggling group of Removites, who were looking at him very curiously. "What is it, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"The new building," he said. "It's——"

"It's what?"

"Only fallen down!"

"Down!" ejaculated Mr. Randall.

"Yes. It's fallen down during the night."

Herbert P. Randall gave a gasp, and dashed off in the direction of the unfortunate structure. The Head followed more slowly.

"Jee—hosophat!"

"Dear me!" said the Head.

The building was indeed down. The night had been rather windy, and the flimsy structure, run up in a dozen hours, had fallen in ruins in as many minutes. Mr. Randall gazed at it in dismay.

"Well, my word!" he exclaimed.

"Quite American—eh?" said Dr. Locke, with a smile.

And for once Mr. Randall had nothing to say. But he quickly recovered himself.

"It's all right," he said; "I guess I can soon put that up again, and——"

Dr. Locke shook his head.

"Nothing of the sort! The materials can be made use of for a building now being constructed near here for a friend of mine; that will minimise the loss. But it will not be rebuilt here!"

"I guess——"

"I am quite firm on that point, Mr. Randall! Come in to breakfast!"

"Well, I guess I'm sorry I haven't been able to wake you up here," said Mr. Randall, when he shook hands with the doctor at parting. "I suppose you will go on in the same old humdrum way."

"I suppose so," assented the Head.

"Well, I'm sorry. But I suppose John Bull will never really wake up. That scheme of raising eggs in large quantities, now——"

"The trap is ready!"

"And of circularising all your old customers——"

"You will lose your train!"

"Oh, that's all right; I've allowed myself five seconds extra in case of accidents! Well, good-bye!"

And the hustler departed.

THE END.

(Another long, complete story of the Chums of Greyfriars next Tuesday, entitled: "The Remove Master's Substitute." Please order your MAGNET in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)

GRAND TALE OF ARMY LIFE.

READ THIS FIRST!

The story opens with a review of the Redminster Cadet Corps, led by young Lieutenant Jack Dashwood. The proceedings are interrupted when the Headmaster receives a telegram asking him to send Jack home at once, as his father—Colonel Sir Harry Dashwood—is dangerously ill. Dick Vivian goes with his chum, and soon after their arrival at the house the Colonel passes away. Finding he has been practically disinherited in favour of his Uncle Dominic and Cousin Leonard, Jack enlists in the 25th Hussars under the name of Howard, and is soon promoted to corporal. He fights Bill Sloggett, a recruit, and defeats him. Through this act he incurs the hatred of Alf Sligo, who swears to champion Sloggett. Tom has a shock when he hears that his cousin, Leonard, is attached to the 25th, as second lieutenant. Before long the latter succeeds in getting Jack deprived of his corporal's stripes. Soon after this, the saddles and leathers in "B" Squadron are repeatedly cut; and a cut stirrup-leather is found in Jack's kit-bag. "How did it get there?" asked the colonel "Surely you don't think, sir, that I placed it there?" replied Jack. (Now go on with the story.)

Dominic Dashwood's Mistake

"I don't think you placed it there, lad," said the colonel; "but it's a very strange thing, that while nearly all the saddles in your squadron have been tampered with, yours has not been touched. Have you an enemy in the regiment?"

Tom flushed redly, and the colonel saw his hesitation.

"Come, out with it, boy!" said the chief. "If you suspect anybody, then it's your duty to tell me."

Tom's mind had been oscillating between Bill Sloggett and his cousin, but the idea that Leonard Dashwood could have crept about the cavalry lines with a razor night after night, and done all that damage, was so preposterous that he dismissed him at once, and somehow he could not bring himself to accuse Bill Sloggett.

"I don't know, sir," he said at last. "Upon my honour, I don't know. All I can say is, that I am innocent of any complicity in this saddle cutting, and there's not a man in my troop who would dare to suspect me."

The regimental sergeant-major, who, in common with all the rest of the staff, had a strong liking for Tom Howard, looked the picture of misery. He had no solution to offer, and he felt that somehow the whole thing reflected on his capacity.

"I am sure, sir, that I can answer for Trooper Howard," he said. "Everything has been done that we can think of, sir, and I should like to resign my post. I was born in the regiment, and such a thing has never occurred before, and I can't bear it, sir—I can't bear it, indeed, sir!"

"Don't be a fool, Middleton!" said the colonel. "The thing is bad enough, but it's no good taking a sentimental view of it. What you've got to do is to help me find this rascal. You can go, sergeant-major. I want to have a word with Trooper Howard."

The sergeant-major saluted, and stalked off, and the colonel drew a step nearer to our hero.

"Now, Howard," he said, turning his keen, grey eyes on the lad, "I want you to consider me your friend. I don't know who you are, but I do know that you are a gentleman by birth. You made a fool of yourself the other day; but you must have seen that I made unusual allowances for you, and I treated the matter myself instead of sending you to court-martial. For the last time, what do you know of this business, or of anyone who is likely to be doing you a bad turn in the matter?"

"Colonel Greville," said Tom—and for a moment the tone of the voice confirmed the chief in his theory of their social equality—"there is only one man in the regiment who is likely to bear me a grudge. I am certain he has not done this cutting. In fact, I am convinced, because last night he and I were on guard together. You don't think that I am lying sir?"

And the tears sprang unbidden into Jack Dashwood's grey eyes, and his mouth quivered with indignation.

"No, Howard, I certainly do not," said the colonel. "I need not ask you to be on the alert, for I think the whole regiment is doing its best, but it makes me very sick to find a thing of this sort going on in the 25th, and I would willingly give a thousand pounds if I could sift the matter before it gets into the papers."

Then Tom returned to his blanket rolling, and the colonel, beckoning to the sergeant-major, ordered a special kit inspection, and examined every razor in the regiment, and remained just as wise as he was in the beginning

Tom was immediately surrounded by an inquiring group of comrades, all anxious to know what the "old man" had said; and through the group came Sergeant Clavering with an item of intelligence.

"Tom, do you know that that stirrup that Middleton raked out of your kit-bag was mine?" said the sergeant.

"The dickens it was!" said Tom, straightening his back. "Then I think that ought to be proof that I did not do it, Jim."

"Let me see the man that thought you did!" said Clavering, wringing Tom's hand.

"And let us all see the man that did the thing itself!" chorussed the others.

And before Tom knew what they were about, he was hoisted shoulder high and carried down the lines, his messmates singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!" until they met Lieutenant Dashwood, when they dropped him suddenly and all scurried back to their work.

The lieutenant strolled towards his cousin in order to receive the salute, knowing how it must gall Jack to give it; but the salute was accorded with due formality; and, if it was accompanied by a curl of the trooper's lips, the lieutenant was too wise to take any notice of it.

"Hang the fellow!" said Lieutenant Dashwood, as he strode to his quarters. "Shall I ever get even with him? I must play my game with the greatest possible caution. I know the colonel is down on me, though he cannot suspect anything, and to pretend that I am popular with my brother officers—a lot of supercilious cads—would be absurd."

He found two letters awaiting him, and, tossing his fatigue cap into the corner, he lit a cigar and opened the envelope nearest his hand. The contents brought beads of perspiration to the forehead of Leonard Dashwood.

"Confound it!" he muttered. "I'm in a dickens of a hat, and these people mean business!"

He read the letter again, and it certainly was not calculated to bring joy to the heart of a cavalry subaltern, especially if he had, as Leonard Dashwood had done, run through his allowance, overdrawn his account at the bank, and plunged heavily into debt.

"Sir," said the letter,—"We have made repeated applications for the settlement of our little account, and money being very tight with us just now, we shall be compelled, unless you keep your promise within the next twenty-four hours, to lay the matter before your father. We lent you £200, and, with the interest, the amount is now £350. Please accept this intimation as final, and do not put us to the trouble of employing other means.—We are, sir, yours faithfully,

HYMAN, ISAACS & Co."

Leonard Dashwood knew Messrs. Hyman, Isaacs & Co. to be the most unscrupulous moneylenders in London, and bitterly did he curse the day that he had placed himself in their clutches to pay a gambling debt contracted at Sandhurst.

"Great Scott! What shall I do?" he muttered. "I can't draw on the governor for another month, and if these blackguards go to him the old man's capable of stopping my screw altogether, cards and billiards being his pet aversion. Not that I think he would do that," continued Dominic Dashwood's son, with a curious smile. "I know too much. Still, the thing has got to be done somehow."

With a heavy sigh he took up the second letter, mechanically opened it and read it, and as he read his eyes dilated, and a strange expression came into his face.

He seized the envelope eagerly, and re-read the address. It was to himself, and in his father's handwriting; but the letter it contained had been put in by mistake, and a very singular letter it was, too, containing, moreover, five £10 notes, crisp from the Bank of England. The letter was one from his father to Dick Vivian. How Leonard hated Dick Vivian, for the mere fact that he had been his cousin's chum at Redminster! And as he read a new light came into his mind, and he ended by laughing—a strange, unmusical laugh.

"Sir," the letter read,—"Herewith enclosed you will find £50 in notes, which I am forwarding as usual for transmission to my nephew, John Dashwood. It may interest you to know that all your mutual attempts at concealing his whereabouts have proved futile. My son, Lieutenant Dashwood, has discovered him figuring as a common soldier in his regiment, the 25th Hussars. He will no doubt be pleased to learn that I know this.—I am, sir, yours faithfully,

"DOMINIC DASHWOOD."

The lieutenant held the notes and the letter in his perspiring fingers, and looked at them until they swam in a mist before his eyes. Then he poured some whisky into a tumbler, dashed it with potash from a syphon, and took a deep gulp.

"That's better," he said, setting down the empty glass. "Now I think I see more clearly."

And he did think for a good half hour, until the mess-bugle went, and in that half hour he had decided on a course of action which was destined to bear considerable fruit in the not far distant future. The next day Messrs. Hyman, Isaacs & Co. received a remittance on account—five crisp Bank of England notes—with a few scribbled lines from the client.

"I should say," laughed Mr. Hyman, looking across the oak table at his partner in iniquity, Mr. Isaacs—"I should say from his handwriting that our young gentleman is taking to drink."

"Ha, ha! I told you we should draw him with that threat about his father. I tell you, my dear Leonard Dashwood is always good for fifty pounds by return of post."

And that night it seemed as though Mr. Hyman's prophetic utterances were true, for Leonard Dashwood drank heavily at mess, and attended morning stables with an aching head and an expression on his face that his cousin had never seen before.

Leonard Dashwood was not the only one in the 25th to receive a missive that astonished him. On Monday morning Tom Howard got a letter from Dick Vivian, and it also had an enclosure. Surely Dominic Dashwood's wits must have been wool-gathering when he placed Dick Vivian's letter in his son's envelope, and sent his son's letter to our old friend Dick.

"I don't know whether the sky is falling or what is going to happen," wrote Dick to Trooper Howard. "When you have read this letter that I send, you can either hand it to its rightful owner or keep it at your own discretion. If it were mine, I should keep it."

And Tom kept it.

The lawyer's letter to his son began with a strong remonstrance of the folly of Leonard's extravagance, which had already begun to reach his father's ears from several quarters.

"Do not imagine that my wealth is inexhaustible," he concluded. "That last receipt is still missing, and if it falls into certain hands—though I admit that is most unlikely—the mine will be exploded."

It was that last paragraph that decided Trooper Tom Howard that the letter might prove of more ultimate benefit to himself than the advice would be to his cousin: and, folding it up very small, he placed it in the little pocket of the waist-belt of his trousers until he should have time to return it to Dick Vivian for safe keeping.

"Who knows," he thought, "what this may not mean? What is the mine that would explode? What is that last

receipt, and are mine the hands into which Uncle Dominic fears it might fall?"

While he was thus speculating he heard an uproar outside, and Jim Clavering, very excited, strode up to him and smote him on the shoulder.

"We have got the 'route,' Tom! There's a row on the North-West frontier, and they've moved the Blue Horse from Secunderabad up to Simla, and we are going out to relieve them three months before our time!"

"Great Scott! When do we go, Jim?" cried Tom.

"The end of the week, boy!"

"And, as far as I am concerned," said Tom, half aloud, "the sooner the better!"

There was loud cheering in the lines of the 25th Hussars that morning, and all parades were cancelled that the regiment might prepare for the sudden call for foreign service.

Tom was very busy all that day; but next morning he did a bold thing, and stopped the sergeant-major as he was about to enter the colonel's office.

"Great Scott, man," said that important functionary, "I have not a minute to call my own! What do you want?"

"Leave to run up to town, major," said Tom. "Put in a word to the colonel for me, there's a good chap. I will be down again in time for roll-call."

"Well, I'll see what I can do, but I won't promise you that you'll get it," said the sergeant-major, jingling into the presence of the colonel.

But Tom did get it, all the same; and hailing a cab outside the lines, drove like mad to the station, just in time to catch the up-train.

As the train flew through the heather-covered country and passed the sombre pinelands, Tom sat in the corner of an empty third-class carriage, wrapped in a brown study. The lawyer's letter which had so strangely come into his possession, had opened up the whole question of his father's estates, and went far to confirm Jack Dashwood's conviction that his Uncle Dominic had been guilty of double dealing. At the same time there was no proof—and without proof he could do nothing—much less on the eve of foreign service, when five days would see him on board ship, with the certainty of twelve years expatriation before him. Still, it was necessary that he should see Dominic Dashwood, who was sole executor; and as Dick's movements were very uncertain, and he was only waiting for an appointment to some regiment that might be quartered at Nova Scotia or Timbuctoo, Jack's little income would have to be sent direct to the regiment now.

When the train reached Waterloo, Jack Dashwood sought the nearest post-office, and, unfolding the letter, made a fair copy of its contents, which he placed in the breast-pocket of his serge, and, getting into a hansom, bade the driver take him to Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Mr. Dominic Dashwood's offices were in one of those grand old houses on the western side of the fields.

On the doorpost, in white letters, which had turned yellow with age, was painted the legend, "Mr. Dominic Dashwood, Solicitor, Commissioner for Oaths," and the second door on the left bore the words, "Clerks' Office," on the fanlight.

"Is Mr. Dashwood in?" asked Jack.

And the head clerk, who had only seen Jack once, but who was gifted with that remarkable memory which is possessed by so many lawyer's head clerks, smiled in a doubtful kind of way, and laid down his pen.

"Sir John Dashwood, is it not?" he smiled.

"That is my name," said the trooper.

"If you will step into the waiting-room, I will tell Mr. Dashwood that you are here."

And Jack was ushered into a narrow slip of an apartment, which was in reality a passage, and the clerk disappeared behind a red baize door.

"Will you step this way?" said the clerk.

With his white gloves and his riding-whip in his hand, Jack marched through an inner room, where three confidential clerks looked up from their work, and exchanged glances, and through yet another baize door led him into the holy of holies, and, stepping on to a soft Turkey carpet that deadened the jingle of his spurs, he found himself in the presence of his Uncle Dominic.

The lawyer sat at a roll-top desk, strewn with papers and oblong packets tied with red tape.

"So you have come at last?" he said, in a dry, non-committal sort of voice. "Sit down."

"Thanks, I won't sit down," said Jack. "But I have come at last, as you say, and I think it is probably for the last time, too. We are for India on Saturday morning, and I want to see you about my money, which you had better forward to me direct."

"You had better sit down," said Mr. Dashwood, still very calm. "I should like to have a few words with you. How are you getting on? How do you like your calling?"

Jack leaned his elbow on the carved mantelpiece, and looked at his uncle. The lawyer was struck with the change in his nephew's appearance. Always sturdy and athletic in his build, he had filled out and seemed to have grown, and presented a remarkably handsome figure in his well-fitting uniform. But it was the expression of his face that arrested Dominic Dashwood's attention; the curious dilation of the pupils of his eyes as Jack looked at him, and the smile that had considerable meaning as it played about the firm mouth.

"My likes and dislikes cannot concern you overmuch," said Jack, "and I have very little time at my disposal. I don't propose to waste it in idle words. I suppose my cousin has told you that I did not enlist in my own name?"

"Yes, I understand you figure under an 'alias,'" said the lawyer, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice. "Thomas Howard, is it not?" And he wrote it down on a tablet before him. "You have also a number, I think?"

"I have also a number," said Jack; "3,842, to which you can add, 25th Hussars, Secunderabad."

Dominic Dashwood's pen travelled quickly over the table.

"Very well," he said. "Your allowance will be duly forwarded. Have you anything else to say?"

"Yes, just this. That your last remittance never reached me."

"You had better consult your friend Vivian about that," said the lawyer quickly. "I sent it to him myself—five ten-pound notes." And he rang a bell.

The baize door opened noiselessly, and a clerk appeared.

"Did you take the letters to the post on Friday night, Wilcox?"

"I did, sir!"

"You make a point of reading the addresses?"

"I do, sir!"

"I wrote two letters on my private notepaper. Can you remember to whom they were directed?"

"One was to Mr. Leonard Dashwood, and the other was to Mr. Vivian."

"That will do." The baize door closed again

Dominic Dashwood turned his revolving chair round, and looked at Jack.

"Are you satisfied?" he said.

"I am satisfied that you made a mistake, Dominic Dashwood," said Jack, fumbling in the breast of his serge. "Dick Vivian certainly heard from you, but you must have put the letters in the wrong envelopes. Perhaps you will recognise this copy of the letter he received?" And Dick placed the copy of the letter he had made in the post-office on the desk in front of the lawyer.

To say that Dominic Dashwood turned pale would be to understate the fact. A wave of greeny-grey passed over his face, and he, reading the lines, swiftly crumpled them up in his hands, and sprang out of his chair.

Jack's eyes sparkled, and his under lip quivered with something very like merriment.

(Another long instalment of this thrilling story next week. Please order your copy of the "Magnet" Library in advance.)

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