

WHY DO THE JUNIORS LAUGH SO?

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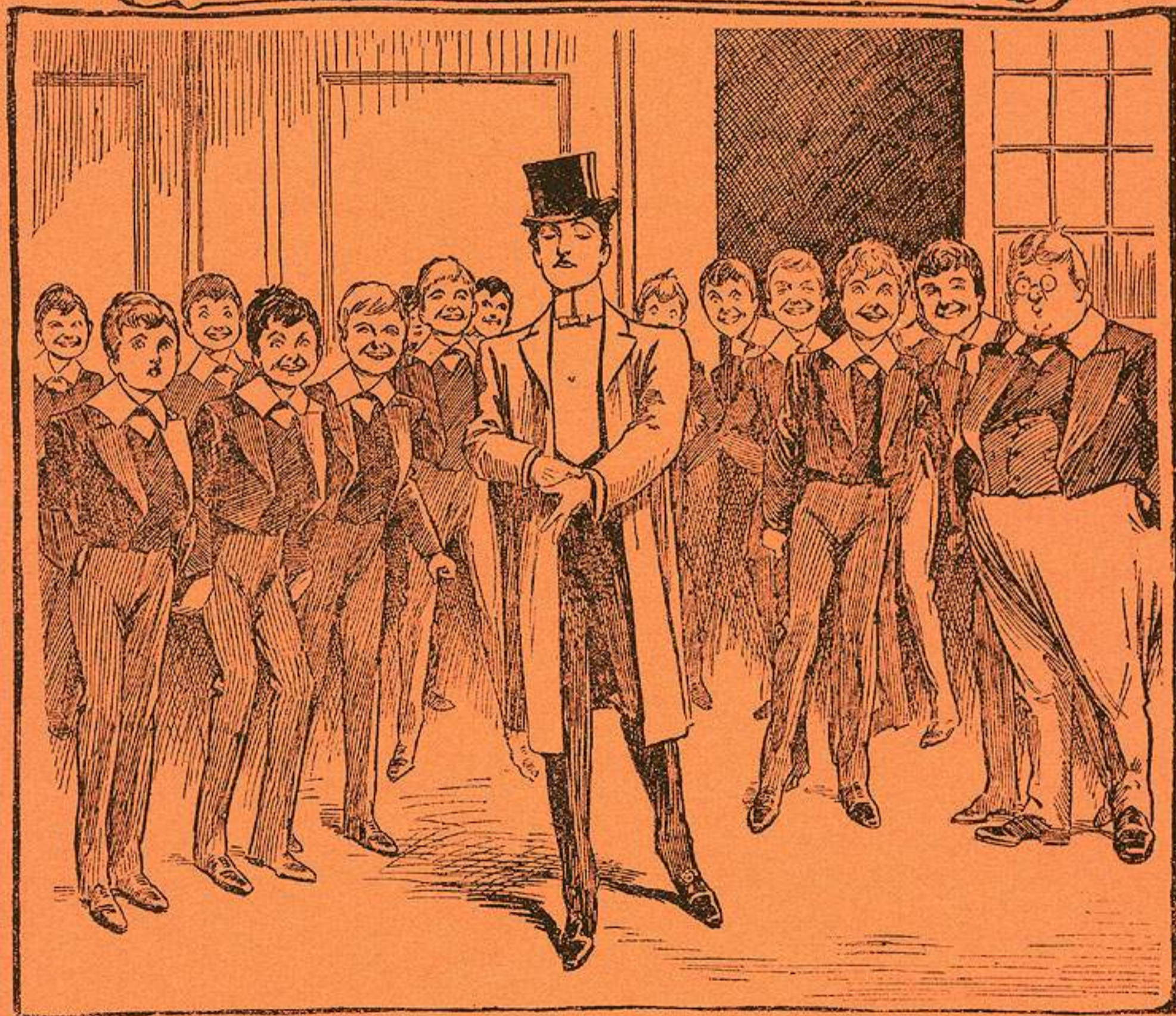
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COMPLETE
STORY
FOR ALL

A SCHOOL TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & CO.
THE NEW SIXTH-FORMER.

By
FRANK
RICHARDS



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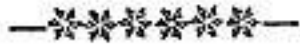
ONE HALFPENNY



The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book to a friend when finished with.

The New Sixth-Former

A Tale of
**Harry Wharton and his
Chums at Greyfriars.**



THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The New Sixth-Former.

"HAVE you seen him?"

"Who?"

"Him!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, of the Greyfriars Remove, were examining the football ground, to see whether it would be humanly possible to play on it after the last few days' vile weather, when Bob Cherry came up, grinning almost from ear to ear, and propounded that query.

"Him!" said Wharton, looking puzzled.

"There are a good many 'hims' at Greyfriars, I believe, Bob. Which particular 'him' are you referring to?"

"Is he a 'him' ancient or modern?" queried Nugent.

"Him!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"There's only one him at present who is attracting particular attention, and that's—him!"

"But who is it?"

"The new chap in the Sixth."

"Haven't noticed him," said Wharton carelessly. "Blessed if I can see what a new chap in the Sixth matters to us. A new chap in the Lower Fourth would matter. But how did a new chap come right into the Sixth, by the way?"

"Oh, of course, he's been to another school before. I hear that he's great guns on Greek—as, of course, he would be, as he's a Greek himself. But you should see him—he's a ripper. There are some dressy fellows in the Fifth and Sixth, but Ionides—that's his name—knocks them all into a cocked hat. But you must come and see him for yourselves. He will surprise you."

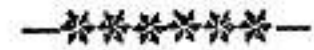
"Well, we sha'n't get any footer," said Wharton; "the ground's too rotten. We may as well go in, Frank."

"Good. Follow the ball!"

Nugent, who had a ball under his arm, dropped it, and kicked it as it rose—a neat drop-kick that sent it a third of the way to the school-house. The three juniors ran merrily after



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS.**



it, shouldering one another off the ball and keeping it going gaily.

"Look out!" shouted Bob Cherry, suddenly.

Wharton and Nugent had overtaken the bounding ball together, and were kicking at the same moment, too busy just then to notice that two seniors were crossing their path. The two were Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and a slim, dark-skinned fellow, dressed with the greatest elegance, and who carried himself with a somewhat mincing gait. He was an undeniably handsome fellow, though somewhat effeminate in appearance to a British eye, and at a glance it could be seen that he was a foreigner. He held his nose well in the air, and there was a lurking suspicion of patronage in his manner as he looked about him. It was evident that the new fellow in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars had an excellent opinion of himself.

The contrast between the big, rugged Wingate and the slim, scented Greek was very striking, but it was all in Wingate's favour. There was nothing effeminate about the captain of Greyfriars. He was showing the new fellow round the school, but it was not likely that he felt much fellowship towards him.

"That's the gym," he was saying. "We're rather proud of our gym here at Greyfriars. I don't know whether you go in for gymnastics much."

"Not at all," said Ionides. "Gymnastics, I find, are a bore. I—"

It was at this moment that Wharton and Nugent kicked the ball. Their boots struck the ball together, and it flew up like a stone from a catapult, and then there was a terrific yell from Ionides.

"Oh! Waroooooch!"

"My—my hat!" gasped Nugent. "We've done it now!"

"Goal!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

The spinning leather had landed fairly upon the Greek's chin, and he was bowled over like a ninepin.

He sat down in the Close—and as misfortunes never come singly, he sat down in the very place where the rain had collected in a deep puddle.

There was a sounding splash!

It was followed by a wail of anguish from Ionides. He was not much hurt. But he was simply smothered in mud, and his elegant clothes were a picture of uncleanness. There were splashes of muddy water on his dark face and on his previously spotless collar.

He hardly knew what had happened for the moment, and he sat in the puddle staring blankly. Wingate stared at him and grinned. He could not help it. It was rough on Heracles Ionides, but it was very funny; and the expression upon his face was the funniest of all.

Harry Wharton ran up, contrite enough, and determined not to laugh. Ionides ought to have seen the ball coming and dodged it, as Wingate would have done; but he had been carrying his nose too high in the air to think of anything of the sort.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry!" exclaimed Harry. "It was quite an accident. Let me help you up."

He gave his hand to the Greek. Ionides staggered to his feet. But the dazed look was gone from his face, and a glare of fury had replaced it. Effeminate and dandified Ionides might be, but there was a passionate Southern strain in his nature. His black eyes were blazing with rage. He turned upon Wharton like a tiger, grasped him savagely, and commenced to strike him without mercy.

"Take that!" he hissed. "And that! I will teach you. It was a trick—it was done on purpose! Scoundrel, take that!"

Wharton was too much taken by surprise by the savage attack to resist for a moment. But he began to struggle furiously, and threw off the Greek. He faced the new Sixth-Former with a blaze in his eyes.

"Hands off, confound you!" he exclaimed. "What the dickens do you mean?"

Ionides snapped his white teeth.

"Ah! I will thrash you—I will——"

"Oh, hold on!" exclaimed Wingate, seizing the Greek by the arm. "We don't allow that sort of thing here, you know. You can't pitch into a junior like that."

"I—I will kill him!"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Cut off, Wharton!"

Wharton was breathing hard. Although he was only in the Remove—the Lower Fourth—he was the finest athlete in the Lower Forms, and he would not have been unwilling to take on the Greek, Sixth-Former as he was. He thought he could, at least, have given a good account of himself in a tussle with the over-dressed, scented fop. But the captain of Greyfriars pushed him away.

"Cut off!" he said crisply.

"Oh, very well!" said Harry; and he walked away. Nugent picked up the football and followed him. Bob Cherry chuckled as he joined them.

"Well, that's the new chap," he remarked. "What do you think of him?"

Harry gritted his teeth.

"I think he's a cad and a bully!"

"Not far wrong, either. But did you ever see a chap dressed like that? And he uses scent—he reeks of it at a dozen yards off!"

"He will have to learn to keep his paws off the Remove, or there will be trouble for him at Greyfriars!" growled Harry.

And Wingate was speaking in the same strain to his new Form-fellow. The Greek, with a sullen face, was wiping the mud off his clothes with a cambric handkerchief.

"That sort of thing won't do, Ionides," said Wingate, in his terse way. "What do you mean by going for a junior like a tiger-cat? You might easily have done him injury, thumping his head like that. You'll have to learn to control your temper."

"I shall not take lessons from you!" snapped the Greek.

Wingate looked him up and down.

"I am the captain of this school," he said. "I dare say you don't know our customs much, but I warn you that the head of the Sixth expects to be listened to with respect, and to have his advice followed. You will take lessons from me, if I choose to give 'em, and you won't give me any surly answers, or there will be trouble!" And the Greyfriars captain turned on his heel and strode away.

The Greek muttered something beneath his breath in his own language, and it was something very uncomplimentary to Greyfriars and all who dwelt therein.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Decides to Stand a Feed.

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove, met Harry Wharton and his chums as they came in with his usual greeting. There was a troubled expression upon the fat face of William George Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What the dickens is the trouble now? Have you lost a threepenny-bit, or has the fiat gone forth that you are to wash your neck of a morning—or what is it?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry, I don't know what's to be done—I'm in an awful fix."

The chums of the Remove stopped. Billy Bunter was their study-mate, when they had a study. At present, like the rest of the Greyfriars Remove, they were in what Nugent described as a studyless condition.

There had been a fire at Greyfriars on the first day of the term, and the Remove had been burnt out.

The dormitory and the row of studies tenanted by that lively Form had been reduced to cinders; and although the workmen were busy clearing the ruins away for the rebuilding to proceed, it was likely to be some time before the Removites had permanent quarters again.

The Remove felt it keenly. Several lumber rooms on the top floor had been cleared out to provide them with sleeping accommodation. Studies they could not have. They had to do their preparation in the junior common-room or the Form-room, and study feeds were a thing of the past. The Removites turned up to tea in Hall, greatly envious of the Upper Fourth, who still had their studies and enjoyed private and cosy teas therein.

It was upon Billy Bunter that the blow fell most heavily.

Bunter was accustomed to getting up great feeds in No. 1 Study, and he would borrow the cash of anybody for that purpose. Generally the Famous Four stood the expense, and Bunter did the cooking. But now that the study was gone, and there was no immediate prospect of getting another, Bunter was "done." He went about with a lengthy countenance, and his woes became a common joke in the Lower School. Temple of the Upper Fourth compared him to Rachel, while Dabney was of opinion that he more resembled Niobe. And frequently, indeed, the voice of Bunter was heard bewailing his lost feeds, and refusing to be comforted.

"I'm in an awful fix, you fellows——"

"Cut it short," said Harry Wharton tersely. "What's the trouble?"

"It's about the study. I was thinking of getting up a little bit of a feed this evening—we haven't had a feed for such a long time—and there's nowhere to cook it. I've asked Temple to let me cook it in his study."

"And what did he say?"

"Never mind what he said—it was something very rude. I can't cook it in an Upper Fourth study. Of course, it's no good asking the Shell or the Fifth. They'd take it as cheek."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"The difficulty is, what's to be done? I should think you fellows were getting ready for a decent meal, after having tea in Hall for three days running."

"Well, the tea in Hall isn't so bad," said Wharton, laughing. "But a cosy study feed would be all right, all the same. We could manage it. But what has happened? Is it raining cash, or has your celebrated postal-order come?"

"I don't see why you should call it a celebrated postal-order, as if there were only one of it," said Bunter peevishly. "I'm expecting a postal-order just now for a rather decent amount, but there has been some delay in the post. But about the feed—what do you suggest?"

"Nothing."

"I think you fellows might stand by a chap in your own study at a time like this. I was thinking of standing a really ripping feed this time, if I can only find a place to cook it. Can't you suggest anything?"

"Ask Hoskins. He'd do anything for you if you'd listen to him playing the piano."

Bunter looked thoughtful.

"Well, yes, there's Hoskins. But the beast has lately set up a mandoline, and he may want to play that."

"Well, why shouldn't he? He's more harmless with a mandoline than with a piano. Stop your cars and stick it out, and he'll let you use his study."

"Good; I'll try. But if I manage to get round Hoskins, how about the feed?"

"Oh, we'll come."

"Yes, rather. You can rely on us."

"I—I don't mean that, exactly. Of course, I want you to come. But unfortunately my postal order has been a little delayed. I'm going to inquire about it at the post-office when I'm in Friardale to-morrow, but just now I'm short of the ready money. I was thinking that you fellows might put up five bob each——"

ANSWERS

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON'S CAMPAIGN."

A Grand School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.

"You will have to get a new thinker, old chap, and start again."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Seriously, it's not a bad wheeze," said Nugent. "We do want a study feed, you know, and if we could borrow a study to have it in—"

"Oh, we don't want to hold the feed in Hoskins's study," said Bunter quickly. "He would want to come, and all his friends. You know he has Mole, Maddison, and Turner in his study, and we can't have the whole Shell to the feed. If we cook in the study, that's all we want. We can have the feed in the lower box-room."

"Well, you ought to ask Hoskins, if you use his study."

"If you like—though it's a waste—we'll have Hoskins by himself, then. But about the funds—I'm willing to do all the shopping. I don't mind how much trouble I take so long as—"

"So long as you get a feed."

"Oh, really, Nugent! I was going to say, so long as I make you chaps comfy."

"After generosity like that, we can't do better than stand the tin," said Wharton, laughing. "Here's my five."

The juniors were pretty flush at the beginning of the term. The cash was forthcoming, and Bunter received it with great satisfaction.

"Of course, it's understood that I'm standing this feed," he remarked. "Shall I let you have this back out of my postal order when it comes, or put it down to the old account?"

"Whichever you like," said Bob Cherry. "It amounts to the same thing, you know."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz off, old chap, and let us know when the feed's ready."

And the chums of the Remove went in. They felt rather stranded without a study of their own to go to. They went into the junior common-room, which was pretty full. The weather was cold, and the football ground unplayable that afternoon. In the common-room there was a bright fire and comfortable chairs. Wun Lung and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were playing chess on a table near the fireplace. Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, was reading near them. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth were discussing some matter apparently of great interest, to judge by their excited looks and tones.

"Catch me standing it," said Temple heatedly.

"Oh, rather," said Dabney.

"No fear," chimed in Fry. "The chap's off his rocker."

"Must be! Of course it's all right to fag the Remove! The Remove are only born to be fagged."

"But the Upper Fourth—well, my hat!"

"The chap's off his rocker; that's the only explanation. He only came yesterday afternoon, and he's started this already. The nerve!"

"The check!"

"He's a giddy Greek, and I suppose he's a sort of fish out of water here. But we're not going to stand any of his bosh, I can tell him."

"Rather not."

And Temple, Dabney & Co. looked very determined. Harry Wharton and his chums exchanged glances. The new fellow in the Sixth had evidently been getting on the wrong side of the Upper as well as the Lower Fourth.

"Did they want to fag him, then?" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "And wouldn't he let them do it?"

Temple glared at him.

"Oh, you shut up," he said. "Catch us fagging! The Upper Fourth never fags! That's for the Remove and the Third."

"Well, the Remove doesn't fag much," said Harry. "I've never fagged. But is it a fact that the Greek is trying to fag you?"

"Oh, rather."

"Wanted me to run his errands," said Temple excitedly. "Mo—captain of the Upper Fourth—told me to go down to the village, and spoke as if I were a dog! Why, I wouldn't have spoken to a Third Form kid as he spoke to me—and I'm captain of the Upper Fourth! Captain of the—"

"Yes, we know you're captain of the Upper Fourth," said Nugent scoldingly. "Don't keep on like a gramophone with only one record, old chap. It strikes me that this Greek bouncer wants sitting on, hard."

"And what do you think he wanted me to fetch?" shrieked Temple. "You'd never guess in a month of Sundays."

"Well, what was it?"

"A bottle of Binker's Patent Face Wash," said Temple. "Fancy me—captain of the Upper Fourth—going into a shop and asking for a bottle of face wash. A bottle of face wash—face wash, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha."

"It's no laughing matter. Of course I didn't go."

"And what did he say?"

"Blessed if I know—I haven't seen him since."

"Phew! He'll come to look for you."

"Let him," said Temple recklessly. "I don't care! I'm not going to fag, and I'm not going to fetch face wash for anybody! Dandified moucher! Fancy a fellow of more'n seven-

teen being such a silly ass! Face wash, you know! Face wash! Me, captain of the Upper fourth, going into a shop and asking for face wash! I'm not going—he can come and look for me if he likes! I'll tell him—"

Temple broke off suddenly.

A lithe form had appeared in the doorway, and a dark face looked into the room. It was the face of Heracles Ionides. And a sudden silence fell upon the juniors.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bully and the Remove.

IONIDES glanced over the crowd of juniors, not understanding the hush that had fallen upon the room. His eyes fell upon Temple, and he beckoned to him. The captain of the Upper Fourth did not stir.

"Temple! Come here! Have you fetched what I sent you for?"

"No," said Temple, drawing a deep breath.

Ionides looked surprised.

"Why have you not fetched it?"

"You can't fag the Upper Fourth."

A very unpleasant expression came over the senior's face. "Indeed! I am new to Greyfriars, but I asked Wingate, and he told me that all Forms below the Shell could be fagged," he said. "I think you are mistaken, my good Temple. I think I can fag you, and I shall fag you. I think you will get into trouble if you don't obey my orders, my good Temple."

There was something "catty" about the Greek's manner; something spiteful and hard, and yet effeminate. He came into the room.

"Then you have not been to the village at all?" he asked

"No," said Temple, between his teeth.

"And you are not going?"

"No. If you asked me to fetch a football, or anything like that—but I wouldn't go into a shop and ask for face wash for the Head himself."

The Greek coloured a little.

"You will do as I tell you," he said in a biting voice, "or you will suffer! I give you a chance to obey! Are you going?"

Temple was silent for a moment. The fellow was a foreigner, and he despised him. But to stand out against direct orders from a Sixth-Former was a bold undertaking. Every eye in the room was on Temple, and he felt that he could not retreat.

"No!" he said.

Ionides waited for no more. He grasped Temple and struck him savagely. There was a supple strength in the wiry Greek, and though Temple was a sturdy fellow, he had no chance. But Ionides had not to deal with him alone. In a second Dabney and Fry fastened on the senior, and he was dragged off.

"Easy does it!" said Dabney.

The Greek turned on the juniors like a tiger. A wave of the passionate rage he had shown towards Wharton in the Close seemed to sweep over him. He struck out with clenched fist, and Dabney rolled under the table, felled like a tree under the woodman's axe.

There was a cry of indignation from the juniors

"Shame!"

Ionides took no notice of it. He was dealing a second crashing blow at Fry, when Harry Wharton sprang forward and struck up his arm. The Greek staggered with the force of his own blow as it met with no resistance, and nearly fell. Temple gave him a shove at the right moment, and he went reeling to the floor.

His fall was the signal for a general rush.

The juniors, angry and indignant, simply piled on him, and Ionides disappeared under a heap of arms and legs.

He gasped hoarsely under the juniors, struggling wildly and uttering furious threats; but they had him down, and they meant to keep him there. Dabney crawled out from under the table, looking dazed.

"Let me up! Let me up!" shrieked Ionides, and a string of savage threats followed. "Let me up!"

"What is all this?"

It was a cold, hard voice at the door. It sent a shiver through the juniors. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was looking in with glinting eyes.

The juniors scrambled off the Greek as if he had suddenly become red-hot.

"Is it possible that you have attacked a senior in this manner—and a new boy, too!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "Ionides, I hope you are not hurt."

"I am hurt."

"It is disgraceful. Boys—!"

"If you please, sir—" began Harry Wharton.

"Silence, sir! I am very much surprised to see you helping in such a display of hooliganism," said Mr. Quelch. "Every boy concerned in this disgraceful affair will take a hundred lines."

"Oh, sir—"

"Not a word!"

And Mr. Quelch marched off with a frowning brow. Ionides, too dusty and ruffled to think of pursuing the dispute with Temple any further, followed him. The juniors would have hissed him, but for the presence of the Form master. They exchanged angry and rueful looks.

"The rotten bully!" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose it looked rather bad to Quelch, but it was all the rotter's own fault."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "I think we shall be upfully against the honourable rotter after this, my worthy chums."

Harry Wharton gritted his teeth.

"He will have to learn that he can't treat the juniors like this," he said. "Why, he's a worse beast than Carberry, and he is bad enough. It's the Remove up against Ionides, and I think we'll make him sing small."

The Greek had certainly made a bad start as far as the Lower Forms were concerned. But he cared little for that. His face was dark with rage as he made his way to his study. His room was next to Carberry's, and the latter was standing at his door as the new senior came along. He looked at him curiously.

"Been in the wars?" he grinned.

The Greek scowled, and swung past without a word. He went into his study and shut the door hard. Carberry chuckled.

In his room the Greek calmed down somewhat. He stopped before a large cheval glass and looked at his reflection there. Cheval glasses were not, we need hardly say, provided by Greyfriars for the Sixth Formers. That, and many other articles of furniture, had been sent in by Ionides at his own expense. The study was richly furnished compared with the rest in the Sixth Form passage. There were no exercisers or punching-balls to be seen, never a football, not a cricket-bat. The Greek found athletics a "bore."

But a silver cigarette-case was on the mantelpiece, and there were liqueurs in the little inlaid cabinet which any boy would have been better without. Ionides was the son of a rich Greek resident in London, and he had an almost unlimited allowance—one of the worst possible things a boy can have. He spent his money with profusion, and in the twenty-four hours he had already been at Greyfriars, he had found friends among a set of fellows who were willing to put up with his airs for the sake of his hospitality.

Ionides looked in the glass, and muttered something in Greek as he saw that one of his eyes was slightly discoloured. He stripped off jacket and waistcoat, and went to the washstand in the alcove beside the bed. The seniors at Greyfriars had bed-room and study in one, instead of sleeping in dormitories like the Lower Form boys.

Then an angry exclamation left his lips. There was no hot water tap in the study, of course, and Ionides did not like cold water. He went to the door and looked into the passage. Carberry was still standing at his door, and he grinned at his new Form-fellow.

"Where can I get some hot water?" asked the Greek.

"You look as if you had been in hot water already," grinned Carberry.

"Bah! I did not ask for jokes. I want hot water."

"Take your jug and go downstairs, and ask the cook," said Carberry. "She may give you some if she feels like it. We don't have hot water here."

"I cannot wash in cold water."

"Rats!" said Carberry.

"I cannot go down with the jug. It is absurd!"

"Go without, then."

"Cannot you fetch it for me?"

Carberry looked at him.

"Is that a joke?" he asked. "Or do you think you can get a Sixth Former to fag for you? For two pins I'd wipe up the passage with you."

The Greek shrank back a little. He could bully a Remove boy, but he did not want to quarrel with a burly senior like Carberry. Skinner of the Remove came along the passage whistling, and Ionides turned and called to him.

"Here, boy! Fetch me some hot water."

Skinner stopped and stared at him. He did not feel inclined to refuse, and he felt still less inclined to go about Greyfriars with a jug searching for hot water. But Ionides was looking dangerous.

"Gimme the jug," said Skinner.

Ionides handed him the jug out of his room. Skinner took it, and started along the passage. His foot slipped on the linoleum, and he went down with a bump. The jug smashed to fragments on the hard floor.

Skinner sat up, with an excellently-simulated expression of dismay on his face.

"By George! Look there!"

"Oh, fool, fool!" exclaimed Ionides. "Find another jug."

Skinner scuttled off. The Greek waited impatiently, but Skinner did not return. Carberry was grinning; his grin

grew into a laugh, his laugh into a roar. Ionides looked at him savagely.

"Why do you laugh?" he exclaimed. "Do you think that the boy will not return?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I know he won't."

And Carberry went into his room and slammed the door, still laughing. He was right, Skinner did not return. Ionides waited for him for some minutes longer, and then went into his study with burning eyes. It was useless to go forth in search of an elusive junior who would certainly keep out of the way, and the Greek was forced to consume his own wrath. But he muttered threats in his own language that boded ill to Skinner and to the rest of the Remove.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Suffers in Vala!

PONG, pang, pong pang, pong!

Billy Bunter heard the sounds as he came along the Shell passage at Greyfriars, and his fat face brightened in expression. He had decided to take the advice of the chums of the Remove, and endeavour to soften the heart of Hoskins, and obtain the use of his study for cooking the feed. He had been shopping, and the good things he had bought at Mrs. Mumble's shop were stacked in a big bag, which he was carrying as he came down the passage. If Hoskins allowed him to cook in the study, all was serene.

Billy Bunter tapped at the door, but received no reply. Hoskins was pang-ponging away at the mandoline, and had no ears for anything else. Bunter tapped again, and then opened the door without further ceremony and stepped in.

"I say, Hoskins——"

Hoskins of the Shell was alone in the study. The sound of the mandoline was sufficient evidence of that, for Mole, Maddison, or Turner—his study mates—would never have stood it. The Shell fellows did not like mandoline practice at close quarters, and Maddison had solemnly promised to smash the thing over Hoskins's head if he ever started playing it except when he had the study to himself. And Hoskins had taken the hint.

Hoskins looked up. He was sitting by the window, mandoline and plectrum in hand, and pink-ponking away industriously.

"Get out!" he said.

"I say, Hoskins, I want to speak to you——"

"Get out!"

"I—I was wondering if you'd play me something on the mandoline, Hosky," said Bunter meekly. "I should like to hear a sonata, or a symphony, or something, on the mandoline——"

Hoskins burst into a laugh. He hadn't a very well developed sense of humour—musicians like Hoskins seldom have—but the idea of a sonata or a symphony on a mandoline struck him as funny.

"You young ass——"

"Well, you know, you play so rippingly," said Bunter. "I was thinking that if you'd play me something, Hoskins, I'd like you to come to a feed I'm standing to some of the Remove."

"I'm not in the habit of going to Remove feeds," said the Shell boy loftily.

"But this will be a ripper—rabbit-pie, beefsteak pudding, Christmas pudding, and mince-pies, apples and oranges and cakes and cream puffs."

"I shouldn't mind coming."

"Bacon and sausages and chips and——"

"I'll come with pleasure."

"Good! The only thing is we should have to cook the things in your study, as ours has been burnt down, you know. I suppose you wouldn't mind us doing the cooking here, would you, Hoskins?"

"Oh, rats! I'm not going to have my study turned into a

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"HARRY WHARTON'S CAMPAIGN."

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Harry Wharton & Co

kitchen for a lot of Remove kids!" growled Hoskins. "Get out! I'm practising."

"You could play me something while I'm doing the cooking, and—"

"Well, it would do you good to hear some decent music," said Hoskins. "You don't care for it, though. I remember I offered to play you my latest sonata on Mr. Quelch's piano yesterday, and you wouldn't come."

"I—I hadn't thought then about cooking in your study—I—I mean I'm sorry. I was an ass, and no mistake!" stammered Bunter. "I should awfully like to hear you playing a tune on that instrument."

"I was playing a tune when you came in."

"Were you? I—I didn't notice. I—I mean, of course you were, and a jolly ripping one it was too." Bunter caught sight of a piece of music with the heading "Alice, Where Art Thou?" and thought he was on safe ground. "Of course, I know that old tune, and I recognised it as I came along the passage."

"What old tune?"

"'Alice, Where Art Thou?'—the tune you were playing, you know."

Hoskins glared.

"I was playing the football song, 'On the Ball,' arranged as a mandoline solo," he said unpleasantly.

"Oh—oh—I—I—I—"

"You don't know what you're talking about," said Hoskins disdainfully. "You haven't an ear."

Bunter put his hand up to his head, as if to feel whether his auricular appendages were still there. They seemed all right, and he couldn't understand in the least what Hoskins was driving at.

"I—I have," he said, "I've got two, Hoskins. My ears are all right."

"Ass! I mean you've no ear for music."

"Oh, I see! But I say, you fellows—I mean, I say, Hoskins, I should like to hear you play 'Alice, Where Art Thou?' on the mandoline."

"Well, I dare say it will improve your mind," said Hoskins. "Would you rather I played 'Alice,' or a little thing of my own?"

"I—I don't really mind which, Hoskins. Which ever you play, I'm pretty certain it will be ripping."

Hoskins made no reply. He took up the mandoline, and began playing, with his eyes turned up towards the ceiling, and a far-away expression upon his face.

Bunter watched him with awe and admiration in his looks. But he was a little puzzled as to which Hoskins was playing—'Alice,' or the little thing of his own. As Hoskins was not looking at the music, he probably wasn't playing 'Alice.' It didn't sound like the tune Bunter remembered, either. The fat junior came to the conclusion that Hoskins was playing the little thing of his own, and when the Shell musician had finished pink-ponking at last, Bunter burst into a rhapsody of admiring wonder.

"My word, Hosky! It's wonderful!"

"Well, I think I play the instrument rather well," said Hoskins.

"Yes, but fancy making all that up yourself, too!" said Bunter.

Hoskins gave him a freezing glare.

"You ass! It was Ascher wrote 'Alice,'" he said.

Bunter's heart sank. He was wrong, after all. In the confusion of the moment he put his foot in it worse than ever.

"Was—was—was that 'Alice?'" he stammered.

"You shrieking idiot!" said Hoskins.

"I—I—I don't know the tune very well," said Bunter apologetically. "You must excuse my ignorance, you know, Hoskins. We can't all be great musicians."

"Well, I suppose there's something in that," said Hoskins, his face clearing a little. "You are an utter idiot, but I dare say it improves your mind to hear really good music. I'll play you a march if you like."

"Is it a long one? I—I mean, I should like to hear it."

Hoskins did not deign to reply, but he struck up on the mandoline. This time, like the famous Macpherson Clonglocketty Angus McClun, of the "Bab Ballads," he succeeded in "eliciting something resembling a tune." So far as it sounded like anything, it sounded like the prelude to the last act of "Carmen," and the Toreador song from the same opera mixed together, with a dash of the "Soldiers' Chorus" from "Faust" and a smack of the "Washington Post." Hoskins stopped at last, and looked triumphantly at the fat junior.

"There, what do you think of that?" he demanded.

"Ripping!" said Bunter heartily. "I know what that is. I thought it was something from Carmen at first, but I soon knew it was Gounod."

"You—you frabjous idiot! That is my own mandoline march."

"Oh!"

"Get along, do! You don't understand anything about music! Get out, and let me do some practice."

"I—I say, Hoskins, I'd like to listen to you practising," said Bunter humbly. "It—it would improve my musical taste, you know."

"You can listen if you like."

"Do you mind if I cook the feed while you practise?"

"You can cook if you like."

"Thanks awfully. I wish I could play the mandoline like that. It's a wonderful gift," said Bunter.

And he raked out the grate while Hoskins was pecking away at the mandoline strings, and began to light the fire. He had just got the fire into a cheerful blaze, and was looking round for cooking utensils, when the door of the study was thrown open and three big Shell fellows rushed in.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Maddison. "Shut up that fearful row, Hosky, old chap. I've got an impot to do."

"What's this young Remove pig doing here?" demanded Turner.

Bunter blinked at the intruders.

"I—I say, you fellows, I'm going to do some cooking here—"

"Rats!" said Maddison promptly. "You're not!"

"But Hoskins said—"

"Hang Hoskins! Get out! Catch us letting a fat young Remove porker use our study to cook in! Travel!"

"But I—"

"Outside!"

Mole, Maddison, and Turner grasped the unfortunate Bunter, and whirled him to the door, vainly protesting.

"I—I—I say, you fellows—hold on—I'm sincerely sorry, but, you see—Ow! If you shake me like that my glasses may fall off, and if they get broken you'll have to pay for them, so there! I tell you—I'm going—Ow! Wow!"

With a final whirl Bunter went staggering into the passage. The Shell fellows stood in the door, laughing. Hoskins was laughing, too. Bunter blinked at them with boiling indignation.

"You beasts!" he roared. "Gimme my bag, then."

"Hallo, that's his bag," said Maddison. "Let him have it."

The bag of good things was slung out of the study. It caught Bunter on the chest. The bag was heavy, and Bunter went staggering along and sat down with great violence.

"Ow! Wow!"

He sat there dazed for some moments, and then slowly picked up himself and the bag, and drifted away. And the Shell fellows stood roaring with laughter as he departed.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Cook in Trouble.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the matter, Bunt?"

Bob Cherry asked the question. Billy Bunter was sitting on a big bag in the passage, looking very dishevelled, and gasping for breath. He blinked up at Bob Cherry with an exasperated expression.

"I've been swindled!" he grunted.

"Ha, ha! How's that?"

"I listened to Hoskins making a fearful row for a long time, and then Maddison and the other rotters came in and slung me out just as I was beginning to get to work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. It's disturbed all my nerves. I've got the grub in this bag, and nowhere to cook it. It's rotten, lugging this heavy bag all over Greyfriars and never finding a place to rest. I'm getting fed up with it. The studies ought to be rebuilt."

"Ask Blundell of the Fifth—"

"I've asked him, and he kicked me out of his study. I thought he was a beast, and I told him so when I got to the end of the passage."

"Ask Wingate—"

"He would think it a cheek—"

"Why not Quelch?"

"Quelch! Do you think I could ask a Form master? Oh, you're rotting!" said Bunter, as Bob Cherry went off into a shriek of laughter at the idea. "I wish you'd be serious on a serious subject, Cherry. What's a fellow to do? I don't often have the funds to stand a really good feed, and it's sickening that this one should be mucked up like this."

"Ha, ha, ha! Better look out for some chap who's gone out for the evening, and use his study while he's gone," grinned Bob Cherry; and he walked away.

The words gave Bunter food for thought. Bob had been joking, but it struck the fat junior as a good idea. He was thinking it over when Heracles Ionides, the new Sixth Former, came by, with his hat and coat on. Ionides looked very well dressed; his coat was of a fashionable cut, with the slimness of the waist carried to a point of exaggeration, and his hat was a shining topper with the very latest brim. He did not even glance at Bunter—a Removee being miles beneath his lordly notice. He stopped for a moment to speak to Bland of the Fifth, who was in the passage.

"It's straight along the lane to Friardale, I think?" he said.

Bland nodded.

"Yes, that's it; or there's a short cut through the wood, over the stile."

"Thank you."

And Ionides went out. Bunter blinked after him thoughtfully. If Ionides was going to the village, he could not possibly be back under half an hour, and would probably be much longer. It would be an unparalleled "nerve" on the part of a junior to make use of a Sixth-Former's study while he was gone out. But Bunter was growing desperate. To have all the materials of a ripping feed in the bag, and to be unable to cook them, was distinctly exasperating.

Bunter rose to his feet. Several juniors were passing, and one of them called to Billy Bunter. It was Linley.

"Coming in to tea, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter hesitated.

Tea was ready in Hall, and most of the boys were going in. The fat junior was anxious to get to work in Ionides' study, but it seemed reckless to miss a meal while he had a chance. Besides, he reasoned that he would need a snack, at least to keep up his strength. So he left the bag in a safe place, and followed the Form into the dining-room.

"What about that feed?" demanded Nugent as he came in.

"I've got it in the bag," said Bunter. "I'm afraid some of the eggs are broken, but the rest is all right, as soon as I get a chance to cook it. One of you fellows might go and get the box-room ready after tea. I wish there was a fire-grate there, and I'd try to do the cooking on it. But I think it will be all right. I'll see about it directly after tea."

"I fancy I'll make a good tea in case of accidents," grinned Bob Cherry.

"The teafulness would be only prudent, as the accidentfulness might be terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

And the Removites had their tea in Hall. The school tea was a very plain meal in itself, but the boys were allowed to take in any little luxuries they fancied and could afford. Most of the fellows improved the festive board in that way, with hard-boiled eggs, pickles, celery, jam, or preserves—but that, of course, was nothing like having a feed in a study.

After tea, which he finished as early as possible, Billy Bunter returned for his bag, and made his way to Ionides's study. Half an hour had very nearly elapsed since the Greek had gone out, but Bunter reflected that he was scarcely likely to go straight to the village and back. He might be away till nine or ten o'clock, as a matter of fact. The fat junior hoped for the best. This study was his last chance of cooking the feed at all that evening, and he did not mean to lose it.

Several Sixth-Formers saw him going into the study, but they naturally imagined that he was fagging for Ionides, and did not think of interfering with him. Bunter had not been in the study before since Ionides came, and he was struck by what met his view as he turned up the gas and lighted it. There was an incandescent burner on the gas, and the light was very soft and bright, different from what the fat junior was accustomed to in the Remove studies.

"My word!" murmured Bunter. "This is ripping!"

The fire was still burning, and Bunter had only to rake it together and replenish it. He glanced round at the furniture of the room. Heavy crimson curtains shut off the alcove where were the bed and washstand, so that the study itself looked like a cosy sitting-room. The big glass, the couple of comfortable easy-chairs, the cabinet and writing-table, were striking enough in a school study, as well as the square of carpet, which could not have cost less than six or seven guineas. There was a brass curb to the hearth in the place of the old fender, and a handsome set of fire-irons with high dogs. Bunter blinked round him in amazement, hardly believing that he could be in a Sixth-Form study at all. He had heard that the Greek was a rich fellow, but he had never thought of anything like this.

"He must have spent a lot of tin on this," murmured Bunter. "He seems to have forgotten to lay in any cooking things, though. There isn't even a kettle here. I shall have to get them out of another study, I suppose."

And he did. He borrowed a saucepan from one study, a frying-pan from another, and knife and fork from a third. Then he set to work.

Bunter was an old hand at frying sausages and bacon. A savoury odour was soon rising from the grate. As for the eggs, he was saved the trouble of breaking them, as nearly all of them were broken already, in the concussion when Maddison and the other Shell fellows had ejected him and his bag from Hoskins' study.

Bunter forgot everything in the delight of cooking. He had some things to cook, and some things to warm up. Then they had to be carefully conveyed to the box-room where the feed was to take place. The old box-room usually favoured by juniors on such occasions had perished in the late fire, but there was another room near the Fifth-Form quarters just as good. The scent of the frying bacon cheered Bunter. He took one of the sausages as a snack to go on with, and felt that life was worth living, after all.

"It's ripping!" he murmured. "I shall be finished here in ten minutes, and if only Ionides doesn't come back till I'm safe out, it's all serene. I wish the other fellows would come and lend me a hand in getting the things to the box-room."

There was a sound of the door opening, and someone stepped in. Bunter had just taken the frying-pan from the fire, and he turned round with it in his hand, and blinked at the newcomer.

"I say, Wharton, is that you—"

"What is this? What—what are you doing in my study?"

It was the voice of Ionides, and Bunter gave a start of affright. A stream of grease poured from the frying-pan upon the carpet as the fat junior stood transfixed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Ionides Takes His Punishment.

IONIDES stared at Bunter, and Bunter stared at Ionides. The Greek seemed dumbfounded. The melted butter and bacon-gravy in the pan was pouring over the side in a hissing stream upon the expensive carpet, and forming a greasy pool there. In his terror Bunter never even noticed it.

"Boy! Brat! How dare you? What are you doing here?"

"It's all right," stammered Billy Bunter through his chattering teeth. "I didn't know you would come back so early—I—I mean, I thought you wouldn't mind. You see, since our studies were—were burnt down, I haven't—you see—"

"You whelp! You're spoiling my carpet! Do you see what you are doing?" roared Ionides.

Bunter started.

"Dear me! I'm sincerely sorry!"

Most of the grease was spilt now. Bunter jammed the frying-pan back on the hob. Ionides, pale with rage, dashed straight at him.

"Ah, brat! I will teach you! I—"

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Hellup! Don't! I didn't mean any harm, and you can come to the feed in the box-room, if you like!"

Thump! thump! thump!

"Ow! ow! ow!"

Thump! thump!

"Ow! Murder! Help! Fire!"

Bunter shrieked and yelled. He was in a bad case this time; the Greek, in his passionate rage, seemed to have completely lost control of himself. He wrenched Bunter over and flung him across a table, and thrashed him mercilessly with his walking-cane. It was a more severe punishment than the most severe flogging ever administered by Dr. Locke, and it was no wonder that the fat junior squirmed and shrieked with the pain.

There was a sound of rapid footsteps in the passage. The door of the study was flung open, and Harry Wharton looked in.

The hero of the Remove had been passing the end of the passage when he heard Bunter's cries, and he had realised that something serious was the matter. Bunter always made a terrific noise if he were hurt over so little; but this time there was no doubt that his cries were in deadly earnest.

Wharton gave one look at the infuriated Greek, and then sprang forward.

"You coward! Stop!"

Ionides took no notice. He lashed away furiously. Bunter squirmed and yelled. Wharton grasped Ionides's arm and wrenched it back.

The Greek turned towards him like a tiger. The cane whistled through the air, and descended upon Wharton's head, and the junior reeled back half-stunned.

But in the moment when Ionides's attention was taken off, brief as it was, Bunter squirmed off the table. The Greek turned back upon him, and lashed out again, and the blow caught Bunter on the shoulders as he dashed to the door. The fat junior yelled, but he dashed on, and darted out of the study.

Wharton staggered against the mantelpiece, which he grasped for support. He was dazed and confused by the cowardly blow.

"You—you coward!" he gasped. "You coward!"

The Greek gritted his teeth and lashed at him with the cane. Wharton caught the blow on his arm, and then closed with Hercules Ionides.

In spite of his name, the Greek was no Hercules, and the strong and wiry Removite was a dangerous adversary even for the Sixth Former. He had easily dealt with Temple of the Upper Fourth, but Wharton was a more dangerous foe. He gripped the Greek with a grip like iron, and they struggled desperately.

But size and age were bound to tell. The junior was forced back and back, till he was down, with the savage face of the Greek bending over him.

Then Ionides grasped the cane again, and a savage shower of blows descended upon the junior. But just then there was the sound of a regular stampede in the passage. Bunter had

carried the news, and the chums of the Remove were coming to the rescue. Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dashed into the study, and they threw themselves upon Ionides.

In a twinkling he was dragged off, and bumped over on the carpet, and Bob Cherry gave Wharton a hand to rise. Bob looked anxiously at his chum.

"The beast!" he cried wrathfully. "He has hurt you!"

By gum, we'll make him smart!"

"Let me up!" hissed Ionides. "Let me go!"

"So we will when we've done with you," said Nugent, between his teeth. "There isn't a Form master to interfere now. Lock the door, Inky."

"The lockfulness is the wheezy good idea."

The key clicked in the lock. The Greek struggled furiously in the grasp of the juniors. But he was no match for three of them, and Wharton was ready to lend a hand now. The Captain of the Remove was recovering himself a little.

"Hold the cad!" he said. "Sixth Former or not, he's going to have a lesson, if we're expelled for it. If he makes a row jam your fist in his mouth."

Ionides was shrieking for help, and Bob Cherry immediately carried out Wharton's instructions. He also jammed a couple of eggs into Ionides's mouth, and the shrieks died away in a suffocated splutter.

"Gr-r-r-r! B-r-r-r-r! G-g-g-r-r-r!"

There was a knock at the door.

"What's the matter here?"

It was the voice of Carberry the prefect.

"Don't answer," muttered Harry. "Not a word!"

They grasped the wriggling Greek and held him fast, but said no word. The knock was repeated, and then there was a thump on the panels.

"If you make that row when I'm trying to work, I'll come in and ram your scent-bottles down your neck!" roared Carberry. And the prefect stamped away.

The juniors chuckled softly. Carberry was evidently under the impression that Ionides was responsible for the disturbance in the study.

"He's gone!" muttered Nugent.

"The gonfulness is great."

"Now to deal with this rotter!"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"What a row he's making. He doesn't seem to like raw eggs. Ladle out that frying-pan on his top-knot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Those smashed eggs will do for his collar."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the jam under his chin."

The juniors shrieked with laughter as they proceeded to adorn the Greek with a goodly quantity of the provisions laid in by Bunter for the feed.

Ionides's struggles were useless.

He was breathless and exhausted now, his resistance was only feeble, and the vengeful juniors gave him his punishment with unsparing hands.

Bacon-fat, and jam, and marmalade, and broken eggs squashed all over him, and the dandified scented Greek was a squirming mass of horror in a few minutes.

Bob Cherry cocked his eye at him thoughtfully.

"I think he'll do," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Have you had enough, Ionides?"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Will you behave yourself in future if we let you off lightly?"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"I can't understand him. I suppose he's talking Greek. Are you talking Greek, Ionides?"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Oh, I give it up. Come on, you chaps."

The juniors unlocked the door, then quitted the study, and slammed the door after them. The slam brought Carberry out of his study with a howl, but the juniors had disappeared round the nearest corner. Carberry was trying to work out a problem which required all his mental powers, and the continual disturbances in the next study naturally exasperated him. The violent slam of the door was the last straw, and he rushed out of his study with a howl of fury.

He thumped at the Greek's door, and at the same moment it was torn open by Heracles Ionides, who had sprung up to rush in pursuit of the juniors.

The two Sixth Formers met face to face, and almost ran into one another. Carberry was about to burst into a torrent of abuse when he saw Ionides's face, and he started back in amazement.

"What the—who the——"

He had no time to finish. Ionides was rushing furiously out, and he knocked the prefect flying. Carberry staggered against a wall, and the Greek rushed on in pursuit of the Removites.

Round the corner he went, and ran into two or three fellows. It was dusky in the passage, and the Greek was in a tearing passion, and not in the mood to be careful. As he ran into them, he began to hit out right and left.

"Ah! Take that—take that—take that——!"

"Hallo!" roared Blundell, of the Fifth, "what the dickens are you up to? Is the silly cuckoo off his silly rocker?"

"Hold him!" yelled Bland.

"Collar the lunatic!"

"Ow! He's sticky!"

"Groo—he's smothered with some mess!"

And the group of Fifth Formers promptly let the Greek alone. They had taken off a considerable quantity of smashed egg and marmalade and jam, and they didn't want any more.

"The beastly rotter! He's smothered with cosmetic, or something," growled Blundell. "Keep away from him."

"I—I am sorry—a mistake," panted the Greek. "I was looking for Wharton—for some juniors who have been in my study. Have you seen them?"

"Oh, go and wash yourself!" said Blundell. And the Fifth Formers stalked away.

And as there wasn't much chance of finding the Removites just then, and as he was beginning to realise that he was not in a fit state for being seen abroad, the Greek made his way back to his own quarters. He might have run the Removites to earth in the common-room; but after his previous experience there he was not inclined to penetrate into the stronghold of the juniors.

Wharton & Co. arrived there rather breathless, but laughing. Harry was still feeling very keenly the lashes of the Greek's cane, but he was satisfied with the rough justice that had been meted out to the bully. And the whole Remove and Upper Fourth roared over the story when it was told. Billy Bunter was the only one who did not laugh. He tried to make his voice heard, but for some time he could not get a hearing. At last he dragged at Harry's sleeve and forced him to listen.

"I say, you fellows—I say, Wharton, I suppose you brought away the grub?"

"The grub!" said Harry,— "what grub?"

"The grub I took to Ionides's study."

"Blessed if I thought of it."

Bunter gave a howl.

"You—you never thought of it! You didn't think of the grub! The grub!"

"Well, it wasn't of much use, after the frying-pan was upset, and we used all the grease and most of the bacon to lather Ionides's chivvy."

"Yes; but what was in the bag—sausages and rabbit-pie, and beefsteak pudding, and cake, and Christmas pudding, and——"

"Never thought of it, my son."

"You—you've left it in Ionides's study?"

"I suppose so. We didn't bring it away."

Billy Bunter sat down in a state of collapse. The licking he had had from the Greek was bad enough. But now the worst had come to the worst.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Ventriloquises.

HERACLES IONIDES had not made a good start at Greyfriars, either with his own Form or with the Lower School. The Sixth mostly despised him as a dandy and a fop, and the juniors disliked him as a bully and an ill-tempered "rotter." Even the fellows who toadied to him for his wealth mostly despised him in their hearts. But the Greek could not have understood that, even if he had known it. He was fully persuaded of his own importance, and his opinion of himself was excellent.

And there was one quarter where the new fellow in the Sixth found favour.

Effeminate as he was out of doors, he was capable of hard work in his study, and his attainments were mostly in advance of those of the rest of his Form. Even the "swots" of the Sixth found themselves outclassed by Ionides on some subjects, especially in Greek. As a Greek himself, Ionides naturally excelled as a Greek scholar, notwithstanding the great difference between the ancient and the modern languages. He found favour with the Head, and with most of the masters, and he had a wily, insinuating manner when he chose which helped him on. He had not been a week at Greyfriars when there was a rumour that he was to be made a prefect.

The Remove received the news with astonishment and disgust. The Sixth did not like the idea at all. That a fellow who never turned up on the football field when he could help it, who was never seen on a bicycle or on the cinder path, should become a prefect, was not pleasant to the seniors. Whatever sort of a scholar Ionides might be, something more than scholarship was required for that post. And his unfortunate relations with the Lower Forms were not likely to help him in his new authority. The juniors were certain to "kick."

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, seldom made a mistake, but no one can be infallible, and the Head certainly made a mistake this time.

No one cared to interfere in the matter, and indeed it would have been a delicate task for anyone to undertake to point out to the Head that his action was unpopular. Ionides became a prefect, much to the disgust of the others of that exalted rank. And the enemies he had made for himself in the Remove knew what it meant for them. A prefect in the Sixth had power in his hands which he used at discretion, and if he happened to be a bully, he could make himself very unpleasant indeed.

And it was not likely that Ionides would lose his opportunities. He had a spiteful, "catty" nature, and he never forgot an injury, or a supposed injury. Harry Wharton & Co. were likely to hear from him—and they did!

"The fellow's a hopeless oad," Harry Wharton remarked. "He's like a cat, and we shall have to look out for him!"

"Yes, rather," grunted Billy Bunter. "I've found out what he did with that grub. He slung it all out into the dust-bin!"

"Horrid rotter!"

"Oh, there's no word for him! Fancy chucking away good grub in these hard times! I don't know when I shall be able to stand another feed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything in that to cackle at. I was standing the feed, wasn't I? I've got the money you chaps sent me——"

"Hand it over, then."

"I've got the money——"

"Well, square up then."

"I say, you fellows, do let a fellow finish! I've got the money you chaps lent me down on the old account——"

"Oh!"

"And so I suppose I'm right in saying that I stood the feed. Now it's all wasted, and goodness knows when we shall get another!"

"Wait till the studies are rebuilt," said Harry, laughing, "and then we'll have a house-warming, and a high old time."

"I suppose you're joking. The studies won't be rebuilt for weeks. I suppose you don't expect me to go without anything to eat till then? The school grub barely suffices to support life. Of course, I can eke it out with things from the tuck-shop. But what I want is a good feed. I've almost forgotten what a good feed is like," said Bunter pathetically.

"Horrid! Why don't you go below stairs and tackle the cook? She often gives good feeds to the Friardale policeman, as I know for a fact. You might be able to cut the bobby out."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Or you could give a ventriloquial entertainment and raise vast funds that way," said Bob Cherry solemnly.

And the Removites chuckled. Billy Bunter's attempts at ventriloquism were a standing joke at Greyfriars.

Bunter blinked indignantly at the juniors.

"I'm sincerely sorry to see jealousy so rampant among you chaps," he said, "and I have got pretty far in ventriloquism already. I can do the ventriloquial drone to perfection. I'll show you now——"

"If you start the ventriloquial groan here I'll give you something to groan for," said Bob Cherry warningly.

"Oh, really, Cherry! But I can throw my voice, too! I threw it out of the window once, and——"

"Pity it didn't stop there," yawned Bob. "The trouble with your voice, Billy, is that you use it too much."

"I threw it out of the window in the passage——"

"Did it fall on anybody?"

"I threw it out of the window," said Bunter obstinately, "and Levison wouldn't believe that there wasn't somebody outside the window helping me. But there wasn't, and I convinced even Levison."

"Ahem!"

"It's a fact. I'm sorry Levison left last term, or he'd have borne me out. I don't like to see fellows so suspicious as you chaps are. Perhaps if you heard me throw my voice at this moment you'd believe me. Look here, I'll make a sound of footsteps coming round the corner there," said Bunter. "If I succeed in that I suppose even you will admit that I'm a real ventriloquist."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Right-ho! Go ahead."

The juniors were standing in the passage downstairs. Bunter screwed up his face and his throat, and proceeded to squeak and grunt out curious sounds in imitation of footsteps. The chums went into a roar of laughter. It was so evidently Bunter who was coughing and grunting that the thing seemed to them screamingly funny. But Bunter's screwed-up face relaxed at last, and his lips were still, and the sound of footsteps approaching from round the corner was audible and unmistakable.

The chums started, and stared.

If Bunter was ventriloquising now, he was doing it remarkably well, for his face was quite still, his lips motionless, and the sound round the corner was quite natural, the footsteps growing louder and louder as they approached.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, really——" began Harry Wharton. "It looks—— Ha, ha, ha!"

He broke into a laugh as a diminutive figure came round the corner. It was Wun Lung, the Chinese. He was coming along the passage, and it was his footsteps that the Removites had heard.

The juniors roared, and Bunter's face was a picture.

"Ha, ha, ha! Off-side again," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Hold on, I'll try again, and——"

"Try again by all means," said Nugent. "Keep it up, old chap. Put your beef into it."

And Bunter, facing the corner, grunted away again as if worked by steam. The chums of the Remove walked quietly off, and left him grunting.

It was about a minute before Bunter stopped, with a face like a beetroot and quite breathless, and looked round. He blinked to and fro in amazement as he found himself alone.

"I say, you fellows—— Oh, really, this is too bad! Fancy leaving me like that! I am sincerely sorry to see jealousy of my wonderful abilities carried to such an extent. I'm not appreciated at this school!"

And the fat junior ceased to ventriloquise.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Ionides Uses His Authority.

"MARJORIE!"

Two or three voices uttered the exclamation, as a graceful girlish figure crossed the Close towards the school-house.

It was Hazeldene's sister. Two or three juniors ran towards her at once, raising their caps. Marjorie smiled sweetly at them. The girl's face was very fresh and fair, and looked a picture surrounded by soft white furs. Harry Wharton was the first to reach her side, but Bob Cherry was a good second.

"Is my brother here?" asked Marjorie. "I wanted to see the ruins of the fire, you know, and I told him I would look in when I came to Friardale."

"We sha'n't be able to ask you to tea in the study," said Harry ruefully. "The study's gone, and the whole Remove passage."

Hazeldene came racing up.

"Hallo, Marjorie! Here you are, then! Come and have a look at the Remove quarters. It's a bit of a change since you came here for the Christmas concert."

It was indeed a change when the girl looked at the scene of havoc left by the fire. The Remove passage, with the studios and dormitory, had been gutted, and the workmen were engaged in clearing the ruins away for the rebuilding to commence.

Implements and materials used by the workmen lay on all sides, with piles of bricks, slabs of stone, heaps of timber, and buckets of mortar.

"The upper box-room is gone, too," said Hazeldene. "See, that's where Wharton got on to the chapel roof with Miss Molly, but the lodge he climbed along has fallen!"

Marjorie shuddered.

"It is a miracle he did not fall," she exclaimed.

Wharton laughed.

"Oh, Cherry and Nugent helped me at the really ticklish part!" he said carelessly. "It was an exciting time, though. You should have seen the amateur fire brigade at work!"

"They couldn't put the fire out," grinned Bob Cherry. "But the Head was put out very much when they swamped him with water. Hallo, here comes Ionides! What the dickens does he want?"

The Greek was strolling towards them.

Marjorie followed the glance of the juniors, and looked curiously at the new prefect of Greyfriars.

Ionides was dressed with the usual dainty care, his clothes immaculate, his collar as high and white as a collar could be, and his fingers sparkling with rings. His hair, which was beautifully curled, peeped out from under his silk hat. A delicate perfume exhaled from him on all sides. The Greek used very expensive scents, but to the Greyfriars' fellows a chap who used scent at all was immediately set down as a fop.

Ionides came up with his usual mincing manner, and raised his silk hat to Miss Hazeldene. The girl's bright fresh looks had attracted his attention, and with his customary conceit he had decided to patronise her. As for the juniors, of them he thought nothing at all. Fellows in the Remove would have to be careful how they dealt with a prefect.

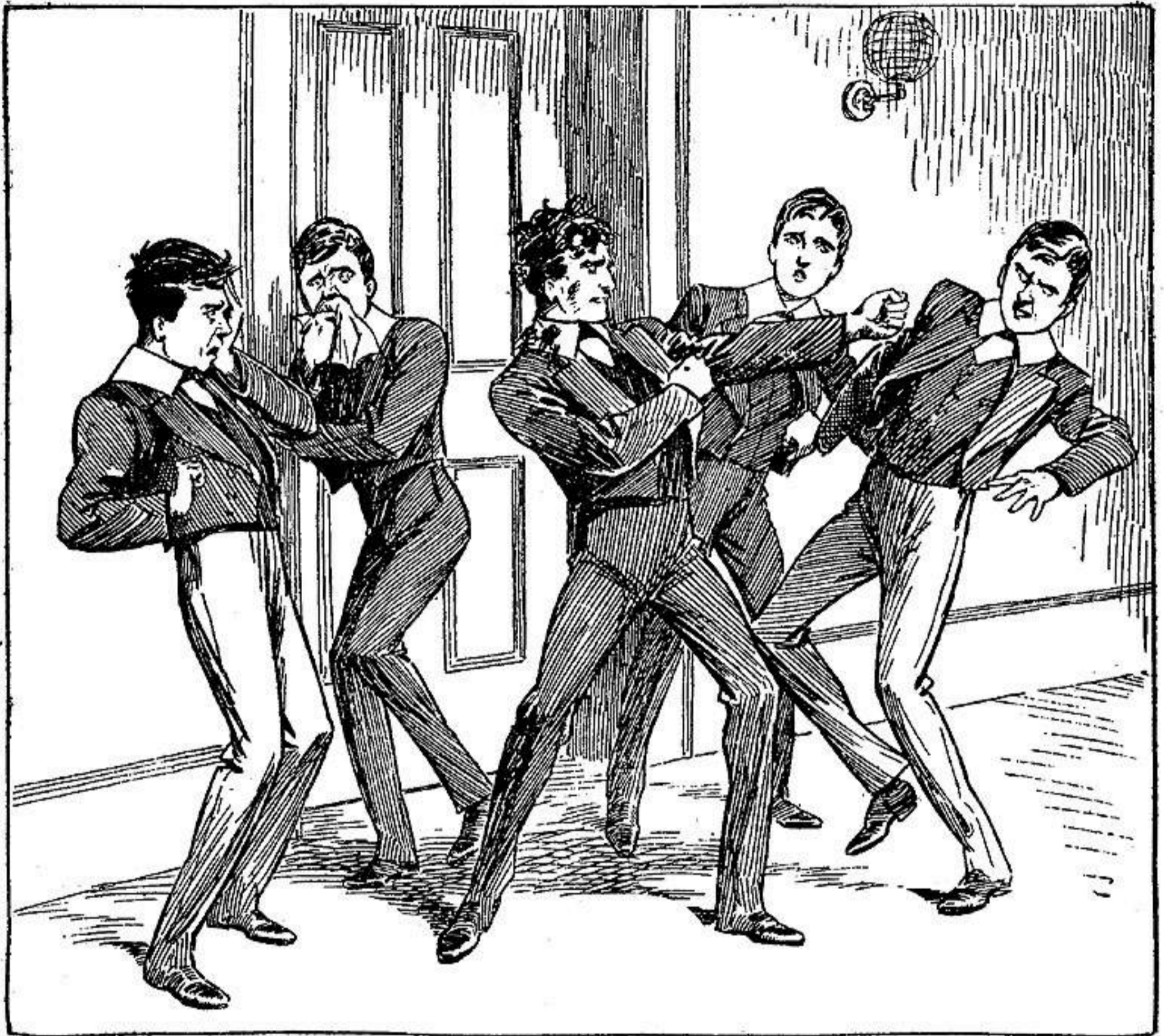
"Good-afternoon!" he exclaimed. "Your sister, I believe Hazeldene?"

"Yes," said Hazeldene shortly.

"Introduce me, my dear fellow."

"Marjorie, this is Ionides of the Sixth," said Hazeldene reluctantly. He was inwardly chafing at the Greek's insolence; but Hazeldene was not of the stuff that heroes are made.

Marjorie bowed coldly.



"Ah! Take that—take that—take that—!" roared the Greek, as he hit out right and left.

"You are looking round Greyfriars?" said Ionides, with an agreeable smile. "It will be a great pleasure to me to escort you, Miss Hazeldene."

"My brother is doing so," said Marjorie icily.

But Heracles Ionides was not to be abashed.

"Oh, I cannot leave you to the care of juniors!" he said.

"You are too charming a young lady, Hazeldene, you have an imposition to do this afternoon."

"That's all right," said Hazeldene. "Lots of time before tea."

"Nothing of the sort. You had better go and do it at once."

Hazeldene did not stir. The Greek looked at him with a glint in his eyes.

"Did you hear what I said, Hazeldene?"

"Yes."

"Then go."

Hazeldene hesitated, and glanced at his friends. Wharton was gritting his teeth. He disliked more than anything else a scene in the presence of a girl, but he felt that he could never submit to the Greek's insolence.

"Don't go," he muttered.

The Greek glanced at Wharton with tightening lips.

"Go at once, Hazeldene," said Ionides, "and you will go with him, Wharton! You will do fifty lines from Virgil for your impertinence!"

Wharton set his lips grimly, and stood still. Wild horses would not have dragged him from that spot at that moment.

The Greek's dark face flushed with anger.

But before he could speak again Marjorie laid a timid hand

on her brother's arm. The girl knew well enough that it was not safe for juniors to defy the authority of a Sixth Former.

"Please go," she murmured; "and you too, Harry. Please do!"

Wharton swallowed his wrath.

"Very well, if you wish it," he said.

And Wharton and Hazeldene walked away. The Greek gave Bob Cherry and Nugent a significant look.

"You may go, too," he said.

The juniors looked rebellious, but a look from Marjorie decided them. They walked away with burning eyes and burning hearts. Ionides smiled at the girl. He had an idea that he could make a great impression upon Marjorie.

But Marjorie's face was like stone.

"This is a very interesting old place," he remarked. "I will show you. But where are you going?"

"I am going in to see Mrs. Locke."

"But I was going to show you—"

"Thank you, I won't trouble you."

And Marjorie walked quickly away.

The Greek hesitated for a moment, and then he strode quickly after her, and kept pace at her side.

Marjorie set her lips, and walked faster.

"But why do you leave me? I—"

Marjorie walked faster. Her desire to get away from him was so evident that the Greek's dark face became darker with rage. He passed his arm through hers, and the girl pulled it away. But the Greek was holding it fast, and she could not release it.

Marjorie stopped and looked at him.

"Let me go," she said.

Ionides laughed.

They were under the trees, and there was no one to observe them at the moment.

The girl's heart beat fast.

"Let me go, or I will call out!" she panted.

He laughed again.

"Nonsense! I am not going to hurt you. Why should you be foolish? I—"

"Help!"

"Fool!" he muttered.

There was a pattering of feet under the trees. Harry Wharton came up breathlessly.

The Greek dropped Marjorie's arm, and laughed again uneasily.

Harry was springing forward with clenched fists, when the girl interposed.

"Don't be angry, Harry, it—it is all right."

"But I heard you call," cried Wharton.

"It is nothing. Let us go."

Wharton looked at the Greek with blazing eyes. Senior and prefect as he was, Ionides shrank from his gaze. But for the presence of Marjorie, Harry would have flung himself at the cad of the Sixth.

Ionides muttered something under his breath and swung away.

Harry and Marjorie walked away together without speaking. The girl was looking very pale and troubled.

Harry left her at the door of the Head's house, without either having spoken again of the incident under the trees.

Marjorie went in, and Harry went in search of his chums with his face set and his heart beating. From that moment it was war between Harry Wharton and the new prefect.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Loses the Sausages.

HARRY WHARTON was frowning, and there was a glint in his eyes when he rejoined his chums. His feelings were shared by the other Removites when he explained what had happened under the trees. That Ionides should venture to make himself disagreeable to Marjorie was, as Bob Cherry expressed it, getting past the limit.

"We've got to make him sing small," said Nugent determinedly. "It's the Remove up against a cad in the Sixth, and we'll bring him down off his perch or bust something."

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, coming up, "I've got an idea."

"Whose is it?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, it's a ripping idea. You know that we can't ask Vaseline's sister to tea in the study now that it's burnt down. I was thinking that we might have a feed in the woodshed to celebrate her visit, if you fellows can stand the tin. I can do the rest."

"I can't quite see that there is any 'rest,'" said Nugent. "But how are you going to do the cooking in the woodshed, see?"

"There isn't going to be any cooking. I can't take the risk and trouble of borrowing anybody's study again. Ionides cut up so fearfully rough about it last time. I was thinking of a cold collation."

"A which?"

"A cold collation. I could get the things at Mrs. Mible's, if you fellows had the tin. I know it's cold weather for a cold spread, but what are you to do when you can't get a fire to cook by? I think a cold collation is the only resource. How much can you fellows stand?"

"We can stand lots of things, Billy, but we can't stand you," said Bob Cherry, walking away.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, Wharton, don't go for a minute. What do you think of the idea of a cold collation in the woodshed?"

"Rotten!" said Wharton tersely.

And he walked off, too.

Bunter was left to blink indignantly. All his ideas seemed to be wrong just now, and the feed he was yearning for seemed destined never to materialise.

Marjorie, as a matter of fact, had tea with Mrs. Locke. The Remove, as usual, had the meal in Hall. Bunter, who had succeeded in borrowing a couple of shillings of Wun Lung, came into the dining-room with a jar of jam under one arm and a paper packet of sausages under the other.

He sat down in his place, and put the sausages on to his plate. They were cold sausages, but they looked very brown and nice. There were eight of them, sufficient for a snack even for Billy Bunter.

"By Jove, they look ripping!" said Nugent. "Shove them along, Billy!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I wish it had run to more, so that I could let you fellows have some," he remarked. "I had just enough to get these sausages

and some jam. I'm sincerely sorry that I haven't enough to let you chaps have any."

"Giving any of those away, Bunter?" called out Skinner across the table.

"Certainly not, Skinner. I have barely sufficient for myself. I am not a greedy chap; but I have to take a certain amount of nourishing food to keep up my strength."

Skinner cast a longing eye upon the sausages. He exchanged glances with Stott and Bulstrode, who were sitting on either side of him. He was determined to have some of those sausages by hook or by crook.

"I say, Bunter, have you been doing any ventriloquism lately?" he asked, as Billy Bunter plunged a fork into the first sausage.

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter, looking up. "I'm getting on splendidly. There are some fellows in the Remove who are jealous of my wonderful abilities as a ventriloquist, and won't admit that I can throw my voice. As a matter of fact, I can throw it about anywhere, almost like an apple, on the best Balmicrumpett principles."

"Stott here says you couldn't make your voice come from the Fifth-Form table."

"Oh, really Stott, it would be as easy as winking. I'll give you a sample after tea."

"Give it us now," said Stott sceptically.

Billy Bunter glanced towards the head of the table. Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, was not in his usual place. Randall, the fattest and best-natured prefect at Greyfriars was in his place in charge of the Remove table. Randall was carrying on a conversation on the subject of football with another Sixth-Former, and paying no attention whatever to what was passing at the table he was supposed to be in charge of.

"It's all right," said Stott. "Old Randy won't take any notice, so long as you don't make too much row. Go ahead. Seeing is believing."

"I'll jolly soon show you, then," said Bunter.

He turned towards the Fifth-Form table, and put his throat in the position for ventriloquising.

A painful squeak proceeded from him, with the scarcely distinguishable words, "Ere I am!"

It was supposed to be a voice speaking from the Fifth-Form table, but it was plain enough that the squeak proceeded from Bunter's straining throat.

But Skinner & Co. didn't care a rap where the squeak proceeded from.

Directly Bunter's head was turned, Skinner, Stott, and Bulstrode reached across the table, and jabbed their forks into the sausages, and whisked them over to their own plates.

"Ere I am!" went on the ventriloquist. "Can't you hear me?"

Bunter turned back to the Removites with a crimson and triumphant face.

"What do you think of that?" he demanded.

"Marvellous!" said Skinner, with his mouth full of sausage.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Do it again, Bunt."

"Certainly! Wait till I have had a mouthful—Great pip! Where are my sausages?"

"Eh?"

"Where are my sausages?" roared Bunter.

Skinner, Stott, and Bulstrode, who were bolting sausages at express speed, made no reply.

Bunter looked up and down the table. Bob Cherry was yelling with laughter, and as he was sitting next Bunter at once suspected him.

"Oh, really, Cherry, it's too rotten! Where are they?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where are my sausages?"

"I haven't taken them, see."

"Who has, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Better employ a detective."

The Removites were chuckling gleefully.

Bunter rose in his place, blinking excitedly behind his big spectacles.

"Who's got my sausages? I'm going to have my sausages. I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo! Sit down, there!" said Randall, looking round. "How dare you make that row at the table, Bunter. Sit down!"

"My sausages—"

"Shut up!"

"I brought in eight sausages—"

"I don't care if you brought in eighty. If you don't sit down and shut up this instant I'll send you out of the room without your tea."

Bunter sat down overwhelmed. He blinked to and fro, and he blinked across the table at last, and saw the last of his sausages disappear into the capacious jaws of Skinner & Co.

"You—you—you rotters!" he murmured.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter started on bread-and-butter and jam. As he opened the jam-pot Skinner leaned across the table and whispered confidentially:

"I say, Bunter, that was an awfully ripping bit of ventriloquism. Would you mind doing it again?"

Bunter gave a glare that ought to have petrified him on the spot. He did not accept the invitation, and Skinner's designs on the jam were frustrated.

As the Remove came out of the dining-room after tea Ionides called to Bob Cherry.

The junior approached him unwillingly. Now that Ionides was a prefect it behoved the juniors to be more careful towards him. They sometimes had little scurrillous scraps with Carberry, but Carberry's character was pretty well-known to most of the masters, and to some extent to the Head, and his influence with the powers that he was small.

It was different with Ionides. He had contrived to worm himself into the Head's good graces, and to keep on good terms with all the other masters. He was certain of backing from the authorities, and the Remove knew that, and they also knew he was a more serious antagonist than Carberry had ever been. Besides, Carberry was merely ill-tempered, while the Greek was spiteful and malicious, and made it a point never to forget or forgive.

Bob Cherry would gladly have turned his back on the Greek and walked away, but it would not have done. He walked slowly up to the senior, and waited for orders, inwardly chafing.

"I want you to go down to the village," said Ionides. "We're not allowed out after locking-up," growled Bob Cherry.

He was thinking of Marjorie Hazeldene, and that if he went out now he would not see her again before she left Greyfriars.

The Greek smiled maliciously. "I will give you a pass out of bounds," he said. As a prefect, it was in his power to do so, and Bob was fairly caught.

"I don't want to go." "That has very little to do with the matter, I imagine," said Ionides satirically. "I shall fag you juniors as much as I please, and you and your set especially, as a lesson to you for your insolence. I will teach you manners before I have done with you."

"You may learn manners yourself," muttered Bob Cherry under his breath.

"You will go to Mr. Fraser, the chemist, and get me what is written on this card," said Ionides. "You will take great care of it, as it is expensive."

"Where's the money?" "You will not need any money, as I have an account with the chemist."

"Oh, all right," granted Bob. He took the card, and walked away. His grumpy look when he came into the hall with his cap and coat on attracted the attention of his chums.

"No good getting ready yet," said Harry. "Miss Marjorie isn't going for half an hour or more." "I've to go to the chemist's in the village for that Greek beast."

"Hard cheese." "It's to get some filthy skin wash or something," growled Bob Cherry. "Ionides is dining with the Head this evening, I hear, and he wants to look as much like a figure in a barber's window as possible."

"Suppose you don't go?" said Hazeldene. Bob shook his head. "It's no good bucking against a prefect. I've got to go. You'll tell Marjorie how it is, won't you?"

"Me helpee Chelly," said a soft voice, and Wun Lung grinned up at the discontented junior. "Supposee me go to village instead of Chelly? Savvy?"

"Good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You're a good little bouncer, Wun Lung. I suppose you could manage it. It's only going to the chemist and getting a bottle of filthy skin-wash and bringing it home without busting it."

"Me blingee safee." "Good! Here's the card—and much obliged." And Wun Lung went off with the card in his hand, a wide grin upon his face, and a very humorous twinkle in his almond eyes.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung Improves the Skin Lotion.

THE Famous Four walked with Marjorie Hazeldene and her brother as far as the railway-station when the girl left Greyfriars. As they left the school gates they met Wun Lung returning from the village, and Bob Cherry called to him.

"Got the stuff, kid?" "Me gottee." "Good! Give it to Ionides, and tell him to go and eat coke." The Chinese grinned. "Me givee; no tellee."

The little Celestial presented himself at the Sixth Former's study. He tapped at the door and opened it, and there was a muttered exclamation in Greek. Heracles Ionides was there, standing before his dressing-table, and there was a packet of curling-pins on the table. The Greek had evidently been

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opening the packet when Wun Lung's tap came at the door. The almond eyes of the little Celestial glimmered, but he gave no open sign of having observed anything. Ionides hastily thrust the packet of pins out of sight, and looked savagely at the Chinese junior.

"What do you want?" he snapped. "Me blingee bottle, me fetchee for Chelly." "You went to the chemist's instead of Cherry?" "Me go." "I told him to go. I'll give him an imposition for this!" growled the prefect. "Have you got the bottle all right?"

"Me havee it." "Give it me, then. You've been a long time." "Me hully quickee."

Wun Lung had been occupied ten minutes or so since re-entering Greyfriars after his return from the village, but he did not tell Ionides so. His look was innocent and deprecating; and even the new prefect did not bully him.

"Well, get out!" he said. "Me savvy."

And Wun Lung left the study. In the passage he stopped, and doubled up in a paroxysm of laughter. No sound came from his lips, but he wriggled and squirmed in an ecstacy of mirth. He straightened up suddenly as Carberry came out of his study.

"Hallo, you young heathen," growled the prefect, "what trick have you been playing now?"

"No savvy." "What were you laughing at?" "No savvy." "What's the joke, you heathen beast?" "No savvy."

"Oh, get along!" growled Carberry, and he took a running kick at the Celestial, which Wun Lung promptly dodged. Carberry's leg swept through the air, and he lost his balance, and sat down with a terrific bump and a gasp like escaping steam.

"My—my word! I'll pulverise him!" But by the time Carberry was on his feet the Celestial had vanished.

Wun Lung returned to the common-room, where he surprised the juniors by breaking out every few minutes into curious chuckles. But though many questions were asked he refused to explain what the joke was, his invariable answer to every query being "No savvy." And when Wun Lung took refuge in that answer it was no good trying to get anything out of him.

And not a word did Wun Lung say till Harry Wharton & Co. came in. Then, when Harry asked him what he was chuckling about, he expounded at last.

"Me gettee facee washee in Fliardale," he said. "Well, we know that," said Bob Cherry. "And you took it straight to Ionides, didn't you?" "Me takee; no takee stlaight."

"Do you mean you didn't take it to him at once?" The Chinese nodded. "And why didn't you?"

"Me openee bottle." Bob Cherry whistled. "You opened the bottle, you cheeky young beggar! What did you open it for?"

"Putee somefin in." The Removites who heard the words redoubled their attention. Wun Lung was the most irrepressible practical joker in the Form, and they began to realise that he had played a daring practical joke on the unpopular prefect.

"What did you put in it," demanded Hazeldene. "Stainee." "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You put a stain in the face-wash?"

Wun Lung grinned and chuckled. The common-room was in a roar. Even Billy Bunter, worried as he was by his disappointment about the cold collation, burst into a snigger.

"You young ass!" exclaimed Wharton, laughing. "He'll find out what you've done when he comes to use the silly stuff."

"No findee. Chinese stainee, me makee selfee. No colour till used, and then it dly dalkee. When quite dly velly dalk, Savvy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The juniors shrieked. Wun Lung was something of a hand with chemicals, and they could easily credit that he could make a stain which would be colourless while in a liquid state, and would darken when it dried, whether on wood or on the human skin.

"My only hat!" said Harry Wharton. "Is that honest Injun, you young sweep? You're not pulling my leg?"

"Me no pullee leggee. All true." "Then when Ionides puts the stuff on his face—"

"Allee light for quarter hour; then he turn darkee-gleenee."

NEXT TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON'S CAMPAIGN."

A Grand School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co

"Ha, ha, ha! Fancy the dandy of the Sixth with a dark green complexion!"

"He's dining with the Head this evening!" yelled Nugent. And a fresh yell of merriment followed.

"Upon my word, it's almost too bad," gasped Harry, wiping away his tears. "I—I wonder if he's used it yet?"

"Must have," said Temple of the Upper Fourth, choking with laughter. "The Head dines at seven-thirty, and it's past seven now."

"Ionides will be going to his house any minute, then."

"Let's go and watch for him."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's the cheese."

The juniors crowded out. Ionides was most likely to leave the house and cross to the Head's private door when he went to dine with the doctor. The juniors crowded into the hall, and lined the walls to watch for him. Wingate, the captain of the school, came along, and stared at them inquiringly.

"What's the little game?" he demanded. "What are you youngsters up to? No good, I suppose."

"We're waiting for Ionides."

"And what are you waiting for Ionides for?"

"We hear he's been using a new face wash, and we want to see the effect."

"Don't be an ass, Cherry! Ionides doesn't use anything of the sort."

"That he does," said Hazeldene. "Wun Lung fetched it for him from Friardale."

Wingate gave a sniff of disgust at the idea, and walked on. He shut the door of his study hard. He despised the effeminate Greek, but he had never suspected that Ionides used preparations for the skin, though he knew he scented his hair.

A few minutes after Wingate had gone Ionides came down the stairs. He saw the juniors in the hall, and scowled at them. There was nothing wrong with his complexion so far. Wun Lung had said that a certain time must elapse before the stain showed itself, and evidently it had not yet begun to work.

"It's all humbug, after all," muttered Bulstrode.

"No humbug. He turns darkee-gleenee soonee."

The Greek stopped in the hall, and called to Bob Cherry. Bob came forward with affected reluctance. As a matter of fact, he was glad of a chance to delay Ionides while the Chinese's stain had time to work.

"Cherry, I told you to go to Friardale to the chemist, and you did not go."

"Sorry, Ionides. Wun Lung went instead," said Bob with unaccustomed meekness.

"You had no right to disregard my orders. You will take fifty lines of Virgil, and bring them to me before bedtime."

"Yes, Ionides."

"And now run upstairs and fetch my gloves. I have left them lying on my table."

"Yes, Ionides."

The Greek looked baffled. Bob's meekness gave him no excuse for inflicting any further penalty. The junior scuttled up the stairs. Ionides stood in the lighted hall, and pulled out his cuffs. He looked a handsome figure as he stood there. He was in evening clothes, which fitted his supple figure excellently. A diamond gleamed in his shirt-front, others in his sleeve-links. He had a light coat over his dress-clothes, and was wearing a silk topper. His face, though dark, was very clear in the skin, his complexion being probably due in part to the cosmetics he used. His eyebrows probably owed something to the pencil. His complexion, though clear, was dark, and in the light of the hall it seemed to be growing darker.

The juniors watched him with almost painful interest. Ionides was a little puzzled to account for the interest they took in him, but he concluded that they were overcome by his magnificent appearance.

Bob Cherry came downstairs with the gloves, and the prefect put them on.

"My word," murmured Nugent, "it's working!"

It certainly was working.

The Greek's complexion was darkening visibly. The clear skin assumed a hue like buff leather, and it was rapidly growing darker. The most curious circumstance was that Ionides himself had not the faintest idea of it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, unable to contain himself any longer.

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

Ionides looked round with a glare. He did not know what the juniors were laughing at, and he was inclined to burst into one of his towering passions. But a quarter past seven rang out from the clock-tower, and he realised that he had no time to lose.

He walked on haughtily, between two rows of grinning juniors, and left the house. The Remove shrieked when he had gone.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton. "What will the Head say when he sees him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the wild yell of mirth followed Heracles Ionides into the Close, and gave him a feeling of vague uneasiness.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The New Prefect Experiences a Series of Shocks.

HERACLES IONIDES knocked and rang, and the door was opened almost immediately by a maidservant. Ionides was about to speak; but the light from the hall fell full upon his face, and the maid gazed at him in horror.

If he had been black, like a negro, or brown, like Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, the maid might not have been so startled. But a man with a dark green complexion was something quite outside her experience.

She gave him a horrified stare, and then uttered a shriek and fled, leaving the door wide open, and Ionides standing on the step petrified with amazement.

"What can be the matter?" muttered the Greek.

He heard the maid's shrieks die away in the distance. He stepped into the hall, and closed the door himself. He was amazed by the maid's conduct, but as he was not shown into the drawing-room, it only remained to show himself in.

"Oh, the awful sight!" It was the maid's voice from some region below. "Oh, it gives me such a turn! I never did see such a thing! Oh, lor!"

Ionides gritted his teeth. He stepped to the drawing-room door, which was half open, pushed it and entered.

Miss Molly, the Head's little daughter, was in the room, and she happened to be alone there. Miss Molly had been ill of late, the result of the shock she had received on the occasion of the fire at Greyfriars; but she was recovering now. She was engaged in adorning a new doll with ribbons when Ionides came in.

She glanced up, and as she saw Ionides, the doll went to the floor with a crash. Miss Molly burst into a wild shriek.

"What is the matter?" cried the bewildered Greek. "What is it? I will do you no harm! Bah, do you not know me?"

But Miss Molly only shrieked and shrieked.

There was a door at the opposite end of the room, and as the Greek advanced towards her, the little girl fled frantically and disappeared, still shrieking.

Ionides stood panting. What was the cause of the terror of the maid and the little girl he could not imagine. He began to wonder whether they were mad, or whether he was.

There was a stop in the adjoining room, and Mrs. Locke looked through the communicating door. Her face was pale and startled, and she had evidently come to see what had frightened her child.

Ionides started towards her, and the electric light gleamed on his dark green face, and Mrs. Locke uttered a scream of affright.

"Really——" began Ionides.

But the terrified lady did not stay to listen. She ran away, screaming for help, and, overcome by terror, fell upon a rug in a dead faint.

"They are all mad!" cried the Greek, snapping his white teeth with rage. "They are mad, or it is a plot to insult me!"

Dr. Locke looked into the room. He had been attracted by the screams of Mrs. Locke as he was dressing for dinner, and he had come tearing down unfinished, with an old jacket round him. A very curious sight the doctor looked, too, as he dashed into the drawing-room.

"Who is it?" he cried. "How dare you—— Oh, oh, oh!" He broke off, gasping, as his eyes fell upon the dark green face.

But Dr. Locke was a brave man. He kept his eyes upon Ionides, and backed away towards the grate. Then he suddenly stooped and possessed himself of the poker.

"Scoundrel!" he cried—"villain! How dare you come here and frighten my child? Wretch, who are you—what are you?"

Ionides panted.

"Do you not know me?" he cried. "Are you mad—are they all mad?"

The doctor started.

"I seem to know your voice."

"I am Heracles Ionides of the Sixth."

"What?"

"I have never been so insulted——"

"Ionides!" cried the Head, dropping the poker with a clang into the grate. "Is it possible? Is it conceivable that a prefect of the Sixth Form could play this silly, dastardly trick to frighten a woman and a child?"

"Sir——"

"It is inexcusable—inexpiable! I have been deceived in you. Instead of a studious scholar, you are a stupid practical joker—a ruffianly scoundrel, sir!"

"Dr. Locke——"

"Go!" thundered the Head, raising his hand and pointing to the door—"go, and never enter my doors again! Begone!"

Heracles Ionides almost staggered in his bewildered amazement. He stared blankly at the infuriated doctor. Never had he seen the Head in such a rage—nor had anyone else for that matter—and the Greek could not conceive what was the cause of the trouble.

He opened his lips to speak, but amazement held him dumb,

and no words came forth. The doctor pointed imperiously to the door.

"Begone!" he thundered.

"But—but—but——"

"Will you go, or shall I ring for my servant to eject you?" roared the Head.

Ionides gave a shriek of rage.

"I have never been so insulted! How dare you treat me like this? What have I done?"

"What have you done?" said Dr. Locke, in scathing accents.

"You dare to stand there and ask me what you have done, after frightening my wife and child almost into hysterics by your mad trick!"

"I—I—I—a trick?"

"Do not bandy words with me, sir! Go!"

"I will not go!" screamed the Greek, quite losing control of himself now. "I will not go till you explain! You asked me to dine with you, and when I come, you insult me! I will be revenged!"

The Head touched a bell.

A scared-looking manservant came into the room, and eyed the dark green visitor very gingerly. But for the Head's presence he would probably not have ventured to enter at all.

"John, turn Mr. Ionides out!"

The manservant gasped.

"Mr. Ionides!"

"Yes, it is Ionides, playing a foolish and dastardly trick."

"I have played no trick," the Greek screamed. "You are mad! You are all mad, or else this is a conspiracy! I refuse to go till you have explained! I tell you——"

"Go! You are no longer a prefect. More than that, you are no longer a member of the Greyfriars Sixth, sir—I expel you!" almost shouted the Head. "Now, sir, begone! Throw him out, John!"

"Certainly, sir!" said John.

The maid had told him of the unearthly visitant with a green skin, and John had been nervous, but now that he knew he had only a human boy to deal with, John was courageous enough.

He advanced upon Ionides and grasped him by the shoulders.

"Outside!" he said laconically.

The Greek was beside himself with passion. He clenched his fist and struck the man full in the face, with such savage force that John reeled under the blow.

But John, though he wore a livery, had muscle and pluck. He reeled for a moment, and then he closed with the Greek. He dragged him from his feet and dragged him towards the door.

Ionides, utterly losing his self-control, struggled furiously, rapping out savage oaths in Greek, and punching, kicking, and biting and scratching.

"My hoye!" gasped John, "what a wildcat! Hopen the door, Hemily!"

Emily, the maidservant, opened the door into the Close. John dragged the furiously struggling Greek to the doorway, and flung him out.

Ionides rolled down the steps, and landed at the bottom with a grunt, and then picked himself up. Too furious to think of anything but revenge, the Greek dashed up the steps and hurled himself at the manservant.

"Which I'm ready for you, sir," murmured John.

And he let out his right, and Heracles Ionides rolled down the steps again. This time he did not charge back. But he groped in the dark for a stone, found one, and flung it with all his strength.

John gave a yell, and staggered into the hall; the stone had grazed his head, crashed past him, and shattered the glass of a picture. Dr. Locke looked out at the door.

"You had better go, Ionides," he said quietly.

The Head's voice somewhat calmed the Greek; he realised that he was acting in the worst possible way for himself. He slunk away in the dusk, and the Head closed the door.

Ionides, his eyes gleaming, his bosom heaving, strode back to the schoolhouse, and entered. Several juniors who had followed him in the Close had scuttled back to announce the fact that he had been ejected from the Head's house, and he found a delighted crowd of juniors waiting for him when he came in.

He gave them a tigerish look.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove. "Who's been chucked out on his neck?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greek made a savage rush at them. The juniors scattered, many of them yelling as they received sounding cuffs. Mr. Quelch came out of his study, and almost ran into the Greek. He started back in amazement.

"What—what—who—what is that, in heaven's name?"

"What, are you mad, too?" shrieked Ionides.

"Ionides! Boy! How dare you? How dare you play such an absurd trick?"

"You are mad—mad! They are all mad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry, from the distance.

"What price our patent face wash?"

Mr. Quelch started.

"Is it possible, Ionides, that you do not know what state your face is in?" he demanded.

The Greek stared at him.

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"What do you mean? My face?"

"Look in the glass!" said the Remove master sternly.

Ionides rushed to the glass over the hall stand.

He looked in, and staggered back as he saw his reflection in the mirror. He gazed at it dumbfounded. His expression was quite sufficient to show Mr. Quelch that it was no trick on his part, and that he had indeed been ignorant that his face was in such a state.

"Heavens!" gasped the Greek, "what can it be—what terrible disease?"

"It is no disease," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "Something has been painted on your face—yet how it can have been painted on without your knowledge passes my comprehension. Have you been asleep? This looks to me like a trick of the juniors."

"Asleep? No! It is not half an hour since I washed my face, and when I left my study I looked in the glass to adjust my tie, and there was nothing on my face then," said the Greek, perfectly bewildered.

"Then I cannot understand it. I suppose you do not use any preparation for the skin?"

"Ah!" cried Ionides, "that is it! It was the skin lotion."

"You—you use a skin lotion!"

"Yes, for improving the complexion, and——"

"Then I must say you are a fop and a fool, and you deserve what has happened to you," said the Remove master. "You might leave those things to the other sex. You have evidently used something containing a chemical which has changed colour, perhaps owing to something in the atmosphere."

"But—but I have used the same before, and—— Ah, I understand now. They have opened the bottle and played some trick with it."

"Ha, ha!" The Remove master burst into an involuntary laugh. "I should not be surprised, and I should not feel very sorry for you if such were the case. I should advise you to go and get your face cleaned, and to use no more skin lotions in the future. Your complexion will be well enough if you take plenty of open-air exercise."

And the Remove master went into his study.

Heracles Ionides went upstairs to his own room, trembling with passion. He guessed pretty accurately that he had been the victim of a joke among the juniors, and he was beginning to understand that, prefect as he was, he was not likely to have everything his own way in a combat with the Lower School.

Nor was he likely to remain a prefect much longer after what had happened! He could call on the doctor and explain, but——

He washed and scrubbed at his face desperately. But the stain, easy as it had been to put on, was difficult to get off. For almost an hour the Greek laboured at the task, and when he at last desisted from sheer exhaustion, there were still very plain traces of the green stain clinging to his ears and under his chin, and his fingers were coloured by it in the washing process.

He looked in the glass at last, gasping with fatigue and rage. He dressed himself carefully for his visit of explanation to the Head. When he came out of his study, there were a crowd of grinning juniors waiting to look at him, but Ionides allowed their grins and chuckles to pass unnoticed. He felt too used-up just then for a fresh row with the Remove.

He called on the Head. Dr. Locke allowed him to be admitted, and listened to his explanation coldly. He conceded that the Greek was not to blame for calling in such a curious state, and that he could not be held responsible for the fright Mrs. Locke and little Miss Molly had received.

"But this would never have happened but for your absurd and effeminate use of a skin lotion," said the Head. "Too much attention to beautifying the person is essentially unmanly. Apart from that, I cannot forget your conduct here. As you have been the victim of a trick, I exonerate you in part, and I shall not expel you, as I intended. I hold you excused so far; but nothing can excuse your conduct here. You ought to have left the house, right or wrong, when I told you to go. You cannot, under any circumstances, be pardoned for the violent assault upon my servant. Had the stone struck him, as you intended, it might have caused him serious injury."

"I am sorry——"

"I hope you are," said the Head grimly. "But sorrow is not quite sufficient to meet the case. A boy of such a savage and ungovernable temper is certainly not fit to hold in his hands the authority which belongs to a prefect."

"But——"

"You are no longer a prefect. You may go."

And Heracles Ionides went. And, with the exception of the Greek himself, there wasn't a soul in Greyfriars who was sorry that Ionides had lost his rank as a prefect. He had joined battle with the Remove, and the Remove had had the best of it—and the Remove rejoiced exceedingly.

THE END.

(Another splendid tale of the Boys of Greyfriars next Tuesday, entitled "Harry Wharton's Campaign." Please order your "Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)

NEXT TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON'S CAMPAIGN."

A Grand School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

GRAND TALE OF ARMY LIFE.



READ THIS FIRST.

On the death of his father, Jack Dashwood finds to his astonishment that he has been practically disinherited in favour of his Uncle Dominic and Cousin Leonard. He consequently enlists in the 25th Hussars, under the name of Tom Howard, and soon becomes a corporal. Unfortunately for Jack, however, his Cousin Leonard is attached to the 25th as second lieutenant, and, with the aid of a bullying trooper named Sligo, succeeds in getting Jack deprived of his stripes. Dominic Dashwood's death occurs just as the 25th are sailing for India. On their arrival there, Leonard transfers into the Ploughshires, while Jack is soon reinstated favourite, and becomes once more full corporal. A frontier war breaks out, and the 25th receive orders to mobilise for the front. Sligo is bribed by Dashwood to drug Tom Howard one night while the young corporal is on picket duty. Tom falls asleep at his post and is told that in due time he will be court-martialled. One day Sligo has a letter from his wife, describing how, while cleaning out a certain set of offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields, she discovered a dusty document under a safe, relating to Tom Howard's affairs, and that Sergeant Hogan, a former servant of Colonel Dashwood's, with whom Mrs. Sligo was acquainted, had joyfully affirmed that it established Jack Dashwood's claim to the Colonel's estates. This letter Sligo maliciously shows to Leonard Dashwood, who manages to destroy it, together with one from Sergeant Hogan to Tom Howard. Tom, being slightly wounded, is one of a convoy which is being sent to the base hospital, under the command of Leonard Dashwood. Some tribesmen are sighted, but make no real attack. Leonard calls a halt, and sits down to think out a way of getting rid of Tom Howard. He is soon, however, reminded by the sergeant that they have to go before dark, whereupon he rises and mounts again. (Now go on with the story.)

The Escort to the Wounded.

"Get ahead, sergeant!" said Lieutenant Dashwood. "I thought the wounded would be all the better for a rest. The poor beggars are shaken up enough, Heaven knows!"

He was beginning to feel that he had made a mistake. He should have pushed on, and let the mules take their chance of the enemy's fire. It might have solved all the difficulty for him. He almost longed to hear the wild yells of the mountaineers, and to hear the rattle of the fire; and it was not long before his wish was gratified.

They wound on among the boulders, which here and there were covered with small, straggling vines, and presently the track mounted a steep rise, with precipitous black cliffs towering on either hand. There was barely room for a mule and its leader to pass, and fifty yards ahead, the advance guard straggled up the slope, using the butts of their rifles to help them on.

All at once Dashwood saw the advance guard fling themselves on their faces, and begin to fire rapidly. The enemy was in force on top of the hill, and, unable to restrain their savage ardour any longer, had opened fire at sixty yards, their bullets starring the rocks right and left, one of them striking the leading mule in the shoulder, and making him rear.

The unfortunate occupants of the panniers had a bad time. One was a very young private, stone-blind, through a bullet having passed through his eyes; the other, a semi-paralysed bombardier of artillery, who had been hit somewhere in the region of the spine.

"Look out, sir!" cried the man behind him, in a terrified voice.

And, hearing a tremendous crash high up on his left, Leonard turned in his saddle, to see a gigantic boulder plunging down in a direct line for the centre of the halted mules.

Men grow dumb with fear, watching the avalanche leaping and bounding towards them; and, to make matters worse, several of the rearmost animals turned and stampeded, galloping madly down the steep hill with their helpless burdens crying appealingly for aid.

A desperate thought occurred to Leonard, and, turning, he grasped the bridle of the third mule, marked the track of the leaping boulder, and, pulling the beast's head round, smote it over the crop with the butt of his revolver, and sent it galloping madly to meet destruction.

All was confusion, men running hither and thither; but Dashwood remained motionless in his saddle, bending forward, almost praying that what he wished might be.

He saw Tom Howard spring to a sitting position, and, reaching an arm to the wounded man in the other pannier, shake him violently. The man's leg had been amputated above the knee, and all the poor fellow could do was to gesticulate with his arms, as Tom Howard flung his own legs downward and dropped to the ground.

The mule, lightened of half its burden, swerved suddenly, and dashed straight into the track of the rolling rock.

Private Johnson uttered a cry of horror as he saw the terrified beast and the helpless man overtaken by the rock.

The advance guard was still firing; and now the enemy, who were in considerable numbers, spread out along the gorge, and blazed down on the doomed convoy.

The sergeant came breathlessly down to where his officer stood.

"It's clear ahead, sir, and there's an empty sangar into which we might get the wounded. A quick-footed man might return to the camp to get help."

Private Johnson was a quick-footed man, and on hearing the sergeant's cry, he did not wait for any order, but sped away, and was soon lost sight of behind the clump of chenar-trees.

Tom Howard, who had flung himself clear of the doomed mule, lay half stunned for a moment, and opened his eyes as Johnson tore by him.

"Take this, Howard!" cried the private, dropping his Lee-Metford by Tom's side. "I'm off for supports!"

Tom reached out his hand and grasped the weapon, and, rising to his feet, followed the disorganised convoy. The men of the escort and the Indian water-carriers had checked the stampede, and, in response to Leonard Dashwood's whistle, seized the mules' heads, and sent them up the slope at a gallop, prodding them with bayonets.

Tom followed, the bullets from the mountain-side whistling about his ears unpleasantly. The stiffness he had felt seemed to vanish as he ran, and at the top of the pass he found the breastwork of stones of which the sergeant had spoken, and the men taking up a position there.

He started as his eye fell on his cousin, remembering Clavering's words. But Leonard was too excited to notice him, for the enemy had at that moment come rushing down, waving their rifles and swords, bent on what they thought an easy conquest.

Without a word Tom took his place behind the stone wall, and, kneeling down, fired at a chief, whose white robe was girt with a scarlet cummerbund.

The chief flung up his arms with a howl, and rolled head over heels down the slope, his sword and shield clashing among the rocks.

"Good shot, sir!" cried Leonard impulsively.

"A better one than I saw you make once," said Tom, looking up.

"The dickens! You here?" hissed his cousin.

And his hand tightened convulsively on the butt of his revolver.

"Play the game, Dashwood," said Jack, fixing him with his eye. "It's not a case of my life, but of all our lives at this moment!"

And the tribesmen being now within sixteen yards, Leonard emptied his revolver among them, with some effect, as some of the escort poured in a heavy fire.

Behind that little line of resolute Tommies the mules capered wildly on their hind legs, and it took the sick-bearers all their time to get the wounded out of their panniers and lay them in some sort of protection against the rear wall of the sangar.

"Vincent, mount your squadron and ride like fury!" cried Colonel Greville, as a limp and perspiring private fell on his knees before him and sobbed out his tale.

Private Johnson had run well, but the pace had nearly killed him. The colonel gave him a draught of brandy, and gathered that the attack was taking place about four miles off. And, saddling for all they were worth, "B" Squadron got under way, and rammed its spurs in.

They did not require to be told that Corporal Howard was one of the wounded convoy. It was good enough for them that British lads were battling for their lives away down the gorge, and they rode a mad steeplechase, Captain Vincent and Mr. Blennerhassett at their head.

They were sniped at before they had gone a mile, but, disregarding the shots, they pushed on past the chenar-trees, where the little party had halted, hearing heavy firing in front of them.

When they began to ascend the steep rise, the firing suddenly ceased, and a babel of yells took its place. Up on the skyline human forms could be seen leaping and bounding in the air, scattering and racing away in little groups, some of the groups pursuing a flying figure, and, alas! overtaking him and doing him to death before their eyes.

"We're too late!" cried Vincent, spurring his horse as he had never spurred a horse before.

And when they reached the top of the hill the white-robed figures seemed to have melted away, and could be seen retreating up the mountain-side, leaving a terrible spectacle for the rescue-party.

The road at that point, having reached the highest point of the gorge, plunged as steeply down on the other side towards a plain where a river ran, and the side of the slope was thickly strewn with gigantic boulders; the harvest of many a winter's storm.

About a hundred of them threaded their way among the rocks there, and, from a few isolated rifle-shots and the feeble crack of a revolver, it was evident that some of the Ploughshares had fled in that direction, and were being hotly pursued.

"Dismount!" cried Vincent. "We shall save some of them yet!"

And, drawing his revolver, he strode down the hill with seven-league boots, followed by Bill Sloggett and Sligo, and a score of other Hussars.

They came across an Indian soldier badly wounded. Round a huge boulder they found the sergeant, with his back against a rock, his head bleeding, but manfully defending himself against the attack of three Pathans. Vincent shot two, and Mr. Blennerhassett slew the third with a running cut.

"Scatter—scatter!" cried the captain. "We shall pick up some more yet. See, the fiends are already breaking away!"

And, looking over their shoulders, they saw the enemy, already having espied the approach of succour, streaming away for shelter, with loud yells.

Bill Sloggett and Alf Sligo ran down a sort of pathway among fragments of rock, looking sharply to right and left; and the path was so steep that Sligo could not stop himself, but gathered pace, and out-distanced Bill Sloggett.

If he had come across a Pathan at that moment he would have been slain, and he clutched wildly at a fragment of rock, and managed to pull himself up at the edge of a cliff that would have landed him into eternity.

"Crumbs! That was a near thing!" gasped the terrified private, panting violently. "And not so easy to get back, neither," he continued, looking upwards, and seeing the figures of his companions far above him.

He drew his sword and used it as a staff, for the ground was shallow and fell away under his feet. By dint of great care he had accomplished about forty yards of the ascent, and hung on to another boulder to take breath, when he saw something that made his jaw drop and his eyes dilate with astonishment.

Not three paces away, his forehead badly scored by coming in contact with the sharp rock, Corporal Tom Howard lay on his back, stunned and unconscious. And, creeping towards him with long, stealthy strides, revolver in hand, came Leonard Dashwood, with murder in his face.

They were in a little amphitheatre on the hillside, and a blue-and-green butterfly floated across it, its wings glistening with iridescent beauty in the sunshine.

"What-ho, she bumps!" exclaimed Sligo, his cunning eyes contracting, and the situation revolving rapidly in his crafty brain.

Leonard reached his cousin's side, casting a swift glance up the hill, and imagining himself alone. Sligo's gaze was riveted so intently upon the spectacle that he did not hear Bill Sloggett approach, and what followed was the work of an instant of time.

The lieutenant bent down towards the unconscious corporal, placed his revolver to his temple and pressed the trigger—once, twice, three times—the whole six chambers in succession—and then he muttered a curse on finding not one cartridge left to carry out his fell intent.

At that moment Sloggett was lowering himself round the corner of a boulder, and saw Leonard Dashwood's hand go to his pocket; but he did not realise what he saw.

Sloggett's imagination conjured up a spirit-flask, with a silver-mounted top. Leonard Dashwood had a ball cartridge in his mind's eye, and already his fingers had grasped one of the little copper cylinders.

It dropped from his hand as he cast another look round and met Alf Sligo's leer.

"'Arf a mo, Mr. Dashwood!" said Sligo, as yet unconscious of Sloggett's presence—"arf a mo, cōcky! I come on in this act!"

How Alf Sligo Put on the Screw.

Leonard Dashwood knelt on one knee beside his unconscious enemy, and looked with eyes like those of a serpent about to strike.

The black boulder in whose shadow he bent was hardly more rigid than the lieutenant, who, for an instant of time, seemed to be paralysed. He saw, however, something that Sligo did not see—the sturdy form of Trooper Sloggett; and, letting his revolver fall into the grass, Leonard Dashwood carried the matter with a high hand, and managed it very well.

"Come here, Sligo!" he said sharply; "and you other man here!"

Sligo started as if he had been shot, and, looking round, saw Bill Sloggett. It was just what the lieutenant intended he should do.

"Here's one of your fellows rather badly hit," he said. "We must carry him up the slope, as the relief-party seems to have cleared those beggars out."

Now, Bill Sloggett, although he had seen the lieutenant kneeling beside Tom, was so placed that the little incident of the revolver had been lost upon him, and, as we have said, he imagined him pressing his brandy-flask to the lips of the prostrate man.

Still, neither Dashwood nor Sligo knew how much or how little Sloggett had seen, and the uncertainty drew both of them together to an even closer companionship for the moment.

To their great relief Bill Sloggett made no sign, but bent down on the grass, unbuckling his canteen, the two others exchanging furtive glances behind his back.

Sligo winked expressively, and laid a dirty finger on his lips, and Leonard Dashwood nodded shortly.

"Hang you!" he muttered. "I'm deeper than ever in the rascal's toils!" And a red gleam came into his eye, and he marked Sligo down mentally for future destruction.

In the meantime, the rescue-party of Hussars had pursued the flying tribesmen to some purpose, and their carbines were still waking the echoes at the mouth of the gorge.

When they returned, a cheer of delight went up skyward as they saw their popular corporal in the centre of a knot of officers, sitting up, weak and dazed, but, after all, alive.

"Lie where you are, my lad," said the medical officer, who had examined Tom's head, and found that he had sustained no injury beyond a bruise on the temple, where he had come in contact with a rock. "You may thank your stars that you've got off so well! All the other poor fellows were cut up horribly!"

"I feel all right, sir," said Tom. "I think the excitement seems to have cleared my head. I shall be quite well in a few days. Don't send me down to that confounded place!"

Tom had for the moment drifted back into the old tone, that denoted perfect social equality with the medical officer, who looked at him more closely and frowned.

"You must leave that to me, my man," said the medical officer, as Tom looked appealingly at Captain Vincent and Mr. Blennerhassett.

"Don't you think he had better come back with us?" said Vincent, drawing the doctor aside. "We can't let you go alone, and it seems hardly worth while sending only one man down."

The doctor agreed without much persuasion, and when they had buried the poor fellows who had fallen in the fray, and piled stones over the grave, the party returned to camp, Bill Sloggett riding very close to Corporal Howard, turning over in his mind Alf Sligo's exclamation as he rounded the boulder.

"I come on in this act!" muttered Sloggett quite twenty times on the ride back. "That's a blessed funny way to address an officer! There's something rum goin' on between them two. I'll bet my life Sligo's at the bottom of that saddle cutting that 'Oward was suspected of! I'll watch it, I will!"

Sligo was one of the rear files of the Hussars, and on the spot where the gorge narrowed Leonard Dashwood rode his pony up to him, and as they scrambled for a few lengths side by side, Leonard found an opportunity to whisper:

"Come to my tent as soon as you can; I have something to say to you."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Sligo, lowering his voice, so that no one could hear him. "I 'ave something to say to you, yer murderer!"

And, seeing the mortal fear that came into Dashwood's face, Sligo chuckled coarsely, feeling that he had scored a hit, and he continued to chuckle at intervals all the rest of the way.

A thrill of excitement ran through that little town of improvised shelters and linked horses and stacks of piled arms, and all the ordinary bustle of camp followers and water-carriers and camel transport. A convoy of wounded had been cut off, and every man grew eager for the advance.

Leonard Dashwood and the medical officer made their report to Sir Bindon Blood, and were carefully cross-examined. No blame could attach to them. It was one of those unfortunate little incidents that will happen during a campaign.

"I regret to report," wrote the general in his next despatch, and he ended up the brief account with the words, "I have to mention the distinguished gallantry of Corporal T. Howard, 25th Hussars, the only wounded man who survived, who shot the leader of the rebels, and was conspicuous for his coolness during the action."

It was months before Tom read that report, and a great many things were to happen before then.

Then, coming away from the general's tent, Leonard Dashwood saw Sligo making his way towards the infantry lines, and overtook him as the sentry challenged.

"All right, sentry, this man is coming to see me," said the lieutenant. And with a very troubled mind, Leonard Dashwood drew back the curtain of his tent, and motioned Sligo to come inside.

"Get off that, you insolent beggar!" he said, as Sligo promptly seated himself on top of a case of whisky. "Do you want to give the whole show away?"

Sligo, realising that the lieutenant was in the right, stood up reluctantly, but with a grin on his face.

"I tumble," he said; "but I say, Lenny, I reckon I've picked a winner this time."

Dashwood sprang round, with a corkscrew in his hand.

"Confound you," he hissed, "I'd give something to—"

But he checked himself with a great effort before his tongue betrayed the thoughts that were in his brain.

"I know what yer were goin' ter say," said Sligo, paling a little. "You're wishin' yer 'ad me in a lonely place, with that revolver of yours better loaded than it was last time. Tell you what, Mr. Dashwood, this little business is goin' ter cost you a pretty penny before you're through with it. What I want to know is, how do I stand in over this last affair?"

"If you keep your tongue quiet," snarled Dashwood, drawing a cork viciously, and gurgling some neat whisky into a tumbler with a shaky hand, "if you will behave yourself, if it's possible, we will come to some

sort of understanding. You've come out top dog so far, I will admit; but you'll have to get up very early in the morning if you think you're going to best me in the end. Have a drink?"

"Yus," said Sligo, taking the whisky and gulping it down greedily. "Now, sir, if you have any communication to make to me, I will give it my best attention."

And he drew himself up with an assumption of mock respect that irritated Leonard to his very soul.

"Look here," said Dashwood, speaking quickly, "we have got to come to a definite arrangement. I was fool enough to take you into my confidence, because I thought you'd be useful, you miserable hound, and I suppose you're going to batten on to me to the end of your days, or you think so."

"I agrees with my friend the 'onourable member opposite," said Sligo, with a wink.

"There's one thing you forget," said Leonard. "In spite of all you know—and I admit you know a good deal—you can't betray me without giving yourself away—remember that. I'm not bound to give you a penny piece. You're a bad character in your regiment; and I'll be bound to say, if I caused inquiries to be made, Scotland Yard would give me plenty of information about you."

Sligo started and turned yellow, and Leonard, who had watched the effect of his words closely, smiled grimly.

"I thought so," he said; "and now, do you imagine anyone would take the word of a gaol-bird before mine? I have a thundering good mind to kick you out again."

"Look here, chuck it!" said Sligo. "What price that letter you tore up—Sir John Dashwood's letter, I mean—Corporal 'Oward, if you like that name better? What ho! I thought so!"

And Sligo mimicked Leonard's tone, as he saw a hot flush come into his face.

"Ink and paper's cheap enough, though I admit the postal arrangements is somewhat defective. What's to prevent me writin' to my missus and askin' 'er jest to drop a line to Colonel Greville, or to Sir John Dashwood 'imself? You bet your life Sergeant 'Ogan won't let the matter drop. There'll be a letter out next mail, and neither you nor me will get 'old of that one."

Leonard knew that perfectly well. It was the one thing that troubled him more than any other, short of the fact that his cousin still lived. There was a pause, and each man looked at the other.

"Do you think that man Sloggett saw anything?" said Leonard suddenly.

"Dunno. Bill Sloggett's a very close chap. He may and he mayn't. I'm goin' to keep an eye on him, though, and I'll soon find out. That'll be a 'undred pounds, Mr. Dashwood, cash before delivery, all orders punctually attended to. Sign! Forward!"

The cheap insolence of the rascal cut Dashwood like a knife. However great a villain he might be, he was by birth and breeding a gentleman, and the veins stood out on his forehead like a whipcord.

He bent forward with his fists drawn back, in the narrowness of the small tent, and the cowardly Sligo shrank back until he bulged the canvas out and made the guy ropes creak.

"Stow that!" he said, very white. "If you lay 'ands on me you'll know it."

"You cur!" said the lieutenant, throwing a world of contempt into his voice.

"Cur or no cur, you said just now that I was top, and I reckon I'll stay there. I want a 'undred pounds, and don't you forget it. And look 'ere," he continued, as soon as this sketch is through I'm going to chuck soldiering, and live 'appy ever afterwards; and you're going to find the spondulicks, my boy."

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