The Story Book for School & Home.

THE

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COMPLETE STORY FOR ALL

A Grand School Tale,

THE RIVALS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS

BOB CHERRY & FRANK NUGENT ARE "CUT"!

The Rivals of Greyfriars

A Splendid Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Trouble in the Form-room.

THE Remove were restive that morning. It was the brightest of April mornings. The sun had come out in a blaze, as if it had made a mistake and imagined that it was midsummer instead of early April. The sunlight gleamed in at the high windows of the class-room, and shone on the oaken desks and the varnished maps on the walls. There was no cloud in the sky. When the juniors ventured to look towards the windows, they caught glimpses of deep blue, cobwebbed by the foliage of the trees in the Close.

On such a morning, with all nature calling to them to be out of doors, it was no wonder that the Remove were restless.

Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, usually had his hands full with the Remove, and on this fine April morning they were a little fuller than usual. Even the dry, methodical Form-master felt the stirring of the spring within him, and to his eyes the room seemed darker and dustier than was its wont. And the attention of his pupils was wandering in a way that would have tried the patience of any Form-master.

Even Harry Wharton, the top boy in the class, was thinking of cricket instead of Latin prose—perhaps because Latin prose seemed more prosy than ever that sunny morning. The afternoon was a half-holiday, and his thoughts were already there—on the cricket-field, and along the shady margin of the river.

"Wharton!"

Mr. Quelch rapped out the name, and Harry, who had just been knocking up a hundred runs against the Upper Fourth—in a day-dream—came to himself with a start.

"Yes, sir."

"Pray repeat my last sentence."

Wharton turned red. He hadn't the faintest idea what Mr. Quelch's last sentence had been, and so he could not very well obey the order.

"Well," said Mr. Quelch, in a honeyed tone, which the Remove at Greyfriars had learned to recognise as a danger-signal, "I am waiting, Wharton."

"I—I—I——"

"Ahem! I am afraid you were thinking about something else, Wharton."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"And may I inquire what it was?" asked the Form-master, with elaborate and sarcastic politeness.

"Cricket, sir," said Wharton frankly.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"I commend your frankness, Wharton; but I am afraid I must request you to leave all considerations of cricket till classes are dismissed. You will remain in the class-room one hour after dinner, and write out a hundred times, 'I must not think of cricket during lessons.' You understand?"

"Ye-e-e-es, sir."

Wharton's face fell. The juniors looked glum enough all through the class. Mr. Quelch was evidently in one of his tantrums, and was not to be trifled with. And yet for the life of them the Removites could not keep their minds to their work that morning. Only five minutes later Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye dwelt upon Bob Cherry as he whispered in Nugent's ear. Poor Bob, quite unconscious of the fact that a keen eye was upon him, went on whispering.

"It's ripping weather for bathing to-day, Nugent. Jolly good idea to have a swim in the Sark this afternoon."

"Ripping!" said Nugent. "My hat, I wish I were there now, instead of in this stuffy old den, with that giddy basilisk watching us."

"Cherry! Nugent!"

The two delinquents started in dismay.

"Yes, sir?" faltered Nugent.

"What were you saying to Cherry?"

Nugent stammered. He could hardly repeat to the Form-master what he had been saying, without increasing the anger of the incensed Mr. Quelch. He turned crimson.

"I—I—it was nothing, sir."

Mr. Quelch rapped on the nearest desk to him with his pointer.

"Tell me immediately what you were saying, Nugent."

"If you please, sir——"

"I am curious to know what weighty matters occupy your young minds to the exclusion of mere lessons," said Mr. Quelch, in his most sarcastic tone. "Answer me at once."

"I—I was saying, sir——" Nugent stopped dead.

The whole Form were on the qui vive now. They knew from Nugent's manner that he must have been making some uncomplimentary reference to the Form-master himself, though that had not occurred to Mr. Quelch's mind.

"Go on, my dear Nugent. I am very much interested."

"That—that I wish I were swimming in the Sark now, sir, instead——"

"Pray continue."

"Instead of sitting in this stuffy old den, sir——"

"Ah! Is that all, Nugent?"

"N-n-n-n-no, sir."

"Go on."

"With—with a giddy basilisk watching us, sir," blurted out Nugent desperately.

Mr. Quelch almost jumped.

The Remove were quite silent for a second, catching their breath. Then they burst into an irresistible roar of laughter.

Mr. Quelch had brought it on himself; and his face, on hearing himself alluded to as a basilisk before his class, was a study. He gasped for a moment.

The juniors laughed loud and long. They could not help it. They had been in a state of strain for some time past, and now their pent-up feelings found relief. But the laughter gradually died away as Mr. Quelch looked round.

"Silence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! The next boy who laughs will be sent in to the doctor."

That was enough. In a few seconds the Remove were as silent and grave as a bench of judges. Mr. Quelch's face was dark with wrath.

"A—a—a basilisk, indeed!" he said. "Indeed, Nugent! A basilisk!"

"I—I didn't want to say it, sir," stammered the unfortunate Nugent. "I—I didn't really mean it, sir. It—it was only a figure of speech."

"I am afraid I cannot allow you the luxury of such figures of speech, Nugent. You will take two hundred lines of Virgil. For the outbreak of ill-timed hilarity that has just occurred, the whole Form will be detained an hour this afternoon." Mr. Quelch smiled grimly. "I trust there will be no more hilarity."

There wasn't much danger of more hilarity now. An hour's detention in the dusky class-room, on that beautiful April day—it was like the knell of doom to the unhappy Remove.

They would rather have been caned—they would almost rather have been flogged. The detention would "muck up" an intended cricket match with the Upper Fourth. That concerned the eleven. It would "muck up" a dozen little excursions that had been planned, and that concerned the whole Form.

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But the word of the Form-master was law; there was no appeal against Cæsar.

The rest of the morning lessons passed off in a gravity and quietness that would have satisfied the most exacting Form-master. A pin might have been heard to drop at times in the Remove-room. The Form were overwhelmed; and when classes were dismissed, they filed out in grim silence.

In the wide, flagged passage without, however, they found their voices. Loud—as loud as was consistent with safety—were the denunciations of the tyrant of the Remove.

Wharton, the captain of the Form, was silent, but the others made noise enough. Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, clapped his hand on Wharton's shoulder with a sneer.

"You haven't anything to say," he exclaimed savagely. "I suppose you are toadying to Quelch, as usual, and backing him up."

Harry Wharton smiled scornfully.

"Mr. Quelch doesn't need any backing up from me, or from any of us," he said. "We've got to stand it, and you know that."

"Still, it's a comfort to growl," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, Wharton doesn't want to growl," sneered Bulstrode. "He's a good little boy out of a story-book, and loves his kind teachers. He can stand anything."

"I can't stand your paw on my shoulder," said Wharton. "Take it away."

Bulstrode hesitated a moment, and then removed his hand.

"As for growling," went on Wharton quietly, "I would growl if it would do any good. As for calling Quelch a tyrant, that's all rot. I know jolly well that if I were a Form-master, I wouldn't allow fellows to make a row in class, or to think about sport in the class-rooms. Why can't you have a little sense?"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Well, I'm jolly well not going to stand it," said Bulstrode. "I've a good mind to cut."

"I say, you fellows, I've got an idea," persisted Billy Bunter. "You know what a jolly wonderful ventriloquist I am——"

"We know what a jolly wonderful ass you are," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Scat!" said Bob; and he walked away with Wharton, leaving Billy Bunter with his great idea unuttered. Bunter blinked after him indignantly. Then he turned to Nugent.

"I say, Nugent—— Oh, really, I wish you wouldn't walk away while I'm talking! I say, Linley—Linley! Desmond! Beasts!"

And Bunter, finding himself alone, sniffed and gave up his attempt to get any listeners to his great idea. He walked away to the tuckshop, and the Remove turned out into the Close, discussing their grievance in heated tones.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Bunter Makes Things Hum.

GRIM enough looked the Greyfriars Remove when the time came to go into the class-room. Never had the green Close seemed so green and inviting—never had the breeze whispered so softly through the leaves, or the river rippled and sung so sweetly among the rushes. It was the first really perfect day of the spring, and it seemed all the more perfect by contrast with the dusky, dull class-room.

The rest of Greyfriars were enjoying the half-holiday.

The Sixth and the Fifth were both playing cricket matches—the Sixth at home, the Fifth away at Redclyffe. The Upper Fourth had a fixture with the Remove—the Lower Fourth—but that was off now, of course. Harry Wharton

reluctantly explained to Temple Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth how matters stood. Temple listened with a sympathetic but superior smile. The Upper Fourth allowed themselves all sorts of airs towards the Remove, apparently undisturbed by the fact that the Lower Form had licked them in an historic football match.

"Sorry!" said Temple. "I suppose naughty little boys have to be kept in, but it's awkward."

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton politely. "I'm sorry the match is off, that's all, but I don't want any of your bosh, you know."

"Well, it saves you a licking," Temple remarked thoughtfully.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"More rats!" said Wharton. "We should have run you off your legs, and wiped up the ground with you. I'm pretty sure of that. If you like to put the match off an hour or so later, we can fix it, unless something goes wrong."

"As it very likely will," grinned Temple. "If Quelch keeps you longer, we shall be hanging about doing nothing. No, thanks."

"You can go and eat coke, then."

"The village chaps are hanging up for a match with us," said Temple, looking at his friends. "We'll go down to Friardale and play them."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Right-ho!" said Fry. "It will be more fun than playing these naughty little fags, too. Think of us when you're grinding out Latin in the class-room, Wharton. So long!"

And Temple, Dabney & Co. strolled off.

And the Remove, instead of playing cricket or going on the river, or roaming in the scented woods, turned into the dusky Form-room.

They were in a mood that was unutterable. To have a half-holiday messed up in this manner was too terrible for words. There was a curious expression upon Billy Bunter's face as he took his place in class. The ventriloquist of the Remove had formed what he considered a ripping plan for extricating the Form from its fix, and he had found no one to even listen to it. The fat junior suffered under a sense of deep injury, and he had resolved to leave the ungrateful Form to its fate. But as that involved sharing its fate himself, he altered his mind once more, and by the time he was in class, he was ready for business.

Billy Bunter had been so long training, that the Form had agreed to laugh at his ventriloquism; but at the finish the fat junior had astounded them by proving that he really had the curious gift. His imitation of voices was marvellous, and his ventriloquial feats had caused much mirth and a great deal of trouble. It was certainly a gift, for, as Skinner remarked, if it had depended upon sense, Bunter would never have ventriloquised.

Mr. Quelch came in, looking very quiet. He was, as a matter of fact, sorry for the boys—and for himself. The windows were open, and from the Close without came in a sweet breath of spring with the sunshine. The shouts of the fellows on the playing-fields could be heard. The Remove all looked glum.

Mr. Quelch knew, of course, how the juniors would occupy their detention if there were no master present to keep them in order; and he had to sacrifice an hour from his own afternoon for the purpose. He did not intend to make it harder than necessary, however, and he set the boys a task to fill up the time, and then seated himself at his desk with a newspaper.

There was silence in the class-room, broken only by the faint scratching of pens. Soon, however, another sound became audible—a faint buz-z-z-z-z-z, as of a wandering bumble-bee.

Some of the juniors looked round. Anything to relieve the monotony was welcome, if it were only the buzzing of a bee. Mr. Quelch looked up, and the boys fell to their tasks again. They were thinking of anything but the dreary Latin conjugations. Some of them thought of cricket, some of the river, some of climbing the Black Pike. Micky Desmond thought of Miss Clara Travers, of Cliff House Girls' School, whom he was to have taken on the bay. Harry Wharton, perhaps, thought of Marjorie Hazeldene, whom he half expected to see during the cricket match that was now off.

Buz-z z-z-z-z!

The noise was growing louder, more persistent.

A stray bumble-bee had evidently found its way into the room through the open window, and though it could not be seen, it made its presence known.

There was something peculiarly insistent and irritating about that steady buzz, and some of the juniors looked for the bee, in order to throw things at it, and Mr. Quelch looked up from his paper with a worried expression.

"Dear me! There is a bee in the room!"

"Shall I look for it, sir?" asked Micky Desmond eagerly.

He would have given a great deal to stretch his legs in chasing a bee round the class-room.

"No," said Mr. Quelch.

Silence, and scratching of the pens again. Then:

B-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z!

The buzzing was close to Mr. Quelch, apparently, for he laid down his paper and looked about him. But he could not see the bee, and he recommenced reading.

B-z-z-z-z-z!

With a slight exclamation, Mr. Quelch swept the paper vigorously through the air. He did not touch the bee with it, but he knocked an inkpot off his desk, and it went to the floor with a crash.

There was a faint giggle in the class, and Mr. Quelch looked round with a red face. The giggle died away instantly, and the boys scratched with their pens with a most remarkable exhibition of industry.

Mr. Quelch resumed reading his paper. The hum of the bee had died away, and the Form-master congratulated himself upon having finally driven away the troublesome insect. But his congratulations were premature.

B-z-z-z-z-z!

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet. There was an expression on his face that would have made a junior quake, if it had been a junior instead of a bumble-bee that was buzzing round him. But it had no effect upon the buzzer. The buzzing grew louder, more irritating, and seemed to float round Mr. Quelch's head in the most exasperating way.

The juniors were watching covertly now, highly interested.

A tussle between an enraged Form-master and a troublesome bumble-bee was far more exciting than deponent verbs.

But Mr. Quelch looked for the bee in vain. The hum seemed to rise and fall in sound, as if the insect were now near, now far. Always it seemed to be just out of the Form-master's reach, or else just behind him, or over his head.

Mr. Quelch made desperate slashes with the rolled newspaper in various directions. He smote his desk with a bang that made the lid jump, and the buzz was silent. Had he killed the intruder? He looked on the desk, but there were no traces of a slain bee. And the next moment the buzz, louder and almost menacing, burst out behind his ear, and he gave so sudden a jump that he barked his shin on his chair

The Form-master was breathing hard now.

The horrible insect had evidently found some mysterious attraction about him, and did not mean to let him alone. In the summer, Mr. Quelch had found that flies had a predilection for a certain spot on his head where the hair did not grow so thickly as it used to. Doubtless this early bee of spring had a similar taste. Mr. Quelch set his teeth. It was a struggle now between him and the bee, and woe betide the intruder when he had a fair chance at it with his newspaper.

The buzz tantalised him. Again and again he struck in the direction of the sound, but the buzz went on.

He banged his desk, and he banged his chair, and he banged the leg of his trousers, with a bang that made him dance the next moment. Then the buzz seemed to settle on the bookcase, and the excited master, forgetting himself for a moment, bestowed a terrific bang there, and the glass flew out in fragments.

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

A ripple of laughter ran through the Remove.

They could not help it; but Mr. Quelch was deaf to their merriment now. He was thinking only of that maddening bee.

Swipe! Bang! Thud!

And still the buzzing continued.

"My only hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "That's about the most obstinate bee I've ever heard buzzing. Why doesn't the beast fly away?"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, chuckled softly. He seemed to be suffering from suppressed convulsions, and Bob Cherry looked at him inquiringly.

"What's the matter, Inky?"

"The matterfulness is terrific. Look at our worthy Bunterful chum."

Bob Cherry looked at Bunter. The fat junior was bending over his work, and his attitude was most innocent. But the position of his lips caught Bob's eye, and he understood. He crammed his fist into his mouth to keep back the roar of laughter that strove to be uttered.

"My hat! It's the ventriloquist!"

And he watched Mr. Quelch's bee-hunt with renewed interest. He understood now why none of the Form-master's frantic swipes succeeded in crushing the bee, and why the troublesome insect did not fly away.

The Form-master was growing more and more excited.

It was very seldom that the severe Remove-master allowed his excitement to rise, but just now he seemed to be utterly exasperated. All his attempts had failed, and that provoking bee was still buzzing about his ears. He stopped his efforts at last, and called on the juniors to help him.

"My boys! Can any of you see the bee anywhere?"

"No, sir,' said several voices.

"Please see if you can—can drive it from the room."

It was only exasperation and exhaustion that induced Mr. Quelch to give that fatal order. He might have known what to expect.

In a moment the Remove were "on" it.

They jumped up from their seats, and spread over the room, hunting the bee. Bulstrode searched along the bookcase with a ruler, smashing all the glass that Mr. Quelch had spared. Skinner and Stott overturned a desk with a terrific crash in a praiseworthy attempt to corner the insect. Wun Lung, the Chinee, even made a jab at Mr. Quelch's back with his pen, to transfix the bee—which was not there. He did not succeed in hurting the invisible bee, but apparently he hurt Mr. Quelch, for the Form-master uttered a fearful yell, and turned on the little Chinee. He seized Wun Lung by the shoulder.

"Boy! How dare you?"

"Me solly! Me killee bee!" gasped Wun Lung.

"You—you stuck the nib of your pen in my back!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Me tinkee me see bee—me killee!"

"You—you utterly stupid boy!"

"No savvy!"

"Boys—er—boys——" In the din of that eager search, the Form-master's voice could hardly be heard. He realised his rashness, and wanted to stop the damage. "Boys, cease this at once! You—you are excused the rest of your detention. You may go."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

The bee was forgotten. The juniors made a rush for the door, and went streaming joyously out. Mr. Quelch panted for breath. And, curiously enough, as soon as the Remove were all gone, the buzzing of that troublesome bee ceased at once, and was heard no more.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Late Comers.

BILLY BUNTER strutted down the passage like an extremely fat turkey-cock. He was feeling very pleased with himself, and proud of his achievements. Three or four juniors made a sudden rush at him, and he was lifted off his feet and rushed out into the Close.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Help! Leggo! Oh, really——"

"Bring him along!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Ow! Gerrooh! Hellup!"

But no attention was paid to Bunter's yelling. With his feet trailing on the ground, he was rushed across towards Mrs. Mimble's shop. He hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels; but as he was rushed into the tuck-shop his fat face cleared.

"There you are!" gasped Bob Cherry, plumping the fat junior down into a chair.

"Ow! I—I—I'm out of breath! What's the matter?"

Bob Cherry waved his hand towards Mrs. Mimble's enticing counter.

"Order what you like, my son."

"Eh?"

"Order what you like! It's my treat."

"I—I—I—— My only aunt!"

"Go ahead!"

Billy Bunter understood at last. It was not a hostile demonstration. The Removites only wanted to show their gratitude to the ventriloquist for delivering them from detention in the class-room.

"Well, really, Cherry, this is jolly decent of you," gasped Bunter. "This way, Mrs. Mimble. I'll have some of the rabbit-pies——"

"You know my rule with you, Master Bunter," said Mrs. Mimble. "You must always let me see your money."

"My friends are standing this treat, ma'am," said Bunter, with much dignity. "I refer you to Robert Cherry."

"Right you are," said Robert Cherry, grinning. "It's all right, Mrs. Mimble. We're all standing treat, and Bunter is to have as much as he can scoff!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

The laughing Removites, of whom a dozen or more had crowded in, planked down their money cheerfully. Billy Bunter's eyes glistened, and he ordered things right and left. So soon after dinner, the other fellows did not feel inclined for anything more solid than ginger beer and lemonade. But Bunter was quite ready for a meal. His orders were magnificent. Even the thoughtless and generous Bob Cherry was a little staggered; but he grinned and bore it. And when the other fellows had drunk their ginger-beer, and were streaming out of the tuck-shop, Billy Bunter was left sitting alone at a little table that groaned under comestibles, with a knife and fork in his hand, and a beatific expression upon his fat face.

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent joined Wharton in the Close. The juniors were free for the afternoon, with only half an hour gone of the threatened hour of detention. But the Upper Fourth cricketers were gone to the village, and cricket was off, unless the Remove knocked up a scratch match among themselves. But just then the sunny meadows and the river seemed more attractive.

"What price a swim in the Sark?" said Nugent. "There are some jolly places for a bathe. Up the stream, I mean. You remember lugging me out of the Pool, below the bridge, the day you came to Greyfriars, Harry?"

"You don't let me forget it," said Wharton, laughing. "I think a swim is a ripping wheeze. It's as warm as midsummer to-day. Who's for the river?"

There were a dozen who were for the river. And to get their bathing things and follow Wharton from the school gates was quick work. Nugent led the way through the wood towards the particular spot he had in his mind's eye. It was a remote spot, where the stream rippled and sang under the overarching boughs of great trees, and green thickets covered the banks amid huge, gnarled trunks.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.

A sound had come from the river bank, hidden as yet by the screen of thickets and trees. It was a sound of girlish laughter.

Splash! Splash! Splash!

Then soft, rippling laughter again!

The juniors stopped dead in dismay.

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent. "It's the Cliff House girls!"

"Oh, hang!" said Trevor. "They've got our place."

"Cheek!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

There was wrath as well as dismay in the looks of the Removites. This particular spot was on ground that belonged to Greyfriars School, and it had been a favourite swimming-place for the boys from time immemorial. A wooden shelter had been built there at the expense of Greyfriars, and although it was not kept locked, it was, of course, only used by Greyfriars fellows.

To have their quarters calmly appropriated by a party of girls was rough; and all the rougher because there seemed to be no remedy.

If the fellows from Herr Rosenblaum's Academy, or the lads from the village had taken possession of that spot, the juniors would have known what to do. They would have called up the forces of the Remove, rushed the intruders, ducked them, and kicked them out.

But that was scarcely feasible as a way of dealing with girls.

"What are we going to do, Wharton?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Blessed if I know! We can't go on now. It—it would startle them, you know."

"Oh, rats! We're not going to give up our swim, I suppose?" said Nugent.

"I suppose you can go and swim while there are girls there?" said Wharton sarcastically.

Nugent turned red.

"N-no; but——"

"We shall have to chuck it, I'm afraid."

The juniors looked gloomy; but there was evidently nothing else to be done. They turned away from the bank, without the girls even knowing that they had been there, and walked slowly back towards the school.

Wingate, of the Sixth, met them near the gates, and stopped. He saw that something was amiss.

"Anything wrong?" he asked crisply.

The juniors poured out their troubles at once. The captain of Greyfriars listened with a wrinkled brow.

"H'm, that won't do," he said. "Of course, you can't go for the girls and sling them out, and that makes it all the harder. And the place is marked 'Private,' too, on a board with letters six inches long. Like their cheek!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Miss Primrose ought to see to it," the senior remarked reflectively.

The juniors looked uncomfortable.

"Of course, we don't want to do anything like—like telling tales or complaining," said Wharton reddening.

"Of course not. But I suppose Miss Primrose can be informed that the land is private property, and reserved for the use of this school," said Wingate. "Why, I might have wanted to go for a swim there myself. I'll just send a note over to Cliff House about it."

Wharton had his doubts. But there was no gainsaying the captain of Greyfriars. And the Removites, deprived of the anticipated swim, turned to cricket as the next best thing to do, and thoroughly enjoyed a good game in the sunny afternoon.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Mischievous Messenger!

MISS PENELOPE PRIMROSE, the Head-mistress of Cliff House School for Girls, was seated in a deep, cane chair, under one of the horse-chestnut trees in the garden. The afternoon was very warm for the time of year, and the chair was very easy and inviting; but Miss Primrose was sitting bolt upright, as if it were impossible to get a bend in her back under any circumstances. Miss Penelope prided herself upon always setting a good example to her pupils, and it was her pride, too, that there was not a single back at Cliff House that was not perfectly straight. Even Wilhelmina Limburger, the stout German girl, naturally given to attitudes of ease if not grace, was trained to the rigid perpendicularity of a pillar-box.

Miss Penelope was knitting. Miss Penelope was always knitting. She knitted socks and stockings for poor children, in endless quantities. She knitted scarves and mittens and jerseys. And in her gentle way she impressed the lesson of useful philanthropy upon her pupils, not without effect, for Marjorie Hazeldene had taken up the same line, and during the past fortnight had knitted nearly half a sock, and her friend Clara was deeply engaged upon a richly-embroidered table-centre, which she intended to present to some extremely poor person in the village of Pegg.

Miss Locke was seated near the Head-mistress. Miss Locke was reading a big volume in German, which it made Miss Penelope's head ache to look at. The old garden was very quiet. Miss Penelope looked up, and ceased to knit, as the gate opened, and a boy came in.

Cliff House was as secluded from the male sex as an Eastern seraglio, except upon occasions of special invitation. To see a boy calmly march into the garden was surprising to Miss Penelope. The boy was a burly fellow, and his garb and his cap showed that he belonged to the Greyfriars School. As a matter of fact, it was Bulstrode, of the Remove. Wingate had given him a note to bring over to Cliff House, and he had chosen the worst messenger possible for a pacific purpose. Bulstrode had happened to be at hand, and the Greyfriars captain had sent him over, without dreaming of the mischief the ill-natured junior might scheme during his walk to Cliff House.

"Good gracious!" said Miss Penelope, putting up her glasses. "It is a boy!"

From her tone, she might have been saying "It is a rhinoceros!"

Bulstrode came coolly in, whistling, and looked round. He saw Miss Penelope under the tree, and instead of going up to the house came towards her.

The school-mistress looked at him through her glasses.

She recognised Bulstrode, on examining his face, as a youth she had seen engaged in a fistical encounter on the Friardale road; and she did not like the expression of cool impudence on his face.

Bulstrode dragged off his cap carelessly.

He was not naturally polite, and the fact that Harry Wharton had done his best to establish friendly relations between the two schools was quite sufficient to make Bulstrode wish to cause bad blood.

"Good gracious!" said Miss Penelope again. "It is a—er—boy! What do you want, my little fellow?"

Bulstrode reddened. He was the biggest member of the Greyfriars Remove, and did not relish being termed a little fellow. Miss Locke smiled slightly, and dropped her eyes on her book again.

"I've brought you a note, ma'am," said Bulstrode gruffly.

"Thank you!"

"It's from our captain," explained Bulstrode. "Wingate, the Greyfriars skipper."

This was so much Greek to Miss Penelope, but she took the note, and after asking Miss Locke to excuse her, opened it and read it.

The contents caused a look of surprise to dawn upon her face.

"Dear me!"

The note was brief, like all Wingate's communications, and it ran as follows:

"Dear Madam,—May I point out to you that the Upper Pool on the Sark is on Greyfriars ground, and is used for bathing purposes by the Greyfriars fellows? They would be much obliged if, on future occasions, their rights were not infringed.—Yours sincerely, G. WINGATE.

"Dear me!" said Miss Penelope again.

She passed the note to Miss Locke. Miss Locke was the sister of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars; but she was very much younger than her brother and very unlike him. She had a kind heart and a sweet temper; but at the same time she had a decisive character, and strong views upon the subject of votes for women. She read the note, and shook her head.

"Absurd!" she exclaimed.

"Is it absurd?" asked patient little Miss Penelope, who was accustomed to rely in everything upon the strong judgment of the Girton girl.

"Certainly! The river is free to all; the fact that it has been used only by Greyfriars till now makes no difference."

"I—I suppose not."

"I should not concede the point. There might be a compromise, perhaps—that it should be used alternately on the half-holidays by the two schools."

"Yes, yes, that would be very fair."

"It wouldn't do for us," said Bulstrode, with an impudent grin. "The place belongs to us, ma'am, and we're not going to have any trespassers."

"Dear me!"

"If you don't keep the girls away, there will be trouble," went on Bulstrode. "We're not going to stand any nonsense, I assure you."

"That will do," said Miss Locke, fixing her clear eyes on Bulstrode. "I am sure Wingate did not intend you to be impertinent. You need not wait. Miss Primrose will write to Wingate."

"Yes—yes, certainly!" said the fluttered little lady.

"Well, are the girls going to keep off the grass, then?" said Bulstrode insolently. "If they don't, there will be trouble."

"That is enough. You may go."

There was more impertinence on Bulstrode's tongue, but Miss Locke's look restrained him. Three or four girls of Cliff House were in the garden, and within hearing. They exchanged indignant looks. If they had been boys, it is probable that Bulstrode would have been ragged before he got out of the garden. As they were girls, they could not bump him over, or knock his cap off, so they contented themselves with giving him looks of lofty scorn as he made his way to the gate. But scornful looks had no effect on the bully of the Remove. He only grinned, and slammed the gate after him as he went out.

He grinned gleefully as he made his way back to Greyfriars. There was going to be trouble if he could manage it, and he thought he could. He went straight to Wingate's study when he reached the school.

"Any answer?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"No. Miss Primrose is going to write and tell you that they have as much right to the Upper Pool as we have."

Wingate looked at him.

"Did she say that?"

"Yes."

"H'm! I know you, Bulstrode. I shall prefer to form an opinion when I get her letter," said Wingate drily. "You can cut!"

Bulstrode left the study, scowling. His unsupported testimony had very little weight with the Greyfriars captain, who, as he said, knew him. But with the Remove fellows it was different. They listened eagerly to the report, and there were expressions of indignation on all sides.

Harry Wharton distrusted the messenger, but he said little. If it was true, it was, after all, a natural line for Miss Penelope to take. Wharton was troubled in his mind. He particularly wanted to keep on good terms with Cliff House, and he read Bulstrode's motives clearly enough. But for the present Harry could do nothing, and he had to let circumstances take their course.

Meanwhile, there was indignation among the girls of Cliff House.

Shortly after Bulstrode's departure the girls came in from the river, with Miss Tulke, the second assistant mistress. The girls who had been in the garden at the time of Bulstrode's visit gave them an account of the affair, which did not lose in effect as they related it. And indignation was very deep and general among the Cliff House pupils.

"The cad," said Marjorie, speaking in vigorous language she had learned from her brother in the Greyfriars Remove, "to be rude to Miss Penelope! The cad!"

"Cad isn't the word," said Miss Clara. "You mean rotter!"

"Oh, Clara!"

"He is a rotter," said Miss Clara fiercely. "If I had heard him being rude to Miss Penelope, I should have punched his head."

"Oh, Clara!"

"Which of them was it?" asked Clara of the excited witnesses. "Surely it wasn't Harry Wharton?"

"Oh, it couldn't have been!" exclaimed Marjorie hastily.

"Or Bob Cherry—or Nugent?"

"Of course not! It was some mean fellow."

"Oh, you never know when boys are going to act meanly," said Miss Clara, with the decision of one who had had at least sixty or seventy years' experience of them. "You never can tell. Even nice boys act meanly sometimes, and all boys are so dreadfully selfish."

"Not all," said Marjorie gently.

"Yes, all," said Miss Clara, in her most truculent manner. "Fancy being rude to Miss Penelope! The—the rotter! I don't think we ought to speak to any of them again."

"Oh, Clara!"

"Oh, dear!" said that lively young lady. "Somebody is always saying 'Oh, Clara,' whenever I speak."

"Well, darling, you are so- so—so——"

"Yes, I dare say I am so—so—so——" mimicked Miss Clara. "But I am not going to speak to any of the Greyfriars boys again, so there!"

And Miss Clara tossed her golden curls in a way that showed that she had quite made up her mind.

"Oh, Clara!"

"And if you girls have any spirit," said Miss Clara warmly, "you'll all do the same. We'll cut them."

"Tat vould hurt tem, ain't it?" said Miss Wilhelmina Limburger, shaking her flaxen head. "Ve not vants to hurt tem, tear."

"I mean not speak to them," said Clara pettishly. "Now, I have made up my mind, and I think you all ought to do the same."

And the general opinion backed up that of Miss Clara. The girls were all indignant, and Marjorie, who was doubtful, was left in a minority of one.

"But we shall meet them at church to-morrow!" protested Marjorie.

"All the better!" exclaimed Clara triumphantly. "That will give us a good opportunity of cutting them dead."

And the girls agreed with gleeful anticipation, and Marjorie said no more. The vials of wrath were ready to be poured upon the unsuspecting heads of the Greyfriars juniors.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
The Breach Widens!

"COME in!" said Wingate, as a tap came at his door, and Harry Wharton entered his study. There was a letter in the junior's hand.

"Letter for you, Wingate."

"Thanks!"

Wharton handed over the letter, and waited. Wingate looked at him.

"You can cut!"

"The letter was brought by the gardener from Cliff House," said Harry, colouring. "If it is a reply from Miss Primrose, I should like to know what she says—if you don't mind."

"Oh, all right; hold on a minute, then."

Wingate glanced through the note carelessly. Then he started and whistled, and read it through again.

"My word!"

Harry Wharton looked anxious. He particularly wanted to avoid anything like trouble between the two schools, as we know, and this looked like trouble.

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Wingate," he said anxiously.

Wingate grunted.

"You can read the letter yourself."

He tossed it to the junior, who quickly read it through. Then his own face became serious. The letter ran:

"Dear Sir,—In reply to your note, I must point out to you that the Sark is public property, and that I cannot therefore accede to your request. I should be very pleased to make some equitable arrangement, by which the bathing-place could be used by both schools alternately.—Yours sincerely,

P. PRIMROSE."

"Cheek!" said Wingate. "Why, it's our place—has been for generations! I suppose Miss Primrose doesn't understand. I'll see what can be done. For the present, the matter will have to stand over. You can tell your Form what's in that letter, and that I'm going to see about it next week."

And Wharton quitted the captain's study. He went into the junior common-room, where he found an anxious crowd awaiting him. That Miss Primrose's gardener had come over with a note was known to all, and they wanted to know the result. The Upper Fourth were as keen about it as the Remove; and so, in fact, were the Fifth, though the latter were too lordly to mix themselves up with the juniors in the matter.

A babel of voices greeted Wharton as he entered, everybody asking questions at once.

"What's the verdict?"

"What does the old lady say?"

"Are they going to keep off the grass?"

"What is the esteemed reply of the respectable and ludicrous Miss Primrose?"

"Whattee lesultee?"

"Why don't you speak?"

Wharton made no attempt to speak while the hubbub continued. When it slackened, he related briefly what Miss Primrose had said. There was a general outburst of indignation at once.

"The cheek!" exclaimed Skinner.

"We're not going to stand it!" exclaimed Snoop. "Why, that was our bathing-place before Miss Primrose was born—and that was a jolly long time ago!"

"The cheekfulness of the esteemed lady is terrific."

"Equitable arrangement, eh?" said Bob Cherry. "That's all very well, but the place belongs to us, and we can't always be looking out in case a lot of girls should be there. We're not going to stand it."

"Rather not!"

"What do you fellows say to raiding the place next time they're there?" exclaimed Bulstrode, looking round for support. "We can pelt 'em from the bank with clods——"

"Good!" exclaimed Snoop immediately.

"You won't," said Wharton, setting his lips hard. "I don't know how this affair will be settled, but it won't be settled in any blackguardly way, as long as I'm captain of the Remove."

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Bob Cherry and Nugent.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific."

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"You'd better not interfere in this, Wharton!" he exclaimed fiercely. "If you're Form captain, get us out of this yourself, then. Our bathing-place has been taken. We're not going to put up with it quietly. If you don't like my way of getting rid of the trespassers, think of a better one."

"You heard what I said," said Wharton quietly. "You won't even go near the river while the girls are there, or you'll get hurt. I warn you. I suppose you can't help being a blackguard, but you're not going to disgrace the Form."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Oh, shut up," said Harry irritably. "I've said my say, and if you want to come and settle it in the gym., with the gloves on, I'm ready."

Bulstrode looked for a moment as if he would take the Form captain at his word. Then he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and strode away.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, ring off, Bunter——"

"But I've got a jolly good idea," said Bunter indignantly. "I say, you fellows, you know what a ripping ventriloquist I am. Suppose I worked off some ventriloquism on them when they're at the Pool again, and——"

"Well, that's not such a bad wheeze, if you could do it," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "What do you think, Harry?"

"I think it would be best to make some arrangement with Cliff House for using the Pool in turn for swimming practice."

"Oh, of course you'd give in!" sneered Snoop. "You like to eat humble pie——"

Harry turned towards him, and Snoop, without finishing the sentence, walked away rather quickly. Harry shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"But it's not for us to settle," he went on. "It's in Wingate's hands. It's an affair of all the Forms—the Fifth and Sixth as well as us. The captain of the school isn't likely to ask our advice, either."

"Well, but what are you going to do?" demanded Stott.

"I'm going to do my work."

And Wharton walked away to his study. The discussion ended, everything being left in a decidedly unsatisfactory state. Bulstrode did his best to spread the impression that Wharton wanted to give way all along the line, and there was angry discontent at the mere idea of that.

The next day was Sunday—a day upon which the two schools were bound to meet. There was early chapel at Greyfriars, but at half-past ten the boys were mustered in order to walk down to the village to Friardale Church to attend the morning service there.

As the Cliff House girls attended the same service, there was no possibility of avoiding the meeting. After the service, boys and girls were free for some time before returning to school. Harry Wharton had looked forward to a quiet walk on the seashore with Marjorie. For the Greyfriars juniors, unruly enough as they were on week-days, never indulged in the bad form of horseplay on Sundays. Games were tabooed, and even the harmless punting of a football in the Close in the morning was looked upon with disfavour.

There were plenty of quieter pleasures for those of simple tastes. Besides early prayers with Dr. Locke, there were two services at the church—though it must be admitted that these were looked upon rather as duties than as pleasures. Quiet walks in the woods or by the sea appealed to the more studious lads. Some of the fellows filled in the blank hours by working off lines that had been left over from the

week, taking good care that the masters did not know they were written out on Sunday. But the greater part of the leisure hours on Sundays were spent in wearing the cleanest of clean collars, the shiniest of silk hats, and looking extremely sedate and respectable, and feeling extremely bored.

The advent of the girls on Sunday mornings had come, therefore, as a boon and a blessing to the juniors.

The meeting with the Cliff House contingent broke upon the deadly monotony of the morning, and many acquaintances had been formed, and the association with the gentler sex naturally led the boys to quieter pleasures than usually appealed to them. Bob Cherry never could keep still or silent for five minutes together when he was with the boys, but when he was with Marjorie Hazeldene, his conduct was irreproachable. The noisy Bob—the boxer, footballer, and singer of noisy songs—became as meek and quiet as a good little boy in a story-book.

But this Sunday Harry Wharton felt there would be a change in the programme. He did not know how the Cliff House girls would meet the Remove, and the Remove, too, did not feel so amiable as usual towards the Cliff House girls.

Bob Cherry was looking a little nervous as the time drew near to set out on the walk to church that Sunday morning. He brushed his silk hat until he seemed likely to brush a hole in it. He had donned a beautifully clean and high collar, in which he felt uncomfortable, and had tied his necktie with great care. Of course, it slipped on one side—it always did. He asked Wharton to put it straight, and a few minutes later requisitioned Frank Nugent's services for the same end; but the recalcitrant necktie did not remain in its place, all the same.

Bob jammed the silk hat on his head, and looked into the glass. He knew he looked much better-looking in a cricket cap, and he grunted with dissatisfaction. Harry looked at him.

"Anything wrong, Bob?"

"Yes, lots," growled Bob. "I hate humbug, for one thing. It's going to be a warm day, and I don't see why I can't go out in my straw. And I don't like marching along a dusty road two and two, with the village kids making faces at us. And my beastly necktie won't keep straight. And——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"My dear kid, you have all these fearful troubles every Sunday regularly. There's something else. What is it?"

Bob Cherry could not help grinning.

"Well, I suppose there is, Harry. I'm feeling nervous about meeting the girls to-day. I don't know what Marjorie will think. I wish Wingate hadn't written that letter. We could have found some other place up the river for swimming. If the girls want the best spot, why shouldn't they have it."

"Why, yesterday you——"

"Yesterday isn't to-day," growled Bob Cherry. "I don't see why our walk with Marjorie and the others after church should be mucked up, because of a rotten swimming place on a rotten river."

"Oh, rats!" said Nugent warmly. "We're bound to stand up for the rights of Greyfriars. It's an old maxim, you know—resist the beginnings."

"Oh, blow your old maxims!"

"Come on, Bob, it's time to start!"

"Is my necktie straight?"

"Of course it isn't. What does it matter?"

"It jolly well does matter!" said Bob, turning back towards the glass, and pushing his silk topper back from his perspiring brow. "I'm jolly well not going out till I've jolly well got this beastly tie straight, so I tell you."

"Then you'd better get the glue-pot," said Nugent resignedly. "That's the only way to keep your necktie straight."

"I have an esteemed tube of the honourable seccotine, which I shall pleasurefully place at the disposal of the worthy Cherry," said Hurree Singh innocently. "That will save the troublefulness of the melting glue."

"Oh, don't be funny!" grunted Bob Cherry, as Wharton and Nugent burst into a laugh. "There, that will do now."

And the troublesome necktie having been finally arranged, Bob followed his chums, and they joined the procession forming up in the Close for the walk to the village church.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
The Cut Direct.

MOST of the boys were ready. The chums of No. 1 Study fell into their places. Mr. Quelch glanced at them, and his glance lighted severely upon Bob Cherry.

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir?" said Bob, with a start.

"What do you mean by wearing a soiled collar to go to church?" said Mr. Quelch witheringly. "Go and change it at once."

"A—a—a soiled collar, sir!" said Bob indignantly. "It's a clean one, sir; I had it on clean ten minutes ago."

"Then you hold the record for soiling clean collars," said Mr. Quelch, in his sarcastic way. "It is certainly dirty now. Go and change it, and rejoin us on the road."

Bob Cherry felt like exploding with indignation. But a Form-master's word was law, and he left the ranks, amid the suppressed giggles of the other fellows, and hurried into the house again.

When he scanned the collar in the glass it certainly did look soiled. The various hands that had manipulated his necktie had left their marks there. Nugent had been putting on his boots just before tying the necktie afresh, and Bob himself had been eating toffee. The collar had apparently gone out of its way to collect finger and thumb marks.

Bob dragged it off, bursting the button-hole in his haste, and looked for another. But his luck was out that Sunday morning; he couldn't find another clean collar. Fortunately Wharton, who was very careful of such matters, had plenty of them, and the chums of No. 1 Study used one another's property as much as they liked. Bob found half a dozen collars in Wharton's collar-box, all of them in the whitest and cleanest possible state. Wharton took a size smaller than Bob Cherry, but that was a detail Bob had no time to worry about now. He jerked out a collar, and jammed it on. It required some little exertion to make it meet and fasten; but Bob effected it, and then that tormenting necktie went on again. Then Bob darted out of the study, and crossed the Close as if he had been crossing the footer field. As a matter of fact, Bob would have given the fortune of a Monte Cristo to exchange his Sunday garb for the free-and-easy attire of the football field. The boys were already out of the gates, and Bob Cherry put on a spurt and joined them.

He dropped into his place in the line, hot and perspiring. It was one of those April days which are very warm, and at the same time moist—the kind of day when even a healthy and comfortable person is liable to feel a little irritated about nothing in particular. Bob Cherry, hot after his run, with the dust of the road in his nose and mouth, and wearing a collar too tight for him, was in a state of mind that may be imagined, but hardly described.

The Greyfriars fellows walked sedately down the road. Little boys belonging to Friardale passed them on the way, and saluted them—not respectfully. Bob Cherry looked with envious eyes upon a little fellow in a smock and huge pair of boots. What wouldn't Bob have given at that moment for the ease and freedom of a smock!

"Anything wrong, Bob?" asked Nugent sympathetically.

Bob Cherry glared.

"Yes; there's a silly ass asking me silly-ass questions."

Nugent did not ask him any more questions.

"I say, you fellows," murmured Billy Bunter from behind, "do you know the village shop is open on Sunday mornings?"

"Oh, scat!" said Nugent crossly.

"But I was thinking we might get a snack there. You know how jolly hungry we always get before dinner on Sunday. I've sometimes thought that my constitution is suffering from that," said Bunter pathetically. "I happen to have run out of cash now, I don't know how. I'm expecting three pounds next week from the Patriotic Home Work Association for some postcards I'm colouring for them. If you like to advance me half-a-crown off that, Nugent——"

"Oh, shut up!"

"If you like to advance me half-a-crown off it, Wharton——"

"Don't be an ass!"

"If you like to advance me half-a-crown off it, Cherry——"

"I'll jolly well give you a thick ear if you speak to me!" said Bob Cherry, in a stifled voice.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Ring off, you young idiot!"

"If you like to advance me half-a-crown off it, Inky——"

"The honourable half-crown is the total impossibility, but I shall be happy to present the esteemed tanner to my worthy fat chum."

"Good! That's better than nothing. I shall let you have this back out of the first three pounds I get from the Patriotic Home Work Association. Keep on, you fellows, and don't make Quelchy turn round. I'm going to slip into the tuckshop as I pass."

"Don't do anything of the sort, you young ass!" whispered Wharton. "Quelch is sure to spot you."

"Not if you fellows are careful. I'm going to risk it."

And as the boys swung on past the tuckshop, Bunter dropped out of the ranks, and disappeared into the little shop.

The column marched on, the juniors in momentary dread that Mr. Quelch would look round and see that Bunter was missing. And, as a matter of fact, he did turn his head a

minute or two later. Mr. Quelch had eyes as keen as gimlets, and he was not likely to miss a space in the ranks.

"What is this? Where is Bunter?"

"Bunter, sir?" said Wharton, to gain time.

"Yes. Where is he?"

"He's behind, sir," said Wharton, truthfully enough.

Mr. Quelch looked angry. At that moment Bunter, who had not been long in the tuckshop, came panting along to recover his place. He found Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed on him. The packet of toffee in his pocket seemed to burn him.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Billy. "I—I just stayed behind to—to tie up my bootlace, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked at him suspiciously. He knew how much Bunter's word was to be trusted.

"Don't stay behind again, Bunter, or you will hear of it."

"Certainly, sir. I'm sincerely sorry, sir."

Bunter chuckled softly as the Form-master turned his head away again.

"I got out of that pretty well," he murmured.

"You mean little beast!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Fancy telling a point-blank lie like that—and on Sunday, too!"

"I'm sincerely sorry to see that you don't believe me, Nugent. You oughtn't to judge other fellows by yourself—you oughtn't really, you know. I did stay to tie up my bootlace, after I came out of the tuckshop. I told Mr. Quelch the exact truth. It wasn't necessary to mention that I had been in the tuckshop as well. He never asked me, and I don't see why I should tell him without being asked. I jolly well believe you've got a prejudice against me because I'm so truthful."

Nugent sniffed, and did not pursue the subject. The boys marched on, and in the village street came in sight of the girls from Cliff House—also coming to the church in a sober and solemn procession.

On such occasions the girls naturally were serious, but just at present Wharton thought they were looking more serious than the occasion demanded.

They walked up to the church with downcast eyes, apparently not seeing the boys from Greyfriars.

The boys, of course, stood aside to allow them entrance, and raised their silk hats at the same time. But the girls did not acknowledge the greeting.

Marjorie was looking very pink, but the others walked straight on, without a glance at the Greyfriars' boys.

Miss Clara had her little nose very high in the air, and there was no mistaking her intentions, at all events.

It was the cut direct!

The Removites looked at the girls and at one another in amazement. They had not known exactly upon what terms they would meet the Cliff House pupils, but they had not expected to be cut at church.

Miss Primrose, who was in charge of her pupils, looked uneasy; but she also looked straight before her. The Cliff House contingent entered the church, and the Greyfriars juniors followed them in with amazed and serious faces.

They had been cut!

And, amid their amazement, there was a little angry feeling. Whatever was the matter in dispute, they felt that they had done nothing to deserve this drastic treatment.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Bunter is Led Out.

FRIARDALE CHURCH was an ancient edifice. Part of it dated from the reign of King John, and the rest of it was old enough. It was inexpressibly interesting to an antiquarian, and inexpressibly stuffy to everybody else.

The stained-glass windows let in a "dim religious light," but not a breath of fresh air; and the old pews were close, and on summer days stifling. And the vicar—good, honest, and conscientious man as he was—had a voice that had been irreverently compared to the drone of a bumble-bee.

And, upon the whole, it was no wonder that the younger part of the congregation sometimes nodded off to sleep. To prevent this was the duty of prefects, who were scattered about among the younger boys, and were supposed to keep lynx eyes on youths inclined to nod. Sad to relate, however, the prefects sometimes nodded themselves, and then the juniors had been known to actually snore.

Billy Bunter had always been the greatest sinner in this respect. He was of a sleepy nature, and when he was not eating he was always inclined to doze; probably his excessive eating was a cause of his doziness. Church was to Bunter a place where he was to sleep if he possibly could, and where the attentions of the prefects appeared in the same light as the Pagan persecutions appeared to the early Christians.

Bunter's snore had more than once been audible during a sermon, and it had led to painful consequences—for Bunter. The fat youth intended to make great efforts to keep awake this morning, and it was partly with a view to that end that he had purchased the toffee. He was as ready to eat as to sleep any time of the day or night.

Harry Wharton, too, made it very uncomfortable for anybody who wanted to sleep in his pew. Wharton was a thoughtful lad; and, without being in the slightest degree "goody-goody," he had that tendency to religious feeling which is a part to a high and noble nature. There was nothing of the Pharisee about Harry, and he never wanted to impose his opinions on others. He regarded religion as a matter far too serious and sacred to be idly talked and argued about. But he thought a fellow ought to draw a line at going to sleep in church, and he was more trouble to Bunter than a prefect would have been.

Bunter did not mean to be irreverent; he was thoughtless, and a little stupid. And when the prefect in the pew happened to be Carberry, he had a bad example set him, for Carberry invariably disposed himself in an unsuspicious attitude, and nodded off to sleep. But Carberry did not snore, and so he was safe.

To a lad with anything like poetry in his disposition, the beautiful service could not fail to possess a charm, even at the hundredth repetition. To any thoughtful English lad, the Book of Common Prayer can never lose its interest, if only because it contains the noblest passages in one of the noblest languages of modern times. But it must be confessed that even with Wharton, when the sermon came, the pleasure he felt was usually succeeded by a feeling of dutiful attention at most. For, as a rule, it dealt with matters far beyond a boy's conceptions—with thoughts and views that seemed to belong to another world.

On the present occasion, Harry was thinking of the Cliff House attitude, too; and he could not help stealing a glance across to the pews where the fair pupils of Miss Primrose sat with prim faces.

But it was only for a moment, and his glance was not met. Carberry was in the pew, and he was already asleep. Bunter was eating toffee contentedly under cover. Bob Cherry was sitting bolt upright, in anguish from his tight collar. His face looked as if all the blood of his body had been pumped into it, and the perspiration was thick upon his brow.

"I say, Wharton," whispered Bunter generously, "will you have some toffee?"

"Be quiet, Billy!"

Bunter sniffed.

"I only asked you if you would have some toffee."

"Be quiet—and listen!"

"Well, I am listening, ain't I?"

Bunter crammed a fresh chunk of toffee into his mouth. Unfortunately, he let another chunk fall on the floor at the same moment, and Carberry started and opened his eyes. To be caught by a prefect with toffee in his mouth was not to be thought of. Bunter jammed his teeth into it to break it, with the idea of bolting the pieces; but the toffee did not break, and he could not withdraw his teeth.

He remained with his teeth imprisoned in the toffee, nearly choked by his efforts to get them loose, and his snorts were alarming. Carberry reached out with his foot and kicked him, as a warning to be quiet.

"Hold your row!" he whispered. "You've been talking!"

"Groo-o-o-o!"

"I'll report you to your Form-master."

"Groo-o-o-o-o!"

"What's the matter?" whispered the prefect. "Is he ill? What's the matter with you, Bunter? You seem to be choking."

"Groo-o-o-o-o!"

Glances were being turned towards the pew from various directions. Billy Bunter was in agonies, and even Bob Cherry forgot his own sufferings for a moment to grin.

Carberry was really alarmed. Bunter was fat and plethoric, and just the kind of fellow to roll over in a fit. The prefect rose.

"Come out if you're ill," he whispered. "Are you ill?"

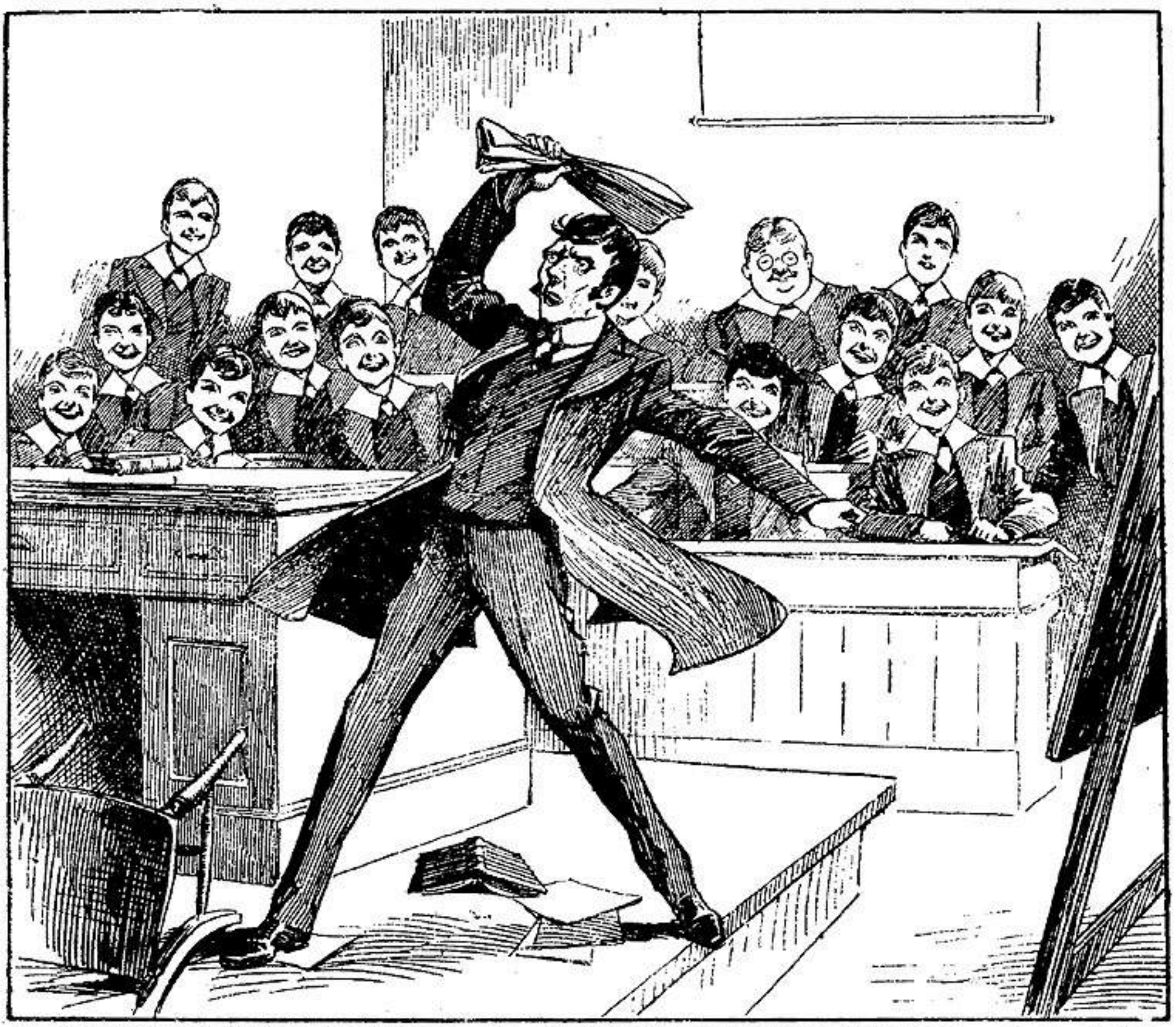
"Groo-o-o-o-o!"

Carberry took him by the arm, and led him out of the pew. There was a rustle of feet as they went down quickly towards the door, and even the preacher paused for a moment. They were quickly out of doors in the bright April sunshine, and there the prefect shook the junior.

"Now, what's the matter with you?"

"Groo-o-o-o-o!"

"You young beast!" exclaimed Carberry, able to raise his voice now that they were out of church. "Open your mouth! What have you got there?"



B-z-z-z-z-z-z! The buzz tantalised Mr. Quelch. Again and again he struck in the direction of the sound. And still the ventriloquial Billy Bunter went on buzzing.

"Groo-o-o-o-o!"

"You little pig! It's toffee!" exclaimed Carberry, in disgust.

Bunter, with a final tremendous effort, ejected the toffee, and gasped for breath.

"I—I couldn't help it," he panted. "Ow! Groo! I've been nearly suffocated!"

"You'll be jolly well warmed when Mr. Quelch hears of this!" grunted Carberry.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. Bunter might be a fool in some things, but he was very keen in others.

"You won't mention it to Mr. Quelch?" he blinked.

"Won't I? You'll see."

"He might ask you why you didn't see me eating the toffee before," suggested Bunter.

Carberry stared at him. It dawned upon him that there was something in what the fat junior said. He could hardly report Bunter's bad behaviour without also giving away the fact that he had been asleep himself.

"You fat little beast!" said Carberry, in measured tones. "I've a jolly good mind to give you a dusting here and now!"

Bunter skipped away to a safer distance.

"Oh, don't get your rag out!" he said persuasively. "You keep mum about the toffee, and I won't say you were asleep. Ow!"

He dodged and ran as Carberry took a flying kick at him. In a moment he was going down the village street as fast as his fat little legs could take him. But Carberry thought his advice was good enough to be followed; and when the fellows came out of church, Mr. Quelch was only informed that Bunter had become faint during the service, and so had had to be brought out into the air. And the Form-master did not ask any questions.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
Two in Trouble!

THE chums of the Remove came out of the old grey porch, and did not immediately take the road home. They had fallen into the way of waiting for their girl friends after morning service; and though the Cliff House pupils had not been encouraging that morning, Harry Wharton and his chums did not want to accept the breach without an effort to make peace.

Marjorie and Clara, and Alice and Wilhelmina came out together, and, as if by clockwork, four juniors stepped forward and raised their hats. Miss Clara tossed her golden curls disdainfully, and walked on, and Alice and Wilhelmina, after a moment's pause, followed her example. Marjorie hesitated.

"Good-morning!" said Harry Wharton and his chums, in unison.

Marjorie's troubled face broke into a smile.

"Good-morning!" she said.

"We hope——" began Harry.

Miss Clara came marching back with a determined look upon her face, for all the world—as Nugent said afterwards—as if she were going to demand votes for women on the spot.

"We're waiting for you, Marjorie!"

"Oh, Clara——"

"Aren't you coming, dear?"

"Yes, certainly."

"But——" began Harry.

"Come, Marjorie!"

"Good-bye!" faltered Marjorie. "I——" She was interrupted. Miss Clara passed her hand through her friend's arm, and drew her away.

The girls walked off, and the chums of the Remove were left staring at one another.

"My hat!" said Nugent.

"The hatfulness is terrific!"

"Great Scott!" said Bob Cherry. "There's thunder in the air! Marjorie's all right, but the others are on the warpath with a vengeance."

"Yes, rather!"

"Blessed if I know what to make of it," said Harry, looking perplexed. "I've had an idea up till now that we were the injured parties, but that doesn't seem to be the view at Cliff House."

"It's the truth, all the same," said Nugent warmly. "They've trespassed on our part of the river. If we're willing to be friendly, I should think they ought to be. Why, this is adding insult to injury."

"The insultfulness is great and the injury is terrific."

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I don't quite catch on to it," he said. "You remember that Bulstrode took Wingate's note to Miss Primrose. He's a cad! He may have given more than his message. I'm going to speak to him about it. Where are you off to Bob?"

"I'm going back," grunted Bob.

"Any hurry?"

"Yes, rather. This beastly collar is suffocating me. It was all Quelch's fault for making me change it at the last moment. I've been in misery all through the service. I'm off!"

And Bob Cherry departed amid the grins of his comrades. They were sympathetic, but they could not help seeing the comic side of the matter. The others crossed over to Bulstrode, who was sitting on the rails, near the church, swinging his legs, and behaving generally as irreverently as he dared with some of the masters and prefects still in sight.

He looked up as Wharton stopped in front of him.

"Hallo!" he said insolently. "Want anything?"

"Yes," said Harry quietly. "You took Wingate's letter to Miss Primrose at Cliff House yesterday? Did you offend anybody while you were there?"

"I don't see why you should think so."

"That isn't an answer to my question."

"It's the only one you'll get out of me!"

Wharton clenched his hand. Bulstrode looked at him with a sneer. He felt quite safe. It was impossible for Wharton to hit him almost under the walls of the church, as it were. With that feeling in his breast, he proceeded to greater lengths of insolence than he would have ventured upon in the Close at Greyfriars.

"Won't Marjorie speak to you?" he jeered. "Well, I can't help it! And you needn't come catechising me. If you want to know what I said to the old girl, you can go and ask her. There's the road to Cliff House!"

"You cad!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "It looks to me as if you have been making mischief on purpose."

Bulstrode yawned.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Wharton trembled from head to foot with anger. It was only the sacred character of the building close at hand that saved Bulstrode from being swept off the rail with a right-hander.

"You cad!" muttered Wharton. "You're not worth touching!"

Bulstrode gave a jeering laugh.

"You don't dare——"

He got no further. Wharton's temper was never patient, and he felt less patient than ever now. His right lashed out, and Bulstrode rolled backwards off the low rail, and plumped on the turf inside.

The next second Wharton repented the blow. But it was too late! A sharp, angry voice rang in his ears.

"Wharton!"

He turned, with a crimson face, to confront Mr. Quelch.

"Wharton!" the Form-master fixed an angry glance upon him. "How dare you! Have you no respect for this building you have just quitted. I am ashamed of you."

"I—I——"

"Not a word! Return to Greyfriars at once, and stay in the rest of the day!"

Without a word Wharton obeyed. He had done wrong, and he deserved the punishment, he knew that. But worse than the punishment was the knowledge that he had lowered himself in the esteem of a master whom he respected.

Bulstrode sat up on the grass, rubbing his jaw. Nugent and Hurree Singh walked away towards Greyfriars with Wharton. If he stayed in, they were going to stay in, too.

Harry had intended to attempt to see Marjorie again that day, and try to set matters right. But that idea had to be dropped now.

"I say, don't you chaps come in!" he said. "It's all right."

"The rightfulness is terrific!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "We shall come in with our worthy chum."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

They overtook Bob Cherry near the gates of Greyfriars. Bob was looking very hot and dusty and perspiring. Even the unfortunate dispute with the Cliff House girls did not worry him so much as the tight collar he was wearing. The lane from the village to the school had never seemed so long and hot and dusty as it did now. The unhappy Bob had halted, and his chums came up. He glanced at them inquiringly.

"We're going in!" said Wharton gloomily. "I'm gated for punching Bulstrode. The brute made me lose my temper."

"Hard cheese! I'm coming along; but I'm going to have this awful collar off first," said Bob desperately. "Don't wait!"

He turned out of the lane into a footpath, where he was free from general observation, while the others strolled on towards the school. Bob took off his necktie and then his collar. His idea was to give himself a breather, as he termed it, and then don the obnoxious collar again. But he had not yet donned it when there were footsteps on the path. Mr. Capper and Mr. Quelch had chosen that way to stroll home after church, and they were bearing down directly upon Bob. It was too late to escape, and there was no time to don the obnoxious collar. He jammed it into one pocket, and the necktie into another, and turned up the collar of his jacket. His Form-master was a stickler for correct deportment on a Sunday, and Bob hoped against hope that Mr. Quelch would not spot him.

Vain hope!

Mr. Quelch was talking to Mr. Capper, and he paused as he saw Bob Cherry.

"Dear me!" remarked Mr. Capper. "How singular that that lad should turn up his coat collar on a warm day like this. Aha! To conceal soiled linen, I fear."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Cherry, come here!"

Bob Cherry reluctantly approached.

"Ye-es, sir?"

"Take your hand away from your throat!"

Bob Cherry obeyed, and the neck of his jacket came open, and revealed the fact that there was no collar underneath.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Capper.

"Boy"—the Remove-master's face was like a thundercloud—"boy, I have before remarked to you on the subject of your collar to-day."

"If you please, sir——"

"Now I find you on the public road—on the public road, sir—without a collar on!" exclaimed the scandalised Form-master.

"I—I——"

"Disgraceful! Go to the school at once, and remain indoors the rest of the day!"

"I—I—I——"

Mr. Quelch waved his hand imperiously, and Bob Cherry went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.
A Wheeze that Didn't Work.

THE rest of that Sunday was not enjoyable to the chums of the Greyfriars Remove. They walked in the Close, or read in the library, and were glad enough when evening service came, and after that supper and bed.

The next half-holiday was on Wednesday, and as the weather was keeping very fine and warm, most of the fellows were thinking of the river. Bulstrode had loudly declared his intention of bathing in the Upper Pool whether the place was taken up by the Cliff House contingent or not. But it was doubtful if he would venture to carry out his threat. He knew that it would mean an encounter with Wharton, and he had had painful experience of Harry Wharton's hard hitting.

At the same time, Wharton felt that something ought to be done. Wingate was leaving the matter open for the

time. He did not know exactly what to reply to Miss Primrose's letter. He was not inclined to yield the rights that Greyfriars had possessed from time immemorial, but if Miss Primrose had taken a more amicable tone he might have agreed to a compromise. At the same time, the big, rugged Wingate was very chivalrous at heart, and did not want to appear anything like rough or overbearing in dealing with women.

So the matter was left in abeyance, and Wingate hoped that, in spite of her letter, Miss Primrose would, on reflection, see reason, and keep her pupils away from the Pool.

That was all the comfort he had to give to the juniors, and they sniffed at it, though they did not sniff in the presence of Wingate.

"Rot!" Bulstrode declared. "They won't give in! Why should they? They think we're going to. Wharton's led them to expect it!"

"Blessed if I know what to make of it," said Hazeldene. "I shall try to see my sister on Wednesday, and ask her what the row's about. I can't understand their not speaking to us on Sunday."

That, indeed, was what made the Remove sore and angry more than anything else.

To be treated with scorn, after being the parties to receive the injury, was a little too much for their patience. The Removites were getting angry about it, and there were suggestions of drastic measures if the swimming-place were taken up by the new rivals of Greyfriars on Wednesday afternoon.

"Blessed if I see why we should give in!" said Nugent. "Bad enough to be either injured or insulted, but both together is too rich!"

"The richfulness is terrific, my worthy chum!"

"Still, we can't enter into rows with a party of girls," said Wharton. "If they were boys we'd jolly soon bring them to order. But I suppose even Bulstrode wouldn't recommend punching their heads."

Nugent laughed.

"N-no—no, I suppose not. But I don't see why we should be walked over."

"Certainly not," said Bob Cherry emphatically. "The whole Form is looking to Harry to save the situation."

"I don't know what to do. As I said, I'd show you the way soon enough if they were boys—but I'd rather give way where girls are concerned."

"The Remove won't give way, if you do."

"No; that's the trouble."

And Wharton became very thoughtful. Exactly what was to be done he could not see. But Billy Bunter, as it happened, knew very well, so perhaps it did not matter. Bunter had great faith in his powers as a ventriloquist, and he had determined to use that art for the purpose of clearing the intruders off the scene. His suggestion to that effect had not been listened to; but Bunter intended to show the Remove that he was, after all, the right man for a difficulty.

Wednesday afternoon was expected with eagerness by the Removites. Bunter was the keenest of all. Wednesday came—a warm, brilliant April day—and after dinner the juniors went joyously out into the bright spring sunshine.

Billy Bunter strolled down through the wood towards the Upper Pool on the Sark. That the place had been taken as on the previous half-holiday was soon evident, from the sound of splashing and girlish laughter that came through the trees.

Bunter caught a glimpse of a graceful form in a Navy-blue bathing-dress on the bank of the river, and dodged behind a big oak.

The short-sighted junior never saw anything till he was quite close to it, and by that time he had generally become quite visible himself; but when he dodged behind the oak he imagined himself to be invisible, as an ostrich with its head buried in the sand believes itself to be. As a matter of fact, half a dozen pairs of bright eyes had marked the fat junior's approach.

Bunter grinned behind the tree.

"Lemme see," he murmured. "Suppose I make 'em think there's a savage dog coming; that'll scare 'em off."

He suited the action to the word.

From the thickets beside the sunny stream came a sound of growling and yapping that might have shaken stronger nerves than those possessed by the pupils of Cliff House.

"Bow-wow-wow!"

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

There was an exclaiming and a shrieking at once. The girls on the bank plunged into the water at once, in deadly terror of the supposed dog, and there was splashing and shrieking and calling out.

Bunter chuckled as he heard it.

"Clara! Come here! There is a dog!"

"Take care!"

"Oh, dear—oh, dear! We shall be bitten!"

"Perhaps it's a mad dog!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Goodness gracious!"

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

But Miss Clara was not terrified; she had seen Bunter. She remained on the bank, and instead of running away, she stepped into the little wooden building that was used as a bathing-shelter, and came out again with a bucket in her hand.

Marjorie Hazeldene called to her from the middle of the Sark.

"Oh, Clara, come here! You will be bitten!"

Miss Clara laughed.

"That's all right, Marjorie."

"But—but come——"

Without replying, Miss Clara stooped and filled the bucket with water, and then disappeared into the thickets.

The girls looked after her in amazement. But Miss Wilhelmina, who had seen Bunter, explained, with a placid German grin.

"It is tat tere is ein poy dere," she explained. "It is not tat tere is ein tog at all, ain't it."

Billy Bunter, unconscious of the fact that vengeance was approaching, grinned with delight as he continued his ventriloquism.

The sounds were certainly very realistic, and would have frightened the fat junior himself if he had not been responsible for them.

"Bow-wow-ow-ow!"

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

Bunter suddenly stopped. There was a light step behind him, and he turned.

The next moment a terrific yell rang through the trees. Down upon the fat junior swooped the bucket of water, blinding him and soaking him from head to foot.

"Ow! Ow! Wow!"

Billy Bunter staggered blindly, and sat down—in a swamp of water. A rippling laugh rang in his ears. But when the fat junior wiped his eyes and looked round him, he was alone.

"Ow! Groo! B-r-r-r! Who was that? I'm all wet! Groo!"

Billy Bunter wiped his glasses and put them on. Soaking and shivering, squelching water as he moved, he beat a hurried retreat from the spot. He had had enough of ventriloquising. He was afraid that there might be some more buckets of water about. As he came out of the trees towards the school, there was a roar of laughter. The Famous Four stopped to stare at him, and they roared.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at, you dummies! I'm all wet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have you been taking a bathe with your clothes on, Bunty?"

"I'm all wet——"

"Yes, you look it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The wetfulness is terrific, my worthy fat chum."

"I was going to scare those girls away," grunted Bunter, "and some beast dumped a lot of water over me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish I knew who it was, that's all," said Bunter, glaring. "Was it one of you rotters?"

"Ha, ha, ha! It was one of the girls, of course," said Wharton, with tears of merriment in his eyes.

"Oh, rot! They didn't know I was there."

"Perhaps they spotted you while you were ventriloquising," suggested Nugent.

"Impossible! I was awfully careful. It was some practical joker—the beast! Ow! I'm simply soaked! I'm going to change my clothes."

And the fat junior toddled off in haste towards Greyfriars, leaving the chums of the Remove shrieking.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.
A Wheeze that Worked.

HARRY WHARTON regained his composure at last. Billy Bunter had disappeared into the gates of Greyfriars.

"I didn't know Bunter was trying to solve the problem for us," he remarked, wiping his eyes. "But he has failed. Now, Frank, you said you had an idea."

Nugent grinned.

"So I have—and I think it will work. We've got to clear the trespassers off our ground without doing anything rough or rude. That's the wheeze."

"That's it."

"Well, suppose we made them think the Pool wasn't a safe place to swim in," grinned Nugent. "They'd avoid it of their own accord, then."

"Yes—but how?"

"Suppose a shark came along while they were swimming——"

"A shark!"

"Well, not exactly a shark," said Nugent. "They might suspect that it was a hoax."

"I should rather think they would."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Well, not a shark, then, but some finny monster that might be supposed to live in the river, with a stretch of the imagination—some gigantic pike, for instance."

"But the pike in this part of the river aren't big, and ——"

"We could put a big one in."

"Where are you going to get it from?"

"Make it."

"Eh?"

"Make it," said Nugent coolly. "My idea is to manufacture a fearsome fish, and send it floating down into the Pool from the upper reaches. It will float down among the girls, and I rather think there will be a scattering."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you like the idea?"

"Ha, ha, ha! If it works!"

"I think it will work. But, anyway, we can only try it. It will be fun."

"The funfulness will be terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur. "And I thinkfully consider that the workfulness of the wheezy idea will be great."

"It's a good wheeze," said Wharton. "Let's try, anyway. It's a bit too rough to have our swimming-place taken up, and to be cut dead at church into the bargain."

"Yes, rather! Then let's get to work."

A good many of the Removites were coming down to the river, and the scheme was communicated to them, and generally agreed upon. Even Bulstrode admitted that it was a good idea. It only remained to carry it out; and that was speedily done. A couple of juniors were despatched to the village upon their bicycles with funds to purchase the necessary materials, and then in a secluded spot under the trees the Removites set to work.

Many hands made light work; and all the juniors who did not assist in the work aided with advice. Under Nugent's clever hands the monster was quickly fashioned. As it grew in shape and size, it certainly was a fearsome fish to look at.

It was about two feet long, and its fins and tail were really neatly done. It's jaws were open, and red and threatening, and its eyes were simply appalling to look at. It was made hollow and watertight, so that it would float with the head and part of the back above water; ballast being sewn in, in the required place, to keep the balance.

"My word!" said Ogilvy, as Nugent put the finishing touches with a paint-brush. "If that thing came along while I was bathing, I should cut."

"Faith, and ye're right," said Micky Desmond. "It looks dangerous enough. And if they guess that it's a hoax, sure I'll ate it intirely."

"They won't guess," said Nugent. "Why, this would take in anybody. We'll try it in the river to see how it goes before we float it off."

"Good! Come on," said Wharton.

Nugent picked up the horrible-looking monster tenderly, and carried it down to the waterside. He fastened a string to it, so that it could not escape, and then placed it gently in the water.

"Bravo!"

That was the general verdict.

The monster floated, with the red jaws and glaring eyes in full view, and a streak of the scaly back glimmering in the sun.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Blessed if it isn't more natural than life!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I don't know about that, Bob, but it's certainly natural enough to take in anybody who doesn't know the wheeze. Let it go, Frank."

"Right-ho! Quiet, you chaps! Don't give the game away."

And the Removites suppressed their laughter as the dummy fish was carefully floated out into the stream, and then let go.

The juniors were about a hundred yards up the river from the Pool, and in the distance could be heard the splashing and laughter of the Cliff House girls.

Nugent, watched eagerly by his companions, pushed out the dummy with a long branch, and when it was in the middle of the stream let slip the string. The monster floated away, bobbing up and down, and looking so exactly like some ferocious denizen of deep waters that the juniors would certainly have been deceived themselves, if they had not watched the process of its manufacture.

Hidden by the trees on the rugged bank, the Greyfriars fellows waited and listened anxiously for results.

For a time there was no alarm.

The dummy fish disappeared from view down the stream, and, owing to the irregularity of the bank, the juniors were only able to follow it for a few yards with their eyes.

Had it reached the swimming pool yet?

"Hang it!" murmured Nugent. "It would be a sell if it passed them without their noticing it!"

"The sellfulness would be terrific, my worthy chum."

Harry Wharton held up his hand.

"Hark!"

There was a loud cry downstream.

It was followed by a variety of wild shrieks.

"Oh!"

"Help!"

"Run!"

"Quick!"

"Ha, ha, ha! They've seen it!"

From downstream came a wild splashing, shrieking, and calling. The monster was evidently doing its fell work!

The juniors dared not laugh aloud, for fear of betraying their presence on the bank of the Sark, and so betraying the ruse. They rolled on the grass, stifling their laughter, almost suffocated with merriment.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is too rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"The ho-ho-ho-fulness is terrific, my worthy chums!"

The shrieks downstream redoubled, but the splashing ceased.

The Cliff House party had evidently left the water.

The shrieks of alarm died away at last, and there was silence on the banks of the Sark.

Then the juniors wanted to go down to the swimming pool to investigate, but Harry Wharton called a halt.

"Hold on," he said. "If we show up now, they'll see the game! Give 'em plenty of time to get clear."

And the juniors waited, impatiently enough, till the silence had lasted five minutes. Then Wharton gave the signal, and they hurried down the wooded bank, and arrived on the stretch of greensward under the overhanging trees, where the wooden bathing-shelter stood.

It was quite deserted.

There was no sign of a bather anywhere. The little building was silent; the stream was forsaken.

The Cliff House party were gone.

Of the dummy nothing was to be seen. It had evidently floated down towards the sea, and doubtless it was by this time well on its way to Pegg Bay.

The Greyfriars juniors looked round them, and burst into a roar of laughter. The scheme had been a complete success.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And for the rest of that afternoon the Remove had uninterrupted possession of the bathing-pool, and disported themselves there joyously.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pax!

WINGATE stood near the door, with a letter in his hand, looking utterly puzzled and perplexed, when the juniors came in for tea. Harry Wharton glanced at him, and stopped as Wingate beckoned.

"Have you been in the river, Wharton?"

"Yes—at the Pool," said Harry demurely.

Wingate looked at him searchingly.

"Weren't the Cliff House girls there this afternoon?"

"Yes, they were there earlier; but they left before we went, of course. We shouldn't be likely to go there while girls were there swimming."

"Of course not, but—— I've had a letter from Miss Primrose, sent over this afternoon, and I've just got it. I can't understand it. I dare say you could throw some light on the matter."

"I haven't seen the letter yet."

"You can read it."

Harry Wharton took the letter. His face broke out into an irrepressible smile as he read the following:

"Dear Mr. Wingate,—In reference to the dispute concerning the bathing-pool on the Sark, I have decided not to allow any of my pupils to bathe there in future. This is not on account of the claim made by you on behalf of Greyfriars to the exclusive use of the Pool, but because it proves that the place is not safe for swimming.

"This afternoon, when my pupils were there, a terrible-looking fish was seen in the water, which must have come up from the sea. My pupils were very much alarmed, and

two of them had very narrow escapes of being bitten by the savage fish.

"I shall not, therefore, allow the Pool to be used by my pupils any longer, and I caution you to debar the Greyfriars boys from swimming there, or some terrible accident may be the result. Yours very sincerely, PENELOPE PRIMROSE."

Wharton handed the letter back to Wingate, and tried to look grave. But with the captain's keen eyes on his face it was hard to compose his features.

"Well?" said Wingate shortly.

"Well," said Wharton.

"You don't know anything about it?"

"Miss Primrose says there is a savage fish in the river," said Harry Wharton. "If the Cliff House girls saw it, and had a narrow escape of being devoured by it, I suppose it must be all right."

"Then you don't think you fellows ought to be allowed to bathe there any more?" suggested Wingate.

Wharton started.

"Oh, no, that's all rot!" he said hastily. "Of course, we should be safe enough."

"Come, the whole story," said Wingate laconically. "Let's have it!"

And Harry, after a moment's hesitation, related it. The captain of Greyfriars listened with suppressed chuckles, and finally with a roar of laughter he could not control.

"Ha, ha, ha! You young rascals!"

He put the letter in his pocket, and walked away to retail the joke to his friends in the Sixth. The Removites were somewhat relieved at the way he took it.

"It's a glorious success!" grinned Nugent. "We've got the place to ourselves now, and without a row with Cliff House. If Marjorie & Co knew the joke, they'd have a reason for getting wild. But they've punished us beforehand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Hazeldene!"

Hazeldene came in. He had been over to Cliff House to visit his sister, with the idea of discovering what was the cause of the Cliff House attitude on the previous Sunday.

His face was clouded as he came in, and the juniors gathered round him in the passage to hear the news.

"Well, what is it?" asked Wharton. "Has Marjorie explained?"

Hazeldene grinned a little.

"Yes. They wouldn't speak to me at first, and Clara proposed to duck me under the fountain——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well for you to cackle," said Hazeldene, "but I really believe that Clara and that big German girl would have done it, too, if Marjorie hadn't come to the rescue. I told 'em I was a flag of truce, and they agreed to give me a hearing. Then they explained—all talking at once, of course. It's all Bulstrode's fault."

Bulstrode, who had just come in, heard the words, and he quickened his pace, to pass on. He did not like the expression upon Wharton's face. But he was not to escape so easily. Harry made a sign to his chums, and they surrounded the bully of the Remove.

"Get out of my way!" exclaimed Bulstrode fiercely.

"All in good time," said Bob Cherry coolly. "Don't you want to hear the news from Cliff House?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, you've got no choice in the matter," said Wharton. "Come here!"

"Sha'n't!"

"Bring him here!"

"You—you cads! Let me alone! Lend me a hand here, Skinny—Stott!"

But Skinner and Stott did not move. Half a dozen pairs of hands grasped Bulstrode, and he was forced to stay and listen. His face was dark with anger and apprehension.

"Now then, Vaseline, go ahead!"

"It was all Bulstrode's fault," said Hazeldene, looking the Remove bully in the face. "He was rude to Miss Primrose when he took Wingate's note over last week

"Oh, rats!" growled Bulstrode.

"I suspected something of the sort. Go on."

"Then the girls agreed to cut us dead, and they did it. They wouldn't have explained now, only Marjorie made them. Clara's on the warpath. But I offered the olive-branch. I told 'em we all considered Bulstrode a rotten cad——"

"Hear, hear!"

"You'd better mind what you're saying, Vaseline!" grunted Bulstrode. "I'll jolly well give you a hiding for that!"

"You'd better not start," said Wharton quietly. "We're all with Hazeldene in this. You are a rotten cad, anyway. Go on, kid!"

"I told 'em Bulstrode was a rotten cad and a rank outsider, and didn't represent the Remove at all," went on Hazeldene cheerfully, "and also that he would come to Cliff House and beg pardon this afternoon."

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"I jolly well sha'n't do anything of the sort!" snarled Bulstrode.

"I leave that in Wharton's hands."

"Wharton can't make me go and eat humble pie to a parcel of girls!" said Bulstrode. "And I jolly well sha'n't do it."

Harry Wharton's brow had grown very stern.

"You will," he said. "As a decent chap, you ought to be willing to apologise after being rude to an old lady."

"Well, I sha'n't, and that settles it!"

"It doesn't settle it. Wingate gave you a note to take to Cliff House, but he never meant you to be rude to Miss Primrose in delivering it. You will apologise to Miss Primrose, and set matters right, or else Wingate will know the whole business, and you can deal with him."

Bulstrode shrank a little. He could imagine how the big Sixth-Former would deal with him if he knew the facts.

"You—you sneak!" he hissed.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"You can call it sneaking if you like, but Wingate has a right to know how you delivered his message, and he shall know, unless you go over to Cliff House at once and apologise to Miss Primrose."

Bulstrode scowled blackly. He knew that he was helpless. He dared not allow the Greyfriars captain to learn that he had added to the message in the letter. Wingate's reply would have been short and sharp.

"Now, are you going?"

"You know I can't get out of it!" snarled Bulstrode. "I——"

"That's enough, then! Some of us will come with you, and see that you do it properly."

"I'd rather go alone, hang you!"

"It's not a question of what you'd rather do. Come on, you fellows! Who wants a walk over to Cliff House?"

There were half-a-dozen volunteers at once. Bulstrode ground his teeth, but he could not resist, and a few minutes later he left Greyfriars in company with the Famous Four, Micky Desmond, Hazeldene and Mark Linley.

The juniors chatted cheerfully on the road to Cliff House—excepting Bulstrode. He was gloomy and silent. He felt that he was going to cut a ridiculous figure, and though he fully deserved it all, that reflection was no consolation to him.

The others were glad enough that the misunderstanding with Cliff House was to come to an end. In a short time they arrived at the gates of the school, and through the bars they could see the trim lawn, and Miss Penelope sitting there in her garden chair. There were some of the girls with her, and a trim maid was laying tea-tables under the trees.

Miss Primrose looked up as the gate was opened, and seemed surprised at the sight of the Greyfriars juniors. They came over towards her, and all the girls looked at them with suppressed smiles. Bulstrode's manner showed the state of his mind, to everyone but innocent old Miss Penelope.

"Pray, excuse us, madam," said Harry Wharton, raising his cap politely, "you will remember Bulstrode, who brought you a note the other day from our captain."

"Yee-es," said Miss Primrose, putting up her glasses and looking at Bulstrode.

"He is sorry that he was not so civil as he should have been, and he wishes to apologise."

"Goodness gracious!"

Bob Cherry pushed the unwilling Bulstrode forward.

He stood hat in hand, glowering.

"Go on," whispered Nugent. "You know what it means if you don't."

"If you please, ma'am——" began Bulstrode.

He paused, and Bob Cherry dug him in the ribs. He made another start.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, that you took amiss anything I said the other day. I—I ought not to have said it. I didn't mean to be rude."

"Dear me," said Miss Primrose, "that is a very handsome apology, and I am pleased to see you show such a very proper feeling, Bulstrode. You certainly were impertinent, but I quite forgive you—in fact, I had already almost forgotten the circumstances."

"Thank you, ma'am!"

"But it is very proper for you to make amends in this gentlemanlike way—very proper, indeed. I am very pleased. I should be honoured," said Miss Primrose, in her stately way, "if you young gentlemen would stay to tea."

The young gentlemen, needless to say, accepted the invitation with alacrity, and even Bulstrode's face cleared.

It was a very pleasant tea in the sunny old garden, with the Cliff House girls, and the Greyfriars juniors enjoyed it.

During tea, of course, they had to listen to various accounts of the terrific monster that had been seen in the Sark; and, indeed, their consciences smote them when they saw how utterly unconscious Marjorie & Co. were of any hoax in the matter.

"And the misunderstanding's all over, then?" asked Harry, as he shook hands with Marjorie for good-bye.

Marjorie laughed merrily.

"Certainly. We are all good friends again."

"Oh, certainly," said Miss Clara, "till the next time, of course."

"Oh, Clara!"

"There won't be any next time," declared Nugent.

"But really," said Marjorie earnestly, "do avoid that dangerous Pool on the river—something terrible may happen if you swim there."

"Oh, no, there's really no danger. I—I think we ought to tell them, you chaps."

"Yes, rather!"

"Tell us what?" asked Marjorie, with a glimmering of the truth.

And Harry explained. It had been on his conscience, and he was glad to get it off.

Marjorie & Co. looked amazed, incredulous, and finally Marjorie laughed.

"You are bad, bad boys," she said, "and I don't think I shall ever forgive you!"

"You—you bounders!" said Miss Clara. "We shall never convince Miss Primrose of all that, and we shall never be able to swim in the Sark again; and I think you are all horrid, and I won't speak to you again, and I won't even say good-bye to you now, so there!"

"Oh, it was only a—a joke, you know," pleaded Harry. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" said Marjorie.

Clara was silent. But as the boys turned to the gate in the April dusk, Clara's voice followed them softly:

"Good-night!"

THE END.

(Another Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday entitled "The Shipwrecked Schoolboys." Please order your "Magnet" in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)

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. Dominic Dashwood's death occurs just as the 25th are sailing for India. On their arrival there, Leonard joins the Ploughshires. A frontier war breaks out, and the 25th receive orders to mobilise for the front. A trooper named 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, who has been promoted to sergeant. An I O U for £95, which Dashwood had given to Sligo as hush-money, falls into Colonel Greville's hands.

A general advance is now ordered, and the column moves into the difficult Mahmund country, and is soon in action. Sligo is hit, and gives Sloggett an important message for Tom Howard before he dies. Leonard Dashwood offers Sloggett money to tell him what this message was, but Sloggett refuses, and later, being brought before a court-martial on a charge of drunkenness, publicly charges Dashwood with attempted bribery.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Truth Comes Out.

Leonard Dashwood turned to the president with a forced laugh, that had something very like a gasp at the end of it.

"That man's statement is absolutely false, Montgomery! The thing is too ridiculous for words! Pray, why the dickens should I be concerned in the death-rattle of a private?"

"One moment, Dashwood. Be calm, if you please. Prisoner, I must ask you to tell us the nature of the message this man Alf—what was his name?—Sligo gave you. Have you any objection to tell the Court?"

"No, sir. He said to me, Alfy did—and, mind you, both his legs were broke, and blood was pouring out of his mouth like anything, so you may take your oath it warn't no word of a lie—'tell 'Oward,' he says, 'letter from Sergeant 'Ogan; watch mails. Dashwood 'ad the last one for 'Oward. There's money in it for 'im.' Then the poor bloke 'opped the twig."

"You infamous liar!" shouted Leonard Dashwood, his face turning a livid green. "Every word is a malicious invention!"

"Was the I O U you gave Sligo, and then sneaked back again—was that an invention?"

Leonard quailed visibly, and bit his lip until the blood came.

"What!" he stammered. "I gave him no I O U!"

"Unfortunately for the truth of your statement, Mr. Dashwood," said a very stern voice that made them all turn in its direction, "Colonel Greville has that document in his possession!" And the chief of the Ploughshires stopped down the tent, every hair on his little head bristling with fury. "Go back to your tent, sir, and consider yourself under arrest!"

Dashwood's eyes fell for a moment on his cousin, who was trembling like a leaf, but not a sign did Jack make.

Dashwood raised his hand mechanically to salute his colonel, and as Captain Vincent had to rise to his feet to let him pass, he whispered to the miserable man:

"If you have a ball cartridge left in your revolver, you will use it!"

As for our hero, who had been a silent witness of his cousin's exposure, a great shock seemed to have come to him, and he was only called to himself by the stern command of the president, who had been speaking to Colonel Greville.

He motioned to the escort, who doubled up one on either side of Bill Sloggett.

"Escort of the prisoner, about turn! Quick march!"

And falling in mechanically in the rear, Sergeant Sir John Dashwood followed them to the guard tent.

They brought more camp-stools, and Colonel Greville and Colonel Martin, with the adjutant, took their seats round the table, and began a discussion of the greatest gravity.

It is not for us to pry into the secrets of that court of inquiry. It is sufficient, for the present, to say that Leonard Dashwood was revealed beyond a shadow of doubt in his true colours at last, and it now became a matter for a general court-martial.

Colonel Martin fumed and fidgeted, for the honour of his regiment was at stake; but the one bright spot in the whole business was the behaviour of our hero, and every member of that little party sitting round the table had something good to say of him.

It was only a pity that Major-General Sir Ponsonby Smithers, K.C.B., G.C.S.I., etc., was not present; but at that very moment Sir Ponsonby, lying on his back, with his legs swathed in bandages, like a man with the gout, was scribbling a report of the sergeant's gallantry, which he was determined to forward to the War Office itself.

"Well, gentlemen," said Colonel Greville, rising, "this is a very bad business; but it must be gone through. It remains for Colonel Martin to report the matter to Sir Bindon Blood, as he is Lieutenant Dashwood's commanding officer. He must be brought to trial, and he will be dismissed the service with ignominy—there can be no two questions about that."

And the party then broke up, Captain Vincent's frown darkening. He had been listening for the report of a revolver for the last half-hour, and had mentally set down Dashwood not only as a scoundrel, but as a coward.

Leonard Dashwood's Last Card.

"Mail-ho!" rang the cheery shout.

And in the midst of all their difficulties and dangers, a hum went through the camp—a hum of delight, for the cry announced letters from home.

The orderly-corporal in charge of the post-office sallied forth with a bundle of officers' letters in his hand, and one he turned over with some little doubt.

"Dashwood!" he muttered. "Sir John Dashwood, Baronet, Malakand Field Force. There's only one Dashwood that I know of, and that's that blessed lieutenant of the Ploughshires. If it's not for him he'll probably know something about it."

And the orderly-corporal went over to the officer's tent.

Leonard was sitting with one wrist clasped over the other, in an attitude very suggestive of handcuffs, and his eyes were blazing like burning coals as he fixed them on the ground at his feet.

"Beg pardon, sir," said a voice from outside his tent. "Letter for Sir John Dashwood. Is it for you?"

The eyes came up from the ground, and looked at the man. He said afterwards among his pals that he had never seen eyes like them; the very whites were scarlet with suffused blood.

"Yes, that's for me," said Leonard Dashwood.

And the man, saluting, went away wondering, while the miserable fellow, one last gleam of hope quickening his heart-beats, tore open the envelope, and read greedily.

"Sir," said the letter, "I can't rest until you have this in your hands. It's the thing that'll clear you in the sight of the world, and clear the good name of the colonel, your father. God rest his soul! Not that there was any need to clear him in the sight of us that knew him, but it's all along of that black-hearted villain, Dominic Dashwood and his scum of a son. And now my mind's easy, Master John, and you will just show this to the old man, and take your proper position; and it's meself that's delighted to read what the papers say of ye, Master John, and hoping ye's quite well, as it leaves me at present.—Your honour's obedient and humble servant, PATRICK HOGAN,

"(Late Sergeant, 25th Queen's Hussars)."

Leonard Dashwood tore the letter savagely with both hands, and picked up the enclosure that had fallen from it.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "Here it is at last!"

And his excitement was so intense, that the words swam before his eyes. He could not read it for several minutes.

It was the receipt for the last instalment of the mortgage, which Sir Harry Dashwood had duly paid to his brother, and the bold signature of Dominic Dashwood, a little obscured by the dirt and grime in which the paper had lain, stood out in damning proof of the lawyer's foul duplicity and crime.

Twenty times Dashwood read it over to assure himself it was the thing he had sought so long, and in another moment it would have shared the fate of Hogan's letter, if a quick step had not sounded outside the tent. Crumpling it in his hand, he thrust it into the pocket of his jacket, and looked up to see his cousin standing before him.

For a moment Jack, who thought he had schooled himself pretty well, found the words would not come to his tongue, and the two young men—the hero and the villain—meeting in such remarkable circumstances, gazed at each other in silence.

Then Jack spoke.

"You have a letter of mine!" he said, with a jerk.

His voice was stern, and his face could not disguise the disgust and loathing he felt for the man before him.

Leonard Dashwood's eyes narrowed down to two horizontal slits, and his little black moustache curled up at each corner of his mouth as his face was distorted into a Mephisophilean sneer.

"There it is!" he said, pointing with his foot to the fragments of paper on the floor of the tent.

"You miserable cur!" said Jack. "That was my property!"

And, with a scathing look of tremendous contempt, he turned on his heel.

"Stop!" said his cousin. "I will tell you who it was from, and I will tell you what was in it. All right, if you don't care to hear; but I think you had better, because you will understand the position more clearly."

There was something so triumphantly menacing in his tone, that Jack conquered the repulsion he felt, and took two steps back to the tent door.

"Your letter was from that beast Hogan, who used to be at the Hall—the impertinent fool, meddling with other people's affairs! Do you remember the mortgage—the mortgage that was never paid?"

Jack's face flushed, and he looked dangerous.

"You know it was paid, you liar!" he said, in a strangely still voice.

"Well, all right, it was paid; but the proof was missing—the last receipt. You see that paper, there? Ah, Mr. Hogan has been too clever, by half. He found that receipt, nosing about where he had no right to, and sent it to you, and I got it, and much good may it do you. You can take your change out of that! Of course, they will kick me out of the Service, and a lot I care! I shall be Leonard Dashwood, of Dashwood Hall. And now you can go, sergeant."

The scoundrel was treading on very dangerous ground, but the half filled bottle of whisky on the table at his elbow had supplied him with an artificial courage for the moment; but Leonard Dashwood had never been nearer death in his life than he was then.

Jack stood motionless, appalled by the very magnitude of his cousin's villany.

Some gentler trait derived from his mother, underlay the fighting instincts of his family, and as he looked at the haggard, hectic face before him, with the sneering lips trembling, and the whole aspect of the man forced and unnatural, a great pity mingled with the loathing he felt, and the desire for physical retribution died out of him.

"You know perfectly well," he said, after a trying pause, "that I could kill you on the spot, and it would not be half the punishment you deserve. But, by Heaven, Leonard Dashwood, I am sorry for you, and I would not be in your shoes for twenty Dashwood Halls! Your father robbed me, and you have followed in his footsteps. I am not so magnanimous, but that, if I had the proof, I would turn you out of your ill-gotten inheritance; but the proof is gone, and you have won the game!"

"What?" exclaimed a voice that rang like a pistol in the hot afternoon. "What do you mean, Sir John?" And a strange figure stepped into view round the curtain of the tent.

"Great heavens, Hogan, what brings you here?" exclaimed Howard, starting back.

"Whist, be aisy, Master John!" said the new-comer. "I've a heap to tell yez. Have you got my letter?"

"He has torn up the paper!" said Jack, pointing bitterly to the fragments on the floor.

"And what's that got to do with ut?" cried the old sergeant, bringing his stick down on one of the guyropes of the tent with such force that the canvas jumped, and Leonard Dashwood with it. "As long as Patrick Hogan is above ground, there's proof enough. Didn't I read it with my own eyes? Didn't I make a copy of ut? Didn't Mrs. Sligo, away back there in the old country, read it, too? What more do you want?"

"Look here, fellow," said Leonard loftily, grasping at the opportunity to wither somebody, "I would like to know what you want here at all? It will pay you a great deal better to mind your own business, unless you desire to be kicked out of the camp!"

"What, you miserable, white-livered little whipper-snapper!" roared Hogan, in a tremendous voice. "Talking to me, who was charging the enemy years before you was born or thought of. What business is it of mine? I, who nursed the young maister here, when he was no bigger than a jack-spur! I'll tell you what my business is—it is to give him back the money you and your black-hearted father robbed him of, and I have done ut, too!"

"Steady, Hogan," said Jack, seeing that the men in the vicinity of the tent were looking in their direction, attracted by the anger in the old man's voice. "We don't want a scene!"

"Let him go on," said Leonard, with a sneer. "Now is

your opportunity, when I am under arrest and my hands are tied. Rub it in, for it's all the satisfaction you will get. What a pity you didn't come five minutes sooner, before I had read the letter."

And he kicked the little pile of torn paper, scattering it over the sand.

Jack looked at him with a face full of silent contempt. His own honest, straightforward nature could not understand his cousin's attitude.

"Very well, Master Jack," said Hogan, flourishing his stick as though he would very much like to bring it down on Leonard Dashwood's shoulders. "I'll say no more, since you wish ut. My mouth's shut, but by jabbers, I will open it wide enough at the court-martial! I'm thankful, for the honour of the old regiment, that he is not one of 'ours.'"

And, twisting up the grey rag of a moustache that bristled beneath his nose, the old soldier followed Sir John as he moved away from the tent door.

Leonard Dashwood leaned forward, and looked after them, his effrontery leaving him the moment he was alone, and his active brain turning over the legal possibilities of the situation

Nor did he raise his eyes from the ground until one of his own men, with a rifle and fixed bayonet, came quietly up, and began pacing backwards and forwards in front of the tent.

It was Private Johnson, who had been sent there by Colonel Martin's own order, lest the prisoner should attempt to break his arrest.

. . . . . .

"And now, my good Hogan," said our hero, as they went over to the portion of the camp occupied by the 25th Hussars, "tell me how on earth you managed to get up here?"

"Where there's a will there's a way, Master Jack," said the old soldier. "I could not rest when I had found that paper, and two days after I had sent it on to yez. I went down to Reading to put the whole thing before Mr. Vivian—the kindest-hearted gentleman I have ever struck, barring, of course, the old colonel. He told me I had done wrong to send the document, and then, bedad, nothing would do but I must come out here and tell yez meself, and he found the money. I have done two tours of Indian service, but, bedad, I never had such a time as this one, knowing all the time that the paper was in the mail-bag in the same boat, and I unable to get it into my hands again.

"How did I get up-country? How does an old soldier get anywhere when he has set his mind to ut? Don't ask me foolish questions, Master Jack! I came, and I am here, and by the powers I'll never leave yez till I see things righted. Whist, but it does me heart good to be with the old rigiment, although they are only a parcel of bhoys, and there's not a face I remember, not a scrap of uniform, except the crest on the button. There are only three of us left who fought in the Mutiny with the 25th—meself's one, Corporal Williams is another—he's in the workhouse, bad cess to ut!—and there's Oliver Perkins, who sweeps a crossing near Finsbury Circus.

Tom Howard—we must call him so a little longer—took the faithful old man over to the sergeant's mess, and introduced him to his comrades, who procured a biscuit-box for Hogan to sit upon, and a dram of whisky from some mysterious corner, and the veteran's tongue wagged without cessation until "First Post" sounded.

Tom Howard sat silently by, turning over in his mind what course he ought to adopt, and whether it was not his duty to interview Colonel Greville.

This, however, he decided to do in the morning, unconscious of the things that were to happen before then.

The Prisoner Helps in the Fight.

Silence had fallen upon the camp. The sentries paced their beats, and the baggage animals grunted in the centre of the square.

Now and again a mare would begin kicking until she was quietened by the stable picket, and overhead the brilliant stars twinkled in the velvet night as they looked down upon that little force, isolated behind its feeble rampart of earth and stones in the heart of the enemy's country.

Then a shot, and another, and another. Hoarse calls to "Turn out," and "Stand to your arms." And in a moment the silence was converted into a pandemonium of shots and shouting, and they knew that a heavy attack was being made.

The tribesmen were in great force, and pressed us heavily. It was not altogether unexpected, as the Khan of Nawagai had given information that the tribesmen were collecting, and that a determined attack would be attempted.

The cavalry had been out just before nightfall, and had come in touch with the enemy; but it was not until half-past eight that the firing began. All the tents were immediately struck, the trenches were manned, and everyone ordered to lie down.

At first the Mahmunds contented themselves with firing from the heights that commanded us; but, soon tiring of the long range, they came up to the parapets of the entrenchment, and charged with the sword.

There were some four thousand of them, and, fortified by hopes of Paradise, nothing stopped them but the bayonet itself.

The heaviest attack fell upon the "Queens," who poured in a tremendous fire, stopping rush after rush, every man under perfect control.

The guns fired star-shell, which, bursting overhead, fell slowly, showing us the numbers and determination of the enemy.

Magazine fire was ordered, and the row was terrific as each man let off his ten cartridges.

Nevertheless, for six hours the enemy declined to be gainsaid, and came on again and again, until the ground outside the trenches was piled up with their dead bodies.

In one tent alone there were sixteen bullet-holes, and every man in the camp that night had a bad time.

The Ploughshires were very hotly pressed, so much so that three of the enemy sprang over the parapet, and the men that manned it ran back upon their supports.

Leonard Dashwood stood motionless during the tumult, a prisoner under arrest, and once or twice the half-hope came into his brain that one of the whistling bullets might pierce his heart.

With his arms folded on his chest, he looked bitterly into the face of the foe, the one standing figure in the whole of the encampment.

(This splendid story will be concluded in next Tuesday's number of THE MAGNET Library. Look out for the opening chapters of the next tale of Army life—"ONE OF THE RANKS."

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