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Frank  
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## The Cliff House Party



A Tale of the Chums of  
Greyfriars and Cliff House,

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

### THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Greyfriars Merchant.

“ANY of you fellows looking for a gold watchchain?”  
It was Billy Bunter who asked the question as he came up to a group of fellows belonging to the Remove in the Close at Greyfriars. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, was talking cricket with Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent and Micky Desmond, when the fat junior came up. Harry’s hand went instinctively to his waistcoat; he was the only one of the group who possessed such a luxury as a gold watchchain, and Bunter’s question made him think that he might have lost it.  
“No, mine’s all right, Billy,” he said, finding that the chain was there.  
“You other fellows, though—”  
“I haven’t one,” said Bob Cherry, “so I can’t have dropped it. Have you found one? You’d better take it in to the Head.”  
Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.  
“I haven’t found one, Cherry.”  
“Then why on earth—” began Bob.

“You see, I’ve got one to sell. Any fellow who’s looking for a gold watchchain—a real, stunning bargain, has only got to say so,” said Billy Bunter. “That’s what I mean. Would you like a gold watchchain, Nugent?”  
“Whose is it?” asked Nugent caustically.  
“Mine, of course. Do you think I should be trying to sell somebody else’s gold watchchain?” demanded Bunter indignantly.  
“I don’t know. I know jolly well you haven’t one of your own.”  
“Well, you can see it. Look here.”  
They looked. Billy Bunter drew a little case from his pocket, and opened it with an important air. A watchchain was disclosed to view—a chain of huge size, and of a peculiar yellow colour, doubtless intended to imitate gold. The chums of the Remove looked at it, and chuckled.  
“Is that it, Bunty?”  
“That’s it,” said Bunter impressively. “A real, eighteen carat gold case, substantial, reliable timekeeper—I mean watchchain. It would look handsome on any fellow’s waistcoat, and the price is only five shillings. Think of it! You don’t often get a chance like that.”



"And we're not going to jump at this one," said Bob Cherry, grinning. "Fivepence would be nearer the mark, and it would be dear at that."

"Oh, really, Cherry! A really reliable, substantial——"

"Rats! Go and bury it somewhere; it's too dazzling."

Bunter frowned as he shut up the case and restored it to his pocket. He fished in another pocket, and produced another case.

"Well, if you don't want a watchchain, perhaps you'd like a real amber-mouthpiece, first-class cherry-wood cigarette-holder," he said. "Wonderful value for the money, too. You can have this splendid cigarette-holder for half-a-crown."

"You'd better keep it for some of the smart fellows in the Fifth," said Harry Wharton drily. "Anybody smoking in the Remove gets a thick ear."

"Oh, I forgot that! Still, it's a nice thing to have about you, ready for when you grow up," said Bunter persuasively. "You can see that it's real amber——"

"Looks like it," assented Bob Cherry. "Fresh from the amber mines in Birmingham, I suppose?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

The Reinovites walked away while Bunter was closing the second case. They had had enough of Bunter and his articles for sale. But the fat junior was not got rid of so easily. He hurried after them, at the same time jerking a little dogwhip from under his tight jacket.

"I say, you fellows, hold on! Look here! Who wants a beautiful dogwhip—eighteen carat gold case—I—I mean silver-mounted handle—silver whistle, and——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"It's simply a beautiful whip, and dirt cheap at three shillings—dirt cheap. If you're looking for a bargain in dogwhips——"

"We're not."

"Then just have a squint at this handsome cardcase and matchbox combined. It's real crocodile—direct from our factories on the Nile—I—I mean from the manufacturer's factories on the Nile, you know—absolutely real, gold mounted in sterling silver—that is to say, in eighteen carat gold, and——"

The juniors stared blankly at Billy Bunter.

He was producing new articles as fast as any conjurer could have done it, and the supply of them seemed inexhaustible.

Bob Cherry took the fat junior by the shoulder, and shook him.

"Look here, what's the little game?" he demanded.

"What do you mean by loading yourself up with this rotten trash and trying to sell it to us? Where did you get it?"

Bunter gasped.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Is it some more of the Patriotic Home Work Association business?" demanded Bob Cherry, still shaking the fat junior.

"Oh! No! I'm done with the Patriotic Home Work Association. I find that it's a swindle, after all."

"We told you that all along, you young fathead," said Nugent, laughing.

"Yes; but, you see, it would have been ripping if I had got the three pounds a week for doing easy and artistic home work," said Bunter. "It wasn't my fault it turned out to be a swindle, was it? But this firm is all right."

"What firm?"

"The Imperialist Fair Trading Co. They supply you with ten articles, and you sell them, and send on the tin, and then they present you with a free gift."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" growled Billy Bunter peevishly. "It's a fair enough offer. You sell six wonderful bargains, thus benefiting your friends, and you get a splendid free gift. I am going to have a camera."

"The articles are worth about a tanner a time, I suppose, and the camera's worth a bob, even if you get it."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"You young ass!" Bob Cherry shook Bunter till he quivered like a jelly. "Don't you start trying to sell sham jewellery and humbug to us, or to anybody, or we'll boot you out of No. 1 Study. We're not going to have a sham jewellery merchant digging with us, I can tell you!"

"Ow! Oh—really—don't shake me like that, you ass! You'll make my glasses fall off, and if they break, you'll have to pay for them! I—I'm trying to benefit you fellows. Ow!"

The severe shaking Bob Cherry administered had a peculiar effect, jerking out of Bunter's pockets the various articles he had for sale. The fat junior's pockets were over full, and as Bob Cherry shook him, he shed wonderful bargains on all sides. Finally, Bob Cherry sat him down on the grass, and he sat there blinking, in the midst of a collection of splendid eighteen carat gold-cased watchchains, silver-mounted dogwhips, amber cigarette-holders, lace-

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK: "THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

edged handkerchiefs, crocodile-leather cardcases, and so forth.

The chums of the Remove walked away laughing, and Billy Bunter blinked after them, and then round at his scattered treasures.

"Beasts!" he murmured. "Fancy not buying a few articles of a chap in their own study! I suppose this is what they call being friendly. Br-r-r!"

He rose to his knees, and, blinking through his big glasses, he slowly and carefully collected up the precious bargains of the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. He was still thus engaged when the toe of a boot lifted him gently behind, and sent him sprawling forward upon his fat hands.

"Oh!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Oh, really, Skinner——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, is it you, Bulstrode?" said Bunter, blinking up at the bully of the Remove. "I—I think you're a beast, you know."

"What are you grovelling down there for, you fat worm?"

"I'm picking up these articles. That other beast, Cherry made me drop 'em. Look here, Bulstrode, do you want a splendid watchchain—twenty-two carat gold case——"

"Not one of that sort," said Bulstrode, laughing. "You young ass! Where did you get all this rotten rubbish?"

"It's not rotten rubbish," said Bunter indignantly. "It's supplied by the Imperialist Fair Trading Co., and I'm going to have a camera when the things are all sold. If you'd like to buy a really splendid half-dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs at the absurd price of two shillings——"

"No fear!"

"You could make a present of them to Marjorie Hazeldene, you know," said Bunter persuasively. "It might make her like you, you know. She thinks you're a beast now. Ow! Ow!"

Bunter rolled over as he received a savage push from Bulstrode's boot, and the big Reinovite walked away. Billy Bunter collected up his articles and drifted disconsolately away. He had expected to get rid of the ten articles in a very short time, and already in his mind's eye he had been taking photographs with the gift camera. But the sale for marvellous bargains did not seem to be brisk. Possibly, too, Bunter lacked tact as a salesman.

He caught sight of Mark Linley, of the Remove, sitting under the elms with a book. Linley, the lad from Lancashire, was known all through the Lower School for his good nature—good nature that was not diminished by the rough treatment he had received in some quarters—for Linley was a "scholarship boy." Bunter brightened up a little as he bore down upon Mark Linley, and he ran over in his mind which of the articles would be most likely to suit the Lancashire lad.

"I say, Linley——"

Mark looked up pleasantly enough. He did not like Bunter, but he was always civil.

"Yes, what is it?"

"Would you like a gold watchchain, twenty-eight carat?" said Bunter, growing more and more reckless with his carats. "It's a ripping chain. Your waistcoat is a bit shabby, you know, and this splendid watchchain would brighten it up, and make you feel as well dressed as the other fellows."

Mark winced a little. The son of a mill-worker could hardly hope to be as well dressed as the other fellows at an expensive school like Greyfriars. But it was not exactly pleasant to have the fact brought home to him in this way.

"I don't want it, thanks, Bunter."

"Then suppose you take these half-dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs?" said Bunter persuasively. "They would make a ripping present for Marjorie Hazeldene. It would be a decent thing for you to do, you know, because she treats you

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just the same as if you were one of us, although you're only a sort of charity boy, you know. Or there's this beautiful silver-mounted dogwhip—"

"Do you want me to take that whip and lay it about you?" asked Linley.

Bunter jumped.

"Eh? Oh, no! Certainly not! What do you mean?"

"Then you'd better get along."

And Bunter looked at Linley's face, and thought he had better. He looked glum as he went. The ten articles were still intact, and the camera as far off as ever. But a sudden thought occurred to the fat junior.

"The girls! Of course, they'll buy the things! I'll go and look for the girls!"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Billy Bunter Catches It.

MARJORIE HAZELDENE came out of the Head's house at Greyfriars with a serious expression upon her charming face. Her friend Clara was waiting for her under the big elms.

For more than a week the girls had been at Greyfriars. Cliff House, the girls' school, presided over by Miss Penelope Primrose, was deserted, and Miss Primrose's fair pupils were being "put up" at Greyfriars. It was a curious change for them, and for the Greyfriars fellows.

"Any news?" asked Miss Clara, linking her arm in her friend's.

"Yes; we're going back to-night."

"Oh!"

"Miss Locke has just told me so," said Marjorie. "You know they discovered that there was something wrong with the foundations at Cliff House—"

"Something rocky," said Miss Clara, who was somewhat addicted to slang, doubtless from hearing so much boyish conversation of late. "Yes, I know."

"Well, it turns out to be a false alarm. They've made a thorough examination, and the place is safe enough."

Miss Clara sniffed a little.

"That's through leaving matters of this sort to men," she remarked. "Men are always finding out that something is wrong somewhere, when it isn't. I knew all the time that Cliff House was safe enough, but that old gentleman talked to Miss Primrose in such dreadfully long words that she believed the place was nearly tottering. If she had asked my opinion—"

Marjorie laughed.

"But she didn't, dear. Of course, it was thoughtless of her. But there is good news; we're going back this evening, and Miss Primrose is going to give a garden-party tomorrow afternoon, and invite all the Greyfriars juniors, as a mark of our—of our appreciation, I think Miss Locke said, of their kindness to us during our stay here."

Miss Clara clapped her hands enthusiastically.

"Ripping!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, Clara!"

"Oh, don't say 'Oh, Clara!' or I shall say spiffing next!" said Miss Clara, with a toss of her golden head. "It is ripping, so there! And Miss Primrose is a duck—a real duck! A garden-party is just the thing! Do you remember the night of the dance?"

"Yes, indeed; it was lovely!" Miss Hazeldene's face became more serious. "Oh, Clara, have you seen my brother?"

"Hazel?" Clara spoke carelessly enough. "No, not lately."

"I want to see him particularly before we leave Greyfriars," said Marjorie. "He seems to have been avoiding me lately."

"Then he isn't in want of money," said Miss Clara.

Marjorie flushed crimson. Hazeldene, of the Greyfriars Remove, was not a brother, perhaps, to be particularly proud of. But probably the very weakness of his character made Marjorie care for him the more. At all events, she was very anxious about him, as she knew that he was in trouble with Mr. Lazarus, of Friardale.

"Clara!"

"Oh, I'm sorry!" said Clara. "I know I mustn't say a word. But—"

"You must not say a word against my brother, or—"

"Now, dear, don't be angry!" said Clara, throwing her arm round Marjorie's neck. "I won't say a word on the subject. But I know very well that you haven't worn your ring lately, and I know where it must have gone, and I think— There, there, I won't say another word!"

"I say, you fellows—I mean, you girls—"

It was Billy Bunter. Marjorie checked the words on her lips, and turned towards the fat Removeite.

"I say, would either of you like a gold watchchain—thirty-six carat gold case," said Bunter, who was rather hazy as to the possible number of carats, but did not mean to err on the side of being too moderate, "or a splendid dogwhip? I've got ten articles to sell at ruinous prices, and I should like you to make some bargains."

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK;

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

"I don't want any, thank you! We are leaving Greyfriars to-day."

"Oh, really! I'm sincerely sorry. Perhaps you would like to buy some of these things to make a few parting gifts," said Bunter, fishing out handfuls of the goods supplied by the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.—gold watch-chains, chain bracelets, lace-edged handkerchiefs, etc.

"No, thank you!" said Clara, with a scornful glance at the array of rubbish Bunter held out enticingly. "But you can return Marjorie the half-crown she lent you last week, as we are leaving the school to-day."

Bunter blinked at her.

"The—the half-crown?"

"Yes," said Marjorie. "You promised it for last Saturday."

"Ah, yes, I remember! I was going to settle it out of the cheque I was expecting for some work done for the Patriotic Home Work Association," said Bunter. "Unfortunately, that turned out to be a swindle. They did me out of six shillings for a colour-box, and then steadily refused to take any picture-postcards I coloured for them. I've spent a small fortune in postage to the cads. Rotten, isn't it? Of course, I shall repay the half-crown shortly. I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning, and you can have it out of that."

"You promised it for Saturday, and I needed it."

"Yes; but I didn't get the cheque," said Bunter, in a tone of patient explanation. "I suppose it's impossible for the feminine mind to understand business. However, I will settle it shortly. When I have sold all these articles I shall get a free camera, and I am going to do photographic work for the Press. I expect to make pounds and pounds. Would you care to have this splendid forty-six carat silver-mounted dogwhip as a parting gift for Wharton? He's thinking of buying a dog, and I believe he's rather expecting a present from you as you're going away."

"You untruthful little wretch!" said Miss Clara. "How dare you say such things? Harry does not even know we are going away yet!"

"N-n-n-n-no; I suppose not! I—I mean, I think he would naturally expect a present if he knew, and you can have this dogwhip cheap."

"Can I try it?" asked Miss Clara, with a glimmer in her eyes that the short-sighted Owl of the Remove failed to see.

"Oh, certainly! It's a splendid article, and— Ow, what are you doing?"

Miss Clara had taken the dogwhip, and was making free play with it round Bunter's fat calves.

"Ow, ow! O-o-o-h! Gerrooh!"

Bunter hopped to escape the stinging slash, but Miss Clara was in earnest. As fast as he hopped she caught him with the lash, and Bunter howled and danced like a lunatic.

"Ow, ow! Stop it! Wow!"

"You untruthful little wretch!" gasped Miss Clara, breathless with her exertions. "You ought to be thrashed!"

"Ow, ow! Wow! Yow!"

"Oh dear—Oh dear!" exclaimed Marjorie, with the tears of merriment running down her cheeks—"oh dear! That will do, Clara!"

"The little wretch was telling stories! Take that, and that!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Miss Clara finally threw the dogwhip at Bunter. The fat junior ceased his impromptu dance, and jammed his spectacles straight on his nose. Half a dozen juniors had gathered round, attracted by the noise, and they were shouting with laughter. Bunter blinked at them furiously.

"Ow, ow! Oh dear, I am hurt! I don't like that girl Clara at all! Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two girls were walking away. Marjorie uttered an exclamation as she caught sight of a junior near the gates. It was her brother, and he had his bicycle with him, and was evidently going out. Marjorie quickened her pace, and did not even notice that Clara left her. Clara did not like Hazeldene, of the Remove. Hazeldene turned his head quickly as he heard his sister call, and a shade crossed his face.

"What is it?" he asked, almost roughly.

"I want to see you, Hazel. You are going out?" asked Marjorie quietly.

"Yes."

"To Mr. Lazarus?"

"Yes," said Hazeldene, after a moment's hesitation. "I've got to go and see him. He wants his money, and—"

"But you can't pay him?"

"No; but—"

"Let him take the things back," said Marjorie. "You



don't really need them. It was reckless of you to furnish your study in an expensive way. And the things weren't worth the money. Let him take them away."

"You don't understand," said Hazeldene peevishly. "He won't take them back. He wants the money. I know he couldn't sue a fellow of my age; but he'll go to the Head with his bill, and make it out as bad as he can. He's a moneylender as well as a furniture-dealer, and he could easily make the Head think that I had been borrowing money. He's a rotten thief!"

"Yet you had dealings with such a man!"

"Lot of good it is saying that now, isn't it?" growled Hazeldene. "You girls don't understand. You don't know anything about business."

Marjorie remembered that Bunter had made the statement, too, and she could not help thinking that her brother's aptitude for business was about on a par with Billy's. But she did not say so. Hazeldene was in a worried and unreasonable frame of mind.

"But what are you going to see him for, Hazel?" asked Marjorie quietly. "If you can't pay him, that won't do any good."

The junior laughed bitterly.

"Because he says if I don't take at least two pounds to him to-day, he'll come up to the school," he replied. "I can't take him any tin, but I'm going to try and stave him off. I don't want to be expelled."

"I don't think you ought to go, Hazel."

"What can I do?"

"Defy him!" said Marjorie, with a glint in her eyes. "Let him go to the Head, if he dare! He has been making you nervous with threats, but I do not believe he would dare to carry them out. If he goes to the Head he will lose his money, anyway. But you cannot pay. You must make a stand sooner or later, why not make it now? I am sure that is what Harry Wharton would advise you to do, if you asked him."

"That's all very well; but——" Hazeldene hesitated. "Well, you can have your way if you like, Marjorie; but—the responsibility's yours. You understand that?"

The girl nodded quietly.

"Speak to Wharton about it, and ask his advice," she said. "Tell him you don't want any money—you could not borrow of him. Ask his advice."

"I'll do it!" Hazeldene laughed recklessly. "I shall be glad to come to some sort of a finish, anyway!"

He wheeled his machine back to the bicycle-shed. As he was leaving the shed after putting it up, he encountered Billy Bunter.

"I say, Vaseline, stop a minute! Would you like to buy a real fifty-two carat gold-cased watchchain, or a sterling silver-mounted cigarette-case, real Russia leather—— Well, my word, fancy a beast stalking on like that while I'm speaking to him!"

And Billy Bunter blinked in great disgust after the disappearing form of Hazeldene.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Mr. Lazarus Visits Greyfriars.

"ANYTHING in the cupboard?" asked Bob Cherry.

He flung his bat into a corner of the study with a crash, and then uttered an exclamation.

"By Jove, I keep on forgetting that there's a study under this one! I say, I'm jolly hungry! That fat little bounder hasn't got tea! Is there anything going?"

"There ought to be," said Nugent, opening the cupboard door—"there ought to be plenty of eggs, and half that ham, you know, and the cold beef. My hat!"

"What's the matter?" asked Harry Wharton.

Nugent made a grimace.

"There's nothing here, that's all."

"Phew!"

The juniors looked into the cupboard. They were hungry after their cricket practice, and they were already late for tea. But the good things they had expected to see there were conspicuous only by their absence.

"Bunter!" said three voices in unison.

"It is like the Hubbardful story of the nursery," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the genial Nabob of Bhanipur. "The worthy Madame Hubbard visited her esteemed cupboard to present her unfortunate canine with a meal bonefully, and when she had arrived at the honourable receptacle the barefulness was terrific, and so the unfortunate canine had none."

"And we shall have none, by the look of things," said Bob Cherry, with a grunt of disgust. "I don't know how we stand Bunter. Most fellows would break him into little bits twice a day. The worst of it is that funds are low."

"The lowfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter came into the study, THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

and blinked round inquiringly—"haven't you brought in anything for tea?"

"No, you young cormorant! What have you done with the grub?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I suppose you don't want me to starve to death? You know I've got a delicate constitution, and can only be kept going by constant nourishment. It's a fortunate thing that I've a good appetite, I think. But, I say, if funds are low, I could raise some tin temporarily by selling some of these articles, if you know a fellow who would be likely to buy them."

"Try Ionides, of the Sixth," suggested Nugent. "He's got a gorgeous taste in dress, and that watchchain may suit him. Try Ionides."

"Good! I never thought of him. He's rich, too, and may be able to buy some of the other things. I'll buzz off at once."

And Bunter "buzzed" off.

Bob Cherry gave a roar:

"My hat! What will Ionides do if the young ass takes that rotten rubbish into his study?"

"Lick him very likely. Serve him right for scoffing the grub. Hallo, Li Hung Chang!"

A quaint little face looked round the door of the study. The almond eyes and long pigtail of Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, came into view.

"Me lookee fol you," he said, in his soft voice. "You comee to feed?"

It was like sunshine suddenly coming into the study. Four hungry juniors, too late for tea in Hall, quite out of provisions and low in funds, jumped at the invitation. It was like corn in Egypt in the lean years.

"Well, rather!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "But what have you got? None of your mysterious Chinese stews, eh—dogs and cats and mice?"

Wung Lung shook his head with a reproachful look.

"No cookee Chinese cookee for fijends," he said. "You thustee Wun Lung."

"Well, I'm hungry enough to trust anybody," said Bob. "Come along, kids. Lead the way, Macduff."

They were quickly in the Celestial's study. Wun Lung's study-mates were out on the cricket-field, and the juniors had the study to themselves. There were plates of nicely-browned sausages, poached eggs, and toast on the hob and fender. The hungry juniors smiled sweetly. It was a feed they could appreciate, and no chance about it of the Chinese ingredients such as Bob Cherry had mentioned.

"Takee seat," said Wun Lung, beaming hospitably. "Nicee-nicee feed. Me makee tea."

"Oh, I'll make the tea for you," said Frank Nugent. "Let's be useful as well as ornamental. You dish up the grub."

"Wun Lung, my son, you're a giddy prince! This is ripping!"

"The rippingfulness is terrific."

The juniors seated themselves round the table. The tea had just started when Mark Linley came in. Linley was one of the juniors to whom the study belonged, and he came in from cricket practice without knowing there was anything on in the study. As he looked in and saw the tea-party, he stepped back, but Wung Lung called to him:

"Comee in. Allee light!"

Linley came in.

"Sitee down," said Wun Lung hospitably. "Jcinee party. Allee light."

"But——"

"There's room for you on this stool," said Bob Cherry. "Here you are."

And he pulled the Lancashire lad down beside him.

Mark Linley laughed.

"Thank you. I'm hungry."

"Grub this way. Here you are. Got another teacup, kid? If not, I'll cut into the next study and get one."

"Allee light. Me gotee."

"Hazeldene was looking for you, Wharton," said Linley, as Harry handed him a cup of tea, and Bob Cherry filled his plate. "He asked me a few minutes ago if I had seen you."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Talk of angels. Here he is."

Hazeldene looked in. There was a white and worried look about his face, which Harry Wharton noticed at once.

"Oh, I didn't know you were busy," he said. "I'd like to speak to you presently, Wharton, if you've got time."

"Comee in," said Wun Lung. "Havee tea."

"Come in, kid," said Harry. "What is it? Anything important?"

"It can wait a bit," said Hazeldene, with a faint smile.

"I only want some advice."

Wun Lung looked at him curiously.

"Allee light," he said.



Hazeldene started.

"What do you know about it?" he exclaimed.

"Me savvy."

"Rats! You don't know. How could you?"

"Me savvy," said Wun Lung, grinning. "Me see you go—talkee to Lazarus. Me savvy."

Hazeldene turned pale.

"Allee light," said Wun Lung; "he is coming here."

"What?"

"Me expecting him," said Wun Lung calmly. "He come to talkee-talkee because me no pay cashee."

"Do you mean to say that you owe Lazarus money, Wun Lung?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The little Celestial nodded.

"Yes, lathel! No owe; he say so. Me bollow ten pounds of him."

Wharton's brows contracted.

"The ten pounds you wanted to lend me the other week!" he exclaimed. "The ten pounds you found the time Fatty Wynn came over from St. Jim's?"

"Allee light."

"But I only had three," said Wharton anxiously. "I gave you the rest back the next morning, and paid you the three the following week. You never let me know that you had it from a moneylender."

Wun Lung grinned.

"You no takee if me say so, p'l'aps."

"You young ass! I wouldn't have let you mix yourself up with that thief for anything!" said Wharton, looking distressed. "But haven't you paid him?"

"Me payee ten pounds next weekee aftel, and one pound intelest."

"A pound interest on the week! The thief! But if you've paid him, what's the trouble with him now?"

"He say the intelest should be two pounds," said Wun Lung cheerfully, "and he chalgee mole intelest all the time me no payee. He say me owe him five pounds now."

"My hat!"

"He thleaten to comee up to Gleyfials if I no pay."

"You won't pay the villain?"

The Celestial chuckled.

"No payee. He comee hele; me expecting him."

"And when he comes?"

"P'l'aps he wishee he no come."

Hazeldene rose uneasily.

"Here, I'd better not stay to see him," he said. "That's what I wanted to see you about, Wharton. I—I've been advised to ask your opinion. Lazarus has added interest to interest, and worked it out that I owe him nearly ten pounds now, after all I've paid. It's for the things in my study, you know—hire-purchase. I've offered to let him have them back, but he won't take them. He's going to expose me to the Head if I don't pay, and make it out as black as he can."

Wharton's face set hard.

"The man's a mere swindler!" he said. "You ought to be kicked if you give him a penny. Let him have his rubbish back. You were a silly ass to have it. I remember that he wanted us to get into debt with him, too—"

"But we had too much sense," said Bob Cherry, in his candid way.

"Oh, all right; pile it on," said Hazeldene, with an uneasy laugh. "I know I've been a fool."

"You have; and a bigger fool for knuckling under to threats than for getting the stuff in the first place," said Nugent. "Suppose he goes to the Head? Do you think Dr. Locke won't see at a glance what sort of a swindler he is?"

"Of course he will," said Harry. "He will see just how matters stand. And he may give you a warm time, perhaps, but anything's better than knuckling under to that rascal, and paying money you don't owe."

Hazeldene nodded gloomily. He did not feel quite so sure about it himself, and he ate little at that well-spread board.

"And you're expecting the fellow here, kid?" went on Harry Wharton. "Are you certain he will come?"

"Me quite celtain. He say he comee if me no payee."

"He may go straight to the Head?"

Wun Lung made a sign of dissent.

"No go stlaight to Head."

"How do you know?"

"Gosling let him in," grinned Wun Lung. "Me givee Gosling half-a-clown to show him in here when he comee."

"I see. And what are you going to do with him?"

"Talkee-talkce. P'l'aps someting else. Me savvy."

The juniors grinned at one another. They saw now that Wun Lung had got up that little tea-party in his study so as to have plenty of friends at hand in case he needed their help with the moneylender.

What he intended to do with Mr. Lazarus they did not know, but they could guess that it was something that would make their visitor wish he had given Greyfriars a wide berth.

Mr. Lazarus had succeeded in frightening Hazeldene;

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

but the little Chinese seemed to be made of sterner stuff. There was a sound of heavy footsteps in the passage, and a knock on the door. The hairy face of Gosling, the school-porter, looked in.

"Which the gentleman has come," he said.

Wun Lung rose from the table.

"Showee him in."

"This 'ere way, Mr. Lazarus."

"Sank you, mein frient."

And Mr. Lazarus walked in. His dark-complexioned, oily face looked a little startled as he saw that he was in a study filled with juniors.

The boys rose to their feet.

"Goot-evening," said Mr. Lazarus agreeably. "And how is mein young frient Vharton? I hope der bookcase is still fery goot?"

"It's all right, thank you," said Harry shortly.

"I see my frient Hazeldene, too," said Mr. Lazarus, rubbing his hands, "and mein leedle frient Vun Lunk. You have my monish, mein frients?"

"I haven't any," said Hazeldene.

"No savvy," said Wun Lung sweetly.

"Mein monish," said Mr. Lazarus, raising his voice a little, "mit der interest, it is five pounds for mein leedle frient Vun Lunk, and ten pounds for Mishter Hazeldene. I go to der Head if you do not pay. Vat is it to be? I have tell you dat I come here for der money, and I have come."

"You'd better go to the Head, then!" snarled Hazeldene.

"You can have your sticks back if you like. I've got no money for you."

"Me payee cashee once," said Wun Lung cheerfully.

"No payee second timee."

"Der interest—"

"No savvy."

"Der just interest amount to five pounds."

"No savvy."

An ugly look came over Mr. Lazarus's oily face.

"Fery goot! Den I go to der Head."

And he turned towards the door. With two steps Wun Lung reached it, and turned the key in the lock.

Mr. Lazarus looked startled.

"You lets me out!" he exclaimed.

"No savvy. Me takee you in."

Mr. Lazarus, looking alarmed, made a rush for the door, and tried to thrust the little Chinese aside. Wun Lung seemed to curl round him like a caterpillar round a stem. In a twinkling Mr. Lazarus was on his back on the carpet, gasping for breath, and the little Chinese was sitting on his chest, perfectly cool, and smiling a bland smile.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Tar and Feathers!

MR. LAZARUS gasped.

The weight of the little Celestial was not great, but it was sufficient to pin his visitor to the floor.

Mr. Lazarus was very stout, and he was not an athlete. He lay on the carpet, and gasped and blinked.

"My young frients," he murmured feebly—"mein frients—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I'll summons you for assault and battery!" gasped Mr. Lazarus. "I'll—I'll have der law of you, so I tells you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were not much afraid of Mr. Lazarus and his law. They laughed loudly as the moneylender wriggled on the carpet and gasped. It was such a change from Mr. Lazarus's truculent manner of a few minutes before.

"Lemme gerrup!" pleaded Mr. Lazarus. "I'll—I'll go. I didn't mean to see the doctor, really! You believe vat I tell you? I'll go!"

"What you tinkee?" said Wun Lung cheerfully. "Me no tinkee you see doctol; me tinkee you great lascal—velly bad lascal. Me teachee you lesson. What you tinkee?"

"Lemme go, and—"

"Teachee lesson first. Bob Chelly, please open cupboard door."

Bob Cherry, grinning, opened the cupboard door. Inside the cupboard a large bag was disclosed, and a tar-pot. Bob stared at them, and then looked at Wun Lung.

The little Chinese nodded and grinned.

"Bling them out," he said. "Me bollow Gosling's tar-pot, givee Gosling tancee, and get feathels frow Mrs. Mimble. All leady fol Mr. Lazarus."

Bob Cherry chuckled, and dragged out the pot of half-congealed tar and the bag of feathers.



Mr. Lazarus's eyes opened wider.

"Mein gootness!" he ejaculated. "I vill have der law of you! You believe vat I tell you!"

"We'll risk that!" said Hazeldene, snapping his teeth. "You've done your worst, and you may as well pay the piper. If you didn't really mean to go to the Head, you've given me some weeks of the blues for nothing; and now you shall squirm for it!"

"Mein frients—"

"Shut up! Shall I lend you a hand, kid?"

"Shovee out the tar!"

And Hazeldene did. The other juniors looked on grinning. They did not feel inclined to help Mr. Lazarus. He had evidently been attempting to blackmail the Chinese and Hazeldene by threats of going to the Head, which he had no intention of carrying out. His visit to Greyfriars was only bluff. If he had gone into Dr. Locke's presence with a tale of having lent money at interest to boys in the Lower Fourth, his reception would have been a painful one, and he would certainly have left the school, with the porter's boot to help him out. It was not likely, therefore, that he would go so far. But he had given the weak-natured Hazeldene many sleepless nights by the mere threat.

Now the turn of his victim had come.

Hazeldene ladled out the tar with a liberal hand, dabbing it over the fat, oily countenance of Mr. Lazarus, who wriggled and squirmed and gasped under the infliction. But there was no escape for him. In a few minutes he was as black as the ace of spades, and then Hazeldene commenced operations upon his carefully-oiled locks. Mr. Lazarus must have been very proud of his hair, and must have spent a great deal of time over it, to judge by the quantity of oil he contrived to make it contain. But the scent of the oil was now quite drowned and obliterated by that of the tar. The greasy locks stuck together in bunches. Mr. Lazarus wriggled spasmodically, and began to say things not quite suitable for polite ears. But Hazeldene jammed the tar-brush into his mouth, and after that the moneylender was silent, save for a sort of volcanic muttering.

"Chuckee over the feathers!" said Wun Lung.

Bob Cherry grinned, and handed over the bag.

It was emptied upon Mr. Lazarus's head and face, and most of the feathers stuck to the tar. Hazeldene gave another dab or two of the brush, to make the work complete, and then the moneylender was allowed to rise.

He staggered to his feet, and Wun Lung politely opened the door of the study.

"You goee to the Head now," he said softly. "You goee if likee. What you tinkee?"

Mr. Lazarus mumbled. His eyes were burning with rage, but there was too much tar in his mouth for him to utter anything clearly. He was evidently saying something unpleasant, but what it was the juniors did not understand. The moneylender shook his fist furiously at the boys, and rushed from the room.

A yell of laughter followed him.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I rather think this will be the last visit of Mr. Lazarus to Greyfriars."

"The lastfulness of his esteemed visit will be terrific, my worthy chum."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They crowded out of the study to watch the flight of Mr. Lazarus. He had no intention of going to the Head, especially in his present state. He made a break for the Close, and, as luck would have it, he met Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, on the steps.

Mr. Quelch halted, thunderstruck.

"What—what—what is this?"

Mr. Lazarus tried to dodge him, but the Form-master stood in the way.

"Stop! Who—what are you?"

"Ach! I vill have der law of you!"

"But—but what—"

Mr. Lazarus dodged the Form-master, who did not feel inclined to touch him in the state he was, and rushed across the Close.

There was a shouting on all sides.

The sight of a man smothered with tar and feathers was not a common one, naturally, in the Close at Greyfriars, and it attracted attention.

A crowd of fags followed at Mr. Lazarus's heels as he made a break for the gates.

As it happened, Gosling had just closed the gates, and Mr. Lazarus was compelled to halt there. The porter stared at him blankly.

"Well, my heye!" he ejaculated. "My heye! What a life!"

"Let me out!" shrieked Mr. Lazarus. "I'll have der law of you! You believe vat I tell you? I'll have der law!"

"My heye! Wot I says is this 'ere, who are you? What do you mean by it?"

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

"Let me out!" shouted Mr. Lazarus, rushing up to the amazed porter and brandishing a clenched fist in his face. "Let me out, ain't it!"

"My heye!"

The next moment Gosling clapped his hand to his eye, for the enraged Mr. Lazarus had smitten him there. He staggered back against the gate.

"My heye! Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Vill you let me out?" yelled Lazarus.

"Which I'll chuck you out!" gasped Gosling, laying violent hands upon the moneylender. "Hout you go!"

He yanked Mr. Lazarus towards the gates. The excited moneylender struggled with him, and in the struggle half the tar and feathers came off, and transferred themselves to the porter's person. The crowd that was gathering round them simply shrieked.

"Go it, Gossy!" shouted Bulstrode. "Go it! Shall I open the gate?"

"Yes, please, Master Bulstrode."

Bulstrode dragged the gate open. Gosling made a big effort, and sent the moneylender whirling through. Mr. Lazarus rolled over and over in the dust, before he finally came to a stoppage on the other side of the road.

When he sat up there, he was as dusty as he was tarry and feathery. He blinked feebly at the enraged Gosling, who was shaking his fist at him from the gate.

"I'll have der law of you! You believe vat I tell you?" he mumbled.

"You kim back!" roared Gosling, digging the tar out of his eyes with one set of knuckles, and brandishing the other at Mr. Lazarus. "You kim back, that's all. Wot I says is this 'ero, you kim back, and I'll pulverise you!"

Mr. Lazarus did not come back. He picked himself up, and drifted down the road, still feebly muttering that he would have "der law" of somebody.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Furniture Removing.

MR. QUELCH entered the School House with a stern expression upon his face. In spite of the tar and feathers, he thought he knew Mr. Lazarus. He signed to Wharton to follow him to his study. Hazeldene had remained out of sight, his heart quaking at a distant glimpse of the Form-master, which revived all his old fears.

"I suppose you know what this means, Wharton?" said the Remove-master. "I ask you as the head boy in the Form."

"Yes, sir," said Harry quietly.

"That man was Mr. Lazarus, of Friardale, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then will you explain his presence here?"

"Certainly, sir. We bought some furniture of him after the fire at Greyfriars, when the Remove studies were burnt down. One of the fellows had some stuff on the hire-purchase system from him, and got behind with the payments. Then Mr. Lazarus came down on him. The fellow is willing to send all the stuff back, and lose what he has paid, but Mr. Lazarus won't take that. I hope you don't want me to mention names, sir. Mr. Lazarus came here to scare the fellow I've mentioned, and to extort money from him—and another chap. Under the circumstances, I thought the tarring and feathering was about the proper caper—I mean justifiable under the circumstances, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled slightly.

"I must say it was somewhat drastic," he said. "It was foolish to have any dealings with such a man. You owe him nothing yourself, Wharton?"

"Nothing, sir."

"H'm! Send the boy you have mentioned to me. You may tell him he has nothing to fear if the case is as you have put it. But the matter must be cleared up."

"Very well, sir."

Wharton left the study. He found Hazeldene in Wun Lung's room, looking very uneasy. Hazeldene looked up nervously as Wharton came in.

"Well," he said, "what does Quelch say?"

Harry explained, and the other turned pale.

"You—you shouldn't have mentioned—"

Wharton's brows contracted a little.

"I had to give him some explanation," he said. "If I had refused to speak, he would have got the story from Mr. Lazarus, and a blacker one. But I thought it best for you, too. You have acted like a fool, and I should have advised you all along that the best thing to do was to own up and tell Mr. Quelch about it. You've been frightened by a shadow all this time."

# ANSWERS



Hazeldene's lip quivered. "I suppose you're right." "Mr. Quelch says you've nothing to fear if it's a straightforward matter; but look here, Hazeldene, don't tell him any lies," said Wharton bluntly. "Tell him the plain truth, and it will be all right. If you start making excuses and fibbing, it will be all wrong."

Hazeldene bit his lip. "I'll take your advice," he said. And he went to Mr. Quelch's study. He was there for ten minutes, but when he came out his face was very changed. He looked like one from whose mind a heavy weight had been lifted. The Famous Four were awaiting him in the passage, and he came up to them beamingly.

"It's all right," he said. "Good!" said Wharton, with much satisfaction. "I thought it would be." "Quelch talked to me pretty straight," said Hazeldene, colouring a little, "but he says I'm not to pay Lazarus any more money, and I'm to send the things back. He says the money I've lost will be a lesson to me. I don't care; it's good enough to get out of that rascal's clutches. The sticks will have to be sent back somehow."

Bob Cherry chuckled. "We can manage that," he said. "They'll all go into Gosling's trap, if he'll lend it to us. You get a pass from Wingate, Harry, and I'll get the trap from Gosling. It will cost a couple of bob, but it will be worth it to see Lazarus's face when we bring his things back, if we can see it through the tar."

"The worthfulness will be great." "Right-ho!" said Harry. "Cut along!" Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, gave the pass willingly enough, and Gosling—persuaded by the tip—was equally obliging. The Removites had a suspicion that the way they intended to return Mr. Lazarus his property might not find favour in the eyes of authority, and the trap was brought round to the side door, which the juniors were able to reach by means of the back staircase. Gosling's pony was a little restive in the hands of Bob Cherry, but when Nugent offered to take charge of him, he received only an ungrateful glare from Bob.

"Perhaps you think you can drive better than I can?" suggested Bob aggressively.

"I don't think," said Nugent, "I know." "Look here, you carry down the furniture. That's about your mark, and don't start teaching your elders."

So Bob remained in the trap, minding the pony, while the rest of the juniors set to work to get the furniture down. Hazeldene shared his study with Bulstrode, and as the juniors set to work, Bulstrode came in, and looked surprised. He turned his gaze inquiringly and aggressively upon Harry Wharton, who was shifting out Hazeldene's bookcase from the wall.

"What the dickens are you doing?" he demanded. "Shifting furniture."

"It's all right, Bulstrode," said Hazeldene. "I'm sending Lazarus his things back. It's only my stuff that's going."

Bulstrode grunted. "Nice state the study will be in, then!" he said. "Ripping up the carpet, too, are you! Nice state of affairs!"

"Mr. Quelch says the things are to go back," said Harry mildly.

"Oh, all right—jolly good thing, too—sheeny rubbish, all of it," said Bulstrode. "Here, let's lend you a hand with that bookcase."

"Thank you!" Wharton accepted the offer rather suspiciously, but Bulstrode was in a good temper, apparently, for he really helped, instead of pushing the things over as the juniors half expected. It was not an easy task to get the bookcase downstairs, but the other things went easily enough. The table, in fact, went too easily—slipping from the juniors' grasp, and bounding and rebounding down the stairs with a succession of fearful crashes. It arrived at the bottom minus a couple of legs, but the legs were duly placed in the trap. When the whole of the furniture had been removed, the trap was pretty full.

Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took their seats in it on the furniture, and Harry sat beside Bob Cherry in front. Bob shook out the reins, and the pony started.

"You'd better let me drive, Cherry," called out Bulstrode. "I wouldn't mind."

"Go and eat coke," said Bob Cherry politely. And he drove off.

The pony was certainly frisky. Bob Cherry drove out by the tradesman's entrance, to avoid attracting attention, but he had to drive past the gates of Greyfriars to get to the village. Gosling's bulldog barked through the gates, and the pony reared.

"Look out!" gasped Nugent, shaking among the furniture. "We shall all be down in a minute."

"Hold on, then!" grunted Bob. "Ass! Keep that beast quiet!"

"Rats!"

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK: "THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

"You'd better let me drive." "Rubbish!" The pony frisked down the lane. Bob Cherry kept a tight hand on the reins, and a disaster was avoided by a series of wonderfully narrow escapes. It was not a long drive, but at least a dozen close shaves were experienced. The trap entered the High Street of Friardale, and the villagers collected from near and far to look on at the unusual sight of furniture-removing by a party of juniors from Greyfriars.

Near Mr. Lazarus's shop the road was very rugged, and the trap jolted ominously.

Bob Cherry pulled at the reins and murmured things to Gosling's pony.

Mr. Lazarus was just inside his shop. He had cleaned off most of the tar and feathers, and was looking very red and newly-washed, but traces of the tar still clung lovingly to his ears and his hair.

He stared at the sight of the juniors and the furniture in the trap.

"Mein gootness!" he murmured. Wharton jumped down.

"Good-evening, Mr. Lazarus! We've brought your things back."

"I'll have der law of you," said Mr. Lazarus venomously. "You believe vat I tells you. I'll have der law!"

Harry Wharton laughed lightly. "If you begin any more nonsense, you'll have to deal with a Form-master instead of a frightened kid," he said. "You'd better keep off the grass. Here's your stuff, if you want it. You can keep the money Hazeldene's paid you."

Mr. Lazarus grinned slightly. It was not likely that any money paid to him could ever be extracted from him again, in any case.

"Will you take the stuff in, or shall we dump it down?" asked Wharton. "For goodness' sake, Bob, keep that pony quiet, or the whole shoot will be over."

"How can I—keep—the—beast—quiet—when—he—won't—be—quiet!" gasped Bob Cherry, staccato.

"I'll take him if you like," said Nugent, getting down off the furniture.

Bob Cherry snorted. "Look out!" shouted Wharton.

But it was too late. Perhaps Bob Cherry had dragged a little too hard upon the reins, or perhaps the pony had realised that he was not under a master-hand. He had suddenly taken it into his head to bolt. Bolting ponies do not stop to think, and Gosling's pony was blissfully unconscious of the perils of bolting with a little trap behind piled high with insecure furniture.

The trap gave a great lurch as Bob Cherry dragged the pony back, and there was a reeling and a crashing of the load of furniture.

Crash, crash!

Hurree Singh fortunately managed to jump clear. The bookcase and the table and the chairs and the roll of carpet followed him down. Mr. Lazarus's furniture was made to sell, not to wear; and even well-made furniture would hardly have stood this sort of thing. There had been about twenty pieces of furniture when they were piled in the trap. There were at least a hundred pieces when they were all on the ground.

"My hat!" gasped Nugent. "I say, Bob, you're breaking up the happy home."

"How can I help it?" gasped Bob, dragging the obstinate pony to a stop at last. "I can drive first-rate—"

"Ha, ha, ha! It looks like it!"

"Except when some cackling ass puts me off my form. Besides, the pony was frightened."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! Mein furniture! Mein gootness! Mein furniture!"

"It does look rather wrecked, and that's a fact," said Harry, looking at the stuff spread over the road. "But you should have sent for it yourself, you know. You had plenty of opportunities after Hazeldene said you could take it back. As it is, you've had it removed free."

"Mein furniture! Mein gootness! Mein furniture!"

"Besides, Hazeldene has paid you more than the lot was worth," said Nugent consolingly. "If it's busted now, it will save you from swindling somebody else with it, and that ought to be a consolation to you."

Mr. Lazarus did not seem consoled.

"Well, it's saved us the trouble of unloading," said Nugent. "Do you think you can manage the drive home, Bob, or shall I take the reins?"

"You'd jolly well better not try," said Bob Cherry. "The pony's as quiet as a lamb, it was Lazarus's face that frightened him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"Ach! Mein gootness! Mein furniture!"

"You shouldn't frighten the horse, then," said Bob Cherry. "What can you expect, if you scare a pony? When there's a frisky pony about, you ought to wear a mask, or a fire-screen, or something. Get in, you chaps, and let's get off."

They got into the trap, and Bob Cherry drove home. Perhaps the pony had worked off his high spirits in overturning the furniture; at all events, he was much quieter on the homeward way, and was as meek as a lamb when Bob Cherry handed him over to Gosling at Greyfriars.

### THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

#### The Greyfriars Merchant Does Not Prosper.

"I SAY, Ionides—excuse me, you know—"

Billy Bunter looked cautiously into the study of Ionides of the Sixth. The Greek was sitting before his window, leaning back in a luxurious chair, with his feet upon a velvet footstool. Everything in Ionides's study spoke of luxury and wealth. The Sixth-Former was the son of a wealthy Greek merchant, and his allowance of pocket-money was of a size that made even rich fellows at Greyfriars open their eyes. He was ostentatious with it, too, a dandy in dress, and thoroughly effeminate in his tastes; so that there was a great deal more contempt than liking for him in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars. Yet Ionides had his good points in his way; he could be generous, at all events, to those who flattered him sufficiently; and at Greyfriars, as everywhere else, there were sycophants.

To Billy Bunter's mind, Ionides was just the fellow to purchase some of the wonderful bargains supplied by the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. Bunter's taste in jewellery was not exactly that of an artist, and to his eyes the big sham-gold watchchain was a work of art. He had been looking for Ionides for some time, and he had seen the Greek senior come in with Carberry, and followed him to his study.

Ionides turned his head a little and glanced at the fat junior.

"What do you want?"

"I—I want to speak to you, my lord," said Bunter. "Excuse me calling you my lord, but I've heard from the fellows that you are a lord in your native land, and I can't help thinking it's true."

The senior's face softened somewhat. His vanity was excessive; he could take in flattery as a gudgeon takes in bait, and even such crude chunks of flattery as Billy Bunter administered were acceptable to him.

"You are right!" he exclaimed. "I am of one of the oldest families in Greece; my ancestors fought with Leonidas at Thermopylae."

"Did they really?" asked Billy Bunter, who had very hazy notions of that brilliant period of Greek history. "What was the row about? I suppose Leonidas was an awful rotter, and I hoped they licked him."

Ionides sniffed.

"Fool! I mean they were in the army of Leonidas, against the Persians," he said. "But how should you understand, with your dull English brain."

"Of course not," said Bunter readily. Bunter would have sold his patriotism for a mess of pottage any day. "You're quite right, you know. I don't believe in all this talk about you aliens. Not all of you, at all events. I don't see why you should stay at home if your countries aren't fit to live in."

Somehow, this tactful remark did not seem to please Ionides. He sniffed again. Bunter went on in the same strain of gentle flattery.

"We're all awfully glad to have some of you aliens here, Ionides. Some of the fellows say you're a bully and a beast, and a silly ass, and so on. They're always making jokes about your using face-wash and darkening your eyebrows, and putting your hair in curling-pins of a night. But I don't see why you shouldn't if you want to—Ow-wow!"

Billy Bunter broke off suddenly as a heavy volume, hurled by Ionides, caught him on the chest.

He was fairly bowled over, and he sat down upon the carpet with a bump that shook the study. It was a thick Turkish carpet, but Bunter was hurt all the same. He sat there gasping, and blinking at the angry Greek through his big spectacles.

"Ow—wow! Yow! What did you do that for, you beast?"

"Get out of my study!"

"But—but I—Ow!" Bunter staggered to his feet. "I—I came to speak to you on an important matter, Ionides."

"If you have a message, deliver it, and go!" exclaimed the Greek, with a wave of his hand, which made three or four valuable rings flash in the light.

"It isn't exactly a message," stammered Bunter, feeling

that he had started very badly, though he had intended to be very tactful and flattering. "It's—it's about some things I want to show you, my lord. If your lordship would condescend to look at them—"

"What are you chattering about?"

"I thought you might like to buy this ripping gold watch-chain," said Bunter, producing it. "It's splendid workmanship, sixty-eight carat gold—"

"You young fool!"

"I—I mean fifty-two carat gold," stammered Bunter. "Wonderful value for the money. How much did you give for that watchchain, Ionides?"

"Twelve guineas," said the Greek boastfully.

"My hat! What a feed you could have stood for a lot of money like that!" exclaimed Bunter, aghast. "However, you can have this watchchain at a big bargain, for two guineas. That isn't much to you, and you can keep that one you have now for second-best, you know."

The Greek rose to his feet, and looked at the chain and then at Bunter. His own chain was a very handsome and tasteful one, and the chain Bunter was holding up for him to view was hideous and vulgar in design, and of a colour that proclaimed its sham nature at a dozen yards' distance.

"Jolly good, isn't it?" said Bunter, putting the chain into the Greek's outstretched hand. "Of course, it isn't solid. But it's thirty-six carat gold case, you know, and looks even better than the solid article, owing to the superior workmanship."

Ionides took the chain, and looked at it, and then looked towards his fire. The Greek always had the luxury of a fire in the evening, and his grate looked very handsome and bright with a brass curb and fireirons, which lavish tips induced the maids to keep as clean as new pennies.

"Haven't you anything more to show me?" asked Ionides, in a tone that would have warned anybody but Bunter that he meant mischief.

But Billy Bunter was too occupied with his own thoughts to notice anything. He thought he had found a customer, and he was beaming with satisfaction.

"Yes, rather, my lord!" said Bunter. "What do you think of this handsome, solid silver-mounted cigarette-case, in real Morocco leather, from our own factories at Tangier—I mean the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.'s own factories at Tangier? Fastens with a catch, first quality, and holds ten cigarettes, and slips into the pocket like—like anything. How do you like it? Take it and look at it. Our goods will bear the closest inspection."

"Anything more?"

"Yes; here's a silver pocket pencil, solid silver lead—I—I mean solid silver case, first-class black lead, made in England—none of your beastly foreign stuff about it—writes like—like anything. Look at it."

"Anything more?"

"Certainly. Here's a handsome dog-whip, real whistle, and lash on it, silver-mounted in first-class style. You can have it for ten-and-six."

"Good!"

Ionides stepped over to the fire, and thrust the four articles he held deep into the red cinders, and proceeded to stir the fire over them with the poker.

Billy Bunter gazed at him for a moment spell-bound.

He could hardly realise what was happening.

But as the valuable dog-whip and the priceless cigarette-case flared up and crackled in the fire, he made a wild rush forward to save them.

"Oh, really Ionides! I say, you beast, I—"

The Greek gasped him by the shoulder, and held him back with a hand of iron.

"So much for your impertinence!" he said. "I suppose it is a great joke to bring this rubbish here and try to sell it to me. So much for it! Now get out of my study, before I throw you out!"

Bunter blinked dazedly at the fire that had consumed his treasures.

"You—you're going to pay for them!" he gasped.

Ionides laughed mockingly.

"Get out, you young fool!"

"Look here, you can have the four for fifteen bob—"

"Get out!"

"Six bob, then," wailed Billy Bunter. "I shall have to send six bob for them myself to the Imperialist Fair Trading Co., or they'll summons me. Six bob!"

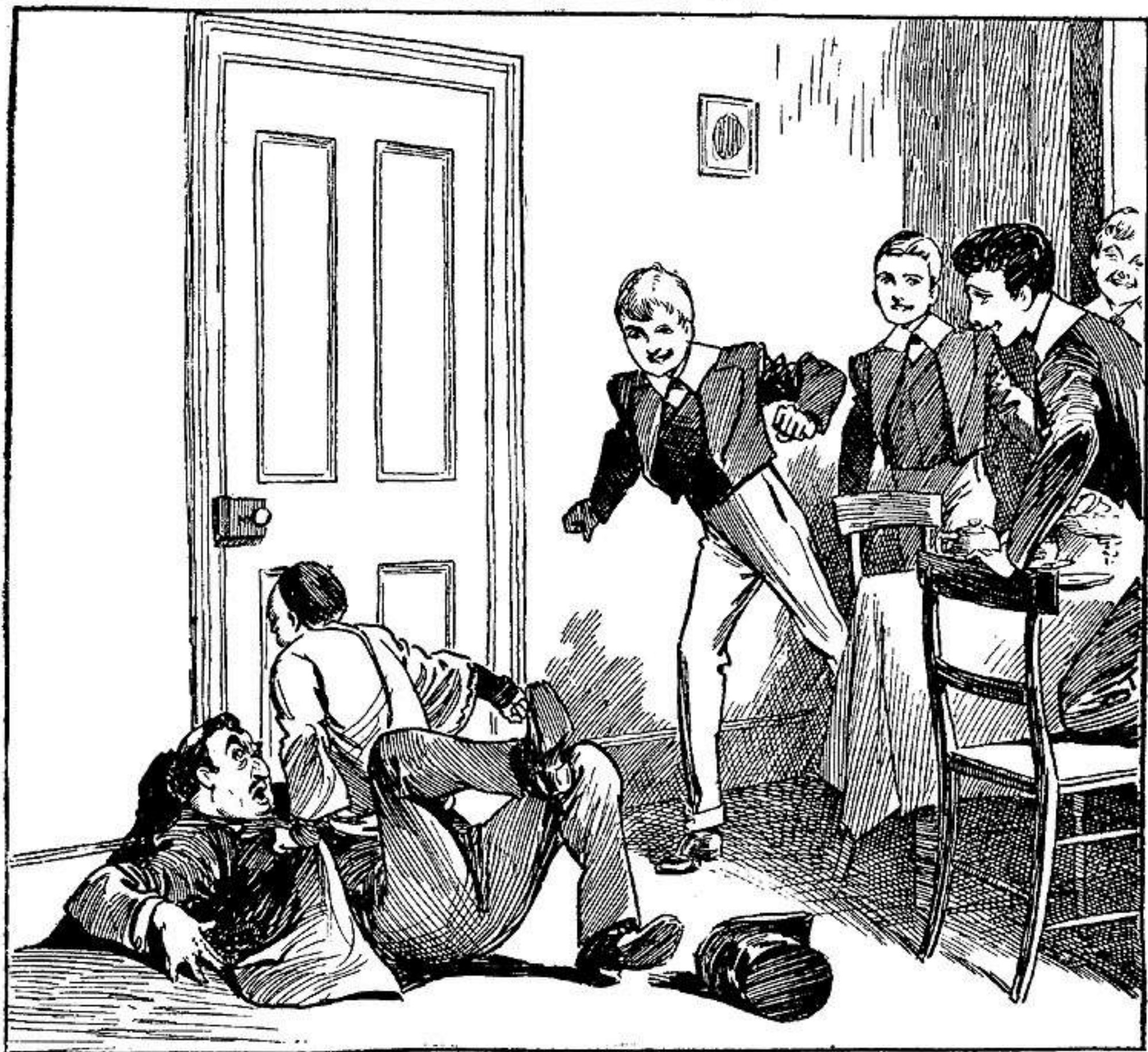
Ionides lifted him towards the door, and dropped him in the passage. Then he laughed, and shut the door.

The next moment it was opened again, and Billy Bunter looked in cautiously.

"I say, Ionides, I shall really have to send five bob to the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. for those things. You might make it five—"

The Greek rushed towards him threateningly, and Billy





Wun Lung seemed to curl round the moneylender like a caterpillar round a stem, and in a twinkling Mr. Lazarus was on his back on the study carpet.

Bunter fled. Ionides ran into the passage after him and delivered a flying kick, and Bunter gave a yell as he rolled over on the linoleum. He did not follow Ionides into his study again. Somewhat sore, and utterly dismayed, he went off in search of sympathy from Harry Wharton & Co. But he received very little.

"Ionides acted like a mean cad, but it serves you right," said Harry. "You shouldn't try to sell that rubbish to people. Besides, I've no doubt you were asking him more than you were entitled to."

"The morefulness was probably terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"But—but I've got to send five bob for the things to the Fair Trading Co.," said Bunter tearfully.

"Send back the rest of the articles, and explain that you've had an accident with these," said Harry. "They had no business to send them to you, and the risk was theirs. Have done with the matter at once."

"Good! I can write and say I've had an accident with the lot, then, and keep the other six," said Bunter meditatively. "Ow! Leggo my car!"

"You young rascal!" said Wharton savagely. "Do you know that what you are proposing would be stealing—the same as if you took a watch out of somebody's pocket?"

"Ow! Leggo! Why, you advised me to do it, yourself; Inky heard you."

"Oh, it's not safe to speak to you at all!" said Harry disgustedly. "I said you should explain that four of the

articles had been destroyed through no fault of yours. They ought to stand the loss. But to keep the rest——"

"I say, Wharton——"

"Shut up! To keep the rest would be stealing; and to sell them to fellows for more than they are worth would be little better than stealing, too."

"I say, Wharton, it's not very nice of you to advise me to do dishonest things——"

"What!" roared Wharton.

"Of course, I sha'n't mention it, but between ourselves, I think you might be a bit more careful about the advice you give to a chap younger than yourself. If I wasn't so jolly strict in my notions, I shouldn't wonder if you induced me to do things I might be sorry for afterwards."

And Billy Bunter walked away, leaving Wharton absolutely speechless.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. The Parting Guests.

"THE girls are going!" That news brought the whole Remove out into the Close.

Three large brakes were drawn up before the house, one of them piled with luggage, and the other two ready to receive the Cliff House girls.

There was real regret on both sides at the parting.

The stay of the Cliff House party at Greyfriars had been



short, but it had been exciting in some respects, and had been pleasant enough. The Famous Four bade farewell to Marjorie & Co. with great regret. But the prospect of the garden-party at Cliff House on the following day was a consolation.

"It's all right about your brother," Harry said in a low tone to Marjorie, as he shook hands with her. "He's right out of that."

"Yes, Hazel told me," said Marjorie. "I knew you would be able to help him; and I am so glad he is out of the clutches of that wicked man."

"Well, it wasn't I, really. We all had a hand in it, Wun Lung most of all," said Harry, smiling. "I don't think Mr. Lazarus will bother Hazeldene or any of us again. I wish I had known about it sooner. But all's well that ends well. Let me help you in. I shall see you to-morrow afternoon."

"Yes. I am glad."

"I—I say, Marjorie! Shut up a minute, Wharton, and let me speak. I say, before you go, do you think you'd like a real bargain in lace-edged handkerchiefs—"

"No, thank you, Bunter," said Marjorie, laughing.

"What do you say to a silver thimble, real hall-marked, and—Ow!"

Bob Cherry inserted his knuckles into the back of Bunter's neck, and jerked the fat junior away.

"You buzz off!" he said curtly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Scat!" roared Bob Cherry, in so formidable a tone that the merchant of the Remove promptly "scatted."

The girls were in the brakes, and Miss Locke had come out to take her place. Harry Wharton was on the step of the brake, still speaking to Marjorie and Clara, when Bulstrode came forward. There was a half-sulky expression upon Bulstrode's face, an expression that Wharton could not quite understand.

"I want to speak to Miss Hazeldene," said Bulstrode brusquely.

"What is it?" said Marjorie quietly.

"If Wharton will give me a chance to speak—"

Harry stepped aside, compressing his lips.

"It's about that night you broke bounds," said Bulstrode, in a low voice, which was only audible to Marjorie, Clara, and Harry Wharton. "You know the window was fastened while you were out."

"Yes," said Marjorie wonderingly.

"Well, it was I who fastened it."

An exclamation broke from Wharton. Marjorie looked at the burly Removeite in wonder. Miss Clara uttered a single word:

"Cad!"

Bulstrode flushed crimson.

"It was caddish," he said. "I know it was. I was wild about the trick you had served me in the box-room, and I thought I'd get my own back. I know it was caddish, and—and I'm sorry."

"It is all right," said Marjorie gently. "Don't trouble about it. It was a cruel thing to do, but if you are sorry—"

"I am sorry."

"Then it is all right."

Marjorie held out her hand frankly, and Bulstrode flushed again as he took it. He stood cap in hand as the brake drove off.

Most of the Remove followed the brakes to the gates, and sent a final cheer down the dusky road after their departing visitors. As Harry Wharton turned in again, after the vehicles had disappeared, he almost ran into Bulstrode. The Remove bully gave him a very unpleasant look, and stopped.

"You heard what I said to Marjorie Hazeldene?" he said, in a challenging tone.

"Yes," said Harry quietly.

"You know it was I who shut you and Marjorie out the other night?"

"I know now. I guessed then."

"Well, and what are you going to do about it?"

Bulstrode's tone was aggressive, not to say bullying. He seemed to have owned up to Marjorie and apologized by some great mental effort, and now to want to indemnify himself for it by quarrelling with Wharton. But the captain of the Remove did not want trouble with Bulstrode then.

"I am going to do nothing," he said. "I am glad you were decent enough to own up, that's all."

"Thank you for nothing. I was not looking for your praises, and I don't value them," said Bulstrode.

"Then I have nothing more to say."

"You don't want the gloves on in the gym.—eh?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"What do you mean? I have licked you once, Bulstrode, THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

and I could do it again. If you want a fight, you've only got to say so."

"Oh, I don't, particularly!" said Bulstrode, with a sneer. "As you so modestly put it, you have licked me before and could do it again, and I imagined you would want to, after what I said just now."

"Well, I don't want to. As a matter of fact, I find you're not such a cad as I thought you, and I'm glad of it."

And Wharton moved aside and walked on, leaving Bulstrode with a clouded face. It was some minutes before the burly Removeite walked towards the house. As he came into the light from the windows, a fat figure with glimmering spectacles loomed up.

"I say, Ogilvy—"

"What do you want?" snapped Bulstrode savagely.

"Oh, is it you, Bulstrode? Look here, would you care to have this splendid nickel-plated penknife, two blades, at a bargain? I can let you have it for ten-and-six—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"It's a big bargain—a really ripping penknife, will cut anything—and you can have it for eight shillings."

"Get out of my way!"

"Suppose we say six shillings, then? Look here, I want you to have this penknife, because you just need it. You ought to have a penknife like this. You can have it for four-and-six."

Bulstrode stretched out his hand, and jerked the penknife away from Bunter.

"Yes, you can have it to look at, rather! Oh! What on earth—"

Bulstrode, with a twist of his arm, sent the penknife flying into the darkness of the Close. Bunter gave a gasp.

"Now you can go and look for it, confound you!" said Bulstrode savagely.

And he walked into the House, leaving Billy Bunter blinking with dismay.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### A Good Time Coming.

THE next morning Harry Wharton, when he came out of the Remove Form-room after lessons, found a letter for him in the rack, addressed in Marjorie Hazeldene's well-known handwriting. His chums gathered round him as he opened it. They knew that handwriting, too, and they wondered what Miss Hazeldene could have written about so soon after leaving Greyfriars. No doubt the letter referred to the garden-party of the coming afternoon.

Wharton smiled as he read it.

"Well?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Well, what's the news?"

"It's about the party at Cliff House," said Harry. "Listen, and I'll read it out. Do you remember a chap named D'Arcy whom we met when we went to St. Jim's for the cricket match?"

The Removeites grinned.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Nugent, imitating with great fidelity the accent of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, he isn't a chap one could forget in a hurry," he said. "Decent chap, too. I liked him. Well, Marjorie met his cousin, Ethel Cleveland, at St. Jim's, and struck up a friendship with her, and Cousin Ethel's coming to the garden-party this afternoon, and D'Arcy is bringing her."

"Good!"

Harry read out the letter. It was a brief one, informing him that Miss Penelope Primrose had made arrangements with the Head of Greyfriars for the whole Remove to come to the garden-party that afternoon, and that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his cousin would be there. The Removeites were always pleased to meet a fellow from St. Jim's, and they were glad to hear it.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, get off the earth, Bunter! Don't bother!"

"Look here, you fellows, did I hear you say that that chap D'Arcy was to be at the garden-party?"

"Yes, porpoise."

"Good!" said Bunter. "I only wanted to know."

And he was walking away, with a satisfied grin on his fat face, when Bob Cherry caught him by the shoulder and swung him back.

"What did you want to know for, porpoise?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I wish you wouldn't shake me like that! You'll make my glasses fall off, and then—"

"I'll knock your head off for two pins! Do you think I can't see through you, you fat young rascal? If you try to sell D'Arcy any of those swindling articles you've got, I'll knock you into tiny little pieces!"

Bunter grunted indignantly.

"Why shouldn't I sell him some if I want to? He may be looking for a pearl-handled, silver-mounted, first-class pen-

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knife, for all you know; or he may at this very moment be thinking of getting half a dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs to give to his cousin as a present. I don't see why I shouldn't give him a chance."

"You young rotter—"

"I wish you wouldn't call me names, Bob Cherry! I suppose you're jealous, as usual, because I'm going to get a camera from the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.—"

"Fathead!"

"The fatfulness of the honourable Bunter's esteemed head is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"I'm going to take a camera with me this afternoon," said Bunter, twisting out of Bob Cherry's clutches. "I want to get some practice ready for when I get that first-class, splendid-value camera from the Fair Trading Co. It stands to reason that the girls would like their photos taken, and I can get Ogilvy to develop them for me, as I haven't studied that part of the business yet. Of course, I can take photographs. You only have to press something, you know, and something happens inside the camera, and then it's done."

"Awfully simple!" said Harry, laughing.

"Yes, isn't it? I don't see why chaps plume themselves so much upon being able to take photos. I shall get a good set this afternoon. I haven't handled a camera myself, but I've seen Ogilvy use it. It's only a small one, not very expensive—nothing like the one I shall be getting shortly from the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. Still, it holds twelve plates, and it's very easy to work."

"Is Ogilvy going to lend you his camera?"

Bunter did not appear to hear the question. He went on very hurriedly:

"It will be a ripping wheeze to take the photos this afternoon. I can take 'em singly or in groups—Miss Primrose with her parrot, and D'Arcy standing with his cousin, and so on. You know what an awful bore a garden-party is, as a rule. The camera will fill up the time."

"You can take a camera if you like," said Bob Cherry, "but if you take any articles for sale, I'll squash you!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

Billy Bunter buzzed off, looking very injured.

"I'm blessed if I shall be able to stand that chap much longer!" said Bob Cherry. "He's always getting up to some cheap trick and making us look small. I know he's thinking of trying to plant some of that beastly sham jewellery and stuff on Gussy, from St. Jim's. He makes me sick!"

"The sickfulness is terrific!"

Bunter was grunting to himself as he walked away. He was dissatisfied, too.

"I'm blessed if I can stand those chaps!" he murmured.

"They grumble at having to let me have a small loan every now and then, though I always put it down carefully on the account; and yet they make a fuss if I try to raise a little money by selling big bargains at a reduced price, and really doing favours to all my friends. I say, Russell, do you want a penknife—"

He broke off, as he nearly ran into a junior in the doorway.

"I'm not Russell, and I don't want a penknife!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy, is it you? You're coming with me to the garden-party this afternoon, I suppose?"

The Scottish junior looked at him with considerable disfavour.

"I'm coming to the garden-party, certainly," he said.

"I'm not coming with you specially; we're all going!"

"Well, it was really through me that the Form got the invitation. I'm very popular with the girls, and— What are you kicking me for, you beast?"

"Sort of lesson," said Ogilvy cheerfully. "Have another?"

"N-n-no! Don't be a beast! As I was saying, will you lend me your camera this afternoon? I'm going to take some photographs at the garden-party."

"No, I won't!" said Ogilvy, with charming directness.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"You don't know how to use a camera."

"Well, I can learn, you know. As a matter of fact, I shall be getting a camera shortly, and I'd rather practise a bit before I get it. I've heard that you might ruin a new camera before you know where you are, if you haven't any previous knowledge of it."

"Well, you cool young beggar," said Ogilvy, in astonishment, "you're not going to ruin my camera for practice! Get off!"

He walked away, leaving Bunter looking sulky. The fat junior's eyes glimmered behind his big spectacles.

"Beast!" he murmured. "I'm jolly well going to borrow the camera, all the same! I know where he keeps it, and he won't like to kick up a row before Miss Primrose and the girls at Cliff House. Beast!"

The hour was drawing near for the juniors to be off, and there were many preparations made by the heroes of the Remove.

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT  
WEEK:

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" ONE HALFPENNY.  
LIBRARY.

The afternoon was very fine and warm and sunny—a perfect afternoon, and the prospect was a most enjoyable one.

The Famous Four looked very nobby indeed when they came downstairs, and even Billy Bunter had a nice clean collar on. He attached himself to the four chums, as usual, and Bob Cherry only gave a grunt.

Bunter carried a little packet in his hand, and as they went out into the Close to join the rest of the Remove, Bob Cherry noticed it. He took the junior's fat ear between a tight finger and thumb.

"What have you got there, porpoise?"

"Ow!" squealed Bunter.

"What have you got in your hand? Is it those rotten articles?" shouted Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry— Of course, it isn't; it's a camera!"

"Oh, that's all right, then!"

Bob Cherry released Bunter's ear, and Billy rubbed it ruefully. As a matter of fact, he had what were left of his precious "articles" in his pockets, and he meant to find a sale for them at Cliff House if possible, in spite of Bob Cherry.

"We're all ready," said Skinner. "Is that fat young rotter coming?"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Let's be off!" said Wharton.

And the Remove, followed by a good many envious glances, walked out of the gates, and down the road to where Cliff House stood fronting the North Sea.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER

### At Cliff House.

"HOW do I look, Marjorie?"

"Beautiful, my dear!"

"Do you think these red roses in my hat really suit me?"

"Yes, I do, really, dear!"

"Well, so do I," said Miss Clara, with another glance in the glass. "Really, I do think I look rather nice!"

"Yes, you do, indeed!"

"It's perfect weather," said Milly Brown, looking out of the window. "I think it is going to be such a lovely afternoon."

"Ripping!" said Miss Clara.

"Oh, Clara!"

"Oh, Clara!" mimicked that volatile young lady. "Really, Marjorie, you will make Ethel think I am slangy!"

Ethel Cleveland laughed.

"One picks up these dreadful expressions from boys," explained Clara. "Do you know, I nearly told Bunter I would give him a thick ear! I did, really—nearly, you know!"

And Ethel laughed again. She was somewhat graver herself, but she liked the lively Clara. Cousin Ethel had found many friends at Cliff House, and she was glad of the opportunity of paying them a visit. Her cousin D'Arcy had, of course, been only too delighted to bring her. If Cousin Ethel had asked him to take her to the North Pole on an aeroplane, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would have telegraphed to town for one immediately.

Arthur Augustus was sunning himself in the garden. He had arrived with his cousin some time before the Greyfriars party were expected. The swell of St. Jim's had halted beside a fountain, and was viewing his reflection in the clear water, and did not notice, in his preoccupation, that the girls were coming out of the house. Miss Clara made a sign of silence, and they looked on.

D'Arcy's reflection was really worth looking at. Dressing had been reduced to a fine art by the swell of St. Jim's, and his slim and elegant figure showed off his ripping attire to the best advantage. He was clad in the handsomest of summer clothes, of a light grey in tint, with a touch of green. He wore a white waistcoat, and a Panama hat—a real Panama, as the juniors of St. Jim's had told one another in rather awed tones, which had cost his noble governor sixteen guineas. But, as Gussy said, it was necessary for a fellow to be decently dressed.

"Bai Jove, I was afraid it would be so!" murmured D'Arcy, as he scanned his reflection. "This is what comes of dwessin' in a hawwy, and puttin' on the w'ong tie. I knew this tie would nevah set accuwately. It is a little bit cwooked."

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and looked anxiously at his reflection. The tie was, perhaps, a trifle crooked, though so slightly that only Arthur Augustus would ever have noticed it.

"Bai Jove! I can't let them see me like this," said D'Arcy, aloud. "I'll slip up to my woom again and put it stwaight. I shall have to untie it."



Then he paused.

"Pewwaps I shall meet some of the gals. No, I'll do it here—there's nobody in the garden."

a low ripple of irrepressible laughter fell upon his ears.

D'Arcy jumped, and looked round.

He whipped off the necktie, and was about to tie it again.

Half a dozen merry faces were looking at him; and the swell of St. Jim's stood transfixed, with the necktie in his hand.

"Bai Jove!"

"My goodness!" murmured Clara. "Pray excuse me. I—I couldn't help it—"

"It was I," said Ethel. "I laughed first."

Arthur Augustus, very pink in the face, raised his hat with one hand, holding the loose necktie in the other.

"Pway don't mind me, deah boys—I mean deah gals!" he said. "I see no weason for mewwiment, but pway don't mind me."

"Certainly not!" said Clara. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I gweatly wegwet that you should discovah me in such a widiculous posish," said Arthur Augustus; "as a mattah of fact, I am not weally finishin' my toilet in the garden, as you might suppose, but am just awwangin' my necktie, which was a little cwoked. It is wathah difficult to get it straight without a glass."

"Let me tie it for you," said Miss Clara.

"Bai Jove, Miss Twevlyn, that's awfully kind of you!"

Miss Clara took the necktie, and arranged it nicely.

Then she proceeded to tie it in a sort of sailor's knot.

D'Arcy looked at it in the fountain, and started.

"Bai Jove, that isn't the way to tie a necktie!"

"No? Shall I try again?"

"Yaas, wathah, if you don't mind."

Miss Clara tried again. This time she tied the necktie in a slip-knot and pulled it very tight. D'Arcy looked in the water again.

"Bai Jove!"

"Very nice now, isn't it?" said Miss Clara. "Don't you think it's nice, Marjorie?"

"Oh, Clara!"

"Weally, Miss Clawah, if you think it's nice I'll leave it like that," said Arthur Augustus unhappily.

"I think it's ripping—and so unique."

"Yaas, it's wathah unique," murmured D'Arcy, blinking at the reflection. "Bai Jove, you've tied it in a wotten knot, and it looks as if I were goin' to be hanged—bai Jove!"

"Did you speak?"

"Oh, nothin'!"

"My goodness; here's Miss Primrose and the boys!"

The girls had caught a glimpse of them through the shrubberies. It was too late for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to think of slipping away quietly and changing the necktie. Miss Clara had made it look, as he had remarked, like a hangman's knot, but there was no help for it now. And the glimmer of fun in the girl's eyes gave D'Arcy an uneasy suspicion that she knew she had not tied it correctly.

Miss Primrose, in a wonderful bonnet, received her guests in her old-fashioned stately way. Her kind old face was beaming; her heart was still young, and she liked to see young and happy faces round her. Her expression grew unconsciously, perhaps, a little less cordial at the sight of Bunter. She was beginning to know something of the fat junior from Greyfriars. But courtesy came before everything; she had invited the whole of the Remove, and Bunter had to come with the rest. Bulstrode, too, was perhaps not a welcome guest. But Bulstrode seemed to be on his best behaviour this afternoon. He was very quiet and subdued in his manner, and had no unpleasant things to say to anybody, which was quite a change for Bulstrode.

Billy Bunter was blinking round in search of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he "froze" to the swell of St. Jim's as soon as he saw him. D'Arcy was always polite, and though he did not particularly fancy Bunter's company, he did not seek to avoid him.

"I suppose you remember me," said Bunter agreeably.

"It's an awfully great pleasure to meet you again, D'Arcy. I remember you made a jolly big score in that cricket match against us at St. Jim's."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the fat face.

"You've wathah a bad memory, Buntah. I had a duck's egg in the first innings, and only scored four in the second."

"Yes—er—that's what I meant to say," said Bunter. "I say, D'Arcy, would you like a ripping, pearl-handled, silver-mounted penknife; finest Sheffield steel blade, cuts like anything, folds up when you close it, and can be carried in any pocket?"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Just look at it," said Bunter hurriedly, fishing the penknife out of his waistcoat pocket. "It's the chance of a lifetime."

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT WEEK:

"THE BARRING OF BULSTRODE."

They were somewhat apart from the others, in the shrubbery. Arthur Augustus gingerly took the penknife in his hands. He didn't want to accept a present from Bunter, yet he was chary about hurting anybody's feelings by a refusal. As for buying the penknife, it never even occurred to his mind that Bunter was trying to sell it.

"Ripping knife, ain't it?" said Bunter.

D'Arcy looked at it. It had an imitation pearl-handle, and the blade might have been of a sort of steel, but it certainly wasn't made in Sheffield. No Sheffielder could have turned out so absolutely rotten a blade. The penknife was worth, perhaps, sixpence, if it was worth anything. Arthur Augustus turned it over in his fingers.

"Lovely, ain't it?" said Bunter enthusiastically. "I wish you'd have it. It's just the penknife you're looking for."

"Weally, Buntah—"

"You'd better have it, D'Arcy—it's just the thing you want."

"Vewy well," said Arthur Augustus, "as you're so pwessin', I'll take it. Thank you very much, deah boy." And he slipped the penknife into his pocket.

Bunter's eyes glimmered with satisfaction. Here was a customer at last—and one who had not even inquired the price!

"Wait a minute, D'Arcy—"

"Pway excuse me, deah boy. I want to join the ladies."

"Yes, but wait a moment. I don't see you very often, you know, and I should like to show you some things. Would you care for half a dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs—twenty-two carat lace—I mean real Valongseong lace—ripping things, I can tell you? Just look at them!"

"Weally Buntah—"

"Better have them while you've got the chance. They'll do for a birthday present to some lady," urged Bunter.

"Vewy well, if you insist," said D'Arcy, putting the handkerchiefs into the inside pocket of his lounge jacket. "And now—"

"Another minute! Just look at this fountain-pen—the latest thing in fountain-pens, you know. How do you like it?"

"Wippin', deah boy; but—"

"It's yours."

"But weally you are vewy genewous—"

"The fact is, I mean to be generous," said Bunter. "Put it in your pocket."

"Oh, vewy well! Thank you, vewy well! You are vewy good, and I shall attach gweat value to these little pwesents," said D'Arcy, "and now I must weally wejoin the ladies."

And he walked away.

He left Billy Bunter rooted to the spot, staring after him with blinking eyes, and gasping like a fish out of water.

"Presents!" muttered Bunter. "Presents! Is he off his rocker? The ass! Presents! He owes me fifteen shillings for that little lot, and he's jolly well got to pay it! Presents! I'll give him presents!"

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### A Good Time.

THERE was no doubt that the garden-party at Cliff House was a success. Except for Bunter, the Removites from Greyfriars were models in their conduct; and even Billy was not so bad as usual. The Famous Four had impressed upon him with such blood-curdling threats what they would do if he worked off any ventriloquism, that the fat junior did not venture to play any tricks of that sort. As for the camera, Miss Primrose had welcomed cordially the suggestion that photographs should be taken before tea. There was to be tea on the lawn, and Miss Wilhelmina Limburger had confided to Bunter some particulars that made the fat junior extremely anxious for tea-time to arrive. But before tea, while the light was still quite good, the photographs were to be taken. Bunter arranged it with Miss Primrose without consulting Wharton, and mentioned it to the chums of Study No. 1 afterwards. Bob Cherry only grunted.

"You'll make a muck of it," he said.

"I'm sincerely sorry to see you jealous again, Cherry, of my wonderful abilities as a photographer. You run down everything I do."

"Because everything you do is such a rotten failure," said Bob. "You don't even know how to handle a camera."

"It's easy enough. I've watched Ogilvy doing it. You focus it, and then you press this little handle here. That makes the plate flop down, and leaves another plate in its place."

"H'm! Sure the plates are in there?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Phew! I never thought of that. I believe Ogilvy always keeps it loaded, in case he wants it suddenly. But I can soon see."



"Wharton, deah boy," called out Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "if you're disengaged at the pwsent moment, you're wanted for cwoquet."

"Certainly," said Harry.

The chums of the Remove turned away. Bunter was examining the camera. He was rather in doubt about how to open it. He discovered at last that it opened at the back, and he succeeded in getting it open, and then he counted up the plates with which it was loaded. There were twelve plates in the slides, all ready for use. The fat junior closed the camera again with a satisfied look.

"That's all right," he said, "there's twelve, and I can take twelve ripping photos. Ogilvy won't mind my borrowing his camera when he sees the ripping positives I shall get."

Bunter meant negatives, but he was still rather hazy about photography. He was ready to begin operations with the camera, but the others were not ready. While the boys and the girls were enjoying themselves in their various ways, Bunter filled in the time by looking out for fresh customers for the remaining articles belonging to the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. He had not yet had an opportunity of nailing D'Arcy again, but he was waiting for it.

Croquet and tennis had no attractions for Billy Bunter. He had an eye to business. He discovered Miss Clara at leisure, with a racket in her hand, and he came up to her with his most ingratiating smile.

"I say, Miss Clara, would you care to see a ripping little purse?"

"No, thank you."

"It's made of real Persia leather, from our own factories—I mean the Imperialist Fair Trading Co.'s own factories, at Ispahan. It will hold anything—pounds, shillings, or pence—anything you like; fastens with a catch. Look at it, and if you like it—"

"No, thank you."

"Oh, really, Miss Clara—"

"Clara! Clara!"

"They're calling me."

And Miss Clara hurried away. Bunter gave a sniff of disgust.

"They say women are fond of making bargains," he muttered. "The girl must be a silly ass to turn up her nose at a bargain like that. I say, Miss Cleveland, would you care to see a little purse—real Russia leather, made in Moscow? Ow!"

A strong grip fell upon Bunter's collar.

He was whirled round, to find Bob Cherry glaring at him. Ethel Cleveland walked on with Nugent, chatting, without noticing Bunter, who was whirled into the cover of a shrubbery by the indignant Bob.

"You young pig!" said Bob savagely. "I warned you!"

"Oh, really Cherry—"

"How many of those rotten articles have you got about you?"

"Three! If you like to take the lot at a reduction—"

"Show them to me!"

Billy Bunter fished out the articles. Bob Cherry changed his grasp from the fat junior's collar to his arm, and, holding him tight, marched him off. He stopped at last on the edge of a pond in a secluded portion of the grounds of Cliff House.

"Now chuck that rubbish in the water," he said sternly.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Quick, or I'll chuck you in!"

"But—but I—"

Bob rushed him down towards the water. Bunter turned quite pale, and in great alarm he threw the three precious articles into the water. They sank, and Bob Cherry, with a twist of his arm, sat Bunter down on the grassy bank.

"Just in time," he said grimly. "You'd have been in in another minute you—you toad! That's an end of your precious articles."

"You—you'll have to pay for them," spluttered Bunter. "You—you—"

Bob Cherry walked away while he was speaking.

Bunter rose to his feet, looking sulky and angry. He moved off from the spot, and a minute or two later jumped as he received a slap on the shoulder. He blinked sullenly at Bulstrode.

"What's the trouble?" asked the Big Removite, good-naturedly. "Anything gone wrong, Billy?"

"It's that utter beast, Cherry," said Bunter viciously.

"He's made me throw my articles into the water—the articles I had to sell for the Imperialist Fair Trading Co., you know. I shall have to account for them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. They'll make me pay for the things."

"Serve them right to lose the money," said Bulstrode.

"They oughtn't to have sent them to you, and they weren't worth more than a bob the lot, anyway."

"They'll make me pay. I had ten articles altogether,

THE MAGNET.—70.

NEXT  
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and that beast Ionides burnt up four of them, and Cherry's made me throw three into the water."

"Better throw the rest after them," grinned Bulstrode.

"I've sold them."

"There must be three jolly big mugs at Greyfriars, then."

"I haven't sold them to our fellows."

Bulstrode's expression changed.

"You don't mean to say that you've been palming off that rotten rubbish on the girls here?" he said angrily.

"No, I haven't. I've sold them to D'Arcy. Blessed if I know what you're scowling about. It's no business of yours, is it?"

"You little fat toad!" said Bulstrode. "It's the business of every Greyfriars fellow, I suppose, to keep a little mongrel like you from disgracing the school. You've sold them to D'Arcy?"

"Yes, I have," said Bunter obstinately. "I think you're talking rot. D'Arcy hasn't paid me for the things yet, either. The silly ass imagined that I was making him a present of them, you see, and I haven't had a chance to explain; but—"

"If you explain to him, Bunter—if you say another word to him on the subject, in fact—I'll break every bone in your body," said Bulstrode, in a low, unpleasant tone.

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Wh-wh-what do you mean, Bulstrode? I can't afford to lose the things. I shall have to pay for them. I have to send the Imperialist Fair Trading Co. fifteen shillings for the ten articles, you see, and I am going to have fifteen shillings from D'Arcy for the three he bought. That will make up for my losses in other directions. I can't be dunned by the Fair Trading Co. for the sake of making a stranger presents. Don't be absurd."

"Little cad!" said Bulstrode. "Look here, I'll pay the fifteen bob, and you're not to mention the matter to D'Arcy again. You understand?"

"Oh, certainly! I'd just as soon have the money from you, Bulstrode. Hand it over!"

"Not much," said Bulstrode grimly. "We'll call in at the post-office as we go back, and I'll get a postal order, and make it payable to the firm, and cross it, and then you won't be able to blue it. I know you; you're not going to spend the money and then duu D'Arcy all the same. Shut up! Don't jaw to me! It's settled. Yes, I know you don't understand why I'm doing this—you wouldn't! Shut up! They're calling you to take the photos. Get off, you worm!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Get away, I tell you!"

And Bunter got away.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### The Photographs.

"HOW very clever of the dear boy!" said Miss Primrose, as Bunter came up with his camera. "Have you had much practice, Bunter?"

"Not very much, ma'am, but I can take ripping photos."

"How clever!"

"H'm!" said Miss Locke. She was no great believer in Bunter, but she did not want to throw cold water on the idea. All the girls were eager to have their photographs taken, and she would not disappoint them.

"My hat!" murmured Ogilvy, as he saw the hand-camera. "That's mine!"

Bunter did not even glance at Ogilvy. He knew that the owner of the camera could not make a fuss about the unasked loan there.

"Please stand in a group here—so," said Bunter, assuming all the airs of a professional photographer. "I want to get a really good group. Would you mind standing at the side, Miss Primrose?"

"Certainly."

"And you this side, Miss Locke."

"Very good."

"I want a good group. I've got twelve plates in the camera—"

"My twelve plates!" muttered Ogilvy.

"I shall take several separate photos afterwards, but I want to begin with groups, while—while the light's suitable. Bob Cherry, would you mind putting your feet out of sight? They'll come out too big."

There was a chuckle among the juniors, and Bob Cherry turned very red. He mentally promised Bunter all sorts of things when they were home at Greyfriars.

"Put on a pleasant smile, Ogilvy, please."

Ogilvy murmured something.

"Don't grin like that, Desmond. Your hat a little farther back, D'Arcy, or I sha'n't get any face," said Bunter,



squinting into the view-finder. "Can you lend me a table or something to rest this camera on?"

A table was forthcoming. Bunter placed the camera on it, and squinted into the view-finder again.

"Good! I think this group will come out well. Would Miss Clara mind stopping whispering to Marjorie Hazeldene? Any movement spoils the picture."

Miss Clara's eyes glimmered.  
"Will D'Arcy remove his eyeglass? It will come out very badly in the picture."

"Yaaa, wathah!"  
"Ah! Quite still now!"  
Click!

"Dear me!" said Miss Primrose. "Is it taken?"  
"Certainly, ma'am, and a very good picture," said Bunter off-handedly. "Now I shall be glad to have some singles. If you would care for them, ma'am, I could get some fine enlargements made, for you to have framed."

"Perhaps we had better see the prints first," said Miss Locke.

"Oh, certainly! Now, Miss Cleveland, may I take you?"  
"Bai Jove! Where does he want to take you, Ethel?"  
"I mean the photograph."

"Oh, I see!"  
Cousin Ethel smiled and nodded. Bunter snapped her, and then proceeded to make further snaps. He took groups and singles, and a view of Cliff House from the garden, and a view of the garden from Cliff House. When the camera clicked for the last time, and the final plate was used up, Bunter rammed it back into its case.

"I wish I had brought some more plates," he said.  
"That's the last."

Upon the whole, the garden-party were not sorry that it was the last. Bunter had been half an hour at work, and he was growing tiresome.

Tea was the next item on the programme, and it was a tea to be remembered.

Under the shady old trees in the sunny garden, on little tables set out in rows, a most substantial tea was laid.

Boys and girls did it full justice—the boys more than the girls, perhaps. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Harry Wharton were seated at one table with Cousin Ethel and Marjorie, and it was the merriest table of all. But all the young faces were bright and happy, and Miss Primrose's old face was very happy, too.

Billy Bunter distinguished himself at the tea. He started early, and finished late, and kept up an excellent speed all the time. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy more than once glanced at him in wonder.

"Bai Jove," D'Arcy murmured to Wharton, "there's a chap at St. Jim's we call Fatty Wynn, he's a bit of a Falstaff; but—but he's a fool to this chap! I weally nevah did see the equal of Buntah! Bai Jove, I should like to get him into a study at St. Jim's with Fatty Wynn, and match them!"

Harry Wharton laughed.  
"I think Bunter would win hands down," he remarked.  
"Bai Jove, I think you're wight, deah boy!"

It was over at last, and the time came to say farewell. The Greyfriars juniors thanked Miss Primrose for her hospitality, and it was no mere lip-service—they were grateful, and they showed it. It had been a ripping time. They said farewell to the girls of Cliff House, and to D'Arcy and Cousin Ethel.

They walked home to Greyfriars in a very contented mood. Billy Bunter had the camera under his arm, and he

nearly dropped it when—out of sight of Cliff House—Ogilvy grasped him by the shoulder.

"Ow! Leggo, Bulstrode! Oh, is it you, Ogilvy?"

"You young sweep! What do you mean by taking my camera without getting permission?"

"I did ask permission."

"Well, yes; but I said you couldn't have it."  
"Still, I asked permission, and— Look here, Ogilvy, I'll give you one or two of the photographs if you'll develop the plates for me. I haven't studied that part yet."

Ogilvy could not help laughing.

"You cheeky young beggar! As Miss Primrose will be expecting some proofs, I suppose I'd better do it. But if you take my camera again—"

"It's all right, I sha'n't need it. I shall have a much better one myself next week."

Ogilvy took the camera into the dark-room as soon as they reached Greyfriars. Billy Bunter waited outside anxiously while Ogilvy was at work under the red lamp. Some of the other juniors waited, too, anxious to see how they came out in the negatives. There was the sound of a chuckle in the dark-room, and the juniors looked at one another wondering. What was Ogilvy chuckling about?

"There he goes again!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The chuckle was audible again and again, and in all, twelve distinct chuckles were heard through the door. Wharton smiled slightly. He guessed that it meant that there was something wrong with each of Bunter's negatives. The door of the dark-room suddenly opened, and Ogilvy staggered out. He seemed almost in hysterics.

"What are they like?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Ogilvy. "Look at 'em!"

They looked at them. Each plate was as black as midnight, and on none of them was anything discernible except dead blackness.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy, you have mucked them up!"

"Mucked them up!" yelled Ogilvy. "You've mucked them up, you young ass! They came out like this in the developer! Ha, ha, ha! You must have let the light get to the plates!"

"The—the light!"

"Yes; you must have opened the camera."

"Opened it! Of course, I opened it to see if there were any plates in it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you ass?"

"Oh, my hat! You young duffer! Don't you know that the plates are sensitive to light, and if the light gets at them they're done in? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really—"

"They were all done in before you started taking the photographs," chuckled Ogilvy. "Every one of 'em. They were all done in when you opened the camera. You young ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Bunter blinked at the negatives.

"H'm! I expect it's the way you've developed them!" he grunted. And he walked away in great disgust.

A shout of laughter followed him. After the airs Bunter had put on as a photographer, the climax was too funny. And for a long time afterwards sly allusions to his wonderful negatives gave Bunter reason to remember the day of the Cliff House Garden-party.

THE END.

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Ronald Chenys, a cadet in his last term at Sandhurst, is falsely accused of cheating in an exam., so one night, packing up a few necessaries, he leaves Sandhurst with his dog Rough. He walks to London, enlists in the Royal North Wessex Regiment under the name of Chester, and is sent down as one of a draft of recruits for that regiment to Dunchester. Arrived there the rookies are taken charge of by two old soldiers, known as Mouldy Mills and Hookey Walker. Ronald is at once marched off to supper in the canteen by Hookey, whither Mouldy also brings the others. One recruit, however, a weedy ex-shop assistant, who affects to be a gentleman-ranker, is missing.

(Now go on with the story.)

## The First Night in Barracks.

"'E's waitin' in the room. Told me to fetch 'im up some minced veal and sippets of toast, and a ginger-beer, with a welsh rarebit to foller," explained Mouldy, at the urgent inquiry of Hookey as to the whereabouts of Augustus. And his chum went into such a fit of laughter at this, that he choked, and had to dash into the wet canteen and swallow a deep draught out of the can of a man whose back happened to be turned at the moment.

They had scarcely time to bolt the last mouthfuls of beef and bread, when suddenly, above all the clatter and din of the canteen arose the full-throated chorus of bugles blowing "first-post," the most plaintive and perhaps the prettiest of all the calls in the infantry.

Whack, whack, whack! Somebody was thrashing the zinc-topped counter vigorously with a cane.

"That's the canteen corporal orderin' us out," explained Hookey. "So come on! There's no 'angin' about after you 'ear that. You've got to answer to roll-call now, and get to bed. 'Lights out' goes in three quarters of an hour."

Pushing their way along with the stream of Tommies, they emerged on to the dark parade ground, and made their way back to their room.

Ronald, however, had first to see to his four-legged chum, and hastened towards the gate. He blundered into Corporal Kedgo on the way, and Rough, racing in at Ronald's familiar whistle, the kindly corporal soon pointed out a snug corner where the terrier could make his bed. A big handful of scraps provided Rough with a royal supper, and Ronald left him as contented as an old campaigner.

Augustus's wrath when Mouldy returned without so much as a sandwich staggered even Mouldy for the moment.

"You vulgar scoundrel! I'll report you for this, see if I don't!" shrieked Augustus, white with rage.

"No good your doing that," counselled Mouldy blandly. "The colonel and me is sich old pals, he wouldn't 'ear a word against me. You remember the time when the Dook of Wellington tried to get me the sack out of my job as lance-private arter the Battle of Waterloo, don't you, Hookey? You remember 'ow the old man told 'im off?"

"Don't I just! Fairly blistered the skin off his big nose!"

"That's jest 'bout it, Boko," sez 'e. "Mouldy and me as been pals ever since me and 'im was at Eton and 'Arrer together, and bust me if I'll let even you say a word again 'im.' You remember, Hookey?"

"Don't I just?" answered the mendacious Walker.

But Augustus was not to be further drawn that night. With the kindly assistance of the two veterans, the beds

were all made down, and everything set ready for turning in.

An army bed is constructed in two parts, the lower section being slid beneath the upper during the daytime, so as to make the most of the floor space.

The drawing out and adjusting of the beds seemed to give Mouldy and Hookey a suspicious amount of trouble, Ronald thought, and he took care to attend to his own himself.

As no one seemed to get to bed until the very last minute, it was not until the bugles had sounded "Lights out" that anyone made a move. Then, as Mouldy turned the gas-tap off suddenly, everybody made a wild dart between the blankets.

Augustus, who was sulking by himself, was first in.

Bang!

That some dire catastrophe had befallen him was evident from the gasps of surprise and snorts of rage which followed the crash.

In the dim light it could be seen that his bed had collapsed in the centre, leaving him doubled up, like a half-shut pocket-knife, on the floor.

Augustus's mishap so excited the rest to mirth, that most of them were compelled to fling themselves on their beds likewise.

The result was startling, for in every case, except Ronald's, the bed seemed to break in halves and deposit the owner with a thud on the ground.

The mirth died away in a breathless gasp, and the unfortunate rookies, remembering that he laughs longest who laughs last, set to work in the pitchy darkness to master the mysteries of the construction of the Army bedstead.

Silently they worked, trying it this way and that, and all ways together, finally giving it up as a bad job, and transferring their mattresses to the floor.

"Funny thing!" came Mouldy's voice, rumbling from beneath the blanket, when all was still. "We took sich trouble, too, to make them beds nice and comfy. Didn't we, Hookey?"

"We did, Mouldy. I expects that's what comes of their just bein' used in the cholera 'ospital. The blessed microbes must have gnored their way right into the iron," suggested Hookey cheerfully.

And leaving this appalling thought to work its havoc on the peace of mind of the rookies, the two old villains went to sleep, and snored like fog-horns.

Sleep was not for Ronald just yet, however. His thoughts turned back to Sandhurst, and the disgrace which had been turned upon him.

Again and again he recalled the sinister words of Slaney, his stepbrother's soldier servant.

He seemed to see that tell-tale half of Ian's cuff-link glittering in the man's palm and the crafty smile on his puffy features. He could feel the imprint of his knuckles now where he struck the grinning mouth.

It was bad enough to know that it was his own flesh and blood which had betrayed him, without a blacknailing brute like Slaney sharing the hateful secret and attempting to make profit out of it.

Then his thoughts turned homewards, and he wondered what havoc the story of his downfall must have wrought there.

It would be his stepmother's hour of triumph, he knew well. It shamed him to think so ill of any woman; but he

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could have sworn that the news had not come as a surprise to her. As like as not it was her hate which had prompted the ruthless deed.

She hated him from the first—hated him, because he, the eldest son by the general's first marriage, barred her own boy's title to the Chenys' fortunes.

With Ronald branded cheat and hounded from the door of the Service, her triumph was almost complete. She would not rest now, night or day, until she had so poisoned his father's heart against him that his name and memory were blotted out for ever.

Would she succeed? Ronald wondered, and wondering, fell asleep. He was brought, gasping, to his senses by a most appalling din and clatter, as if the whole barrack-room was tumbling about his ears.

#### Augustus Smythe is Roused.

"Now then, tumble out, me little darlings!"

Bang! Clash! Bang!

"No more bye-bye just now! Up ye git!"

Bang! Bang! Clash!

Private Mouldy Mills, attired only in a much-shrunken flannel grey-back shirt, was beating a "revally" of his own with a shovel on the great iron coal-box.

The guard bugler had already sounded "Rouse!" but Ronald and half the other rookies had not heard it in their heavy slumbers.

Ronald was out of bed in a trice, and even George and Alf showed no reluctance to rise; but Augustus Smythe only pulled the blankets tighter round his ears, and turned over on his other side.

"Don't think your arrystocratic young friend quite heard you, Mouldy, old boy," said Hookey Walker, with a wink at Ronald.

Mouldy was glaring in Augustus' direction, with his mouth wide open.

"Better go and knock at his Royal 'Ighness's door, and ask him if he'll have a nice cup of tea brought up to him," suggested Hookey.

"Blessed if I don't think I will!" said Mouldy, and licked his horny hand to get a better grip of the shovel.

The next instant he had landed Augustus a welt which almost shot him out of the bed on to the floor.

This was too much for Augustus. Already rankling under the humiliation of the previous night, he burst into a blaze of fury.

He sprang from his blankets straight at his tormentor, and, dodging the wild blow with which Mouldy sought to stave him off, he butted him in the chest, with such force as

to make him stagger backwards and collapse into the almost empty coal-box.

The old soldier was wedged nose to knee, as tightly as if he had been stuffed into a barrel.

He looked so comical, with his bare, stumpy legs waving helplessly in the air, that the whole room burst into a yell of laughter, while Hookey simply collapsed into hysterics.

"You nasty, owdacious, little spitfire!" spluttered Mouldy, as soon as he could find his voice. "Here, give me a hand out of this, someone, and watch me skin him! D'ye 'ear, Hookey? Don't lay there larfin' like a mad hyena! Come and help a pal!"

Hookey, however, was too overcome with delight to lift so much as a finger to extricate his chum from his uncomfortable fix.

Augustus, on the other hand, half-frightened at the success of his onslaught, half-defiant, retired sullenly to bed again.

He had scarcely got between the blankets when the door opened, and in walked Corporal Kedge.

"Hallo! What's this?" he demanded hotly. "Revally gone five minutes ago and a man still in bed! Get out of that!"

"Sha'n't!" snarled Augustus. "I ain't used to gettin' up at half-past five, if you are; and, what's more, I'm not going to start now!"

"Oh, you aren't, aren't you, Private Smith?" replied the corporal.

"Yes; and look here, my name's Smythe, not Smith, when you want to speak to me!"

"Indeed! Well, look here, Smith," continued Kedge, ignoring the correction. "If you want a chance of getting fifteen days' hard labour for insolence to a non-commissioned officer, you've only got to stick in that bed just one second longer. If you weren't a red, raw rookie, to say nothing of being a half-baked puppy, besides, I'd clap you in the clink for what you've said already! But I'll give you another chance. Come out!"

"But look here—"

"Come out!" rapped Corporal Kedge.

Augustus took one more look at the smouldering eyes and square, determined jaw, and then crawled out like a whipped puppy.

"Now, don't forget this, you, and all of you! You've got to a place where when you get an order you've got to jump up and do it, and no asking why. Otherwise, you'll find yourselves in the clink quicker than you can say knife!"

Kedge turned on his heel.

"Now then, Mills," he said. "Since when have you taken to folding yourself up and goin' to bed in the coal-box 'stead of sleepin' in your cot like a 'uman being? Why, you ain't up at revally, either!"

"Goin' to bed in a coal-box!" gasped the indignant Mouldy, ceasing for a moment his excruciating endeavours to extricate himself from the trap which held him tighter than a vice. "D'yer think I'm 'ere for fun?"

"No back answers now!" commanded Kedge, with just the flicker of a smile playing round his grim mouth. "Get up out of that, sharp! It's a scandal seeing an old soldier like you playing at being a trussed chicken when he ought to be settin' a good example to nooly-joined recruits! Don't let me catch you at it any more—d'ye hear?—or, by gum, you'll be for it, too! Here, pull him out of it, Walker!"

Leaving Hookey to prise his chum out of his painful fix, the corporal left the room.

Mouldy would have proceeded to skin Augustus alive the moment he had steadied his cramped legs under him. Hookey, however, had decided that things had gone far enough, and being a taller man by six inches, and three stone heavier than Mouldy, he skirmished his pal back into his corner, and stood over him while he clothed his nether limbs.

"That's all right, Mouldy, old boy!" he said soothingly,

as Mills hurled threats of the most bloodcurdling ferocity in the direction of the now trembling Augustus. "That's quite all right! But take your time. It ain't only good enough to break him up into little bits and chuck him out of the winder; you're only spoilin' good sport that way. What you've got ter do is ter wait until he's had 'is rifle and bay'nit served out, and then you can have one of them duels, same as you 'ad when you killed poor Slinker Evans and Tubby Taylor. You remember them poor, ignorant jossers, don't you, and the job we 'ad to bury them under the boards of this very room?"

If Mouldy did not remember these ghastly details, at least, he pretended to, and reluctantly consented to let the matter rest for the present.

Time was short enough in any case. There were beds to be "run back," blankets and sheets to be folded to regimental pattern, and the floor swept before the morning sluice-down could be thought of.

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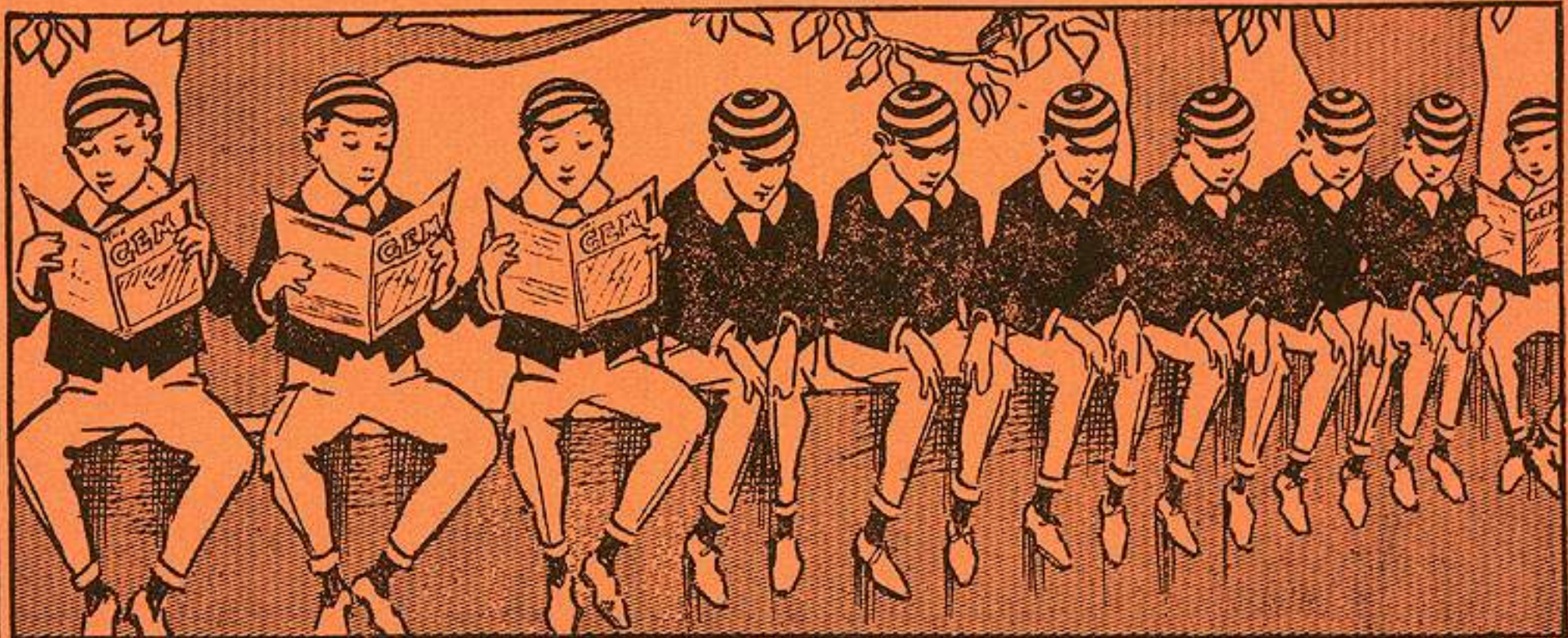
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